



NEW SOUTH WALES.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

REPORT

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, APPENDICES, AND PLANS,

RELATING TO THE

PROPOSED RAILWAY

FROM

TEMORA TO WYALONG.

Presented to Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Act, 51 Fic. No. 37.

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1894.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Honorable WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR, Vice-Chairman.

The Honorable JAMES HOSKINS.

The Honorable Frederick Thomas Humphery.

The Honorable John Davies, C.M.G.

The Honorable WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT.

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THOMAS THOMSON EWING, Esquire.
WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esquire.
WILLIAM McCourt, Esquire.
John Cash Nelld, Esquire.
Edward William O'Sullivan, Esquire.
Charles Collins, Esquire.
Henry Dawson, Esquire.

MEMBERS OF THE SECTIONAL COMMITTEE.

The Honorable Frederick Thomas Humphery, Chairman. William Chandos Wall, Esquire.
Henry Dawson, Esquire.

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

RAILWAY FROM TEMORA TO WYALONG.

REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS, appointed during the first Session of the present Parliament, under the Public Works Act of 1888, 51 Vic. No. 37, the Public Works Act Amendment Act of 1889, 52 Vic. No. 26, and the Public Works (Committees' Remuneration) Act of 1889, 53 Vic. No. 11, to whom was referred the duty of considering and reporting upon "the expediency of constructing a line of railway from Temora to Wyalong," have, after due inquiry, resolved that it is expedient the decision upon the proposed railway be deferred for six months; and, in accordance with the provision of sub-section IV, of clause 13, of the Public Works Act, report their resolution to the Legislative Assembly:---

1. The official description of the proposed line shows that the railway would Description of begin at the termination of the Cootamundra to Temora line, at 291 miles 63 chains the proposed 95.8 from Sydney, and that it would go thence to Barmedman and from Barmedman to Wyalong, a distance of 331 miles from Sydney. The total length of the line between Temora and Wyalong, according to the official description, would be 40 miles; but subsequent to the description being handed in it was found that the length could be reduced to 38 miles 46 chains. To within about 4 miles of Barmedman the route of the line is chiefly along the side of the main road. It passes on the west side of the township, and then proceeds almost direct, mainly along the public road to Wyalong. For nearly the whole distance the country is flat, and no expensive engineering works are necessary. The steepest grade is 1 in 100.

2. The estimated total cost of the railway is £104,430, or £2,707 per mile, Estimated exclusive of the cost of land and compensation.

3. At the commencement of their inquiry the Committee found that the avail- The Commitable information concerning the proposed line was not complete. This was due to the tee's inquiry. proposed work having been somewhat hastily submitted to the Legislative Assembly in the desire to assist as quickly as possible the large population which at the time had assembled on the Wyalong gold-field. The line had some time before been surveyed as far as Barmedman in connection with a project for establishing railway communication with the Lachlan River districts, but, up to the time of the reference of the work to the Committee, no survey beyond Barmedman, in the direction of Wyalong, had been made, and no report had been obtained from the Railway Commissioners upon the traffic prospects and expenses of the proposed extension. Desirous, however, of proceeding with the inquiry as expeditiously as possible the Committee examined the Under Secretary for Public Works, the Engineer-in-Chief for Railway Construction, the Chief Draftsman of the Department of Lands, and the Chief Inspector of Mines; and also appointed a Sectional Committee to inspect the route proposed for the railway and to take evidence in the district. Subsequently they

they examined Mr. McLachlan, Secretary to the Railway Commissioners; Mr. Harper, Goods Superintendent, Railway Department; Mr. Pittman, Government Geologist; Mr. Shellshear, Divisional Engineer, Department of Railways, Goulburn; and Mr. Firth, Acting Engineer-in-Chief for Railway Construction. In the course of their inquiry the Committee have held six meetings at which nine witnesses were examined. In addition to this, the Sectional Committee's inquiry comprised five meetings, at which the evidence of thirty-one witnesses was taken; and every effort has been made to procure complete information upon the project. By the examination of Mr. Harper, the Committee obtained valuable information with regard to the traffic prospects on the proposed line of railway, and the data supplied by him will be found in the appendix to his evidence. The question of light and cheap railways, referred to in the report of the Railway Commissioners as "pioneer" railways, received considerable attention, and in this connection the Committee examined Mr. Shellshear (Divisional Engineer of the Railway Department at Goulburn), who recently visited America to inquire into matters of general railway construction, as to the mode adopted in the United States of constructing light and cheap lines. In endeavouring to arrive at a proper conclusion with regard to this proposed work particular attention was also given by the Committee to the probable permanency of Wyalong as a gold-field, and upon this point Mr. Pittman, Government Geologist, who recently visited the district, was examined, and a copy of his report to the Department of Mines is attached to the evidence.

Sectional Committee's inquiry. 4. The Sectional Committee, who were accompanied by a surveyor of the Railway Construction Branch of the Department of Public Works, made a careful inspection and inquiry. At Barmedman, Wyalong, and Temora witnesses, including some from Hillston and Cargellico, were examined. The Sectional Committee were of opinion that under existing circumstances it would be premature to construct a railway simply to serve Wyalong, but having regard to the facility with which, from an engineering point of view, the proposed line could be constructed, they felt "justified in recommending its construction, if viewed as a section of a main line to the Lachlan at Hillston, viá Cargellico," but at the same time they considered "that the question of ultimate extension to the Lachlan should first be decided." Unless it should be the settled policy of the country to extend the Cootamundra-Temora branch to the Lachlan, the Committee felt they would not be justified in recommending the immediate adoption of the proposal under consideration.

Railway Commissioners' Report.

5. The report of the Railway Commissioners, received by the Committee very late in their inquiry, is not favourable to the immediate construction of the proposed railway. In their estimate the Railway Commissioners do not adopt the figures supplied by the Department of Public Works, but a cost estimated by themselves, based upon a suggestion for the construction of cheap pioneer lines made by them to the Minister for Works in 1892. The estimated cost of construction put before the Committee by the Engineer-in-Chief for Railway Construction was £104,430; the estimated cost stated in the Railway Commissioners' report is £85,000. Taking this estimate of cost, the annual interest at 4 per cent. would be £3,400, and the cost of working £3,550, (viz.:—traffic expenses £800; permanent-way expenses, £2,000; and locomotive expenses, £750—total £6,950 per annum). Regarding the probable revenue from the line, the Commissioners say nothing definite can be stated. "In railway construction," the report says, "the proposal, from a traffic point of view, is unique, as the future entirely depends upon the permanency of the gold-field at Wyalong, which it is understood is the basis of the extension. There is country adapted for agricultural purposes around Wyalong and en route thereto, but there is no present necessity for providing it with railway communication while there are large areas suitable for the purpose contiguous to existing lines available." The present population of Wyalong the Commissioners do not regard as permanent; but basing an estimate of traffic "on the assumption that there will be a permanent settlement at Wyalong to the extent that now exists at Temora—about 1,800"—the value of the annual revenue from the railway would not exceed £2,800, leaving an annual deficiency of £4,150. Considering the "great uncertainty of the future of Wyalong," the Commissioners recommend that the proposal to construct the railway be "deferred for six months, or until such time as there can be no reasonable doubt as to the future of the place."

- 6. Prominent among the various points in the inquiry to which special The evidence consideration was given, were:—
 - (1) The proposal viewed as a portion of a future extension to Hillston, viâ Barmedman and Cargellico.
 - (2) The most suitable route by which to tap the Lachlan Valley.
 - (3) The permanence of the field, and its future population.
 - (4) The traffic prospects between Temora and Wyalong, as a present terminus.
 - (5) Whether the requirements of the population demanded the immediate construction of the proposed line.

A perusal of the evidence given by the Under Secretary for Public Works shows that prior to the discovery of gold at Wyalong, a survey had been made from Temora to Barmedman, the Department having in view a possible extension of the railway from Temora, via Barmedman and Cargellico, to Hillston, as the best route, by which to reach the Lachlan Valley, the desirableness of this route being to a great extent emphasised by the subsequent influx of a large number of people to Wyalong. Another possible route suggested to the Committe in the course of their inquiry was one by way of Forbes and thence to Hillston, and on the whole the evidence indicated this as the better route of the two. The evidence given on this point tends to show that the former route could only be justified by the township of Wyalong becoming a permanent and successful field, and not on account of the actual traffic which might reasonably be expected. The Committee, however, while directing particular attention to the proposal submitted to them by the Legislative Assembly, found it also necessary to consider the question in view of the traffic which might be expected from either of the routes mentioned. It was elicited that although good land for agricultural purposes existed in the country to the north-west of Wyalong, large areas contiguous to the Temora line remained uncultivated. In his evidence on this point, the Secretary to the Railway Commissioners says, "the country between Wyalong and Hillston is now used entirely for pastoral purposes and the traffic from that district comes to the railway now, so that no new traffic would be developed by the extension of the proposed line."

- 7. The evidence obtained from witnesses competent to express a reliable The opinion on the permanency of the gold-field pointed to the likelihood of the population permanency or obtained reduced unless further developments were made in the near future. "The the field evidence of experienced miners"—the Sectional Committee's Report states—"confirms the opinion freely expressed by local residents, and endorsed by the Chief Inspector of Mines, that even should no further discoveries be made, remunerative employment will be found for upwards of 1,500 people for a considerable time to come." Additional evidence upon which to base some reasonable estimate of the future prospects of the field was furnished in a report made by the Government Geologist, who after an exhaustive examination of the various claims already in existence and the country in the immediate vicinity, gave it as his opinion that the present prospects of the field were exceedingly favourable, but at the same time he pointed out that there was little doubt that mining operations would be more difficult and expensive as a greater depth was attained, as harder granitic formations would probably be reached.
- 8. In arriving at a conclusion with regard to the proposal submitted to them, Decision of the the Committee have had due regard to the important interests involved. There are Committee reasonable grounds for assuming that the construction of a railway to Wyalong would be followed by a fair amount of agricultural settlement, and the Committee have been supported in this assumption by the results of the extension of the line from Cootamundra to Temora, which has paid, since its opening, working expenses and over 3\frac{3}{4} per cent. towards interest; but the evidence furnished by competent witnesses, while favourable to the prospects of Wyalong, is not conclusive as to the permanency of the field, the general opinion being that, until further development takes place it could only support a population of about 1,500 persons. There has

has also been the question as to which route the extension to Hillston should take, and this, too, must, in the opinion of the Committee, depend largely upon the future of Wyalong. Under all the circumstances, the Committee are of opinion that the further consideration of the projected railway should be deferred as shown in the following extract from the Minutes of Proceedings of the meeting held on Tuesday, 22 May, 1894:—

Mr. Trickett moved,—" That the Committee proceed to consider the evidence on the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong, with a view to reporting on the subject to the Legislative Assembly."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Davies, and passed.

Mr. Trickett moved,—"That, in the opinion of the Committee, it is not expedient the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong, as referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly, be carried out."

Mr. Collins seconded the motion.

Mr. Humphery moved,-"That the motion be amended by the omission of the word 'not."

The amendment was passed on the following division upon the question,—"That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the motion":—

Ayes, 5.
Mr. Garrard,
Mr. Hoskins,
Mr. Trickett,
Mr. McCourt,
Mr. Collins.

Noes, 7.
Mr. Suttor,
Mr. Humphery,
Mr. Davies,
Mr. Wall,
Mr. Neild,
Mr. O'Sullivan,
Mr. Dawson.

Mr. Humphery moved,—"That the motion be further amended by the insertion of the words that the decision upon 'after the word 'expedient."

The amendment was passed on the following division upon the question,—"That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted":—

Ayes, 9.
Mr. Garrard,
Mr. Suttor,
Mr. Hoskins,
Mr. Humphery,
Mr. Trickett,
Mr. Wall,
Mr. McCourt,
Mr. Neild,

Noes, 2. Mr. Davies, Mr. O'Sullivan.

Mr. Humphery moved,—"That the motion be further amended by the omission of the words 'carried out."

The amendment was passed on the following division upon the question,—"That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the motion":—

Ayes, 2. Mr. Davies, Mr. O'Sullivan.

Mr. Collins.

Noes, 9.
Mr. Garrard,
Mr. Suttor,
Mr. Hoskins,
Mr. Humphery,
Mr. Trickett,
Mr. Wall,
Mr. McCourt,
Mr. Neild,
Mr. Collins.

Mr. Humphery moved,—"That the motion be further amended by the addition of the words 'deferred for six months."

The amendment was passed on the following division upon the question,—"That the words proposed to be added be so added."

Ayes, 9.
Mr. Garrard,
Mr. Suttor,
Mr. Hoskins,
Mr. Humphery,
Mr. Trickett,
Mr. Wall,
Mr. McCourt,
Mr. Neild,
Mr. Collins.

Noes, 2. Mr. Davies, Mr. O'Sullivan. The motion as amended,—"That in the opinion of the Committee it is expedient that the decision upon the proposed railway from Temora to Wyalong, as referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly, be deferred for six months," was passed on the following division:—

Ayes, 9.
Mr. Garrard,
Mr. Suttor,
Mr. Hoskins,
Mr. Humphery,
Mr. Trickett,
Mr. Wall,
Mr. McCourt,
Mr. Neild,

Mr. Collins.

Noes, 2. Mr. Davies, Mr. O'Sullivan.

> J. GARRARD, Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Sydney, 28 May, 1894.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM TEMORA TO WYALONG.

MONDAY, 9 APRIL, 1894.

Bresent:-

JACOB GARRARD, Esq. (CHAIRMAN).

The Hon. WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR.

The Hon. JAMES HOSKINS.

The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY.

The Hon. JOHN DAVIES, C.M.G.

The Hon. WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT.

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THOMAS THOMSON EWING, Esq. WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq.

JOHN CASH NEILD, Esq. CHARLES COLLINS, Esq.

HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Committee proceeded to consider the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Joseph Barling, Esq., Under Secretary, Department of Public Works, sworn, and examined :-

1. Chairman.] You propose to make a statement to the Committee concerning the proposed work which J. Barling, has been referred to it by the Legislative Assembly? Yes; the proposal before the Committee was so referred by Parliament on the 29th March, the following being the terms of the resolution:-"That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report upon the 9 April, 1894. expediency of constructing a line of railway from Temora to Wyalong." The early history of this proposal is involved in that of the extension of the railway from Cootamundra to Temora, so that I need not refer to it in any detail. Taking Hillston as the terminal point for the present, four different routes have been advocated. In speaking of Hillston as the terminal point, I do so for the purposes of the comparison I am about to make. I cannot say it has been absolutely determined by the Minister that the railway should be extended from Wyalong to Hillston, because there is another proposal extending the railway to Hillston via Forbes along the Valley of the Lachlan. But the discovery of gold at Wyalong has come as a surprise upon the Department, and as far as we can see at present the connection with Hillston will probably be via Wyalong. 1st. From Coolaman. This of course must be at once put aside, as the starting point has already been fixed at Cootamundra, and extended 38? miles to Temora, so that this proposal is entirely disposed of. 2nd. The extension from Temora via Mandamah, leaving out Barmedman, and taking a direct route to Hillston. 3rd. The extension to Hillston via Barmedman, and thence in a direct line to Hillston. 4th. The direction of the line now proposed, via Wyalong, Lake Cargellico, and on to Hillston. Whatever doubt there may originally have been as to which route should be adopted is now in all probability set at rest by the discovery of auriferous deposits in the neighbourhood of Wyalong, which, accompanied by the fact of the splendid agricultural country which is common to all the routes, determines the balance of evidence undoubtedly in favour of the fourth or Lake Cargellico route. Independently, however, of the reason I have referred to, viz., the discovery of gold deposits, there are others in favour of the Lake Cargellico route, which may be briefly summarised in the words of Mr. Surveyor Kennedy, whose report I will presently hand in. He says: "I think that the proposed line via the lake would be much easier to construct, open up better country (as against the direct or No. 3 line), and suit most people; the extra length by deviating to the lake would not at the greatest exceed 12 miles." There are other interesting remarks of Mr. Kennedy's pertinent to the subject, and which, with the permission of the Committee, I will read. He says: "On the whole line there would be no earthworks of any importance; in fact, there would only be forming for the whole distance, the curves need not be sharper than 20 chains radius. Almost the whole of this line has the bright chocolate soil, the same as sample No. 1, along its route; with the exception of that portion along the Humbug Creek marked as sample No 3, this soil is principally found in the Myall and Belar scrubs. The whole of the route is well settled, and the land is being rapidly taken up and cleared for agricultural purposes. Occasional belts of ironbark, gravelly ridges are passed along the route, and enough timber for sleepers could easily be procured close to the line; splendid ballast can be found adjacent to the line at the head of the Humbug Creek, Lake Cargellico, and the Willantry Bluff." I will hand in the same surveyor's report on the direct line (No. 3). It will give some interesting details to the Committee which I need not further refer to. I may mention, however, that in February of this year the Department received, through Mr. Rac, M.P., a letter from the Hillston Railway League conveying a resolution in favour of the direct route from Barmedman. This letter I will hand in. I have already pointed out the reasons for selecting the Cargellico route, and in all probability the real reason for the opposition of the people of Hillston is that they are afraid the line will stop at Lake Cargellico

Esq.

J. Barling, Etq. 9 April, 1894.

instead of going on to Hillston. With regard to the character of the country and its capabilities for settlement, I have obtained a report from Mr. McKinney, the Chief Engineer for Water Conservation, which, as it bears directly on the subject before the Committee, I will read. It is dated the 3rd instant :--

> TEMORA TO LAKE CARGELLICO. Geological formation.

FROM Temora to Lake Cargellico, is a distance of about 96 miles in a direct line. For fully two-thirds of this distance the country is geologically of allurian formation, with extensive outcrops of cruptive rock. Throughout the greater part of the remaining distance, and extending to Lake Cargellico, Tertiary deposits are found. Quartz-veins are met with at Lake Cargellico, and it was at one time believed that there was a promising gold-field there.

Throughout by far the greater part of the entire distance from Temora to Lake Cargellico the soil is a rich chocolate loam, covered as a rule with a dense growth of scrub. The valuable nature of this land is shown by the great progress of settlement throughout the district in recent years. The resumed areas of pastoral holdings have to a very large extent been taken up by selectors. For instance, in the case of the Hiawatha Run alone, an area of more than 40,000 acres was thus alienated within a period of eighteen months. The quality of the soil as to agricultural production has been tested thoroughly, and it has been proved that the soil is highly suitable for wheat and other crops.

Development of the district by irrigation.

Lake Cargellico is now a permanent source of water supply, and as the lake proper has an area of more than 4,000 acres, and much of the soil in its neighbourhood is well suited for irrigation, considerable development of the capabilities of the soil by this means may be looked for. Near the river Lachlan the soil is rich grey alluvium, sufficiently uniform as a rule to require little or no grading. The success of the Willandra Weir, which, besides diverting a large supply of water into the Willandra Billabong, holds back the water in the river Lachlan to a distance of about 14 miles, shows what can be done in the way of conserving the waters of the river Lachlan, and making them available for irrigation. The richness of the soil is exceptionally great, but this very feature makes the bush tracks almost impassable in wet weather. In the absence of railway communication the productiveness of the soil and the comparative abundance of water can be availed of only to a limited extent. II. G. McK., Chief Engineer.

As the Minister informed Parliament, when submitting the resolution to refer the proposed line to this Committee, I saw Mr. Warden Slee, and I should like to read the few remarks made by that gentleman on the subject :-

THE proposed route is almost a level between Temora and Wyslong. No engineering skill or bridges required, with the exception of a few culverts.

The land will tap a large area of auriferous country as well as agricultural lands. At present the population is about 12,000, but he thinks (say) about 1,500 would be ample for present prospects. Nevertheless there are great possibilities of alluvial ground being discovered within a few miles of Wyalong in a southerly

and northerly direction.

Of course the future extension of the line would certainly tap the Lachlan River. He is of opinion that sooner or later a large mining and agricultural population will inhabit these parts.

The permanency of the field will greatly depend on further development. His private opinion is that recis at a greater depth will be found too small.

He considers that the line would tap an area of 20 miles on each side. There is very little agricultural land at Wyalong, but there is really very fine land some little distance away-in

fact, good country extends all the way to Mount Hope in the one direction, and Hillston in the other.

Mr. Slee feels confident that in the Wyalong district alluvial diggings will also be discovered. This is simply a part of a large auriferous country, and he thinks at any moment very much better reefs may be struck. The average return of gold is at present about 2 oz. to the ton.

There are about thirty claims which have struck payable stuff, giving an average of six men to each claim, which means that 180 men are making wages now, and the others are just prospecting over the ground.

There are at least 1,000 at the present moment engaged prospecting, with every hope that something better will soon

be discovered. Gold has been struck over an area of 6 miles in length by 2 miles in width, and Mr. Slee considers there is an auriferous area of at least 30 miles in length by 10 miles in width, extending from Wyalong to Hillston, in which alluvial and reef gold may be struck at any moment.

Agricultural prospects. - There is a large area fit for wheat-growing extending over the whole of the district; that is

to say, right on to Hillston, for at least 20 miles on each side.

Wyalong may be considered to be as the roof, as it were, of the dividing water-shed between the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers.

Of course, the evidence of Mr. Slee will be available, so I need not enlarge on his statements. I also hand in a map prepared by Mr. Saunders, the Chief Draughtsman of the Lands Department, which shows the land, starting 5 miles from Temora, and situated 20 miles on either side of the proposed line, and 20 miles to the north of the terminal point. The particulars are as follows: Freehold land, 112,750 acres; conditional purchases and conditional leases, 442,120 acres; reserved land, 260,750 acres; remaining Crown land, 451,100 acres; or in other words, of the whole area affected, 56 per cent. is Crown lands. The areas given are approximate. This map also shows that, with the exception of a little land at Temora, practically no land will have to be resumed for the entire length of the line from Temora to Wyalong, so that the question of land compensation may be entirely put aside. I have also obtained from Mr. Hickson a detailed catimate, giving the approximate cost of the construction of a road from Temora to Wyalong. The estimate is £69,100, and in the report Mr. Hickson says: "The country is very flat, so that draining on both sides will be necessary for the greater part of the distance." We have allowed a double track. The formation will be 20 feet, and the metalled portion 18 feet wide. The width of a single track roadway will give 12 feet of metal. It should here be noted that while this expenditure of £69,100 would produce no revenue, the construction of a railway, a greatly superior means of communication, would be at once revenue-producing. Mr. Russell, the Government Astronomer, has kindly supplied me with particulars of the rainfall, as noted at stations in the district affected by the proposed line. They are as follows :-

No. of years'		Average Annual							
observations.						rainfall.	Greatest.	Loust.	
7	Cootamundra		411			26.34	40:78	12.07	
11	Coombaning					21.16	37:08	10.75	
11	Kildary					18:08	27:70	8:38	
11	Wyalong		***	***		21:07	30:32	8.65	
13	Temora					21.11	31.10	11.31	
G	The Reefs	***				22.47	35.81	11.89	

J. Harling, Keq.

I will now give the official description of the proposed line, which is dated 29th March: -

The line begins at the termination of the Cootamundra to Temora line, at 291 miles 63 chains 95'8 from Sydney, and passes through the town common at 203 miles 30 chains; thence it will occupy a portion of the main road to Barmedman 9 April, 1894. up to 300 miles 10 chains, where it diverges from it to avoid rising ground. Barmedman Creek is crossed at 310 miles 63 chains, Crown land being traversed up to 311 miles 70 chains, where Barmedman Town Common is entered. To get a muitable site for the station the line bends westward, and passes through the unalienated township sections Nos. 21, 11, 10, and I successively. From thence it strikes generally in a direct line for Wyalong at about 331 miles.

A section has only been completed up to date to 312 miles, showing a surface line with easy grades and curves. No detailed estimate of this portion has been made, but it will not exceed £2,500 per mile. The ruling grade is 1 in 100.

As regards the rest, the section is not yet complete, but, judging from Mr. Kennedy's report, the cuttings will be light, and except at the south-west corner of Barmedman township, where a moderate cutting is encountered, and one other of shallow depth, it will also be a surface line. Three thousand pounds a mile should be sufficient for this portion, and the estimate, when the full information is to hand, will probably be less. The grades will be easy.

This survey is a portion of the Barmedman to Hillston, via Lake Cargellico, now being surveyed.

The length of this line is about 40 miles, and the further extension to Lake Cargellico is 66 miles, while that from Lake Cargellico to Hillston is 53 miles.

The total estimated cost is £110,000 to Wyalong.*

With regard to the survey of the line, the portion between Temora and Barmedman, a distance of 224 miles, has been Burveyod.

A line between Barmedman and Wyslong has also been surveyed to within 10 miles of the latter place, and in about another week the whole line to Wyalong will be marked out, but this will, of course, be subject to medification.

It will be observed by looking at a map of the Colony, that the line now proposed admirably spaces the country as between the Lachlan River and the Junee-Hay extension. The nearest point from Wyalong to the line of the Forbes to Wilcannia survey is 48 miles, and to the nearest point on the Junes-Hay line, 64 miles. As it may perhaps be useful to the Committee, I will give a table of the distances in connection with the proposed line. They are as follows :-

	Diliterar
Sydney to Cootamundra	253
Cotamundra to Temora	382
Temora to Barmedman	
Barmedman to Wyalong.	1771
	100
Wyalong to Hillston, via Cargellico	90
Forbes to Wyalong	4.03
Wyalong to the nearest point on the Forbes to Wilcannia	0.1
Wyalong to the nearest point on the Junee line	2.4.4
Forbes to Lake Cargellico and Hillston	
Sydney to Wyalong	3311
Wyalong to Melbourne	4013

I am also to say that the Minister contemplates that the construction of the line shall be subject to the betterment principle, and that he hopes before the present Session is over the Bill giving effect thereto will have passed into law. I have one or two memoranda with regard to the subject of the wheat crop, which may be of some interest to the Committee. Mr. Coghlan has kindly given me some information on the subject. I have a letter from Mr. C. Wood Davis, a well-known economic writer in America, addressed to Mr. Coghlan, in which he deals with the wheat crop of the world, and which has a rather important bearing on the subject before us. In the first place, I may mention that the wheat-crop of the world, according to Mr. Coghlan's book, is 2,249,000,000 bushels. The production of the whole of Australasia is only 40,000,000 bushels. That is according to Mr. Coghlan's last returns, but I know it has been exceeded a little since then. That would only give 11 per cent. of the whole wheat production of the world. I mention this to show how very little our production at present affects the market of the world. I find also that about 200,000,000 bushels are required by the importing countries of Europe, and it is an acknowledged fact that in the United States the growth of the population is proportionately greater than the increase of the area sown of this cereal. In Russia and Central Europe the consumption of wheat is also increasing. Of course it is well known that America is the great wheat-producing country of the world. Of the 2,249,000,000 bushels of wheat produced I see the United States production is 408,000,000 bushels. The letter of Mr. C. Wood Davis, reads as follows:-

Peotone, Kansas, U.S.A., 24 February, 1894. My Dear Sir, Permit me to thank you for copy of the Wealth and Progress of New South Wales you were so kind as to send me. Enclosed I beg leave to hand you a recent communication to the New York Suz, in which the movement of population is shown by the increase in the number of farms during the last forty-three years. I have long desired to make this

showing, but the Census figures relating to farm increase during the ninth decade are but now available. I think this will interest you, as it shows the complete exhaustion of the arable portion of the public domain, and that the United States will soon have all it can do to supply food and fibre for its own people; hence will cease to compete with Australasia in supplying the wants of other peoples, and thus leave a wider field, that ensures high prices, to the other

exporting countries. I have just mailed to the Sun an article, in which I show by an analysis of official data that, with average crops,

hereafter our export power must be confined to such products as cotton and tobacco.

I also enclose another article-appearing as an editorial in the Sun-in which I attempt to show that the industrial and commercial depression is due to the loss of purchasing power by the farmer. This is, I believe, the only logical conclusion, as it affects alike freetrade, protected, and gold and silver using countries. What else could result from abnormally low prices when half the labour of civilised people is employed in agriculture ? Yours truly,

T. A. Coghlan, Esq., Government Statistician, Sydney, New South Wales.

C. WOOD DAVIS.

I think that shows that the wheat industry is exceedingly promising in this country. I am well aware that at the present time the price of wheat is lower than it has been for something like two centuries, but the prospects show that there is every hope that the wheat industry here will improve and become one of our most promising industries. The following is from the Sun of 10th September, 1893:-

With prices of farm products again such as to afford fair remuneration for the labour and capital employed in production, as they presently must be by reason of the elimination of the world's acreage excess, the purchases of the 30,000,000 upon our farms will help to keep every spindle busy; labour in the towns will, at least for a time, be well employed; hoarding will cease, confidence will be restored, money become abundant, and an era of prosperity will result from the operation of that natural law which is the ultimate arbiter in determining the price of nearly every product of labour.

I quote this to show that there is every prospect that the wheat industry of the world will prosper. There is one other interesting fact which I may mention with regard to our wheat crop. I see that the area under crop with wheat in 1892-3 was 452,920 acres; in 1893-4, 622,320 acres—an-advance of 169,400 acres, or nearly 40 per cent. increase. That is as far as the land is concerned. But as far as the

4

J. Barling, Esq. 9 April, 1894.

the wheat production is concerned, though the figures I have given show an increase of about 40 per cent. the actual figures being 37 4 per cent. over last year—the increased yield is only 15 per cent. greater. From this it seems that even with a very largely increased area of land, we are still 35 per cent. behind

2. Mr. Wall.] You have given us a return of the cost of constructing a road from Temora to Wyalong? supplying our own needs.

3. Do you know that there is a very large field opening up in Temora with a population of 7,000 or 8,000 people; -can you tell us how long that field was in existence before any money was expended on the roads? I could not answer that, but I know very well that we should not have spent anything like that amount of money there.

4. The Department states that this is an undulating country composed of chocolate soil? Yes.

5. This estimate is to construct a metal road, the whole of the distance from Temora to Wyalong? Yes. 6. Do the officers of the Department report on the necessity of the construction of a metal road for the whole of the distance? I do not think it will be necessary to construct a road at that cost, unless the

Wyalong gold-fields become permanent. 7. Has such a thing ever been done in the Colony before in connection with any gold-field which has been

opened? I do not remember.

8. We have the estimate of £69,000 for one work against £110,000 for the other;—are we to understand that it is intended to carry on the work? It all depends, of course, upon the developments which take place. There are 11,000 or 12,000 people at Wyalong now, and if the field turns out to be a permanent one, it is possible such an expenditure will be contemplated, but I cannot say it is contemplated now.

9. Do the officers of the Department point to the necessity of any such expenditure as that mentioned being required on the road? Not at present. I have merely given the cost of a road as compared with

the cost of a railway.

10. Take the road from Temora to Cootamundra, which has been used for many years, has that amount

of money been expended upon it? I should think not.

11. And it is a somewhat similar country? Yes. I did not wish to urge the argument, that if we do not construct the railway we shall have to construct an expensive road. Of course, that will depend very much upon future development.

12. Can you obtain from the officers of the Roads Department a report showing the actual urgent expenditure required at the present time on the road to make it trafficable? Yes. I think I have a report

now. The Minister has granted a sum of £500 at the present moment.

13. Are we to infer from the report submitted to us that the construction of this line will cause a special development of the wheat industry in that particular part of the country? I should think it would stimulate the production of wheat there, but the main argument at present in favour of the line is the opening up of the gold-field. That, in conjunction with the probable extra supply of wheat, has determined the Minister in submitting the line for investigation.

14. Then we are to take it that the urgency of the construction of the line is to provide facilities to Wyalong, in consequence of the opening up of the field, and not for the purpose of wheat production? I have not the smallest doubt that this line would, in course of time, been have recommended purely from

an agricultural point of view.

15. Of course, that is one of the prospective advantages, but that is not one of the reasons for the con-

struction of the line? It is partly.

16. Do you know whether it is proposed to increase the price of land adjacent to the railway, as has been done in other cases where railways have been constructed? That is a matter for the Lands Department; but I may mention that immediately on the line being brought before the House, by the direction of the Secretary for Public Works, I addressed this note to Mr. Houston:-

Department of Public Works, 30 March, 1894. My Dear Houston, Mr. Lyne wishes me to ask you to move Mr. Copeland to reserve at once a mile on each side of our proposed line between Temora and Wyalong. The matter is very urgent indeed, in view of the resolution arrived at by the Assembly last night to refer the proposed work to the Public Works Committee for investigation. Will you oblige Mr. Lyne by bringing this under Mr. Copeland's attention immediately?

W. Houston, Esq., Under Secretary for Lands.

Yours, &c., J. BARLING.

This is the reply :-

Department of Lands, Sydney, 3 April, 1894. Sir, With reference to your letter of the 30th ultimo, urging that a mile on each side of the proposed line of railway, Temora to Wyalong, be reserved, 1 am directed by the Secretary for Lands to inform you that a reserve already exists within one mile on each side of the line from Temora to Barmedman, and the line from Barmedman to Wyalong is almost wholly within leasehold areas, reservation of which is at present unnecessary. The Crown land in the immediate vicinity of Wyalong has been reserved from conditional purchase for gold-mining purposes. I have, &c.,

WM. HOUSTON, Under Secretary

The Under Secretary for Public Works.

(Per R. H.D.)

17. Has any request been made to the Lands Department to reserve land within 20 miles of the line? No.

18. With regard to the suggestion or request of the Under Secretary for Lands to reserve land within a mile, is not that the usual request preferred on the initiation of any line? Yes; it is done, I think, as an extra precaution.

19. And is not the object of that special reservation on each side of the line in order that the Government may realise a greater price for it? Undoubtedly; but with the Betterment Bill before the House I do not think the importance of the reservation is as great as it was before, because we shall be able to tax any alienated lands, provided the Bill is carried.

20. Speaking of those reservations—they exist in regard to most of the lines which have been constructed? I think so.

21. Are you aware that this, instead of promoting settlement, has had a tendency to prevent it;—has that been brought under the notice of your Department? I think it has; but, as I said before, I think the introduction of the betterment principle will take away from the argument against our reserving lands, because if the Bill were passed it would, I think, be quite safe to sell the lands.

22. You state that the object of reserving the land is to obtain a higher price for it in consequence of the railway facilities afforded, and the object of the betterment principle is to throw 75 per cent. of the cost of construction on the people who take the land;—if they do not take it under present circumstances of April, 1894. without the betterment principle being in existence, is it likely that they will take it for settlement when they have to pay 75 per cent. of the coat of construction? Seventy-five per cent. is the maximum. I do not know what percentage will be fixed.

J. Barling, Enq.

23. Is it intended to establish special rates along this line;—is that a matter which rests entirely with the Commissioners, or has the Department considered it? We have nothing to do with special rates; we do not take them into consideration at all.

24. Then you rely on the Department being recouped for any losses which may be entailed in connection with the construction of the line by the adoption of the betterment principle along with the special rate? I may mention a fact which occurred in connection with the Glen Innes to Inverell line, that the resolution was passed by Parliament with the provision that the betterment principle should apply, and that special local rates should be levied until the line paid working expenses.

25. Apart from the recent discovery of gold at Wyalong, did the Department regard the proposed line as an immediately important work? I should not like to say it would not have been taken up now if there had been no gold discovered. The surveys we have made from Barmedman to Hillston show that we have thought the construction of the line to be of sufficient importance to justify a survey being made.

26. Have you any idea of the present settlement in and around Hillston? No. I have the population apart from the extraordinary population which has recently arisen. At Temora the population is 915, at Barmedman, 176. I should say that it is less at Hillston, but the total population of the whole county of Bland is 4,571. That, of course, was before the gold rush took place.

27. Can you tell us whether the Temora line is paying? I have asked that question, but I have not received an answer yet.

28. What was the cost of the Temora line per mile when completed? About £4,000; but the country to Wyalong will be very much easier. Again, I do not think it is proposed to fence the line between Temora and Wyalong, whereas the Cootamundra to Temora line is fenced.

29. Mr. Davies.] I understand you to say that the whole of the lands through which the line will pass

will be Crown or leased lands? Yes.

30. So that there can be no claim for compensation? There will be just a little at Temora.

31. Would the leaseholders be entitled to some compensation for severance? I do not think so. In this case it is all reserved land. There will be no compensation of any kind. There will be no charge or cost incurred for the resumption of land.

32. What is the total estimated cost of the line? £110,000 for 40 miles of line from Temora to Wyalong. 33. The Crown lands will be much increased in value by the construction of the line? There is no doubt about that.

34. Is it intended that the trains over the line shall run at the ordinary speed or at a reduced speed? We shall have 60 lb. rails on the line. We do not propose to fence it. Certainly if the trains run at night they would have to do so at a reduced speed.

35. Can plenty of sleepers be obtained? Yes.

36. Will the line be of the same gauge as the existing line to Temora? Yes.

Henry Deane, Esq., M.I.C.E., Engineer-in-Chief, Railway Construction Branch, Department of Public Works, sworn, and examined:-

37. Chairman.] Do you propose to make a detailed statement as to the line before the Committee proceed H. Deane, to examine you? I have already made a report, which I think the Under Secretary for Public Works Esq., M.I.C.E. has embodied in his statement. I might, perhaps, read a description of the line. I have more information now than I had when the line was submitted. The length is reduced a little. From Temora to Wyalong 9 April, 1894. it will be 38 miles 46 chains. The estimated cost of constructing this as a light line of railway is £104,430, or £2,707 per mile, exclusive of cost of land and compensation. This line begins at the termination of the Cootamundra to Temora line, at 291 miles 64 chains, and runs chiefly along the side of the main road to within about 4 miles of Barmedman. It passes on the west side of the township, and thence strikes almost direct, mainly along the public road, for the township of Wyalong, where it ends on its southern boundary at 330 miles 30 chains from Sydney. The country is nearly flat throughout, and there are no expensive works. The steepest grade is 1 in 100.

38. What are the authorities going to do for a road when you have monopolised it for a railway? The road is 3 chains wide, so that there ought to be room for both.

39. Mr. Hoskins.] Have you had careful surveys made of the proposed line between Cootamundra and Barmedman? Yes; the survey goes nearly along the road the whole of the survey. 40. Are there any streams of water or creeks to cross? Nothing of any importance.

41. Then ordinary sized culverts will carry off the water? Yes; small timber openings, and what are called open waterways and box drains will be sufficient.

42. Is there plenty of timber in the neighbourhood suitable for sleepers—ironbark or blue-gum? Yes. 43. How far will the timber be from the proposed line? A good many of the sleepers which were used on the Cootamundra to Temora line came from the neighbourhood of Barmedman, and I think the ironbark which exists about there will be sufficient to afford sleepers for the proposed line. I propose to use a cheaper kind of sleeper than was used on the Temora line. The Temora line had rectangular sleepers. I propose to use a class of sleeper, such as has been supplied at Narrabri lately under a contract there, mostly round on the top. The sap wood has not been stripped off. They are at least 9 inches wide, and some of them are wider. There is a large quantity of timber, and they make capital sleepers, and

are much cheaper than the ordinary kind. 44. Do you believe that if those sleepers were used they would be no more liable to shift than the ordinary square sleepers? They are quite as good in that respect.

45. What depth of ballast do you propose to put on the line? It will work out to about 5 inches—the same as that I propose for the Moree line-1,200 cubic yards per mile. 46. And you intend to have 5 inches of ballast under the sleepers? Yes; and it runs a little way up the side of the sleeper. 47.

H. Deane, 47. Have your officers made any explorations with a view of ascertaining whether there is good material Esq., M.I.C.E. for ballast in the neighbourhood? No, I do not think that has been done; but ballast could be obtained from the Temora line, and I infer that there will be ballast in this neighbourhood as well.

9 April, 1894. 48. And even if it is not very plentiful, you could bring some of it from the neighbourhood of the Temora

line? Yes. 49. What kind of station buildings do you propose to have? I put down a certain amount for station buildings, but it will have to be left to the Railway Commissioners to decide exactly what class shall be constructed. I based my estimate on those on the Narrabri to Moreo line, and there timber is used. The cheapest possible description of buildings will be put up.

50. Then you propose, subject to the approval of the Railway Commissioners, to have weather-board

stations and goods sheds? Yes.

51. Do you know whether there are quantities of suitable timber to be obtained at a reasonable price in the vicinity of the proposed line? I think there is some pine.

52. And the pine obtained in that locality and on the Lachlan is very efficacious in restricting the ravages

of white ants? Yes. 53. Then the surveys which have been made between Tomora and Barmedman are sufficiently accurate, I suppose, to enable the Department to call for tenders for the construction of that portion of the work in how long a time? There is no reason why tenders should not be called in a very short time. It would not be possible to stake out the line in the usual manner. I think, if Parliament required that the tenders should be called very shortly, I should have to make certain provisions in the specification to give the contractor a certain amount of latitude, limiting him as to the height of bank and so on-that is to say, to make him put a minimum of bank; but I could not, within a very short time, give him levels all the way along the road and pegs in the usual manner.

54. Can you give an idea as to the time in which you can have tenders called, if Parliament sanctions the work, for the construction of a line from Temora to Barmedman? If it were looked upon as an urgent matter, and the work had to be done in that way. I think I could call for tenders within a month-

certainly as soon as a line could be passed by Parliament-perhaps a little sooner, if necessary.

55. You think then that if Parliament sanctioned the construction of the line or a portion of it, you might be able to call for tenders for the construction of the line between Temora and Barmedman within a month? Within a month from to-day, if I had instructions to do so.

56. What description of rail do you propose to use? Sixty-lb. steel rail, flat bottomed.

57. Do you propose to use chairs? No; the rails will rest on the sleepers.

58. Then the idea is that there will have to be a moderate or slow rate of speed, say 15 or 16 miles an hour as a maximum? Yes; it would be to all intents and purposes a very good line, but it would not be a high speed line.

59. Would it be safe to run at the rate of 20 miles an hour? I think so.

60. The surveys of the proposed line from Barmedman to Wyalong are not in such an advanced state as those from Temora to Barmedman? I received a section of the line this morning, and I hope in a few

days to be able to furnish it to the Committee.

61. Supposing the Committee recommended Parliament, and Parliament approved of their recommendation, to construct a railway from Barmedman to Wyalong, how long do you think it would take you to have the line in a sufficiently advanced state to call for tenders for it? I should like another month for that. 62. Could the ordinary rolling stock run over the proposed line safely? Yes; I should say I would very

much prefer to have a proper section and proper pegs put in in the usual manner, because it would in the end be a saving in constructing. But if it were pushed, it could be done as I state.

63. How long do you think it would take you to stake out the road, in order that you might let the contract in the usual way between Temora and Barmedman? By putting on a number of surveyors, I think it could be done in two or three months more.

64. Chairman.] What is the grade of the line? One in 100.

65. Is there not a steeper grade than that going into Barmedman? No; it can be cut out.

66. Mr. Trickett. | How does the country the line has to traverse compare with the country from Cootamundra to Temora? It is much smoother, easier, and less expensive for the construction of the line. For instance, the first part to Barmedman is a surface line throughout until you get close to Barmedman. There is not a cutting in it.

67. Will not that, being very level, necessitate considerable expense for draining? I think not. Where there are little watercourses we can run the water across the line by putting down box drains, or open

watercourses at frequent intervals. 68. And those are inexpensive? Yes.

69. You have not the section from Barmedman to Wyslong? No.

70. Is that much more undulating country? It is very much the same. There is only one rise where there will be anything of a cutting.

71. When the line from Cootamundra to Temora was authorised the Committee imposed a condition that it should not exceed a certain sum per mile—1 think it was £3,300? Yes.

72. Was that exceeded? Yes.

73. To what extent? It has cost between £3,800 and £3,900.

74. Why was it so much more expensive? It was impossible to make it for less. My estimate, if I remember rightly, was £3,650, and I expected to be able to do it for that. But there have been some increases of side cutting which have been necessary to keep the formation up. This is in soft country where the embankments have compressed the ground underneath. I was rather concerned about one portion because the quantities were running up so high, and I sent an officer down specially to examine, measure, and report. That is one reason, but there are others. The accounts have not yet been made up, and therefore I have not investigated the matter thoroughly.

75. Do you think £2,700 will be the ultimate cost per mile of the proposed line? Yes; it can be kept down to that. In fact, with the Temora line I would have limited the carthworks and let the banks go down. I do not think there would have been any serious consequences. In the case of the proposed line the work would be let at so much a chain or so much a mile, and the contractor would see that not

more than the quantities estimated for are put on. 76. It is not proposed to fence the line? No.

H. Deane, 77. Is the nature of the soil similar to that between Narrabri and Moree? No; there is more red soil. 78. But I mean in regard to the ballast required ;—would the ballast sink in? There would be the same Esq., M.I.C.E. fear, because certain portions of the Narrabri to Moree line are over black soil. 9 April, 1894.

79. Do you think 5 inches of ballast would be sufficient? Yes. I should like to express the same opinion about this kind of construction for the proposed line as I did about the Mores line. I should prefer to make it stronger, but to meet the demand for cheap railways I think it can fairly and safely be done in this way.

80. Have you seen the line which was constructed from Broken Hill to Tarrawingee? Yes.

81. Is that a ballasted line? Yes; I think it is sand ballast chiefly, or fine shingle or coarse sand from Stephen's Creek and other watercourses.

82. That is a surface railway, is it not? It is not so much a surface railway as this would be. There are banks and cuttings in places. A portion of the country is very level, but there are banks and cuttings upon the line.

83. The estimated cost of the Narrabri to Moree line was, I think, £2,400 a mile? Two thousand four

hundred and seventy pounds was the estimated cost of the last portion.

84. Does it not strike you that the proposed line should be a less expensive one than the line from Narrabri to Moree, considering the difficulties in the shape of floods and washaways on the Morce line? I will explain where the difference comes in. One cause of difference is the difference in length, so that the terminal arrangements are divided over a greater length than in the case of the Moree line. Some of the items are less.

85. Are parts of the Narrabri and Moreo line much more expensive than other parts? I divided that line into two sections. In the first section the average per mile came to £5,056, and the other portion was £2,470—something like the proposed line. The permanent way materials for the proposed line I have put down at a little more, and the reason for that is that special arrangements were made with the Commissioners about freight, and so on, in regard to the Narrabri-Morce line; and, pending similar arrangements being made in the present instance, I have taken the freight on the permanent way materials at the recognised value of 2d. per ton per mile. My arrangements with the Commissioners have been chiefly that freight is to be charged at 2d. per ton per mile unless there is return freight. If there is return freight only 1d. is to be charged; but in this instance, if the work is to be pushed on, I think it would not be fair to expect the Railway Commissioners to use the 1d. rate, because there would be no return freight. 86. And that makes a considerable difference? That makes a good deal of difference. On the other hand, the prices of materials in England have gone down, and it is possible that I may be able to lower

the estimate accordingly.

87. You think it possible, then, that you may construct the line for less than £2,700 per mile? I might possibly he able to lower the cost of the permanent way materials. The next item where I have an increase of about £100 a mile is in the laying and ballasting of the sleepers. I put the laying down at a little more—1s. 6d. instead of 1s. 3d., and 1 have put the sleepers rather higher—3s. instead of 2s. 6d. Taking it altogether I should not consider the Temora district as good a district for getting sleepers as the Narrabri district. The timber is not so good nor so straight as it is in the forests near Narrabri, and I think it would be fair to put a little more on the price; but even sleepers at 3s. would be very cheap. Several small items divided by the mileage of the Wyslong line bring a higher result than in the case of the Moree line. For instance, it would be necessary to make provision for water supply. I have not made up my mind yet where water is to be obtained, but in the case of Moree I have put down £3,000, and I put down £3,000 in the case of Wyalong, there having to be in each case two water stations on the road. Three thousand pounds divided by 60 is only about two-thirds of what it is if divided by 40. That makes a difference of £27 per mile.

88. And those are the chief items of difference? Yes.

89. Considering that this work, if constructed at all, may be regarded as a very urgent one, what time would you say should be allowed for construction from Temora to Wyalong? If we had the rails and a pushing contractor I think we could do it in six months.

90. That would be something very uncommon in railway construction? Yes. The Temora line wa done in thirteen months; that is the quickest piece of work up to the present, and this is about the same length. 91. Mr. Neild.] Do you think it absolutely essential to use ballast on the line, seeing that there is a large mileage in America where no ballast is used? Yes; I prefer ballast.

92. Have you given any attention to the system which is in operation on some parts of the Continent known as the Balk System, with longitudinal sleepers and iron ties? Yes; the longitudinal sleepers are

not anything so good as the cross sleepers; you do not get the same amount of bearing surface. 93. But there would be a considerable diminution in expense? I very much doubt it, because with longitudinal sleepers you have to trim the timber all the way along, and then you have to fix your ties. Where you have transverse sleepers you run them through a machine and you have the grooves made for the rails to fit in; and having such good hardwood timber it would be out of the question to use soft

wood. If you attempted to use hard wood for longitudinal sleepers they would curl about frightfully.

You would soon have a track which would be quite useless. 94. You do not propose to fence the line? No; I have only included a small sum for fencing. 95. Do you not think there would be considerable inconvenience to vehicular traffic on the road by

reason of the trains running along the road without a fence? I propose to put the line close alongside the boundary of the road, so that the rest of the road, being over 2 chains wide, would practically be quite clear for the other traffic.

96. Then you do not think the line would materially interfere with the road? No.

97. Are you not likely to have accidents with teams scared by the trains passing so close without any

intervening fence? I think not.

98. I suppose the line would cross and recross the road in places, necessitating the construction of a good deal of roadway to make up for the portions occupied by the tracks? No; the road is pretty straight nearly all the way. There are few curves, and they can easily be managed. 99. Then you think the construction of the railway would not necessitate any large expenditure upon the

present roadway? I do not think it would. The road is a very straight one. 100. Do you know the country from Wyalong to Barmedman? Yes; but I have not been over it. 101. Has the line from Cargellico to the Lachlan the best approach? The line via Cargellico would be the best approach to the Lachlan.

102-3. Better than the southern line shown on the map in pencil? Yes. The dotted red line on the 104.

plan practically avoids all the difficult country.

H. Deane, 104. In your opinion, then, if there is an extension to Wyalong, you think it will follow the dotted line

105. Mr. Humphery.] In what respect will the proposed extension differ from the line from Cootamundra Req., M.I.C.E. on the plan to the Lachlan? Yes. 9 April, 1894. to Temora? The country is very much easier for the railway construction. The country between

Cootamundra and Temora for the most part is undulating. 106. I am speaking of the difference in the weight of rails and sleepers? I should uso the same weight of rails and the same number of sleepers to the mile, but I should use sleepers of an inferior quality—of

ironbark, of course, but not so carefully shaped, and less ballast. 107. When you say inferior quality, do you mean that the timber itself will be inferior? No; I shall

spend less money upon dressing it. 108. Will the durability of the sleepers be lessened? No; it will probably be exactly the same.

109. In what respect will they be inferior? Being less shapely they cost less money.

110. Will the stability of the line be affected by substituting the sleepers for those you propose to uso for those generally used? No.

111. It will be an equally good line? I cannot say it will be an equally good line because the rails do

not have the same amount of bearing surface, but it is quite good enough for the traffic. 112. Will it cost more to maintain and keep in repair? I do not think so-not on account of sleepers; and I do not think it need cost much more to repair on other accounts if the speed is kept down. A line that is deficiently ballasted, of course, would be liable to greater charges for repairs than one that has plenty of ballast and good formation. Cheapness of construction as a rule means higher maintenance

charges. That is very well understood. 113. Having understood that, I wish to know from you in what respect the line would be more costly to maintain than the line from Cootamundra to Temora. I imagine that if the traffic were exactly the same over the Cootamundra to Temora line as over the Temora to Wyalong line, the maintenance would be

higher on the Temora to Wyalong line, because it would require more attention. 114. What do you think is the rate of speed which should be traversed over the proposed extension, and the weight of the engines which should be used? From 15 to 20 miles an hour would be sufficient. I think the engines should be limited to those which have an axle load of between 10 and 12 tons.

115. Do you know what engines are being used between Cootamundra and Temora? No.

116. Therefore you are unable to say whether they could be safely used over the proposed extension? No.* 117. Mr. Collins.] Seeing that the line from Temora to Wyalong will cost more to keep in repair than the line from Cootamundra to Temora, do you think the Railway Commissioners will be agreeable to take it over on those conditions? The Railway Commissioners have, for the last two or three years, advocated

118. Notwithstanding that they cost more to keep in repair? I suppose they have looked at it from every point of view.

119. Mr. Davies. I think you say your previous surveys have not gone beyond Barmedman? Yes;

Mr. Gillett has been working between Barmedman and Wyalong. 120. Before the gold-field was discovered you had made surveys in a different direction, had you not?

No; Mr. Gillett commenced to work under instructions to work towards Lake Cargellico?

121. He was not sent out to run a line to Wyalong, but to run a line to Lake Cargellico. Some timo ago the Minister authorised an examination of the line from Barmedman to Hillston. I sent Mr. Kennedy, and he recommended the line via Lake Cargellico. As a result of his report, I recommended to the Minister that the line should be run from Barmedman to Lake Cargellico, and thence to Hillston. The Minister approved, and I sent Mr. Gillett to Barmedman to start from that end, and Mr. Marshall to Hillston to start from that end to meet him.

122. What was the character of the surveys made from Barmedman to Hillston, not by way of Wyalong,

but the previous survey? The ordinary trial survey.

123. Did they pass through the same character of country, or was it better country than that which it is proposed to tap by going via Wyalong? It is reported not to be so good, and the construction will be more costly. As you see from the plan, you have to pass about three ranges.

124. What is the cost of 60-lb. rails per ton? Hitherto, it has come to about £6 per ton, delivered in

Sydney.

125. Has not the Department recently been able to secure a large line of steel rails at a very low rate?

A very favourable quotation was received.

126. At what price? With all charges, it will come up to £4 16s., delivered in Sydney. I might say that it is not quite clear whether the rails offered are from Cleveland ore. I presume they are from hematite ore; but if the tender is accepted, it will have to be on the condition that the rails are made from hematite ore, with the usual acknowledged specification.

127. Will this be the cheapest line of railway, with a 60-lb. rail, you have been able to secure at any

time? Yes.

128. At what did you calculate the price per ton of the rails laid between Narrabri and Morce? The new rails were reckoned at £6 per ton. The others were re-rolled rails. Some of them we had taken over from

the Commissioners' account at £5 10a.

129. What will be the difference in the rails on the proposed line, taking them at £1 per ton, as against £6 per ton on the Moree line? The cost of the rails, reckoning the most recent quotation in Sydney, would be £20,171—that is, without freight. The freight, at 2d. per ton per mile, would be £255 17s. 1d. per mile. The cost of the 60-lb. rails, taking it at £6 2s. 6d. per ton, which was one of the most recent calculations, comes to £674 per mile, and taking it at the newer calculation, it comes to £522 per mile, so that there is a saving of £150 per mile.

130. You propose to lay your sleepers on 5 inches of ballast? Yes.

131. What ballast do you propose to put between the beds of your sleepers? It will come half-way up the sleepers.

132. Is it to be broken ballast, or drift from the river beds? It will probably be broken ballast. There may be some quartz obtainable from the ridges. We had some on the Temora line.

TUESDAY,

[·] Norm (on revision) :- I believe instructions have been given only to use, on the Temora line, engines having a maximum axle load of 12 tons.

TUESDAY, 10 APRIL, 1804.

Present:

JACOB GARRARD, Esq. (CHAIRMAN).

The Hon. WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR.

The Hon, JAMES HORKING.

The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY.

The Hon. JOHN DAVIES, C.M.G.

The Hon. WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT.

THOMAS THOMSON EWING, Esq.

WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq. WILLIAM McCOURT, Enq. JOHN CASH NELLD, Esq.

EDWARD WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN, Esq.

CHARLES COLLINS, Esq. HRNRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Joseph Barling, Esq., Under Secretary, Department of Public Works, sworn, and further examined :-133. Chairman.] You are aware that the Public Works Act provides that in the case of a proposed railway J. Barling, or tramway the Department shall submit to the Public Works Committee a map or plan of the proposed line, together with a book of reference, and a report from the Railway Commissioners, giving an estimate of its probable cost, together with the cost of maintenance, and so on ;- that report was not put in 10 April, 1891. yesterday? I am not in a position to say when it will be ready; but I hope to have it next week.

134. Is not the Chief Commissioner at present absent in Tasmania? Yes; but I do not think he will be

there very long.

135. Then the report will have to wait over until he comes back? Yes. The Commissioners, I believe, have not had time to make their report yet, and I understand, though I am not certain on the point, that they wish to visit the district through which the proposed line will pass. That, however, will not take very long. The peculiar circumstances of this case demanded that we should do all we could to get it before the Committee because Parliament will soon come to a close, and unless we advance the work at every stage as far as possible, it cannot be dealt with. We our doing our very best, and I hope to be able to furnish the report next week.

136. Knowing the feeling of the Legislature in regard to it, the Committee have taken up this work out of its turn, and no delay will occur through our action? Yes; but I think we have done all we could

towards pushing it on.

Charles James Saunders, Esq., Chief Draftsman, Department of Lands, sworn, and examined :-137. Chairman.] The Committee understand that you have prepared a compilation of county maps in the Temora and Wyalong district, upon which the freehold land is shown coloured red, the conditionally purchased and conditionally leased lands as blue, the reserves as green, and the Crown land unalienated and not dealt with in any way as white? Yes.

138. The map takes in an area extending 20 miles on each side of the proposed line, beginning 5 miles north of Temora, and extending about 20 miles north of Wyalong? That is so.

139. The area shown upon it is-Freehold land, 112,750 acres; conditionally purchased and conditionally leased land, 442,120 acres; reserves, 260,750 acres; unalienated Crown land, 451,100 acres; a total of

1,266,720 acres; -is that so? Yes; that is the case. 140. Is this return, so far as you are concerned, up to date? I think it can be regarded as fairly up to date.

141. How long is it since you last received information from the local Land Office? We are generally within a few weeks of the local offices.

142. You know nothing of the country yourself? Nothing personally.

143. You have never been there? No.

144. Would you like to give the Committee an opinion as to what you think would be the increase in value of Crown land in the district if the proposed line were constructed? I do not think I could venture on that.

145. Do you know if a request has been made to your Department by the Works Department to reserve

the land along the proposed line? A request was sent to us.

146. Asking you to reserve how much? To make the usual reserve of 1 mile on each side of the line. 147. There was no request from the Works Department to reserve from sale the whole of the land shown on the coloured part of your map pending the completion of this inquiry? I have not seen a request of

that sort. 148. Do you know whether the Lands Department have taken any steps on its own motion to make such a reservation? I am not aware of such a reservation having been made. A couple of large reserves have

been made in the neighbourhood of Wyalong.

149. Are they shown on the plan? Yes. 150. You are not aware whether the Secretary for Works or the Secretary for Lands have taken steps to comply with what appeared to be the general request of the Assembly, namely, to reserve the whole of the land in the district pending the decision of this Committee? I am not aware that they have, but of course steps might have been taken without my knowledge. Most of the Crown lands in this locality lie within the leasehold areas. The existing leaseholds terminate in 1895, and in the majority of cases applications have been made for an extension of lease. Those applications have not yet been disposed of.

151. Has the Department decided on its policy with respect to the leases in the Central Division?

I think the matter is awaiting further legislation.

152. You do not know anything as to the direction of that legislation? Nothing at all.

153. Mr. Neild. Is it customary for your Department to raise the price of land through which a railway has been taken? I believe that it is customary.

154. By creating reserved areas? By proclaiming special areas.

155. Unless special areas are proclaimed the price of the land is fixed by statute? Yes. 156. Mr. Wall.] Can you give us, approximately, the area reserved at Wyalong for gold-mining purposes?

Looking at the map, I should say that about 50,000 acres have been reserved. 157. 283—B

Kirq.

C. J. Saunders, Esq. no 10 April, 1894.

C. J. Saunders, Eeq. 10 April, 1894.

157. Are those reservations made subject to alienation under the 48th section of the Act, or is the land entirely reserved from conditional purchase? The land is reserved from conditional purchase and condi-

158. You are talking of the land in the vicinity of Wyalong? Yes; land in the immediate vicinity of

159. That land will not be open for selection or settlement until the reserves have been revoked? That

160. Mr. Trickett.] I suppose you know what quantity of land has been alienated within the last three years between Cootamundra and Temora? I cannot say that I have taken particular notice of that

161. One of the recommendations in favour of the line from Cootamundra to Temora was that settlement and cultivation would follow its construction; -can you say whether that has happened? I feel certain, without having looked into the matter, that nearly all the land in the vicinity of the line has been sold.

162. Since the construction of the railway? I should not like to say that.

163. Have you any knowledge as to the nature of the settlement? I could not tell you anything in

164. What officer would be able, from local knowledge, to give us information on the point? Most of regard to it. that land is dealt with by the District Surveyor at Forbes, but the land between Cootamundra and Temora

is dealt with by the District Surveyor at Wagga, 165. Will you kindly get us, as soon as possible, a return showing what area of Government land bas been alienated between Cootamundra and Temora since the construction of the railway, the average price paid for it, and the increase in settlement there? Within 20 miles on each side of the line?

166. Yes? I will.

167. Mr. Wall.] Can you tell us what area was reserved along the Temora line when it was being constructed? I think we reserved the land within I mile of the line.

168. Has that land, or any portion of it, been alienated since the construction of the line; if so, what

price was paid for it? I will find that out for you. 169. Mr. Ewing.] This land is in the Central Division, you say, and most of the unalienated Crown land forms part of the leasehold areas there: but are not the rights of the pastoral holders to this land now under dispute? What rights—the right to an extension of lease?

170. Or something further? I do not know what further rights they may have.

171. The pastoralists may, under the existing law, be entitled to hold that land for some time? That is the matter which is hung up at the present moment.

172. So that in 1895 this land may not come into the occupation of the Crown? It may not. The lease-

holders may get an extension of their leases. 173. You do not know how the land will stand? No one can say now how it will stand then,

174. Mr. Humphery.] Can you tell me if the gold-field reserve at Temora, or any portion of it, has been thrown open to selection? I could not say without looking into the matter.

175. Do you know if there are several reserves between Temora and Cootamundra? Yes.

176. Were there some at the time the Committee recommended the construction of the Temora line, four years ago? Yes; there must have been some large reserves then.

177. Can you say whether any of them have been thrown open for selection? I think some of them have

been. 178. Will you supply us with information showing what reserves have been thrown open for selection, and the area selected since April, 1890, within, say, 20 miles of the line between Temora and Cootamundra? Yes.

William Henry John Slee, Esq., Chief Inspector of Mines, Department of Mines, sworn, and examined :-

W. H. J. 179. Mr. Wall.] You recently visited Wyalong? Yes. Blee, Esq. 180. And furnished a report in regard to the gold-field there? Yes.

181. Have you any doubt as to the permanency of that gold-field? None whatever,

10 April, 1894. 182. I think you stated in that report that the auriferous belt extends over a tract of country 5 miles by 2? That is the belt at present being worked.

183. There have been some crushings on the field? Yes.

184. From how many different lines have those crushings been taken? They have been taken from thirteen different claims, and several different lines of reef. 185. What is the size of the reefs? They are very small.

186. Have they been decided to any depth? They have not. The deepest sunk upon is about 100 feet.

187. They have continued to that depth? They have continued to that depth. 188. Have they cut out in any case where they have been sunk on? No.

189. The Lands Department have reserved, I believe, about 50,000 acres in the vicinity of Wyalong;was that reserve made on the recommendation of the Mines Department? It was not made on my recommendation. I am not aware whether it was made on the recommendation of the Mines Department. 190. Are you aware that 50,000 acres of land there have been locked up from settlement? I am not aware of it.

191. You think it is necessary for the development of the mining industry there that such a large area of land should be locked up from settlement? I think it could be locked up to a certain extent, because there are miles and miles of auriferous country to which a rush might take place at any moment.

192. But has not the Department, under the 48th section of the Act, power to deal with the whole of that land so that it may be available for both mining and agriculture? It has power to give permits to search for gold, but not power to give a title.

193. If the land is proved to be auriferous, the Department has power to resume it upon paying compensation? Yes; compensation according to the Land Board's decision.

194. Has any alluvial discoveries been made at Wyalong? I believe not, up to date.

197. What is the nature of the rock? Decomposed granite.

195. Several prospecting shafts have been sunk? Yes. 196. At what depth have they reached the rock? About 35 feet is the deepest I have known, although they have sunk through the rock, thinking at the time that it was not bed-rock.

198.

198. Is not decomposed granite considered rather below the stratigraphical position in which permanent reefs are discovered? Not necessarily; but it is very seldom that reefs in granite formation carry down to any depth.

10 April, 1894.

W. H. J.

199. Unless the granite hardens? There is a great probability of the reef pinching out, or becoming

refractory.
200. Do you regard this as part of the belt of country which extends to Hillston? It extends to Hillston, Billy's Lookout, Wollongough, Melrose Plains, and right out to Burra Burra. I have been through it for miles.

201. Is it of the same nature as the country round Yulgogrin? It is not the same in geological formation at Yalgogrin. The ground there is composed of quartzites, also slates and granite.

202. We were told yesterday that the country you have described extends in the direction of Mount

Hope? Yes.
203. Would it go so far as Cobar? No; but it goes to Lake Cowal, Billy's Lookout, Yalgogrin, and Melrose Plains. A rush might take place to that country at any moment.

204. Mr. Wilkinson furnished a report some time ago with regard to the alluvial deposits in that part of the country? Yes; at Billy's Lookout.

205. He did not anticipate that any considerable deposits would be found there, because of the limited denudation? But at the same time he stated that further to the south, where Wyalong is now, deposits might be discovered.

206. What is the nature of the rock they struck at a depth of 100 feet? Decomposed granite. There is also diorite at Wyalong; but no reefs have been found in it.

207. Did you not report on some field on the southern line recently? You mean the Grong Grong field?

No; I have not been there.

208. You regard Wyalong as a field likely to furnish employment for a large number of miners for some time to come? Yes, for years to come. I believe that better reefs will be discovered, and that more

reefs will be worked in a short time.
209. The reefs opened up in the vicinity of Barmedman have been rather erratic in their character? Yes.

210. Are there any that can be termed permanent reefs? No.

211. The same may be said with regard to the reefs at Temora? The heavy flow of water has greatly hindered the reefs at Barmedman from being worked.

212. Considerable amount of reesing is done in the vicinity of Temora? Yes.

213. That is also a granite and diorite country? Yes.

214. Those reefs were very promising to a shallow depth? Yes. Some of the shoots were, perhaps, 6 feet in length, whereas the reef showed 100 yards in length.

215. In the reefs opened up at Wyalong the enclosing stratum is soft;—there will be no difficulty in testing those reefs? None whatever.

216. Have those who are prospecting there evinced a desire to test the reefs to a depth? Most of those reefs are not in the hands of mining men. They are in the hands of selectors and farmers who have not done much mining work.

217. You have dealt with a good many disputes at Wyalong arising out of the administration of your

Department? Yes.

218. Is there any truth in the rumour that has been circulated that practically the whole of Wyalong has been taken up by a syndicate from Barmedman, and that in consequence of their names appearing on so many applications the Department asked them to substitute other names? No; I believe not. One party, perhaps, have applied for several permits, and the Department, through my recommendation, has asked them to substitute other names to prevent what might be considered a monopoly. I have not heard any applicator there.

of any syndicates there.
219. But would not this privilege of substituting other names have the effect of placing the field in the hands of a few persons? No. As soon as the permits are granted the cancellation of the selections will take place, and each party must make his title good by a miner's right, and must, therefore, employ a

large number of persons.

220. But I understand the position to be this:—Several persons have made applications for a number of permits, and they will have the privilege of substituting other names for their own? I believe so.

221. Will that not enable a small number of people to hold a large part of the field? It will give them the right to do so if they provide substitutes to work for them. The people coming there do not come from Barmedman alone, but from all parts of the country.

222. Is the selection on which gold was discovered at present in course of cancellation? Yes.

223. Is the greater part of it covered by permit applications? I believe that about one-third of it has been applied for, and that two-thirds of it will be available when cancellation takes place.

224. Any that remains will be Crown land, subject to application in the usual way? Yes; very little prospecting is carried on until application permits have been granted.

prospecting is carried on until application permits have been granted.

225. Is it the intention of the Department to give persons holding permits the right to apply for leases or to give them ordinary claims or prospecting claims? So far as I know they are to have ordinary claims held under a miner's right; but I cannot say for certain.

226. If claims are held in that form, employment must be given to a large number of people? Yes; I have recommended that the land should be taken up under miners' rights.

227. You have no doubt that the present development warrants you in stating that the field is likely to be a permanent one? Taking the whole of the surroundings I think the field will be permanent.

228. Is there any difficulty in obtaining water for machinery and the necessary treatment of the stuff? I believe that water for crushing purposes can be obtained by sinking no distance from the present reefs on Crown land within a mile of the surveyed township.

229. Is there any truth in the statement that has been circulated in the press that there is only one water catchment at Wyalong? No; there are several water catchments there.

catchment at Wyalong? No; there are soveral water catchments there? You do not think any delay in the development of the field is likely to be caused by the want of water? I do not think so. During the last forty years I have seen fields much worse off for water than this is

this is.

231. When visiting Wyalong which way did you go? From Sydney to Temora and through Barmedman.

232. Did you find the read in a very bad condition? The read between Barmedman and Wyalong is 233.

233.

233. Are the bad parts of the read continuous, or is the read bad only where the water has lodged? The Slee, Esq. country is nearly level and the road has not been drained, so that the water sinks down into the road

wherever the drays have been along it. 10 April, 1894. 234. 1s there no undulating country? Not much; it is nearly all level country. I do not think there

would be a cutting more than 7 or 8 feet deep on the line. 235. In speaking of the permanency of the field, I suppose you rely solely upon the reefs which have been opened up? Not necessarily. I formed my opinion from what I saw in travelling over the country for miles on former occasions. In a report dated August of last year, I referred to the country between

Yalgogrin and Barmedman as being more auriferous than Yalgogrin itself. 236. I wished you to confine yourself to the discoveries already made, and to separate them from the prospective development of the field. Do the present discoveries warrant you in saying that a large population can be maintained at Wyalong for some time to come? The present discovery would warrant me in saving that the field can support a population of about 1,500 for some years to come.

237. And you think there is a great probability of further development taking place? Yes.

238. That is in reefing? Yes.

239. You also think it probable that aliuvial deposits will be found in the vicinity of Wyalong? I think that both southerly and northerly alluvial deposits will be discovered within a few miles of Wyalong. Wyalong is on the watershed of the Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee, and that, no doubt, is why the ground there is so shallow.

240. Mr. Trickett. Have you any statistical information which you can give us as to the number of miners' rights, residential areas, and mineral leases granted at Wyalong during the last twelve months? I know that over 1,000 miners' rights were taken out at Barmedman in one month, and there must have

been 1,500 taken out since the discovery at Wyalong.

241. No mineral leases? No mineral leases.

242. Have any permits been taken out? Permits to dig and search for gold?

243. Yes? · Some hundreds.

244. How is it that only about 1,500 miners' rights have been issued, when there is such a large population there? A large number of men bring their miners' rights with them. A right can be issued and holds good for any part of New South Wales.

245. Most of the people there have gone to search for gold? Yes; or for business purposes. 246. Do you know the number of residential areas there? There were none when I left the field.

247. How long ago is that? I left the field on the Wednesday before Easter.

248. Is this a place where residential areas would be applied for in the ordinary course? They would, in

time, but at present it is very likely that the warden will object to them.

249. Why? Because they might be put right on to the land where prospecting was being carried out. 250. Then does the population squat down where it chooses? The people there can go where they like; but I have refused to give them the right to reside at what is known as the main camp, so as not to prevent miners from sinking there. Business people, as a rule, go where they can find the miners close

at hand. 251. All the people who occupy residental positions at present have no title to their holdings? They are

there merely on sufferance, under their business license.

252. The reason why residental areas have not been taken up is that the Department will not allow them? Residental areas have been taken up in the new surveyed town. People are allowed to go there and get a title to their land. That is within a quarter of a nule of the nearest claim, and about 14 mile from what is known as the main camp.

253. Can you tell the Committee whether there are indications there of other minerals besides gold? One or two of the reefs have copper associated with their free gold. There may be other minerals besides

gold in payable quantities there.

254. Were there not prospects of tin being obtained in that part of the country? Yes; about 20 miles miles away.

255. Not sufficiently close to be an argument in support of this proposal? No.

256. Do you think there are good prospects of mineral finds along the proposed line from Barmedman to Wyalong? I think that in time to come we ought to have larger mineral discoveries within 20 miles of the line.

257. What are your ideas about the Temora gold-field :- do you think it is retrograding? I reported

upon that field in 1880, and I believe what I then said has come pretty true.

258. What was that? I said that the quartz reef at Temora would never be much good, and that the alluvial would be greatly confined to a certain lead. That was published in the Annual Report for 1880. 259. Those who advocated the construction of a line from Cootamundra to Temora said that the mines at Temora had not had fair play-that they had not been systematically worked, but had been muddled and scamped? I think that the whole of our mining fields have been scratched over. We have not done our work as we should have done it.

260. Can you tell us with regard to the Temora mine, whether that is the reason of their not having gone ahead, or is the reason to be found in the absence of gold? The reason of the Temora field not doing

well is that the shoots of gold were too short, and the country very hard to follow up.

261. I suppose that when you went from Temora to Wyalong you made a pretty close observation of the country you traversed? Yes. 262. Did you notice a very fine belt of ironbark within about 10 miles of Temora? There is some very good

timber at no distance from Temora.

263. Is there not a small forest of ironbark? Yes.

264. Would not that timber be suitable for railway sleepers? I am not able to say; but I should think so.

265. I want to know if that is not a prominent feature in favour of the construction of the line? There is very good timber between Barmedman and Temora.

266. And a considerable quantity of it? Yes.

267. The proposed line is estimated at a cost of about £104,000, upon which the interest, at 4 per cent., would amount to about £4,000 a year;—suppose the working expenses of the line are put down as another £3,000 or £4,000, do you think the prospects of the field would justify the expenditure? I could hardly say, not being a railway engineer.

268. I am putting the questions to you, not as a railway engineer, but in your ordinary capacity; -- do you think that the prospects of the field are such as to justify a charge on the country of from £7,000 to (CS,000) a year? I think so. I think that in a very short time we shall have a very large agricultural and mining population within some miles of Wyalong-that is, including Burra Burra and the whole of the district.

W. H. J. Slee, Enq. ~~ 10 April, 1894.

269. A fixed mining population? A fixed mining population. At Burra Burra there are now 500 men

making a living where, two years ago, there was a wilderness.

270. Are the reefs at Wyaloug more marked than those of Temora, which you speak of as being too short? They are in quite a different geological formation. We have a tract of saucer-shaped country through which the auriferous strata run.

271. That indicates permanency? Yes.

272. Mr. Suttor.] What do you think are the present prospects of Wyalong? I think the present prospects are over-rated by a number of people. I consider that 1,500 people will be enough to develop the field for a long time to come. I think it will be able to support 1,500 people for some years without any further discoveries.

273. Mr. Humphery.] Is the formation at Wyalong similar to that at Barmedman? Not at Wyalong

proper, but in parts of the district the formation is similar to that at Barmedman.

·274. Is the tract of country, 5 miles by 2, of which you spoke, similar to the country round Barmedman? No; it is granite country, whereas the Barmedman country is porphyry.

275. Do you know the Fiery Cross and the Hard-to-Find claims at Barmedman? Yes.

276. Are they still being worked? One is working, and the other is going to start again. The present machinery is not powerful enough to cope with the flow of water.

277. How many claims are now being worked at Wyalong? About thirty.

278. Are there any buildings of a permanent character in course of erection there? There are some buildings going up in the surveyed township, and also at the main camp right among the workings. 279. Have you been over the country between Cargellico and Wyalong? Yes.

280. Over the whole of it? Yes.

281. Is it auriferous country? The country round Lake Cargellico is somewhat similar to the Wyalong country.

282. And between Cargellico and Hillston? The country is the same right through.

293. Do you think it probable that gold discoveries will be made between the localities I have mentioned? Yes; I think so.

284. Is the whole of the land between Barmedman and Cargellico suitable for agriculture? A good deal of it has been taken up for agricultural purposes, but I think that gold will be found there. 285. Is it used for grazing at the present time? Most of it is.

256. Round Wyalong? Round Wyalong it is all mallee scrub; but a short distance away from there there is good agricultural land. 287. How far from the town of Wyalong? Within a mile of the surveyed town,

288. In a northerly direction? Yes; towards Wollongough.

289. Is there any good land between Barmedman and Wyalong? There is very good land through there. 290. And between Wyalong and Cargellico? Yes. You can get good agricultural land within 20 miles of this line.

291. For the whole distance? Yes.

292. You are referring to the proposed line to Wyalong, and the extension to Cargellico? It is the same country right through.

293. Mr. Wall. Is not the land locked up in these reserves? I presume that the reserves have only been made for a short time.

294. Mr. Humphery.] Has the Temora gold-field reserve been thrown open in agricultural areas since the railway was taken there? Some of it has. There are some large wheat-growing farms within 6 miles of Temora. Of course, a great deal of that land has been thrown open.

295. Has all that has been thrown open been taken up? It has been taken up for agricultural purposes. 296. There are some other reserves around Temora; -do you know if they also have been taken up in agricultural areas? I know that a large number of them, though I cannot say exactly which, have been thrown open, as these reserves always are after a gold-field has been established.

297. They were gold-field reserves, and since the construction of the line they have been thrown open?

I believe so; but I cannot say positively.

298. Mr. O'Sullivan.] You mentioned at the beginning of your evidence that there is a belt of auriferous country reaching from Barmedman to Melrose Plains? Yes.

299. Whereabouts are those plains-what town are they near? There is no town nearer than Condobolin, which is 60 miles from Wyalong. Melrose Plains, by way of Burra Burra, would be about 35 miles from Condobolin, and from 50 to 60 miles from Wyalong.

300. Burra Burra is where the rush took place last year, and where you say there are 500 men? Yes.

301. Are they making good wages? I would not say that. They are making a living.

302. In your opinion this line by going to Wyalong will materially aid in the development of that auriferous belt? Yes; it will aid in the development of the whole of that auriferous tract of country. 303. Just as the Cootamundra line developed the Temora mines, so the Wyalong line will develop mines further out? Yes. The railway is going into a tract of country requiring development, and which is at present almost waterless.

301. When you spoke of Wyalong being able to support 1,500 people, did you mean 1,500 workers?

No; 1,500 people taking everyone—that is, supposing there is no further development.

305. In a population of 1,500, there would only be 500 or 600 miners? There would be 1,000 miners, and 500 people making their living from the miners.

306. But the wives and children would have to be taken into account? Yes.

307. So far as I can gather, there have not been many reefs opened up yet? I have formed my opinion from my forty years of mining experience in Victoria and New South Wales. I was only a boy of 17 when I commenced.

308. You have seen such good indications of reefing country round Wyalong that you think the field will maintain 1,500? Yes; taking into consideration its geological formation and everything else.

309.

W. H. J. Slee, Esq.

309. It is probable that there will be an extension of the field out and beyond Wyalong? Yes. 310. When asked just now if there was as good agricultural ground around Wyalong, you said, "No,

that there was a lot of mallee scrub there "? That is where the present workings are.

10 April, 1894. 311. Is not malleo country always good agricultural country? Not there; because the rocks are on the

312. I suppose that there can be no doubt that the 50,000 acres which have been reserved at Wyalong will be found to be to some extent auriferous? I believe that that country will to a great extent be found to be auriferous.

313. I suppose the officers of the Department have taken care to pick out what they consider auriforous country? Yes; these reservations are always made on the recommendations of officers who are supposed

to know the nature of the country.

314. In the early days of Lambing Flat, and of the Young gold-field, the miners suffered from want of water, and mining was retarded by it? Even at Mount Browne the miners suffered a great deal from want of water; but they soon made tanks, and sunk wells, and that is what they will have to do at

Wyalong. 315. I suppose they can be left to take care of themselves, so far as the conservation of water is concerned? I do not say that. When Peak Hill was opened, I went there as warden, and we had very little water at first, but the people soon made dams, and now they are never short. At Mount Browne, in 1880, we had no water; but now you can always get plenty of water on the field. The miners must make dams for their crushing and puddling machines.

316. Do the Government aid them by sinking artesian wells? That is a matter I have nothing to do with.

317. You know that there is good agricultural country about Temora? Yes.

318. Is it anything like the country towards Wyalong? Some of the Wyalong country is as good as the Temora country.

319. And further on towards Cargellico, you say it is very good? It is a perfect Garden of Eden in some

parts, on towards Wollongough.

320. In the event of the Wyalong field failing, there would be ample agricultural resources to help to make the railway pay, and I presume the large population now at Wyalong would leave some of its members behind as tillers of the soil? I believe that the mining there will be permanent, and the miners will require people to produce the food they consume.

321. Barmedman is a town which has been kept alive by mining? Barmedman was entirely a mining

town until selectors took up land there, and made it the centre of a farming district.

322. In the same way the rush of miners to Wyalong may bring about settlement upon the land there? Yes; I could point to a score of towns in Victoria and New South Wales which originated in the same way. 323. Is Wyalong on the route to Cargellico? Yes, directly, and directly on the route to Hillston.

324. Is it on the route usually travelled by stock and wool teams? Yes.

325. If the proposed line is constructed these will go to Wyalong instead of to Temora, thus giving work to the railway? Yes.

326. They come now from Cargellico to Temora? Yes; but if the proposed railway were made they would go to Wvalong.

327. Which is the proper route from Hillston to Barmedman? Through Wyalong and on to Wollongough.

328. Whereabouts is that? A little to the north of Wyalong.

329. But that is not on the road to Hillston? A line going on to Hillston would tap the Wollongough country.

330. You mean the proposed line from Wyalong to Hillston, via Cargellico? I mean the proposed line from Wyalong to Hillston, ria Wollongough.

331. But putting that aside, will the proposed line to Wyalong attract traffic from Wollongough? All the traffic from Wollongough will come to Wyalong.

332. And I presume that the people at Hillston would send their traffic that way; they go now to Coolamon on the Narrandera line? Yes.

333. It would be much shorter to come to Wyalong? Yes.

334. So that it is possible that traffic will come from the Hillston district as well as from the Cargellico district? Yes; I have no doubt that the whole of the traffic from that district will come to Wyalong. 335. Then we may conclude that at the very worst, if the mines should fail, there will be an agricultural development which will help the railway, and at the back of that, pastoral traffic from the Cargellico and Hillston districts? I think so.

336. Under these circumstances, you have no hesitation in expressing your opinion in favour of the pro-

posed line? I think that a railway to Wyalong would be beneficial to the country.

337. Do you care to say whether you favour the line or not? I am not an engineer, and would not like to express an opinion about the line; but, as Chief Inspector of Mines, I say that it would be beneficial to the country at large.

338. Taking a common-sense view of the matter, you would recommend it for the reasons stated? Yes. I think it would be a great feeder to the Temora line, which will then pay better than it does now.

339. Mr. Davies.] What extent of auriferous land has been proved to exist ou the Wyalong field? A tract of about 5 miles in length by about 2 miles in breadth has been proved to be auriferous, and, since I have left the field, gold has been discovered 7 or 8 miles further out.

340. What extent of land has been taken up under miners' rights? Men were working 10 or 12 miles further out under miners' rights; but the claims which have been found payable have been on the tract of land to which I have just referred. There are miners working all over the district.

341. What number of miners' rights are in existence in connection with the tract of laud to which you have just referred? At the lowest computation from 800 to 1,000.

342. What is the largest holding of any one miner on that particular portion of the field? Each miner can hold 60 feet along the line of reef by 400 feet in breadth.

313. Are the miners on the land you speak of in full work, or are the holders of the land waiting for other people to prove it? There are miners all over the place prospecting. Their pegs come close together.

344. There is no idle ground? There may be. Men may be there one day and gone the next, because 345. the miners can pull up their pegs and re-mark.

W. H. J.

Slee, Esq.

10 April, 1894.

345. Then the land has all been proved? It has not been proved. They are prospecting. 346. Can you tell us what quantity of gold has been raised from the piece of land which you describe as

5 miles by 2? I could not say exactly; but I should think about 600 oz. up to Easter.

347. Are there any large crushing plants on the field? There are two plants being erected. 348. How was the stone which gave the 600 oz. of gold treated? It was taken to Barmedman by

bullock teams, and crushed at the Barmedman crushing machine. 349. Can you tell us the names of the principal claims from which that gold was obtained? Yes. There is Neild's Claim No. 1, Cassin's Claim, Conway's, Keith's, Neild's No. 2, Perry's, Fraser's, Gormay's, Smith's, MacMahon's, Lasery's, Jamieson's, and Taylor's.

350. They are all on gold? They are on gold.

351. What is the greatest depth of any of these claims? One hundred feet.

352. Has the reef widened, or has it contracted, at that depth? The reefs are about the same at 100 feet as they are when first cut.

353. What is the nature of the walls? Granite.

354. What quantity of stone is at grass or yarded? When I loft there was very little stone at grass -perhaps 200 tons altogether. Very few claims were working.

855. Is the whole population idle? No; but they were obliged to get permits before they could do any

work. They were working with as few hands as possible.

356. Do you know who were erecting the crushing plant? I believe one crushing plant is being erected by Messrs. Gough and Turling, another by Mr. Plumb, and a third by a man named Grange, an engineer from Sydney.

357. Are these crushing plants being erected on the 5 mile by 2 area? Yes.

358. You regard Wyalong as likely to be an extensive field? Yes.

359. For what distance has the reef been traced? These reefs run in particular blocks, and may be traced for miles.

360. Have they been traced for miles? Yes.

361. Do you know the greatest depth which the prospectors have obtained at the greatest distance from the centre of the discovery? From 40 to 50 feet is the deepest shaft far away from the first prospectors' claims.

362. Are those people on gold? Yes.

363. How many miles are they from the centre of the 5 miles by 2 miles tract? Four miles.

364. Each way? Yes.

365. Are you satisfied that the reef is of the same character as that which is being worked by those who have already got gold? In one of the selections the formation is rather more favourable as regards permanency than it is close to the first workings at Wyslong.

366. Have you any hope of discovering payable alluvial gold? Yes.

367. Near to the centre of the field, or at some distance away? Out away from the field, 4 or 5 miles

north or south of Wyalong. I certainly expect that we shall get payable gold there.

368. What arrangements have the Government made for the sanitation of the central camp? As warden, I took the police there with me, and turned off all the mon who were living near the drains going into the tanks; but I believe that they have since gone there again. 369. All the water for the supply of the residents has been polluted? There is a tank there which really

belongs to Mr. Blyth, the holder of Wyslong Run. I have recommended the Government to resume

370. Has the water been polluted by the people residing in the camp? It was when I first came there, but I turned every one off the drainage area. I have heard, however, that they have since gone close to

the drainage area again. 371. You did your part to prevent the contamination of the only water supply existing? Yes; the tank

was fenced in, and I put up a notice that it was to be used for purely domestic purposes.

372. Was there much sickness when you were on the field? Very little, if any. Of course there is always a certain amount of sickness on new fields, because of the way in which the men there have to live. 373. Have you made any representations in regard to the water since? I have recommended that a certain tank should be resumed for domestic purposes, and another for stock purposes. I have recommended the resumption of three tanks. With regard to the sickness, I have not thought it of sufficient importance to make any representations on the subject. I have had charge of gold-fields where the number of sick people has been very large, but this field has been very healthy.

374. How will a supply of water be got for the use of the machinery? Tanks will have to be made or wells sunk. I believe that water will be obtained by sinking, perhaps 200 feet or more; but that is not

likely to be water which will be useful for domestic purposes—it will be slightly brackish.

375. Do you think a good supply of water for a crushing plant would be obtained by sinking 200 feet? I think a supply of water might be obtained in that way; but they could make large tanks or

376. The machinery cannot be used until water is obtained? One party bought a tank full of water dams on the watershed.

from Wyalong station.

377. What quantity of water is there there? I believe from 3,000 to 4,000 yards. 378. Is it usual to find good agricultural land in auriferous country, and where you have perphyry? Yes; at Lambing Flat, now Young, for instance, you have good agricultural country.

379. But was not the gold there alluvial? Well, at Grenfell there is more quartz than alluvial gold. 380. Is it possible to find good land where there are simply quartz reefs? Not necessarily, and that is

why I think we shall get alluvial gold here.

381. Usually good land is found upon alluvial fields? Yes. 382. And not where there is quartz? At Peak Hill there is quartz; but there is extraordinarily good

383. In the flats? Yes; away from the hills. Wyalong is on a table-land, one side of which drains to the Lachlan, and the other to the Murrumbidgee, and directly you get off it there is good agricultural land.

384. Like the Parkes and Forbes country? Very similar to it. 385. Holding the views you do in regard to this field, you will be in favour of the construction of a cheap line of railway from Temora to Wyalong as the best kind of road? Yes; I think it will do good to the whole country.

W. H. J. Slee, Esq. 10 April, 1894.

383. And you believe that eventually the line would pay? I think so. 387. Mr. Hoskins.] Is Barmedman as large as Temora? Latterly it has improved very considerably, and

is becoming as large, or even larger, than Temora. There is a Lands Office there now. 388. There are plenty of stores and public-houses there? I think there are four or five hotels and seven

or eight stores, also private buildings. There is a quartz-crushing machine there. 389. What are their customers—gold-miners, farmers, or squatters? There are large wheat-growing districts outside of Barmedman. Within 4 or 5 miles of the town there are some thousands of acres of land under cultivation.

390. Then we are to understand that the customers of the storekeepers and hetel-keepers are persons cultivating the land in the neighbourhood of the town? Their customers are either miners or farmers. 391. Is there a large farming population in the neighbourhood of Barmedman? Yes; right out to Yalgogrin.

392. Chairman.] How long were you at Wyalong? Thirteen nights.

393. Was that the first time you had visited it or the district? It was the first time I had visited Wyalong; but I have been through the district several times.

394. The Barmedman district? The Barmedman and Yalgogrin districts. You have to pass Wyalong to get to them.

395, I suppose you frequently visit the Temora district? Yes; very frequently.

396. When was your earliest acquaintance with Temora? I was the first official to report on the field for the Department.

397. What was the nature of the road communication between Cootamundra and Temora at that time? Very bad.

398. As bad as it is between Temora and Wyalong now? I think so.

399. Did they propose a railway then to take the miners to the field? I do not know.

400. How long ago was it? In 1880.

401. Is the road between Temora and Wyalong worse than is usual where there is a sudden rush of this kind? I think it is one of the worst roads I have seen, because of the gilgai holes. There is no room to go in between them, and you must pass them. Between Peak Hill and Tomingly there is a short distance nearly approaching it; but this road will certainly be a very bad one to make.

402. Gilgai holes are shallow water-holes? Yes, without hard bottom.

403. Is there no means of draining them? No.

404. You have to go round them? You would have to go miles round to escape them.

405. What is their size? Some are, perhaps, as large as this room. There may be 6 or 7 feet of embankment between them.

406. Do they extend right across the 3-chain road? Yes; you must go through them; you cannot go round without going many miles out of the way.

407. Is there fairly good timber and scrub along the road? Yes.

408. Would it not be possible to make a bottom by cutting down the brushwood and putting it on the road? I daresay a road engineer could make a good road.

409. But it is the large number of people who have gone over this road in exceptionally wet weather that

has made it so bad? The heavy traffic going over it makes it bad.

410. And has not the weather been exceptionally wet since the Wyalong field was opened? No. While I was at Wyalong the weather was dry, though letters which I received stated that there had been heavy rain at Sydney.

411. Then no unusual quantity of rain fell at Wyalong? The only rain we had fell on the 19th March

last, and it made the road almost impassable.

412. How far do these gilgai holes extend—all along the road? No; within a radius of 5 miles.

413. Then there is only 5 miles of road which are very bad for travelling? No; the rest of the road is bad. 414. What is the matter with it? The country is nearly level, and the water lodges in the tracks made by the drays.

415. The road is cut up by the thousands of people who have travelled over it lately? Yes.

416. You tell us that there is only room for 1,500 people there? That is, with the present discoveries; but I believe there will be a large mining and agricultural population in that district.

417. Is it not usual, after the first rush, for people to find that there is not the room which they anticipated, and to make a stampede back? That very often happens.

418. You do not think that the population of 10,000 or 12,000 which is there now will be maintained? No; it is likely to dwindle down, but I believe there will be a population of a few thousands there for many years to come.

419. Knowing what you do of the place, how many people do you think will settle within 9 miles of Wyalong? If there are no further discoveries, I should think about 2,000. If there are further discoveries, we may get a better set of people there than we have at present.

420. A greater number of people? Yes; more of a mining population.

421. You mean there will not be such a sudden rush, but a gradual filling up of the country? If the mines at Wyalong were in the hands of working miners or of mining men, instead of being principally in the hands of selectors and selectors' sons, who are not used to mining, they would support a larger population.

422. Do you ever remember a case where it has been proposed to take a railway to a gold-field to which

there was a rush? No: I do not.

423. Are the gilgai holes to which you have referred between Barmedman and Wyalong, or between Barmedman and Temora? Between Barmedman and Wyalong.

424. Are they nearer to Wyalong than they are to Barmedman? They are slightly nearer to Wyalong.

425. I understand that the road between Temora and Barmedman is fairly good? In parts.

426. From Barmedman to Wyalong it is bad, especially where the gilgai holes are? Yes; the road is pretty bad right along.

427. Do you think that if a population of 2,000 had gone over the road it would have been as much cut up as it has been? Perhaps not. Of course, the people there now require more stores, and so on. 428. Presuming that there were a population there of 1,500 or 2,000, there would not be the heavy traffic over the road which there has been? I believe that in time to come we shall have a population of several thousands there, though the present discoveries will not support more than 1,500 people. 429.

420. Suppose the whole of Wyalong were in your hands, and it was necessary to have a fairly good road to Temora, what do you think you could do the work for? I should not like to say; I am not a road engineer.

W. H. J. Slee, Esq. ~~~

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Esq.

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430. Do you think that £200 a mile, if expended between Wyalong and Barmedman, would get rid of 10 April, 1894. the gilgai holes? No; I think it would take far more. You often get gilgai country in which the holes are far apart, so that you can take a road between them; but here you may have one wheel in the gilgai hole and the other on solid ground.

431. What do you think it would take to deal with the gilgai holes? I could not say; I am not a road

engineer, and I do not wish to go beyond my province.

432. In the brush which you have mentioned close to the gilgais? Yes. 433. Have you ever heard of a new gold-field like this having a railway taken to it? No; I do not know

of such a thing being done.

434. While you were at Wyalong did you go about the district much? Every day. 435. How far from Wyalong? I have been, perhaps, about 20 miles away from there.

436. Is the country over which you went good agricultural country? Yes; very good agricultural country. 437. Where do the people from the direction of Forbes come into Wyalong? They come Marsden way. 438. They do not go through the gilgai country? Yes, partly; others come on to the 16-mile Tank, on the Wollongough Road.

439. You expressed the opinion just now that if the line were taken to Wyalong, the people of Hillston, instead of going to Coolamon, would come to Wyalong; but if they did that the Commissioners would

lose 70 or 100 miles of freight? I believe they would lose to a certain extent.

140). So that the proposed line would take money from the coffers of the Commissioners? It might, to a certain extent.

411. Have you any maps in your Department showing the geological formation of the country in and about Wyalong? I believe such a map has been issued within the last fortnight.

412. What area does it take in? I do not know-I have not seen it.

WEDNESDAY, 16 MAY, 1894.

Dresent:-

JACOB GARRARD, Esq. (CHAIRMAN).

The HON. WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR.

The Hon. JAMES HOSKINS.

The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY.

The Hon. JOHN DAVIES, C.M.G.

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The Hon. WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT.

WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq.

WILLIAM McCourt, Esq. JOHN CASH NEILD, Esq.

EDWARD WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN, Esq.

CHARLES COLLINS, Esq.

HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Hugh McLachlan, Esq., Secretary to the Railway Commissioners, sworn, and examined:-413. Mr. Davies.] The Railway Commissioners have furnished the Committee with a report on the proposed Temora to Wyalong railway. What are the chief grounds actuating them in recommending the McLachlan, postponement of the construction of that line for six months? The uncertainty that it will be a payable one. The reasons for their recommendation are clearly set forth in the report.

444. Did the Commissioners take into account the probable extension of the line to the Lachlan? Not 16 May, 1894. to my knowledge. So far as I am aware, that question was not brought before them.

445. If a railway were taken to Wyalong, and thence to Hillston, would it not open up splendid agricultural country? I do not think the Commissioners went over the Hillston country.

446. They confined their inspection and inquiry to the country between Temora and Wyalong? Yes. 417. Without taking into account that the line would probably develop a large traffic beyond Wyslong?

Yes; so far as I am aware. 448. Have the Commissioners formed their opinions from the doubtful condition of the settlement at the Wyalong gold-fields? Yes; and having regard to the population along the surveyed line. You must recollect that the country between Wyalong and Hillston is now used entirely for pastoral purposes, and the traffic from that district comes to the railway now, so that no new traffic would be developed by the extension of the proposed line.

449. Traffic coming from the district between Temora and Wyalong comes to Temora? Yes; to Temora now, but before the Temora line was opened, some of it used to go to other stations such as Old Junee.

Still, it all came to the railway. 450. Has the traffic on the Temora line increased? The line has only been opened a short time, and during the last four or five months the passenger traffic has been abnormal owing to the rush to the goldfields, while a great deal of building material has also been sent up there.

451. But was the traffic increasing prior to the discovery of gold at Wyalong? I do not think one could form a very good opinion upon that point, because the line had been under construction for some time, and a fairly large quantity of wheat was kept back pending the opening of the railway. Mr. Brunton, I know, kept a large quantity of wheat back. Then, too, the first few months after the opening of the line were busy months, when all the wool and the wheat were being sent down. The line has not been open long enough to enable us to compare the earnings of any particular month in one year

with the earnings of the same month in another year. 452. The Commissioners doubt the stability of the traffic on that line? Yes, the passenger traffic and

the amount of building material sent over the line is somewhat exceptional. 453. I gather that the Commissioners doubt the wisdom of constructing the proposed railway until there is some permanency about the character of the settlement? Yes; that is their report.

154. Has the Temora line paid? It has paid more than the working expenses since it has been opened. In answer to a question asked by Mr. Hoskins, a return was laid on the table of the Legislative Council a few nights ago, showing that the total cost of the line up to date has been £185,000 and the revenue derived from it has been £5,831, while the working expenses only came to £1,934.

455.

McLachlan, Esq. 16 May, 1894.

· 455. Then you do not put down that line as one of the non-paying railways? It would not quite pay interest; but it is more than paying working expenses. The return was made up from the date of the

456. The Commissioners recommend the suspension of the consideration of the proposed line for six opening of the line to the 31st March last. months in order to give time for it to be seen whether the gold-fields will be permanent? Yes, they recom-

mend the consideration of this proposal being held over for six months.

457. Mr. Hoskins.] From a paragraph in the Commissioners' report, I take it that they consider that this line should be constructed, if carried out, in the way described by the Commissioners in a paper dated 10th October, 1892? They recommend that if it be constructed, it should be constructed in a similar way to that in which the Narrabri to Moree line is to be constructed.

458. Do you know if Mr. Deane has been instructed, in travelling through America, to observe and report upon the character of the light lines there? No, I do not. I saw a statement on the subject in a

newspaper; but I do not know of my own knowledge.

459. Seeing that a line from Temora to Wyalong would travel through similar country to that passed through between Cootamundra and Temora, and in view of the return which has been made by the Temora line, would it not be well to carry out the proposal before us in the cheap manner suggested by the Commissioners? No; because you must recollect that the Temora line does not only its own local traffic, but the traffic from Wyalong as well. A line from Wyalong to Temora would get nothing of the traffic passing over the line from Temora to Cootamundra, though its traffic would help to swell the returns of the

460. Would not an extension of the existing line give railway communication to a larger tract of country specially adapted for wheat-growing, and also obtain some of the Lake Cargellico traffic? It might open up a new district; but is there any necessity for doing this, considering the cost. There is any quantity of land available for settlement along the lines already opened up. For instance, the Culcairn to Corowa railway passes through an agricultural district which has been already opened up; but it does not pay working expenses. The country of which you are speaking is well served for pastoral purposes. We

get all the wool that comes from that district now.

461. Are you not aware that nearly all the land between Culcairn and Corowa is in the hands of private individuals? Yes: but it is cultivated, and we get the traffic from it. There is a good settlement of

German farmers along that line, and a good deal of the land is under wheat.

462. Are we to infer that if a railway were taken through a wild and uncultivated district, and the land through which it passed were afterwards cultivated, that cultivation would not contribute towards its return? Of course, it would pay something; but it might not pay sufficient. The country between Culcairn and Corowa is one that has been already opened up, and on which there is a fair amount of settlement; but last year the earnings on the railway there were only £3,900, while the working expenses amounted to £4,200, so that the receipts do not balance the working expenses, leaving the question of

interest out of consideration altogether. 463. Are you sure that a great deal of the land along the line is cultivated? Yes; I have been over the

line. We know that a great deal of the wheat there passes through Culcairn.

464. That line cost £4,000 or £5,000 a mile? It cost £215,000, or a little over £4,000 a mile.

465. If the proposed line to Wyalong were made a pioneer line, do you not think that it would not only encourage settlement, but that it would lead to increased cultivation and consequent development of trade? Would not its construction simply be robbing one district to benefit another? Between Blayney and Harden we have an immense area of land which has not yet been settled, although it is provided with a railway; and the same thing may be said of the land on the Southern line, and on the South-western line. We know the results which have been obtained from the Culcairn to Corowa line, which passes through an agricultural district already developed. In the case of the Wyalong district, you are only assuming that it will be settled.

466. From your evidence, I gather that agricultural produce does not pay the railways. Is that because it is carried at so low a rate? If you give railway accommodation to a district which is close to a large population, the land there will be taken up at once, because of its proximity to a market; but here you

are 300 miles away from a market, and people naturally prefer land which is more accessible.

467. Is it not a fact that land nearer Sydney has nearly all been alienated? There are millions of acres

not yet cultivated.

168. Do you know that a great deal of the land which has been taken away from the original pastoral lessees, not only about Wyalong, but even out towards Cargellico and Hillston, has been selected by people coming from Victoria? I dare say a good deal of it has been taken up, and, if it paid to do so, the people owning it would cultivate it.

169. I suppose you have not read the evidence given before the Sectional Committee who visited

Wyalong? No.

470. That evidence shows that people would cultivate much larger areas of land if they had railway accommodation, because wheat-growing would pay better than wool? At the same time, however, there are immense areas of uncultivated land alongside the existing lines.

471. I take it that the Commissioners would not object to the construction of the proposed railway if it could be constructed for £2,000 a mile? They say clearly that they recommend the postponement of the whole question.

472. Do they not say in the second paragraph of their report that if the railway could be made as a pioneer line, at a cost of £85,000, it should be carried out? No.

473. If the line could be made for that amount, would they still oppose its construction? Yes.

474. Mr. McCourt.] Unless there were a settled population at Wyalong, the Commissioners would oppose the construction of the proposed line? Yes.

475. Is there much margin of profit on the carriage of wheat? I really could not say.

476. Is not wheat carried at a very low price? It is carried at the lowest rate that we carry anything at.

477. Therefore there is not a great deal of profit made out of it? No.

478. I notice that the Commissioners' estimate of traffic expenses is much less than in any previous estimate put before us? I understand that they have simply estimated the actual cost of working the line. 479. This estimate is considerably less than the estimate for the Morce line? I do not recollect what the figures were in connection with the Moree line, but this line is much shorter.

480.

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480. At any rate, the Commissioners arrived at this estimate in the usual way? Yes. It is an estimate McLachlan, of the actual expenses. No cost of supervision or snything like that has been added. Esq. 481. Ought not the cost of supervision to be estimated? Well, the same general expenditure as is

incurred now would cover the working of this line. 482. I suppose the cost would be divided between the proposed line and the Temora line? No; it would be debited against the existing line generally. We should not require a new traffic manager, or any

officer of that sort for the proposed line.

483. Mr. Trickett.] I suppose in the course of the inquiry made by yourself and the Commissioners -- ? I have not made any inquiry myself. My information is obtained from the Commissioners' report. Mr. Harper went through the district and obtained a good deal of valuable information.

484. I suppose it has been the experience of the Commissioners and yourself that the population of a new gold-field always dwindles down very materially after a certain time? Yes. That may be said now of Coolgardie. A large number get the fever, and a tremendous rush to a place ensues, and then most people

are sorry that they have gone, and come back again.

485. That is the universal experience in connection with gold-fields, as far as one may judge? Yes. Of course an alluvial field becomes worked out in time, and with reefing fields people come away after a time. 186. That is one of the reasons why the Commissioners wish to wait a bit before going on with this proposed work? Yes.

487. The Commissioners estimate that if a permanent population of 1,800 or 2,000 people settles at Wyalong, the revenue of the line will be about £2,800, and the consequent annual loss in working

expenses and interest will be about £4,000 a year? Yes.

488. That estimate is based on the assumption that the line will only cost £85,000? Yes. With regard to the carriage of grain, I would point out that it is charged for at a diminishing rate. The longer the distance, the less the rate. For the journey from Temora to Cootamundra, a distance of 38 miles, all we get is Gd. a ton.

489. Chairman.] But that traffic feeds your main line? The rate is the extension of the main line,

diminishing with the distance.

490. Mr. Hoskins.] You are referring to full loads—6-ton trucks? Yes.

491. Mr. Wall.] What is the length of the proposed line? About 40 miles, practically the same length

as the Temora line.

492. The Commissioners estimate the earnings on the proposed line at £2,800, while the earnings up to date on the Temora line have been £5,831; -why should they not estimate the earnings on the proposed line at the same rate as the earnings upon the Temora line? Well, on the Temora line, we get not only the local traffic, but also the through traffic from Wyalong. Then, too, the traffic on the Temora line has been abnormal since the rush to the gold-field, and cannot be taken as a fair criterion.

498. If the country between Temora and Wyalong is similar in character and population to that between Wyalong and Lake Cargellico, do you think there is any justification for assuming that the revenue of the line will be only £2,800? The Commissioners considered the matter before making their report. 491. In other estimates which have been put before the Committee, the passenger traffic has been estimated as bearing a certain proportion to the population? The passenger traffic is very difficult to estimate. Of course, the nearer the district is to a big centre of population, the more people there travel.

495. Is this estimate submitted in accordance with the general rule heretofore observed, or is it merely a general estimate of the probable revenue? It is a general estimate.

496. I suppose the Commissioners were aware that the question of sending the railway to Hillston had been under the consideration of the Works Department? Not that I know of. The further extension of the line had not been referred to them, and they do not, as a rule, report on or consider matters not referred to them. They were asked to report on a proposed line from Temora to Wyalong.

497. Were they aware that the line was submitted to this Committee as a section of a contemplated

extension to Hillston? No; I think not.

498. Has any officer of the Commissioners' Department been at any time asked to report on that extension? Not to my knowledge. Surveyors from the Works Department have probably been over the country; but no officer of the Commissioners' Department has been sent there.

499. The Commissioners have not considered the question of extending the line to Hillston? No.

500. Will the officer who has been inquiring as to the probable revenue of the line, be able to give us any information as to the quantity of traffic likely to come from Hillston? I do not know that he will be able to do that.

501. I suppose the Commissioners regard the advantages derived from railway construction as represented purely by the cash balance remaining at the end of the year? To a large extent that would be the way in which they would look at the matter.

502. Is it not a fact that part of the country through which the proposed railway would go is specially

adapted for the cultivation of wheat? Personally, I have no knowledge of it.

503. You have spoken of the immense areas of uncultivated land alongside our railway lines. Can you say whether these areas have been reserved for special prices, or whether they are available at ordinary upset prices? I could not tell you that. 504. You could not say whether the increased price put upon these lands has tended to lock them up?

No.

505. Has there been a great increase in the passenger traffic on the Temora line since the rush to Wyalong commenced? There has been a big increase.

506. The trains on that line only run three times a week? Yes.

507. Are you aware that on the days when trains are not running, four coaches, fully loaded, ply between Cootamundra and Temora? No. I know that a coach runs with the mails on the off days; but I did not know that there were four running. I am inclined to doubt the accuracy of the statement.

508. If the Committee saw them they ought to know? Have you any idea of the number of passengers

that would be carried by the four coaches daily? 509. Do you think that if, at the end of six months, the Wyalong gold-field proves capable of maintaining double the population estimated for by the Commissioners, they would recommend the construction of the proposed line? I could not say, though of course they would then be prepared to reconsider their report. 510.

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510. Mr. Neild. Have the Commissioners taken any steps to ascertain the prospects of the field? At the present time there is a doubt as to its permanency. I do not think that they went further than to ascertain that there was such a doubt.

511. Do you know how many claims there are on payable gold? No.

512. The Commissioners were not concerned with matters of that sort when drafting their report? Certainly; the Commissioners were on the field themselves.

513. How long ago? I think they were there last Monday week.

514. Prior to the drafting of their report? Certainly; the report was written on Friday last, after their return.

515. Do teams compete with the Temora railway? Not to my knowledge.

516. You have not been officially informed of such competition? I do not recollect hearing of it. I

know that on the off days, a coach runs to carry the mails. 517. I am referring more particularly to the goods traffic. You do not know of such competition? No. 518. Do you anticipate that the competition which exists in certain other localities is likely to be serious?

I do not think that it is assuming such proportions, or likely to affect our revenue.

519. In the letter of the Commissioners in regard to narrow gauge railways, they refer to the greater running cost of a slow line; -would what they say there apply to the proposed railway to Wyalong? To a limited extent it would.

520. The proposed line is intended for slow traffic? Yes. The Commissioners propose to run over it at

the maximum rate of 15 miles an hour.

521. And a slow rate of speed necessarily involves increased expenditure? It practically doubles the running wages which have to be paid, in that the men would be longer on the road.

522. Does it make any difference in regard to fuel? To some extent, because the engine would be twice

as long on the road as if you ran at the rate of 30 miles an hour.

523. Would that exceed the greater consumption which would take place with a forced draught? I think so. 524. Towards the end of their letter the Commissioners speak of a pioneer railway as a line to carry traffic with reasonable speed at a lower rate of charge than it is now carried by road; -would that apply to the proposed line? I have just given you an instance of how it would apply. We take wheat over the Temora line at 6d. a ton, and I do not think teams could compete with us at that rate. As a matter of fact, the team competition is not very large.

525. Mr. Dawson.] Do you know whether persons coming from Cootamundra, Tumut, Murrumburrah, and those places in private conveyances would use the railway, or would they go straight on? Incal people would probably not use the railway; but I think Mr. Harper could give you more information on

that point.

526. Have the Commissioners allowed for the carriage of ore between Wyalong and Barmedman? The Commissioners say that they would not attempt to make an estimate of the probable revenue of the line. I understand, too, that persons are putting up crushing plant at Wyalong, so that there would not be much

ore sent by the railway.

527. Have the Commissioners taken into consideration the fact that there is plenty of ironbark close to the proposed line, and that sleepers could be got from there for the purpose of supplying other lines more cheaply than they could be got from other places. You have to take them from Bargo Brush now? There is a certain amount of ironbark about Cootamundra, and we have used a few red-gum sleepers on that part of the line. You get a great deal of red-gum along the rivers. In Victoria they use pretty well all red-gum.

528. Mr. Collins.] The Commissioners are losing between £8,000 and £9,000 a year upon the Culcairn to

Corowa line? Yes, including interest.

529. Do you think that that line is ever likely to pay? I could not say—the revenue has not shown any signs of improving.

530. Is the country there similar to that between Temora and Wyalong? I could not say. It is good

country.

531. The cost of that line was over £4,000 a mile? Yes.

532. And this line will cost? Say £2,000 a mile.

533. Could a cheaper line have been constructed between Culcairn and Corowa? Yes, on the system proposed for this line.

534. Do you think such a line would have paid? No, because the present line does not pay working expenses.

535. Mr. Humphery. The Temora line has been open seven months, I believe? About seven months. 536. What do you estimate the annual interest on £185,000 to be? At 4 per cent., £7,400.

537. Then what rate of interest has that line been earning between September and March last? Less than 4 per cent., and, of course, the traffic has been abnormal.

538. Do you know of any other branch line which at present yields 4 per cent.? Not a line newly

opened, such as this. The Narrabri line pays a little more than 4 per cent. 539. Do you know any line which has paid 4 per cent. from the time of opening? I do not recollect any. 540. Therefore, you cannot say that at the present time there has been any loss on the Temora line?

Not at the present time.

541. In considering their report, had the Commissioners the plan of the proposed extension now before the Committee? No; though, of course, they had all information about the proposed line.

542. Do you not see that on the plan before us, an extension of the line to the Lachlan is marked out? To some extent that plan seems to me to be misleading, because in order to properly consider this matter, you should know the character of the country to the north, so as to be able to decide whether the extension should not be made from Forbes.

543. In reporting upon the proposed line, do you not think that it was absolutely necessary to take into consideration the probability of getting traffic from the Lachlan eventually, if the line were constructed?

That traffic comes to the railway at present.

544. Are you prepared to express an opinion on behalf of the Commissioners as to whether the railway should be extended to the Lachlan from Forbes? That is a matter which I have not considered.

545. Do you not think it is essential, in considering the proposal before the Committee, to also take into consideration the proposed extension to the Lachlan? That is a matter which I think the Committee should 546. consider.

546. Is it not also a matter for the Commissioners to consider? No; I think they have laid it down all H. McLachlan, through, that they do not onter into the policy of constructing any line other than that referred to them. They have never considered either rival or alternative routes. 547. Should they not have given consideration to this matter, not as a question of alternative routes, but 16 May, 1804.

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as affecting the earnings of the railway? They would have borne it in mind in framing their report; and they have recommended that the matter should be postponed. 548. Are the Commissioners familiar with the traffic coming to the railway from the Lachlan? They

know the stations from which it comes. 549. Do they know the volume of that traffic? Yes; we know what amount of traffic comes to the rail-

way at the present time.

550. I suppose you have not taken into consideration whether any of the Lachian traffic, which is now supposed to go to Victoria, would be obtained by extending the railway to the Lachlan? As a matter of fact, the traffic from the country between Wyalong and the Lachlan practically goes to our line nownone of it goes to Melbourne.

551. What about the traffic to Carrathool and Whitton? Those stations are a long way from the proposed

line.

552. Are they so very far from Hillston? They are a good distance away, and on the Murrumbidgee,

which differs not only in name but also in natural characteristics from the Lachlan.

553. Some of the witnesses who were examined by the Sectional Committee said that the traffic reaching Carrathool and Whitton found its way to Victoria; -is that correct? So far as I am informed a great part of that traffic comes along our way; but I believe Mr. Harper could give you more complete information.

554. Mr. O'Sullivan. I gather from your evidence that the Commissioners have looked upon this line simply as a line to Wyalong? Yes; they were asked to report upon such a line, and they did so.

555. Did they take into consideration the probability of a large settlement taking place at Wyalong, in consequence of the throwing open of the leases in the Central Division? They would consider that in a general way.

556. There is no mention made of it in their report? They would have it in their mind in making the

report.

557. You are aware that that land is admirably suited for agriculture, and especially for wheat, and is likely to be taken up as soon as the leases are thrown open. That being so, is there not a possibility of a great amount of traffic coming from the district, even apart from the gold-field? Yes; but in the opinion of the Commissioners, that development was too problematical to justify the present construction of the

558. When the construction of the Temora line was recommended, the Temora gold-field had practically ceased to exist. The line was recommended as one likely to develop an agricultural district? Yes; but

there was a certain amount of mining going on there and at Barmedman.

559. If the construction of the Temora line was justifiable, on the ground that it would serve an agricultural district, would not the construction of the proposed line be justifiable for the same reason? The Commissioners have fully considered the matter, and they do not recommend the construction of the line. 560. If the line were extended to the Lachlan, would it not take a great deal of the traffic that now goes to Melbourne vid Carrathool and Whitton? It would gain no new traffic.

561. I understand that a great deal of the traffic in that district goes down the Murrumbidgee to Echuca and scarcely uses our railways at all; but if a line were made to the Lachlan, or even to Wyalong, would not a great deal of that traffic come to Sydney, and thus give a return to our railways? So far as I am advised, there is not a great amount of traffic from between Hillston and Wyalong going to Victoria. 562. Chairman. In the seven months, during which the Temora line has been opened, it has paid working

expenses, and almost interest charges as well? Yes.

563. But you consider the traffic upon it abnormal, owing to the fact that a large quantity of produce was kept back in anticipation of the opening of the line, and because of the rush to the Wyalong gold-fields? Yes; I ought to mention that the months immediately following the opening of the railway-October, November, and December—are the fat months of the year. May, June, and July, are lean months.

564. So that the traffic during the remaining five months of the year would be very light compared with what has already taken place? Yes; it would be rather misleading to take the returns up to date as a criterion of the probable traffic of the line, because of the favourable circumstances which have attended its opening.

565. Has that fact weighed with the Commissioners in recommending the postponement of the proposed

work? To some extent it has.

566. When the Commissioners were asked to report upon the proposed line, were they furnished by the Construction Branch with an estimate of its probable cost? I do not recollect.

567. As a matter of fact, on what were they to base their estimate of the probable net revenue of the line, if they did not know what it was to cost? I think the cost was stated by Mr. Deane to be about

£110,000. 568. Is it not the invariable custom for the Construction Branch to furnish the Commissioners with an estimate of cost? Yes; we generally get their estimate, and the Commissioners usually state in their

report that the Engineer-in-Chief fixed the cost at so much.

569. Why then have the Commissioners ignored the estimate of the Construction Branch in this case, and worked on an estimate of their own? They have not ignored the estimate of the Construction Branch; but they say that they would recommend a pioneer line, and give an estimate of what they think the pioneer line would cost. The same thing was done in connection with the Moree line.

570. That statement is not borne out by facts. In reporting upon the Moree line the Commissioners took the estimate of the Engineer for Railway Construction, and has it not been their invariable practice to base their report upon that officer's estimate? As a rule, of course, the Commissioners' reports are based upon the estimates of the Constructing Branch. The Moree estimate given was much amended on

the original sum. 571. Is not this the first time that the estimate of the Construction Branch has been put on one side? I think this is the first time in which the Commissioners have given their estimate of cost in this way. 572.

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572. Can you give us any reason why the estimate of the Construction Branch should be ignored? I do

573. Can you find any reference to the estimate of the Construction Branch in the Commissioners' report? 16 May, 1894. Mr. Deane seems to have made an estimate for an ordinary line, and the Commissioners give it as their

opinion that the work could be done much more cheaply. 574. As a matter of fact, the Commissioners were informed that the Engineer-in-Chief estimated that the proposed line would cost £110,000? I am not sure. Mr. Deane mentioned to me that the line would

575. The Commissioners in their report have ignored Mr. Deane's estimate, and have made an estimate cost £104,000. of their own, putting the probable cost of the line at £85,000? Yes; they think the line could be made

576. The proposal put before us was for the construction of a line to cost £104,430, and in basing their report upon an estimated cost of £85,000, the Commissioners have not reported upon the proposal put before the Committee? Of course, that is a matter for the discretion of the Committee to determine. I do not know if Mr. Deane considered that this line should be similar to the line from Narrabri to Moree,

and made his estimate for a light line, instead of for a pioneer line. 577. That has nothing to do with the fact that the Commissioners had Mr. Deane's estimate before them?

The Moree line was originally estimated to cost £300,000, I think.

578. That was not the estimate put before this Committee, and it was upon the estimate put before the Committee by the Engineer for Railway Construction that the Commissioners based their report. I wish to know why, in this case, they have ignored the estimate put before us, and have based their report upon an estimate of their own? The Commissioners have not ignored the engineer's estimate; but they think that the work should be done for £85,000. I might say that Mr. Barling, in giving evidence upon the Morce line, stated that the original estimate of cost for the line was £500,000.

579. Is it a fact that during the last twelve months three railway officers have visited America with a view of reporting on the construction of cheap lines, and the general running of railways there? Three railway officers have visited America within the last few months for the purpose of reporting on railway

matters.

580. Have they reported to the Commissioners? Yes.

581. Have those reports been published? No, they are private reports. These officers did not go to inquire only into the construction of light railways.

582. Was Mr. Shellshear one of them? Yes.

583. Is it a fact that he devoted his attention principally to railway construction? He is one of the engineers for existing lines, and dealt with the character of the lines in America, and, of course, to some extent with their method of cheapening lines.

584. And Mr. Parry with signalling and traffic matters? Yes.

585. And Mr. Howe with mechanical matters? Yes. 586. Is Mr. Shellshear in Sydney? I think not.

587. Where are his headquarters? At Goulburn. 588. Was there anything in the reports of these officers which it would be undesirable to make public? Not that I am aware; but in managing a big Department such as theirs, the Commissioners do not publish everything in the press.

589. At all events, these reports have not been made public? No.

590. Mr. McCourt. You stated that the working expenses on the Temora line for seven months amounted to £1,900. For the remaining five months they would not be so heavy? I do not think there would be any difference.

591. So that in a year the working expenses would come to about £3,500? I suppose so.

592. When the proposal to construct that line was before the Committee, the Commissioners estimated that the working expenses would come to £7,497 per annum, or double the actual amount? In one way and another the cost of maintenance and other traffic expenses have been very much reduced since the first reports were made. The actual cost and maintenance on branch lines is now about £50 a mile. When the Commissioners took office their maintenance was estimated at £125 per mile, and that would make a big difference in 40 miles.

593. So that the Commissioners have reduced the cost of working the lines by about one-half? They have made considerable reductions, and if they were making an estimate to-day they would reduce it

considerably.

594. It would follow from that, that the estimates of working expenses previously put before the Committee have been too high? Many of them could, I think, be reduced.

595. Largely reduced? On a branch line they could be largely reduced.

596. Mr. Humphery.] If the railway were extended to Wyalong, would there be any increase in wages? Naturally.

597. In what respect? You would have to have more maintenance men.

598. But as far as the management of trains was concerned? Yes; because the distance would be increased by about 40 miles, or 80 miles there and back.

599. How long would it take to do the journey? Three or four hours each way, and then a driver has to get his engine ready. I think we should have to put on a double set of men to work the line from Cootamundra to Wyalong.

600. You estimate the working expenses of the line at £3,500, about the same as the actual cost of working the Temora line? Yes.

601. Do you not think that that estimate is excessive? I think not. The Commissioners made it after consideration.

602. Now that the trains run only three times a week on the Temora line, are the men paid full wages? The maintenance men lose three-quarters of a day a fortnight.

603. I am referring to the men on the trains? As far as possible, when they are not working on the Temora line, their services are used in other ways.

604. Mr. Neild.] What do the engine-drivers do on the off days? Work is found for them in one way or another; but I do not know exactly how they are employed.

005. Chairman.] You have based your estimate of working expenses upon a cost of £85,000; but if the

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line were to cost £104,000, and were of a more substantial character than that you suggest, would not the working expenses be reduced? I think not.

606. Is there not more wear and tear on a cheaply-constructed line than there is upon a more substantial line? There might be a little less wear and tear, but that would be compensated for by the slow speed 16 May, 1894. no which trains would travel over the cheaper line. Over one line you would travel at the rate of 15 miles an hour, while on the other line you could travel at 25 or 30 miles an hour, if necessary.

607. Mr. Davies.] The receipts on the Temora line show that that line is paying working expenses and more than 31 per cent, interest on the capital cost; -what interest is paid on the money borrowed for that line? Loans are not raised for any particular line.

608. But you do not pay more than 3; per cent. interest on any loan? Yes, we do. We reckon the average interest at about 4 per cent.

609). Mr. Neild.] I understand that your estimate is based upon a service three times a week; - if the trains run six days a week, would the working expenses be double? No.

610. How much would they be increased? I could not say off-hand; but they would not be doubled. 611. Mr. Wall.] Could not the staff now engaged on the Temora line be used to work the Wyalong line? I think not.

612. Do the trains run from Cootamundra to Temora and return to Temora on the same day? Yes.

John Harper, Esq., Goods Superintendent, Department of Railways, sworn, and examined:

613. Chairman.] You have visited the country round and beyond Wyalong, I understand? Yes. 614. Mr. Hoskins.] I suppose you have, on many occasions, travelled between Cootamundra and Temora?

Yes. 615. Is that country pretty well settled? Only comparatively well settled—there is not much popula- 16 May, 1894.

lation there. 616. What is the character of the settlement;—is the land settled by farmers, by squatters, or by small graziers? There are two or three squatters, and the rest of the land is agricultural country, in the hands

of selectors. 617. Is much wheat sent over the railway from Temora to Cootamundra? About 40,000 bags during the season—that is, to Cootamundra and to other points along the main line.

618. Have you been in that locality lately? Yes.

619. Have you been beyond Wyalong? Not recently. 620. Have you ever been beyond Wyalong? Yes; I have been up in the Hillston and Cargellico

District. 621. Is the country between Temora and Wyalong, and beyond Wyalong, similar to that between Temora and Cootamundra? I think the country between Temora and Cootamundra is better than that between Temora and Wyalong.

622. For grazing, or for agriculture? For agriculture and for grazing too.

623. Is the country beyond Wyalong, out towards Cargellico and Hillston, as good as that between Cootamundra and Temora? Yes; it improves as you go out towards the Lachlan. It is good country out there.

624. Where does that good country commence? I should think within 10 or 15 miles of Cargellico, say, 20 or 30 miles the other side of Wyalong. The country there is more favourable, I should imagine, for settlement.

625. Has any settlement been made in that district by selectors who have taken up large areas of land, and combine pastoral with agricultural pursuits? Yes; to a limited extent.

626. In what locality? Between Temora and Wyalong, there has been settlement of that kind. About forty people have taken up land there, and some of them have put in wheat; but the results last year were not very successful. About 1,300 acres of land were put under wheat, and the yield was about 10,000 bushels.

627. Was the season against them? They say that the season was against them.

628. Is the country beyond Wyalong settled? There is more settlement out in the neighbourhood of Cargellico.

629. How far from Wyalong? I suppose about 35 miles.

630. What are those settlers—are they vignerons, agriculturalists, graziers; or do they combine agricul-

ture with grazing? They combine agriculture and pastoral pursuits on small holdings. 631. Do they seem to be fairly prosperous? I could not say. It is nearly two years since I was out in that neighbourhood, and then I did not go there with the view of making any inquiry into the nature of

the settlement. 632. Have you heard the people in and about Wyalong express the opinion that when the Central Division leases expire. a large amount of settlement will take place in that part of the country? I have heard that said, wherever I have been in New South Wales.

633. Have you heard it said in that part of the country? I cannot say. I can scarcely recollect con-

versations of no moment to me which occurred two years ago. 634. Do the people beyond Wyalong suffer in consequence of the dryness of the climate and the absence of surface-water? Of recent years they have not suffered much from the dryness of the climate, and the pastoralists have made a lot of artificial water. What their reasons are for complaining about their lot, I

do not know. 635. How do the people away from Lake Cargellico manage;—do they make tanks and dams? Yes.

636. Is it good holding ground for water? That I could not say.

637. Do you think from the information you have gathered from your recent journey, that if the railway were extended to Wyalong, a large additional area of land would be put under cultivation? I am very doubtful about it, under existing conditions, such as the price of wheat, and the discouraging circumstances of the last year or two.

638. You did not hear any of the settlers say that if they had the benefit of railway communication, they would cultivate wheat, because, at present prices, it would pay better than wool? I daresay I have heard them say that; but people will say anything to prove that they ought to get a railway.

639. What is your own opinion? I am rather inclined to be doubtful about it.

640.

J. Harper,

Eaq.

17 May, 1894.

J. Harper, 640. Doubtful about what—the propriety of making a railway? Of the extent to which agriculture will Kaq.

be gone in for. 641. You will not express any opinion as to the propriety of making a railway? I prefer not to do so. 642. You do not consider that a large additional area of land would be placed under cultivation, if the 16 May, 1894. railway were extended to Wyalong? I do not see any reason for supposing that there will be more cultivation there than there is along existing lines closer to Sydney. For instance, between Cootamundra and Temora the area which has been put under crop owing to the construction of the railway to Temora is comparatively limited. There are still large areas of land there available for agriculture.

643. Is not the cultivation of land between Cootamundra and Temora increasing, having regard to the fact that the line has only been constructed a few months? It does not take long to put that land under

cultivation, and the line has been under construction two years. 644. The country beyond Wyalong is not expensive country to clear? Not the country out towards the lake and the river. That country is not so expensive to clear as is the country between Temora and

645. If the line were extended to Wyalong, would it attract wool which now goes to Carrathool and Wyalong. Whitton, and thence down the Murrumbidgee to Echuca and so to Melbourne? I do not think so. 646. Why? Because nothing will bring that wool this way. Certain clips of wool in that district would have to go to Melbourne under any circumstances, unless their exportation were prohibited.

647. Why is that? Because the financial interests of the stations are in Melbourne.

648. Suppose we gave those stations increased facilities, in the way of cheap and rapid transit, do you think the wool would come to Sydney? We do that now. We offer low rates and rapid transit from Carrathool, Hay, and the stations on the Murrumbidgee; but, notwithstanding that, they cross the railway line, and avail themselves of the low transit provided by the steamors.

649. Do you not think that that is because the steamer freights are cheaper than the railway freights?

That has something to do with it; but there are other reasons.

650. As a rule, the conveyance of railway produce does not give much profit to the railway? No. As

a matter of fact it involves us in a slight loss. 651. Am I to infer from your evidence that you do not think that if the line were taken to Wyalong, or even farther west, the quantity of wool and wheat carried on the New South Wales railways would be increased? I do not think any new traffic would result. Of course, I am leaving the population now at

Wyslong out of consideration, because it is problematical whether it will increase or decrease. 652. Mr. McCourt.] Could you make an estimate of the traffic in the Wyalong district which would go over the proposed line? Yes; I estimated that at £2,764. The following is a copy of my report, to which I have appended a list of the stations which would probably send their wool by the proposed line. [Vide Appendix.]

THURSDAY, 17 MAY, 1894.

Present:

JACOB GARRARD, Esq. (CHAIRMAN).

WILLIAM CHANDOS WATE, Esq. The Hon. WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR. WILLIAM McCourt, Esq. The Hon. JAMES HOSKINS. JOHN CASH NEILD, Esq. The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY. EDWARD WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN, Esq. The Hon. JOHN DAVIES, C.M.G.

CHARLES COLLINS, Esq. The Hon. WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT. HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

John Harper, Esq., Goods Superintendent, Department of Railways, sworn, and further examined :-653. Mr. Trickett.] In your memorandum, dated 23rd April, 1894, you say that the line we are considering is proposed to form part of a scheme of railway construction to Hillston, on the Lachlan, vid Lake Cargellico. Yesterday, however, Mr. McLachlan stated that that extension did not form the subject of any part of the Commissioners' report? Certainly. I only mentioned the fact because I thought it was one to which I ought to draw the attention of the Commissioners. My estimate was based solely upon the probable traffic of a line to Wyalong.

654. Whose proposal is it to extend the line to Hillston? I gathered that that was the intention, from the report of the surveyor engaged on surveying the route.

655. A surveyor from the Works Department? Yes.

656. Has your memorandum been before the Commissioners? Yes.

657. Can you tell us what is their view with regard to this very important proposal to extend the line to Hillston? Of course, I do not know; but I do not think they have gone into the question. I have not done so on their behalf.

658. Do you not think that that extension is one of the most important features in connection with the matter under consideration? That I cannot say. As far as my knowledge goes, the Commissioners have merely dealt with the proposed line to Wyalong.

659. Did you go to Hillston in the course of your inquiries? No.

660. Have you been in the district at all? I have been there twice. On the last occasion I was there

about two years ago. 661. Did you not find that the traffic was being fairly well carried on by the teams along the road? Yes. 662. And that the road, in ordinary weather, was in fairly good condition? Yes. The first time I was up there, they had nearly 4 inches of rain, but when last I was there, the weather was dry.

663. With the exception of where it passes through the gilgui country, and could be repaired by the use of sapplings and metal, I suppose the road is as good as most country roads? Yes; it is a good back country road.

664. While in Wyalong, did you ascertain the views of the people with regard to the proposed railway? The people I spoke to in Wyalong did not appear to trouble themselves very much about the railway. They were more concerned with their mines.

665. The feeling in regard to it was certainly not keen? No.

GGG.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE-BAILWAY FROM TEMORA TO WYALONG. J. Harper, CGG. At the present time, I suppose, the road traffic gives employment to a very large number of teamsters, farriers, hay and corn merchants, and others, who, if the railway were constructed, would probably .ose their business? Yes; there are a large number of teams employed on the road. 667. Do you know what they are paying for carrying between Wyalong and Temora? From 30s. to £2 17 May, 1894. a ton. £2 a ton is about the most they are paying. 608. Is that for carriago both ways? That is from Temora. Nothing is being carried back as far as Temora; but they carry ore to Barmedman, at from 10s. to 15s. a ton. 669. Did you find that the people at Wyalong were suffering hardships through not being able to get provisions up? No; I found overything remarkably cheap there. I only paid 1s. 6d. a feed for each of my horses.

670. You estimate the total possible goods and coaching traffic on the proposed line at £2,764 in round figures? Yes.

671. Is not that a pretty liberal estimate? Yes; because while I have only dealt with the railway to Wyalong, I have included the traffic from stations right out on the Lachlan, though it is doubtful if that traffic will come to the line.

672. Mr. Neild. Do you anticipate that teamsters will compete much with the proposed line? I can bardly say; the teamsters are prepared to do such extraordinary things now-a-days. There might be some competition in high-class traffic. Our maximum rate would probably be about 4d, a mile; but there have been cases in which teamsters lately have been carrying for 2d. a mile.

673. The fact that teamsters are able to compete with the railway is largely due to the good seasons and abundance of grass which we have had lately? Yes.

674. In bad seasons, when teamsters had to carry their own feed, I suppose competition would be

absolutely impossible? Yes; all but impossible. 675. Is there, in a good season like the present, a fair supply of grass along the road from Temora to Wyalong? No; the teamsters have to carry feed for the last 10 or 12 miles at the Wyalong end. There is scarcely enough grass there to keep a bullock alive.

676. When you speak of high-class traffic, I suppose you mean wool? No; 3d. a ton would be the local

rate of wool. 677. You do not shut your eyes to the possibility of teams competing with this line? Well, I have ignored such competition, because in making out these estimates I believe in crediting the line with all the traffic to which it is entitled. Under ordinary circumstances we assume that it would have that traffic.

678. Then in good seasons you estimate that it might reasonably discounted to the extent of the teamsters' competition? Yes; but the traffic would have to go to Young or Coolamon, or some other point upon the railway, so that we should not lose it altogether.

679. At present on none of your lines do you run at so low a rate as 15 miles an hour? No; 18 miles an

hour is our lowest speed, including stoppages.

680. On what line is that? That is the average speed of a mixed train on the Cooma line.

681. In making your estimate, have you based it upon the existing current rates? We have local rates in operation on the Temora line, and I have credited the proposed line with an extension of those rates. 682. How much higher are the local rates than the ordinary rates? On wool they would be a 1d. a mile higher than the other ordinary through rates.

683. Have you taken into consideration the fact stated by the Secretary to the Railway Commissioners yesterday, that a slow train service is more expensive than a rapid service, inasmuch as the time occupied in running the trains over the line is almost doubled? I have not considered that.

684. But assuming that that statement was correct, the ratio of earnings to expenses would be reduced? Decidedly.

685. Is the Temora line worked at a slow rate of speed? No, at an average rate. The trains travel

nearly 20 miles an hour. 686. With a slow rate of speed on the proposed line, while the earnings would be the same, the traffic expenses would be higher? Yes; the net earnings would be less.

687. Do you know if it is proposed to use the lighter class of engines upon the proposed line? No, I do

not. I have not gone into that matter. 688. You do not expect that the traffic will necessitate the use of beavy engines? You can always move a limited load with a light engine, no matter what the weight of the trucks may be. For a light engine you would reduce your train weight, not your truck weight. 689. Is the loading likely to be sufficiently heavy to necessitate the use of heavy trains? I scarcely think

so, though you might have exceptional cases during the wool season.

690. You say that about 10 miles from Wyalong there is little grass? Yes; because there you get into mallee and thick scrub-there is no herbage at all there. 691. Have you travelled beyond Wyalong? No. I have been to Hillston, and through Cargellico; but I

do not know the country between Wyalong and Cargellico. 692. How did you get to Hillston? From Carrathool and from Hay. I have been there twice.

693. From the information you obtained there, did you come to the conclusion that the present population of Wyalong is likely to be permanent? I heard so many different opinions that I am in doubt as to what the character of the population would be. Some people thought the field was everything that was good, while others held contrary opinions.

694. The feeling of uncertainty about the permanency of the population would lead to a feeling of uncer-

tainty in your mind about the prospects of the line? Yes. 695. From your knowledge of roads in this country, which I assume to be very extensive, do you think that the condition of the highway between Temora and Wyalong is likely to cause serious inconvenience to the traffic? I do not think so; and they are improving it every day. They now make a detour through Christie's Paddock, on Wyalong Run, to avoid the worst of the gilgais. There is a splendid track

there, and I travelled over it in a buggy at the rate of 8 miles an hour. 693. How is the road between Barmedman and Temora? It is cut up a good deal; but it would be

697. That road runs through pine scrub? Yes; but if you go off the track into the bush it is not a bad possible to improve it.

698. When I drove over it, ten or twelve years ago, it was difficult to traverse, because of the numerous running road. 283-D

J. Harper, little pine stumps sticking up like so many cobbler's pegs. Is that its condition new? No; I drove from The road is practically clear now, the ruts Barmedman to Temora with the Commissioners at night. Esq.

being the worst thing about it. 17 May, 1894. 699. In making your estimate, you have given the proposed line the benefit of the doubt in all cases?

700. Mr. Wall.] If the Commissioners state, through their secretary, that they have no knowledge of the intended extension of the line to Hillston, they cannot have read your report? What I take them to mean is that they have no knowledge of the extension, so far as being prepared to give evidence in connection with it.

701. You state that the rates chargeable on this line, if constructed, would be the same as those now charged on the Temera line? Yes; local rates, which are higher than the through rates. We charge through rates from Sydney to Cootamundra, and from there to Temora we charge a local rate.

702. The rates on the proposed line would be the same as you are now charging on the Temora line?

Yes.

703. Have you any knowledge of the settlement between Wyalong and Lake Cargellico? No; I have

not been over that country.

704. In investigating this matter, did you make any inquiries as to the settlement existing within a certain radius of Wynlong that will be served by the proposed line? No; for the simple reason that there was no one at Wyalong who had time to give me the information, or whose interest it was to do so; but I did what I considered would be more satisfactory: I reckoned upon all the traffic within 50 miles one way, 60 miles another, and 40 miles another.

705. If the settlement between Wyalong and Lake Cargellico is as great as that between Barmedman and Temora, it is reasonable to suppose that there will be as much traffic from that part of the country?

Yes; assuming that that country were served by the proposed line.

706. If there was an equal area of land under cereals in the vicinity of Wyalong, that produce would be

brought along the proposed line? Yes.

707. Assuming that the population of Wyalong will be as great or greater than that at Temora, is it reasonable to infer that the goods and passenger traffic on the proposed line, apart from the produce carried, will be at least equal to the traffic on the Temora line? Decidedly.

708. Can you give the Committee any information as to the normal volume of traffic on the Temora line

previous to the Wvalong rush? Yes.

709. Will you give us the monthly cash returns? Yes; though before doing so I should like to point out that they are rather misleading, because during the first few months that the line was opened all the wool and wheat traffic of the season came over it. The total traffic for September was £622; for October, £1,132; for November, £1,161; and for December, £708.

710. The rush commenced about the beginning of January? Yes.

711. And from January on, what were the earnings? In January, £533; in February, £632; and in March, £1,039. That is the last return that I have.

712. Do those figures represent the total earnings inwards and outwards? Yes.

713 Taking the average of the three months since January, there has been a falling off in the returns attributable to the failure of the wheat and wool traffic? Yes; but there were other causes. We had a truck rate to Temora of £32 10s., and the result was that we were drawing the Young traffic there, consequently we had to put Young on the same footing as Temora.

714. Did you visit Hillston to inquire into the volume of traffic going via Carrathoo!? To try and draw

that traffic this way, if I could.

715. Was there much traffic going in that direction at the time? There was some wheat going from Gunbar to Carrathool and Whitton.

716. Was there any wool? Yes.

717. Was the survey of the proposed extension to Hillston made prior to your report? I made no report. I simply went there canvassing, to try and get the stations there to send their wool to Sydney.

718. Your visit had nothing to do with the construction of any line? No.

719. Do you know whether the proposed line from Temora to Hillston was surveyed before your visit to that part of the country or afterwards? I do not know. I did not hear of the surveyors being out when I was there.

720. You are not in a position to say whether the proposed extension has been under the consideration of the Commissioners? No; it has never been under my consideration.

721. You stated yesterday that the average production of wheat in the Wyalong district was about 9

bushels to the acre? Yes; that was according to the returns. 722. Are you aware that the decrease in wheat is to be attributed to the failure of the crop at Temora, not to the failure of the Barmedman crop? The return which I obtained from the local police officer showed that 9,000 bushels of wheat had been obtained from 1,300 acres.

723. Are you aware that Barmodman is included in the land district which extends to Temora? I cannot

speak as to that; but I have a list of places where wheat is grown.

724. Are you aware that a large quantity of the wheat grown in the vicinity of Barmedman was cut for hav? Yes.

725. The evidence of the farmers examined by the Sectional Committee at Barmedman went to show that the average vield was 15 bushels to the acre? I can only quote the official returns.

726. You did not make any inquiry among the farming community as to what the yield was, you simply

took the returns furnished to you by the police at Barmedman? That is so.

727. If the population at Wyalong were as great or greater than the population of Temora, would it not give a return to the railway equal to that furnished by Temora? Decidedly. I may mention that the returns of the inward tonnage there is based upon two months of analysed Temora traffic, as distinguished from traffic coming to that place from Young and other districts.

728. Does the train from Cootamundra to Temora return from Temora to Cootamundra the same day?

Yes; coming back at night to meet the mail. The engine is stabled at Cootamundra.

729. Does the train remain at Cootamundra the next day? No; It runs to Gundagai on the alternate days.

730. Mr. Humphery.] What was the cost of carriage from Temora to Cootamundra prior to the opening

of the railway? Rates were very high everywhere, then; but they have gone down since the breaking up of the Carriers' Union. I should imagine that at that time they amounted to between £2 and £3 a ton.

Esq. m 17 May, 1894.

J. Harper,

731. What was the cost of carrying wheat from Temora to Contamundra? I can searcely remember;

but I should think about 5d, or 6d, a bushel. That is about the usual rate for the distance.

732. Are we to understand that the Commissioners carry wheat from Temora to Cootsmundra for 1d. a bushel per mile? Yes. The rate would be 6d. from Barmedman, and 9d. from Wyalong. That is the through rate. It does not matter where the wheat comes to, it is charged for at that rate. For instance, if it were milled at Cootamunden, and then came on to Sydney, it would be charged the extended through rate.

733. Do you not think that in view of the great benefits given to the district by the railway, the rates might have been fixed somewhat higher? No; the policy of the Commissioners has always been to encourage agriculture, because they think that if indirectly they get an advantage from the increased

production, they are rendering a benefit to the country.

734. Do you think it is possible for any branch railway to pay if you carry wheat for one-twenty-fourth part of the amount which teamsters charge for carrying it? I think so, if there is sufficient population in the district.

735. What are you charging for wool? I have given the line credit for 3d. a ton per mile.

736. But what do you charge between Temora and Cootamundra? Three-pence a ton per mile is the local rate.

737. That is about 10s. a ton for the 40 miles? Yes.

738. What was the rate before the line was opened? I could not say; but I should imagine that it was about 1s. a ton a mile.

739. So that it is now carried for a fourth of what was charged before the opening of the railway? Yes. 740. What is the present rate charged by teamsters? You can hardly tell. I have known them to take loading for 2d, a ton per mile.

741. But what is the ordinary rate? The ordinary rate up to 50 miles is about 1s. a ton. Beyond that

it is about 10d. a ton.

742. So that producers of wool in the Temora district have benefited to the extent of Od. in the 1s., and producers of wheat to the extent of 51d. in 6d., by the opening of the railway? You, that is the position. 743. You are familiar with the whole of the district between Forbes and Hillston? Yes; I know it all pretty well.

744. Are you familiar with all the stations beyond the Lachlan? Yes; I have been on many of the

stations between the Lachlan and the Darling.

745. From your knowledge of the present traffic on the New South Wales railways, can you say if the extension of the railway from Temora to Cargellico, and on to Hillston, would serve a district not at present served by the Hay railway? I do not think it would. I think that relatively all these districts are pretty well served. It is good travelling country at the time they want to travel,—that is, during the summer months.

716. Are you of opinion that much of the traffic on and beyond the Lachlan would come to an extension

of the proposed railway to Hillston? I do not think so.

747. Why? Because, as I pointed out yesterday, most of the stations there are owned and controlled by Victorian financial agents, so that the wool naturally goes down the Murrumbidgee.

748. Which of the railway stations receive most of the traffic from the stations on and beyond the Lachlan? Carrathool, Whitton, and Hay deal with most of that traffic.

749. And traffic going to those stations mostly continues on to Victoria? Yes.

750. Going down the Murrumbidgee to Echuca? Yes.

751. What is the reason for that? I think most of those properties were taken up by Victorian financial institutions, which exercise a very strong control over them still, and they feel indisposed to send their wool to Sydney under any circumstances. I have a very interesting map here which shows our position on the Lachlan.

752. From what part of the Lachlan district does the traffic find its way over to Victoria instead of coming to Sydney? Nearly all the traffic in the district having Marfield, Yallaock, Yathong, and Coan Downs for its northern boundary, and Huntawong, Cowl Cowl, and Gunbar for its eastern boundary, finds its way to Carrathool and Hay. All the frontage stations send their produce to the Hay line.

753. Are you of opinion that if the Temora line were extended to Hillston via Lake Cargellico, the wool from the district you have just mentioned would make use of that extension instead of going into

Victoria? No; I think that the bulk of it would still go down the river.

751. You do not see any prospect of such an extension becoming profitable by reason of any fresh traffic which it would gain for the New South Wales lines? No; I might mention as bearing on this point that this year we offer a special rate of £3 5s. a ton, which is little more than half the ordinary rate, for the wool coming from a station within 60 miles of Cobar, in order to induce them to use our railways; but we could not do so generally.

755. From what you know of the Lachlan district, do you think that eventually the line should be taken from Forbes as far as Cargellico and Hillston? I think that would be a better strategical line, because it would intercept the traffic better, and would run parallel with the Cobar and Hay lines. If such a line were made, it would intercept a great deal of the wool going to the river, and would have a chance of

756. Are you of opinion that the earnings of such a line would be much greater, or at any rate greater than the earnings of a line from Temora to Hillston and the Lachlan? That is a very difficult question to

answer without having gone into the matter. 757. I am asking you from your knowledge of the various stations out there, and the probable traffic that would come to the New South Wales railway system? Personally, I should prefer a line down the

Lachlan. 759. Are you of opinion that for the profits of a line to Wyalong we should have to depend wholly upon the traffic of the district between Wyslong and Cootamundra? No; and you will notice that in my estimate I have allowed for the produce of stations so far away as Uabba, which is 60 miles from J. Harper, Esq.

Wyalong; though I think it extremely improbable that that wool will go to Wyalong. I think it will continue to go to Whitton; but still I have credited the Wyalong line with it. Similarly I have credited

that line with the Ungarrie produce, though that station is 40 or 50 miles from Wyalong. 17 May, 1894. 760. You have credited Wyalong with produce which will probably still continue to go to Carrathool or Whitton? Yes. To make it a little bit clearer to the Committee, 1 may mention that I have based my estimate at 82s. 3d. a ton for greasy wool as far as Wyalong, while the rate to Coolamon is 70s a ton, to Cowra 60s. 3d., and to Carrathool 64s. 9d., a difference of nearly £1 a ton in favour of Carrathool,

which is a big consideration with the teamsters in that dry country.

761. What is the difference in mileage? Carrathool is 420 miles and Wyalong 331; but, of course, the competitive rates are in operation at Carrathool. Our rate to Carrathool for ordinary merchandise is £30 for a 6-ton truck; but I have credited Wyalong with earning £36 8s. for a similar load, so that practically a carrier would gain £1 on his wool and £1 on his merchandise by sending his produce the longer distance. The unfortunate part is that we compete with our local rates on the south-west line.

762. Chairman.] But the competitive rates must be maintained in order to keep what you have got, with-

out taking anything else into consideration? Yes.

763. If the trade on the proposed line increased to such an extent as to justify you in imposing ordinary rates, what effect would the Carrathool competition have then? Practically the Wyalong rate is almost a competitive rate in itself, as compared with the rates to other places. The Temora rate is a competitive one, because it comes into competition with the Narrandera rate. There are competitive rates in operation as far as Narrandera, and also to Junec; and so, practically, we will have to have competitive rates

to Temora. 764. Can you tell the Committee where the produce of the county of Dowling goes to-does it find its way rid Hillston to Carrathool, or does it go to Forbes or to Temora? Most of it goes to Whitton or to

Carrathool, though some of it goes to Forbes and to Cowra.

765. Then, you take that country as the competing ground of the three routes? Yes.

766. Mr. Humphery.] Has the Temora line interfered at all with the earnings of the Young branch? Yes: it affected them very considerably, owing to the operation of the competitive rates. The rate to Young until recently was £36 for a 6-ton load, the distance being 250 miles, whilst to Temora it was

£32 10s., the distance being 292 miles. 767. During the winter you will not get much wheat or wool on the Temora line? No; that traffic has

practically ceased for the year.

768. Then we may anticipate the average earnings for the next three or four months to be much lower

than the earnings of the summer months? The earnings will be scarcely anything just now.

769. Mr. O'Sullican.] I gather from the important evidence which you have just given us that, until we can adopt some means of diverting the wool from the Victorian railways, we must merely treat this proposal as a line to Wyalong? Yes.

770. We need not look for new traffic beyond a few miles from Wyalong? There will be no new traffic. 771. You estimate that about 10,000 bales of wool will be sent to the line from the stations named in the

list you handed in yesterday? Yes. 772. That would give a good local traffic? Yes; I have given the line full credit for wool.

773. I suppose your estimate is a very liberal one? Yes.

774. I gather from what you have said that you are somewhat doubtful about the permanent character of the Wyalong population? Of course, everyone is bound to have their doubts about a gold-field until the place is fully tried.

7741. Have there not been some very encouraging telegrams from there recently? Yes; but I have had the pleasure of reading Mr. Pittman's report, and I should like the prospects to be stronger than

they aro.

775. I presume it is upon what you have seen and read and learnt from others that advice has been tendered to the Commissioners to suggest the postponement of this work for six months? You have my report before you, and I suppose they based their recommendation upon it. Beyond that, I do not know anything of their action in the matter.

776. Mr. Davies.] In the event of the Temora line being extended to Hillston, would it take any of the

traffic down the river to Victoria? No; it could not do so.

777. I presume you paid visits to the thirty stations named in your list? No; but I was able to obtain their clips from our knowledge of what they sent last year.

778. Not from personal inquiry? No. We know what was booked last year.

779. Can you tell the Committee what is the gross number of sheep on those runs? About 900,000. 780. And you estimate that those sheep produce something like 600 tons of wool? Yes, about 10,000 bales.

781. Is that a fair average return? My figures are taken from the sworn returns of the stations, as well

as from our books.

782. Do you not think that £165 is a very small estimate of the value of the wool traffic from Wyalong to Temora? That is for the wool traffic from Barmedman, and, in addition, I have allowed £536 for 6,700 bales of wool and sheepskins coming from Wyalong. In connection with the Moree line, I only allowed

2d. a ton per mile; but here I have allowed 3d.

783. You estimate 1,000 tons of wheat at 6d. a ton; -does that cover the 38 or 40 miles between Temora and Wyalong? No; it covers the through mileage. Practically, the basis of all wheat rates is the distance to Sydney. If the wheat is milled and converted into flour at Cootamundra, or elsewhere along the line, it is still allowed to come on at the through rate, instead of paying two local rates. The local rate is made up of 49 miles added to the distance from Sydney to Temora.

784. Then, if a farmer sent 100 tons, you would charge him £2 10s.? That is what the through rate

would be. If the wheat only went from Wyalong to Temora we should charge a higher rate.

785. What would it cost to bring wheat from Wyalong to Sydney? Fourteen shillings and sixpeuce a ton. 786. And from Cootamundra to Sydney? Thirteen shillings and sixpence a ton.

787. That is a difference of a 1s., which I suppose would be made up of a 6d a ten to Temora and another 6d. to Wyalong? Yes.

788. Do you regard the carriage of wheat as profitable? No; it does not pay in itself. 789. How do you make a profit then? That is a very intricate matter to explain. Of course, in framing rates,

rates, we must have regard to a good many things. First, we must study what charge an article will bear, J. Harper, because if the rates were too high it could not be produced.

790. Have the rates for the carriage of produce ever been lower than they are now? No; they are lower 17 May, 1894.

791. Another commodity which I suppose does not pay the Department for carrying is coal? There is a very narrow margin of profit in connection with coal.

792. Is the rate on coal lower than the rate on wheat? It is higher than the rate on wheat; but of course it is hauled for shorter distances.

793. Wool gives a fair return, does it not? Yes; it is one of our biggest sources of revenue.

794. Does it pay better than most other articles of produce? It pays better than any other article of produce.

795. You also take into account 250 trucks of live stock? If that estimate had been based on the actual traffic from Temora it would have been a good deal lower; but I took into consideration the fact that the Temora line has not been open very long, and people may not have got into the habit of sending their stock along it; but in any case the estimate is very high. During the seven months that the Temora line has been opened we have only taken 58 trucks of live-stock along it.

796. Do you think that there will not be a very large number of sheep coming to Sydnoy? No; because there is not much fattening country out there. The country is not held for fattening purposes.

797. You allow £425 for passenger traffic—do you not think that that is a very small estimate? It is based, as I explained yesterday, upon the number of passengers carried on the Temora line under normal conditions.

798. Do you think the estimate a liberal one? Yes, a very liberal one.

799. Is the country between Temora and Wyalong country through which a railway could be cheaply contructed? Yes.

800. That being so, and the reads there being very defective, would it not be advisable to construct a cheap line of railway? That opens up a very large question. A cheap railway costs more for maintenance than a better line.

801. Could not an abundance of ballast be obtained in the district? Yes; but that is rather an engineering question.

802. But you know whether it is an expensive country for railway construction? It should not be expensive country.

803. You think that the construction of the railway might stand over for a time? That is my opinion. 804. The Commissioners' report was based upon your recommendation? It would be, so far as the earnings of the line were concerned; but the Commissioners went over the country themselves.

805. If the construction of the railway is postponed for six months, do you think it will greatly inconvenience the people between Wyalong and Barmedman? I do not see how it could with the existing low rates of carriage.

806. Even at the special rates you propose would you be able to carry freight between Temora and Wyalong for less than half what is paid to teamsters now? Yes. Our highest charge would be 4d. per ton per mile.

807. The same might be said with regard to the ore going to Barmedman? That would be charged for

at the rate of Id. per ton per mile.

808. Then, would not the railway be a means of developing traffic? I do not think so. It would not cause a single additional bale of wool to be produced, and I do not think they would continue to send ore to Barmedman. They would be more likely to take up the Barmedman battery and send it to Wyalong.

809. But then there are supplies to be taken to the gold-field? A railway there would not make any difference to the consumption. When I was in the district we could get things more cheaply at Wyalong than at Temora.

810. But would they not get them still more cheaply if there were a railway? I do not think the traders would reduce their prices so much.

811. Mr. Hoskins.] Are you familiar with the country between Forbes, Hillston, and Cargellico? Yes; I have been up both sides of the river.

812. Are there not one or two towns in that district? Yes; Condobolin and Euabalong.
813. A railway from Forbes to the Lachlan would not only serve the district traffic, but would also the

trade of those two towns? Yes; it would be closer to those towns than the proposed line.
814. Is not the country between Forbes and Hillston better than that between Wyalong and Hillston?

It is generally regarded as better country along the river frontages.

815. Do you not think that a line from Forbes to Hillston would offer more facilities for trade than the proposed line, and would intercept traffic now going to Carrathool and Whitton? Yes; I think that where a line intercepts traffic it is not likely that people will cross over it to go elsewhere.

816. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the S16. Chairman.] You said that the traffic during the months immediately following the opening of the said that the traffic during the said that the traffic during the said that the said that the traffic during the said that the

September no wool was moving. The wheat traffic makes very little difference to the returns.

817. How many bags of wheat were sent from Temora to Cootamundra last season? About 45,000 bags

were sent from Temora altogether last season.

S18. Was your estimate of the traffic coming from the country between Wyalong and Lake Cargellico based upon the traffic now coming to Temora from that district? Do you refer to the wool traffic? based upon the traffic generally? As far as the wool traffic is concerned, some of it goes to Carrathool and S19. To the traffic generally? As far as the wool traffic is concerned, some of it goes to Carrathool and Coolamon, and some of it goes to Temora. Each clip was taken out and corrected to the last returns. Coolamon, and some of it goes to Temora. Each clip was taken out and corrected to the last returns.

line, assuming that all went to Sydney? Roughly, about £3,400.

S21. How much would you credit the Temora line with? The sectional returns are not prepared by me;

but they would credit that line with wife of the total freight.

822. Which would be approximately how much? £450. Some of that wheat, however, may not have gone to Sydney, so that the proportional earnings might be higher.

MONDAY, 21 MAY, 1894.

Brecent: -

JACOB GARRARD, Esq. (CHAIRMAN).

The Hon. WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR.

The Hon. JAMES HOSKINS.

The Hon. PREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY.

The Hon. JOHN DATIES, C.M.G.

The Hon. WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT.

WILLIAM McCourt, Esq. JOHN CASH NEILD, Esq. EDWARD WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN, Esq.

CHARLER COLLINS, Esq. HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Edward Fisher Pittman, Esq., A.R.S.M., Government Geologist, Department of Mines, sworn, and cxamined:-

21 May, 1994.

E.F. Pittman 823. Chairman.] You have recently visited the Wyalong gold-fields, and the country adjacent thereto?

Eeq., A.R.S.M. 824. You have furnished a report, a copy of which you hand in? Yes. (Fide Appendix.)

825. How long were you in the district? Nearly three weeks. 826. Is the conclusion you have arrived at that it is difficult to say whether Wyslong will be a permanent

field or not? I have reason to believe from the surface evidence that it will be a permanent field. 827. Are there as many indications of it being a permanent field as there was of Temora itself? I think more so. Temora was mainly an alluvial field; but in this case the best evidence of its permanency is

in reefs. No alluvial has been discovered yet. 828. Would you liken or compare it with any other field which has been in existence for some years? I have never seen a field in which the conditions of the occurrences of gold were exactly the same.

829. Does not that make it difficult to prognosticate whether it is likely to be of a permanent character?

Not necessarily. 830. Take Peak Hill for instance. Was it not expected that there would be a permanent field there when it was first discovered? The area which was discovered at Peak Hill was a very limited onenothing like the extent of Wvalong.

831. Mr. Neild.] Are you of opinion that there is any serious risk or large probability of the country hardening at a depth, and the veins now being worked pinched out? I think the country will harden; but I do not think it necessarily follows that the veins will be pinched out.

832. Is the same formation being reached at a depth as that which exists on the surface? It is exactly the same formation.

833. And what is that? Decomposed granitic rock.

834. Is that showing signs of hardening as the sinking proceeds? No.

835. What leads you to expect greater hardness at a depth? Because the rocks have been decomposed by the action of the atmosphere, chiefly, and also by the percolation of water from the surface ;—in other words, the decomposition has extended downwards from the surface, and I have every reason to believe that at an unknown depth you will reach the limits of the decomposition.

836. And you anticipate that the gold-bearing veins will be found to exist in that harder granitic rock?

837. The reins at present are rather narrow in their limits? No; they are narrow in places, but not

narrow as a rule. 838. What width do they run? From a few inches up to 5 feet. One of their peculiarities is that they keep on widening and narrowing. Wherever they narrow you may expect them to widen again, and vice

839. Is the rock likely to harden to such an extent as to render the cost of working unduly great and unprofitable? There is no doubt we must expect that that will be so in some cases, but not necessarily in all. 840. That is not a feature which you would regard as being in any way fatal to the success of the field in the future? I think it will influence largely the future of the field; but I cannot say which reefs it will pay to work when they get into the hard granite, and which it will not pay to work. I think a great many will not pay-certainly not so many as will pay under the present conditions.

841. That, of course, and the future profitableness of working, will necessarily affect the population?

Undoubtedly. 812. Do you anticipate the opening-up of any alluvial ground in the district? Yes; I think we ought to expect alluvial ground will be found, although it will be very difficult to discover; the reasons I have mentioned in my report. The reason is, that the geological configuration of the country is obscured from its being a level plain covered by Pleistocene deposits. One does not know, therefore, where to look for an old valley, because one cannot see the sides of it in the shape of hills.

843. Then, altogether, you regard this as being a permanent field? I have every reason to believe it will be. I cannot see any reason why it should not be. I should like to explain a little more fully why I do not anticipate the reefs to pinch out. I have heard a good many people remark that they will probably pinch out; but I cannot see their line of reasoning at all. That decomposed granite which is now found on the surface was once undoubtedly hard granite. It was during the time it was hard granite that those fissures were formed in which the reefs now exist. In other words, the reefs are newer than the granite, but were formed before its decomposition commenced. Therefore, there is no reason why they should not exist down in the zone underneath the decomposed rock.

844. You say then that the gold having its origin from below was forced up from those fissures? No; I think the gold came in more from what we call lateral secretion, that is, that it was brought in by infiltrations through the walls,

845. Where a fissure existed in the original rock the gold would be likely to be found? Yes.

846. And there would be no reason to anticipate that these fissures were to be found only within a few hundred feet from the surface? Quite so.

817. They would be likely to continue downwards for a considerable depth? Yes.

848. (an you form any opinion as to whether any water difficulty may occur in connection with the mines? I should expect them to find water when they got down to the hard granite rock, because I 849. believe the decomposition has been effected by the sinking down of water.

849. Is there anything in that part of the country which would lead you to fear that the water difficulty E. F. Pittman, might be excessive? I should not expect it to be excessive. A.R.S.M.

850. I suppose it is an open question? It is.

851. What is the greatest depth which has yet been worked? At the time of my visit 107 feet.

21 May, 1894. 852. In going down do the reefs or veins improve or fall off in gold bearing qualities? I cannot say that

there was any improvement or falling off, they seemed to be fairly consistent. 853. Is there much mining going on in the vicinity of Temora? Very little.

854. Are there any prospects of a permanency about Barmedman such as would give employment to a population which would require railway communication? I hardly think that, although at the time of my visit there were some negotiations going on for again floating the Barmedman mines.

855. The character of the country from Temora to Barmedman is practically repeated until you get near to Wyalong where a change takes place and a different class of country is arrived at? Yes.

856. And in the vicinity of Wyalong the country is not so good for agricultural purposes? I am not a competent judge; but I should have imagined that about Wyalong it was a very good agricultural land. 857. Did you pursue your investigations far beyond Wyalong? About 7 or 8 miles.

858. What was the character of the country? The same wherever I went, excepting that geologically it

was slightly different. I got on a slate formation about 4 miles to the east of Wyalong.

859. Would you expect that to be gold-bearing? Yes.

860. Are there any workings in that class of country? Yes; one of the best reefs I saw was in a slate working about 11 mile from the surveyed township. There was granite on both sides of it.

861. That would be a likely place for expecting mineral deposits? Yes.

862. Does that slate country exist to any extent in the neighbourhood? Four miles cast of the surveyed township you get the western boundary of the slate formation.

863. Has any gold been discovered there? I think so.

861, Mr. Suttor.] Can you give us any further information with reference to Wyalong? I do not think

I can say any more than is contained in my report.

865. Mr. Dawson.] You say that the country between Barmedman and Wyslong is very similar to that between Cootamundra and Temora for agricultural purposes? I said that as far as I could judge Wyalong appeared to be a good agricultural country.

866. Do you think if the scrub were cleared off that the land about Wyalong is better agricultural country than that botween Temora and Cootamundra? I should have thought so; but I do not pretend to give an expert opinion.

867. Do you know how many payable claims there were at Wyalong when you were there? I did not count them, but I believe as far as they know there were between 40 and 50.

868. Has the field steadily progressed since then? I think so.

869. Do you think that the construction of a railway to Wyalong would give a greater impetus to mining there? Yes.

870. Mr. Humphery.] What area would give us a fair idea of the extent of the discoveries made up to the present time? I have given it in my report as about 7 miles by 7.

871. Would you consider that an extensive gold-field? That would depend on the amount of payable gold which had been discovered in it.

872. But having regard to the number of reefs discovered up to the present time? Considering the time

they have been discovering the reefs I should say it was very good indeed. 873. In your report you mentioned that it is probable that when a depth of 200 feet is reached solid granite will be found. Before arriving at that depth do you think there would be employment for a large number of people for a number of years? Yes; I should certainly think there would.

871. It will take a considerable time to reach the solid granite? Yes.

875. Are you of opinion there will be a large settled population at Wyalong? As far as evidences go, one would be justified in expecting it.

876. You know the results of the various crushings which have taken place at Barmedman from stone

carted there? Yes.

877. Are the results satisfactory or otherwise? Eminently satisfactory.

878. When you left Barmedman had provision been made for any machinery? Yes; I was given to understand that three machines would be shortly erected, in fact when I left I saw some of the machinery going to Wyalong.

879. You have no doubt that batteries will shortly be on the ground? Yes.

880. Do you think that the best stone has been sent to Barmedman? I do not. When I was there I saw some of the best stone which was being retained, so the owners told me, until the arrival of the batteries

at Wyalong. 881. One would imagine that the best stone would be sent first? I think the best stone was sent in the first instance, but, subsequently, I think, the idea of the owners was that they would sooner have it crushed where it would be under their observation. They had an idea that the Barmedman battery was not quite up to date. 882. Do you think any quantity of picked stone is being kept back? Several people have told me they thought their stone was too good to send away. At the same time I do not anticipate there will be much higher results obtained than have been obtained in some instances. For instance one man crushed 16 or

17 tons for 4oz. 15dwt. per ton. 883. Mr. O'Sullivan.] In your report you say that up to the present time 488 tons of stone have been

crushed for a total yield of 869ez, of smelted gold? Yes. 884. Do I understand that that was not picked gold? No; that included all the crushings-all that

was sent to the mill, in fact.

885. You also state in your report that the field is about 800 feet above sea level, and there is every reason, therefore, to expect that in tertiary times the drainage from this area found its way to deep valleys and deposited therein the gold which was derived from the denudation of the reefs? Yes.

886. You mean, then, that there is alluvial gold at some depth? I mean to say that one would naturally

expect it. 887. It is possible, then, that some rich alluvial may be discovered there, though at some depth? Yes. 888. Something similar to Gulgong? Yes. At the same time I would point out that the discovery of alluvial there is a matter requiring a great amount of patience, because there are no surface indications to 889. guide one in looking for it.

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E. F. Pittman, 889. You allude in your report to the presence of mispickel? Yes.

890. Does not that indicate sulphurous atone? Yes; sulphur and arsenic.

Req., A.R.S.M. 891. It will cost a good deal to treat that kind of stone? Yes.

892. That, you say, will have to be treated by chlorination? Yes; mispickel is about the worst form of

ore to treat, even by chlorination. 893. Do the inclusions you refer to of country rock, known amongst miners as horses, indicate that the reefs there are what is known as shooty? No; the horse is merely an indication that when the fisaure was formed a piece of the country rock fell into it.

894. It may be a good gold-bearing reef all the same? Yes.

895. You also state that one of the characteristics of the Wyalong reefs is that they thin out and make again at intervals. What does that indicate? I think I have described that in my report.

893. Mr. Davies.] Have you examined the reefs at Temora? Yes.

897. And at Barmedman? No.

898. Then you cannot say whether the same reef or reefs are found at Wyalong? I think it is extremely

899. What is the character of the reefs at Temora are they granite walls? No; the Mother Shipton, which is of any consequence there, is a large reof occurring in diorite.

900. You seem to regard the field at Wyalong as a permanent one? Yes; I can see no reason why it should not be.

901. And you believe it will be a payable field? I think so.

902. Have you any fear of the reefs pinching out at 200 or 300 feet? No.

903. Not to pinch out and make again? They will certainly do that.

901. What depth will they go before they make again? The reef makes immediately it thins out. For instance, in Gorman's reef, at 90 feet from the surface, I found in the shaft a reef about an inch wide. Ten feet on one side it was 4 feet wide, and 10 feet on the other side of that it was 2 feet wide, as far as it had been opened, and was probably as wide again.

905. If the walls are granite it will be expensive working? Yes.

906. Still the returns, so far, indicate a payable field? Yes. 907. Which way do the reefs run? I observed three different courses, but the most common one is north, 20 degrees east.

908. Is that the best one on that field? Yes. There are also rich ones running east and west.

909. What is the greatest thickness between the walls of the reefs you have seen at Wyalong? Five feet.

910. Defined granite walls? Yes.

911. Do the walls seem to make as they sink? No; good walls are not a characteristic of the field—as a rule they are not well defined.

912. The widest reef, you say, is about 5 feet? The widest part of a reef I saw was 5 feet.

913. To what extent was that stripped? I saw it in the shaft—it was 5 feet wide for 3 or 4 feet in depth. They were sinking along it. Following it down to about 60 feet at the bottom of the shaft it was 4 feet wide, about 35 feet down it was 5 feet wide.

914. Was that all carrying gold? Yes; that was Neeld's prospecting claim.

915. Was that the deepest claim? No; Taylor's shaft is 107 feet, but the reef is not quite as wide.

916. How far is that removed from Neeld's? About half a mile.

917. Is that the same reef? I do not think so.

918. In consequence of that I suppose you have come to the conclusion that there are a large number of reefs running parallel? Yes.

919. Mr. Hoskins.] Did you observe any permanent water on the ground? No; there is none.

920. Therefore, all the water which will be required for domestic purposes as well as for crushing, will

have to be conserved there? Yes.

921. Mr. McCourt.] How long will it take to prove the permanency of the field beyond all doubt at the present rate of working? It depends on what you mean by proving. I cannot lay down an absolute rule. Take, for instance, Mount Morgan, which is not so good as it was, but I think every one will allow that it has been a permanent mine.

922. This field then may give out in a day, a week, or a month? I do not anticipate it.

923. You cannot place the matter beyond absolute doubt? No; I cannot go so far as to say it will yield so many hundreds or thousands of ounces. So far as my judgment goes it is likely to be permanent.

924. Would you be in a better position to say whether it will be permanent if you visited it in three or sir months' time? Undoubtedly.

925. And even then it would only be a matter of opinion, and that is all it can be? Yes.

926. Mr. Trickett.] You say that the gold is probably deposited by the percolation of thermal waters? Yes; by that I mean hot waters. The waters down some depth in the crust of the earth carry silica in solution.

927. Is the deposit upward or downward? It is supposed to be a lateral deposit.

928. How is the stuff which is being obtained from the mines being treated? By crushing and amalgamation.

929. Are they getting the gold out well by that means? Yes, I think so; although there has been no proof as to what they are losing in the concentrates and tailings. I do not think that the battery at Barmedman is sufficiently gold-saving to warrant the continuance of its use without the people knowing what they are doing.

930. Then you do not know whether the best means are being adopted for getting the gold out of the

quartz? No. 931. Your report indicates that as the field goes on the stuff will become much harder, and probably will have to be treated by the chlorination process? Yes.

932. Is that an expensive process? It is more expensive than amalgamation. It is the process adopted at Mount Morgan.

933. It is recognised there as being very expensive? Yes. They have got it as low as 19s. 6d. a ton, but as a general rule, it will cost more.

934. Do you think that this is likely to be a poor man's field? At present it is undoubtelly, because the 935. sinking is so extremely soft, and the gold is so very free and plentiful.

21 May, 1894.

964.

935. As developments make it more difficult to work, is it not probable that the population will fall off E.F. Pittman, Eaq., A.R.S.M. considerably? Possibly. I do not think it necessarily follows, because if it were in the hands of companies they would probably employ a large amount of labour.

935). Chairman. How many men were on the field when you were there? I could not say.

936. Were they leaving the field or not? There are always some leaving it. When I went there there were more leaving than coming, but I have seen since that the rush has recommenced.

937. Can you form any idea as to the number of men employed? That would depend on the class of men who went there. The people I saw coming away were those who expected to find gold on the surface.

933. Leaving them out, can you form any idea as to what population could be supported there by the present developed field? No.

939. Although you do not anticipate that the gold will get any less, you think the difficulties, after you get below 200 feet, will be increased? Quite so. They might be.

940. They might be so great as to make it not pay? It might be so. I would like to explain, however,

that the 200 feet is an arbitrary figure.

941. Do you not think that a gold-mine, with a railway within 39 miles of it, is fairly well served? Yes. 912. Did you ever know of any place where it was proposed to run a railway to a gold-mine upon its first starting-like Wyalong? I cannot say I have over known a similar case.

943. Were provisions dear when you were there? Extremely cheap.

944. Was there any difficulty in getting teams to and from Temora and Wyalong? Only in very wet weather.

945. Is it a fact that they have found a better route to avoid the gilgais? Yes; I came back that way myself.

940. And it would not be a great hardship for the people of Wyalong to travel over a road of that kind to Temora? I should think not.

947. Mr. Neild.] Is timber necessary in the present sinking? Yes.

919. Can it be got in the vicinity, or would the construction of a railway line facilitate the supply? There is plenty of timber in the vicinity at present, but how long it would last if the field were largely increased, I could not say.

Walter Shellshear, Eq., M.I.C.E., Divisional Engineer, Department of Railways, Goulburn, sworn, and

919. Chairman.] How long have you been connected with the Railway Department? Twelve years and W.Shellshear, Req., M.I.C.E. three months.

950. During the last year you have visited America, and reported to the Commissioners on the mode of working cheap lines of railway in that country? Yes; I left in August, and returned at the end of 21 May, 1894. December. I was accompanied by Mr. Parry, of the Traffic, and Mr. Howe, of the Locomotive Department. I was looking into the question of the construction and maintenance of roads, and other matters in connection with railway business. I was seven weeks in the United States.

951. What railways came immediately under your notice? I travelled over 7,000 miles, most of which belongs to short companies. All the American lines are in private hands.

952. Were any of the lines which you passed over what may be called pioneer lines? More than half the lines I passed over were of that character.

953. Was the nature of the country difficult or easy for the construction of railways? I went over every class of country. I was three times over the Rocky Mountains on different lines; then on the level country of the prairies. Then I went to the country on the delta of the Mississippi; also, on the black soil country in the cotton districts, and then I saw the first-class lines in the Eastern States.

954. I suppose the Rocky Mountain line would not be a very cheap one? I might explain that the great point with all their lines is the extraordinary amount of care which is taken with their surveys. When it is decided to construct a line between two points, the greatest possible care is taken to secure the best line the country can afford. The country is thoroughly explored. There is a class of engineers known as locating ongineers who undertake that work, and their value is estimated by the ease with which they get over bad country with easy grades and light works.

955. Are these locating engineers employed by the projectors on salary or by contract;—is there any inducement held out to them beyond their salary? I am not prepared to say. I believe in some cases

they contract to make the survey, and in other cases they are on a salary.

956. Is the black soil country pretty flat? It is practically level. 957. What does it cost them to construct lines in that country per mile? It is very difficult to get at any accurate cost, on account of the incidental expenses in getting their charters through and floating their stock. All the lines there are very heavily loaded beyond the actual cost of construction.

958. What is the gauge on the lines? The gauge in the States is now almost universally the standard-4 feet 81 inches. A large mileage of narrow gauge lines was constructed some years ago, but as fast as possible they are widening them to the standard gauge. For instance, the Rio Grande was on the 3-feet gauge, and they have widened it to 4 feet 81 inches, the object being to allow through communication between all the lines.

959. In the first instance, when developing new country, do they run out a line of narrow gauge, and subsequently when trade allows, widen it to the standard gauge? No; they seem to be completely set

against narrow gauges at the present time. 960. In constructing lines for the development of new country, do they make their works of a less stable character at first, with a view to improving them when traffic warrants it? As a matter of fact, their pioneer lines consist of a mound of earth, a few temporary trestles and wooden boxes, to carry them over the water-courses. The rails are closely timbered, the sleepers being close together. The lightest rails they use now are 50-lb. steel rails, but the general opinion of the engineers there is that nothing lighter

than 60 lb. is expedient on account of the weight of the stock. 961. How close are the sleepers? Sixteen to a 30-feet length, that is 2,816 per mile.

283—E

962. What is the average here? Eleven and 12 to a 30-feet length, or 1,936 and 2,112 to the mile. 963. Do I understand that the roadway is merely a mound of earth without any ballast? Ballast is quite unknown there until you get on the heavy traffic lines.

W. Shellshear, 964. What is the usual height to which the earthwork is made up? It varies very much according to the Esq. M.I.C.E. class of country, but you might assume that the rail level is about 18 inches above the ordinary surface. The object of keeping it up is to ensure good drainage, because without ballast it is absolutely necessary that

21 May, 1894 the road should be properly drained. 965. As a matter of fact, then, there are no earthworks brought from a distance, but merely the material taken from the gutters on either side to form the mound? Not strictly speaking, because they are very careful there not to have any heavy grades, on account of the excessively heavy trains running, and it is therefore necessary in some cases to bring earth from a distance.

966. What do they consider a good grade? About I in 150 on level country.

967. What is the ruling grade over the Rockies? Some of them are as steep as 1 in 25-that is exceptional.

968. And on the Rio Grande? In some parts 1 in 30, 969. Are any of the companies with heavy grade-lines expending money in cutting them out? As far as the Rockies are concerned the country has been so earefully explored, that they have got the best line the country can afford, but in the eastern states they spend vast sums in cutting out the grades, because

it is ruinous to haul the very heavy traffic they have there over the heavy grades.

970. Does that apply also to curves? With the American rolling-stock curves are a second consideration. Bogeys are entirely in use there, and their engines are beautifully equalised for running over rough roads. I travelled round curves as sharp as 51 chains on the Rocky Mountains in a 70-feet Pullman car. 971. At what rate of speed do their trains run over the black soil country? I am afraid the speed of the trains there is limited to the rate at which they can drive the wheels, because they run at an excessive speed on the worst possible road. Their bogey rolling-stock and their central-couplers enable you to travel over the road at high speed, which with the English pattern of vehicle it would be unsafe to do. 972. Is there a centre-buffer? There is no side-buffer. There is a central coupling and buffer, which

enables them to take the curves with perfect freedom, and at the same time mitigates the oscillation

common with a slack-coupled vehicle.

973. Is this a combination of coupling and centre-buffer, or are the two separate from each other? It is a combined device.

974. Do you think it is applicable to our railways? Unfortunately it is not applicable to our stock,

in which we have a large sum of money invested. 975. Presuming we were beginning afresh, would you advocate the use of such central-buffers and couplings? I would say they are incomparably better than ours.

976. I suppose it would be almost impossible to work the central buffer in connection with our present

stock? Almost impossible.

977. Did you come to any conclusion as to what one of these pioneer lines would cost per mile on the black soil country? Excluding bridge and culvert work and the permanent-way, it would come to £ 100 or £50 1—that is in putting up the mound. The permanent-way is worth from £1,000 or £1,100 per mile for a Galb. rail.

978. Are you allowing for the extra sleepers? Yes; and I have allowed for the extra strong fish-plate

which they use in America very largely. My estimate is exclusive of fencing and waterways.

979. What would the fencing add to the cost? About £100 per mile. 980. What sort of sleepers do they use? The sleepers are the great trouble in America - they are mostly pine and oak, but the life of them does not average more than six or seven years. Something like 15 per cent, of the total number of sleepers is renewed annually on their line.

9801. Do they spend as much labour upon them in squaring them as we do, or do they use them in a rough form? Some of them are sawn timber, and some of them are level on the two sides. The oak sleeper is simply a small tree levelled off at the top and bottom.

981. I suppose the mound is banked up to a certain extent on the sides of the sleepers? Yes; to an

inch over the centre of the sleepers, and rounded off on each side.

982. Do you know the country in the Narrabri district? No; but I know some of the country in the Richmond River district. It is about the same as the black soil country in America. 953. What about the rainfall on the black soil country in America? It is not so heavy as our coast

rainfall, but it is heavier than our up-land rainfall.

981 Is it an element of danger in washing away the mounds? Of course their roads very often do get washed away in heavy storms. 985. Do they travel over these lines at night-time? Yes; their engines are provided with a very large

lamp, almost amounting to a search light.

\$86 What do you consider a safe speed to run over a railway built on the system to which you have been referring? It depends upon what rolling stock you have upon it.

987. With our rolling stock? Twelve or 15 miles. Most of our rolling stock has been designed on the

English pattern, and it has not the elasticity or flexibility which the bogey stock has. 988. Does not the flexibility of the American stock give it a shorter life? I cannot say much about that. 959 As a matter of fact, it gets ricketty sooner than ours? The American engine, as a rule, has not the

life of an English engine, because it has not the same amount of workmanship in it.

990. Then, if one of our engines ran over a line of that kind, it would not be safe to go at more than 15 miles an hour? No. 991 At what speed could the American pattern of engine travel over it? I travelled up to 50 miles of

an hour. The roads were straight and level. 992. Do you know the Temora district? I have been to Temora, but not beyond it.

993. Do you think the country between Cootamundra and Temora easy country to make a line over? do not see any difficulty.

994. Would you think it possible to make a line between Cootamundra and Temora on the £1,600 a mile basis? No. It is a question of more earthworks than on the plains, and that means expense.

995. Is the black-soil country to which you have been referring free from obstacles in the way of scrub? It is densely timbered and swampy.

996. Do they find it safe in swampy country to make lines of the character described, and to run trains

over them at the speed to which you refer? They do it. 997. Have they many accidents? They have a large number, but in proportion to the business done t do not think you can call them excessive. You must remember that they move nearly 400 times the tonnage we do. America having half the railways in the world, you may reasonably expect to see half 998. the accidents in the world take place there.

593. On the 10th October, 1893, the Railway Commissioners recommended that, for pioneer purposes, W. Shell-hear, lines might be constructed at the rate of £1.750 per mile—that is exclusive of bridges, waterways, and lines might be constructed at the rate of £1.750 per infe-that is exclusive of integer, water and to of an accommodation; this estimate comes out somewhat similar to the one you have referred to of 21 May, 1804. lines over the black-soil country? The difference is that there is a certain amount of ballast allowed for in the Commissioners' estimate. I have not allowed for ballast in mine, but for a few extra sleepers to give the necessary bearing area for the read.

009. Mr Suttor. What is the general impression you have formed of these light lines in America; -are they serviceable? They carry very heavy traffic on some of the lines, and they certainly do a large amount of business, and with suitable rolling stock, I think, they are the best thing which can be devised for new countries. 1000. Mr. Collins.] Were you upon these lines during wet weather? I was on them during pretty heavy rain.

1001. Do the engines sink upon them? No.

1002. Do not heavy loads make any impression at all? Not to a serious extent. Of course, where the trallie is heavy it becomes necessary to ballast.

1003. Do you think it would be necessary to ballast pioneer lines in this country? Not for one or two trains a day running at the speed proposed if the lines are properly drained.

1001, Do their roads cost much for maintenance? There was difficulty in getting reliable information on account of the great trouble with the timber. Fifteen per cent. of the sleepers have to be renewed every year, and a large amount of the time of the fettlers is taken up in renewing sleepers.

1005. Is there much wool or stock traffic on those lines? It is mostly cotton lumber, and there is also a good deal of fruit, meat, and fish carried in refrigerating cars. There is a limited amount of live stock

carried.

1006. Are yards erected in which to put the live stock? Yes; cattle yards, the same as we have.

1007. Have they goods sheds? Yes, where necessary; but as a matter of fact, they run their lines through, and when they have constructed it they add these things as they require them at the terminal point. They are erected of timber.

1008. At what rate do they travel on the pioneer lines? Twenty or twenty-five miles an hour.

1009. What sort of bridges have they? Open tressle and wooden culverts.

1010. Mr. Humphery.] Are the lines in agricultural districts fenced? Where the stock is run then they fence the roads, because when they are not fenced they have to pay compensation for cattle killed. They fence when the cost of compensation becomes more than the value of maintaining the fence

1011. How do they arrange for taking up and setting down traffic? They run what we know as the American car, and they are provided with a flight of steps at the rear, so that people may step down upon the rail level. They have no platforms beyond a few planks to cover the side of the ditch. The trains stop at fixed points according to the time-table.

1012. Are there any waiting sheds? In some places. At others there is nothing but a signboard stating

that the trains stop there.

1013. Our timber being superior to that of the United States, would it be necessary to have a smaller number of sleepers than what they use there? If you do without ballast you must have close timbering, otherwise the sleepers will go down and the earth will come up.

1014. Presuming earthworks were made, are you of opinion that our lines might be built for less than £2,000 a mile? It depends on what creeks or waterways have to be crossed, and what earth works there

are. There is plenty of country in the plains where you could build lines at £2,000 a mile. 1015. And they would be suitable for agricultural districts? Yes; a line similar to what I saw over

there would answer every purpose of agriculture. 1016. Could you use upon those lines the ordinary rolling stock? At the speed of 15 miles an hour

erdinary rolling stock could be used. 1017. With what weight of rails? Nothing lighter than 60 lb.

1018. Mr. O'Sullivan.] Notwithstanding the heavy cost of replacing the 15 per cent. of the sleepers, the lines you refer to are worked cheaper per annum per mile than ours? No, not as far as maintenance

1019. I mean working expenses? I would not like to say they are; but most of them are doing a much charges are concerned. larger business than on our lines, and of course, you could handle a large business cheaper than a small one. 1020. But they employ a lesser number of men per mile than we do? No, they have rather more men

per mile on the maintenance of their roads than we have. 1021. I refer to the working of the line by porters and others attached to stations? Of course upon some of the lines absolutely no one is employed beyond the telegraph operator at wayside stations, but the

trains are heavily manned, because they carry their staff with them.

1022. I believe they trust a good deal to luck in the working of the lines? They have a system of rules

1023. Did you hear of any serious accidents there arising from the rivalry of different drivers employed by different companies in reaching certain points? No; because their rules define where they are to cross, and they are not allowed to go beyond the points which they are directed.

1024. I suppose the lines in the old settled States in the east are constructed as well as ours? Yes; the Pennsylvania road is equal to anything in the world as far as the condition of the road itself, works, stations, and rolling-stock are concerned. The New York Central is almost as good. 1025. Mr. Davies.] What is the cost of maintenance per mile on our existing lines? It varies. On the

outlying branch lines it is less than £100 per mile per annum. 1026. What would it be per mile in the black soil country of the States? The disturbing element of the cost of the renewal of sleepers comes in. The maintenance runs to about £150 per mile, but you have to consider the enormous number of sleepers they have to renew.

1027. Supposing cheap pioneer lines were constructed here, what would be the probable cost of their maintenance? Not more than £100 per mile per annum until the sleepers commenced to decay.

1028. What is the life of one of our ironbark sleepers? From seventeen to thirty years. I have taken

many up perfectly sound after thirty years' service. 1029. You would not anticipate any great additional expenditure in respect of sleepers? No.

1030. Will your visit to America result in a reduction in the cost of maintenance here? There are very many points over there which are suitable in this Colony, and which will result in a decided saving in the maintenance of the lines.

W.Shellshear, 1031. In ballast or sleepers? More in matters of detail in connection with working and management. Esq., M.I.C.E. 1032. Is there any line in our system which would compare with the one you spoke of near Mississippi ? No; there are many lines I travelled over which would compare more with the Junee to Hay and the 21 May, 1894. Jerilderie line.

1033. Where? On the prairies.

1031. You believe branch lines could be constructed here at a cost of only £2,000 per mile? That is

exclusive of fencing and waterways. 1035. Mr. Hoskins.] Supposing it is desirable to make pioneer or light lines here, would it not answer instead of having squared sleepers to have them half round with notches for the rails to rest upon? Half round sleepers such as you describe would be cut out of small young timber. Our ordinary sleepers are cut out of mature large size timber, and as a matter of necessity they are much sounder and more durable than the sapling timbers. It would be a question whether you could get those timbers sufficiently cheap to make it pay to have one or two renewals of them as compared with the life of one first-class

1036. What is the average cost of the square ironbark sleeper? We are paying from 4s. to 5s. 3d, for

9 feet ironbark sleepers.

1037. What would half round sleepers, with a notch to bear the rails, cost? Where you have to bring timber from a considerable distance it would always pay to use the best you can get. Where you run a line through a timber country where there is a suitable class of sapling for half round sleepers it might pay to use them, but considerable allowance would have to be made for additional cost of maintenance on account of the speed at which they rot. The life of half round stuff is nothing like the life of the solid

matured ironbark. 1038. Supposing they cost 1s. only, and the others cost 4s., and you renewed them twice, you would be a gainer? You would be a gainer, no doubt, in that case; but it would be a question of transferring the

charge from the capital to the maintenance.

1039. The object of having pioneer lines being to have a cheap means of railway locomotion, would not

the half-round sleepers answer the purpose for some time? Undoubtedly.

1040. Did you see any of the Baldwin engines, similar to those you have here, in America? I saw some similar, and some a little bigger. 1041. Was any special danger considered to attach to running them over the light lines of railway? They

run them over there without quibble.

1042. Is it not a fact that they construct railways there with heavy grades as well as light? I have travelled over railways there with grades of 1 in 25. Speaking from memory, the rails were 65-lb. rails. The sleepers were spaced at 2,816 per mile. In some places the line was ballasted, and in some places it was not.

1043. Mr. McCourt. Do heavy Baldwin engines run on the cheap lines in America? Yes.

1014. What is the weight of the engine and tender? Up to 90 and 95 tons. The tendency in America is to run excessively large engines on all lines. I have seen as many as three or four engines on one train with as much weight as it could stagger under.

1045. Mr. Hoskins.] But is not the weight equally distributed so that there is no inordinate weight on one pair of driving wheels? That is the great point about the American construction. The spring-gear is almost perfect, so that it is impossible to get any excessive weight in any one part.

1046. Mr. Trickett.] Did you see any of these lines being constructed? No.

1047. Are they constructed very quickly? Yes, as a rule. They have special scoops for taking out the side ditch and forming it, and they put on large gangs for the construction of the road.

1048. Would these scoop appliances be suitable for this country, where there are so many stumps? Yes, just as suitable as for other countries.

1049. Would the tressle bridges be suitable for this country? Yes; in fact our timber being so much

better, we should get a better job.

1050. Do you think you could safely recommend these light lines of railway for a trial here? Yes, in many parts of the country. If we do not do something of the sort the railways will simply swallow themselves up with the interest you will have to pay on the capital. 1051. Would Wysleng be a suitable road to try it on? I have not been over the country; but the

western plains is a class of country where they could be tried to great advantage. 1052. Mr. Neild. I understand that the banking up of the earth on the American lines covers the sleepers

in the centre, and leaves the end exposed? Yes.

1053. Do you think that the necessity for renewing the American sleepers is due in any way to the laying of the sleepers upon earth and covering them with earth? Not necessarily. My remarks with reference to renewals apply equally to the ballasted roads. The life of the timber is very short, even in the ballasted roads.

1054. Supposing the same method of covering the sleeper with earth were adopted in this country, do you

think it would affect the life of our sleepers? Not materially.

1055. But timber lying on a good bed of sound ballast would surely last longer than timber laid on soil, or covered with soil? But the object of that particular form of mounding up is for drainage, and tho timber, under these conditions, is not like timber more or less sodden in the ground.

1056. Are not our lines constructed very much on the plan of the American lines - are not water tables

formed, and a bed raised upon which the ballast is raised? Yes. 1057. Does not that give you practically the same drainage as the American system, plus the superior drainage of your ballast? The difference is that if you put ballast upon a new embankment, when you start to run, that ballast sinks into the embankment, and the embankment forms a dam which holds the water in it. In many cases, if the line has been in use a little time the ballast gets completely destroyed for drainage purposes by the amount of material which gets forced through it.

1058. Are we to understand that the method of forming water-tables and embankments in America is superior to our method of construction? It is superior for that particular class of construction. For instance, in soft country their width of cutting is 24 feet for a single line; the width here is 15 feet.

1059. Supposing you get into self-draining country, how then; -would the American method of roadmaking compare with ours, apart from ballast? The two methods are practically one and the same, apart from the question of ballast.

1000.

1060. You spoke just now of the ballast settling down into the soil; -when one of our lines is thoroughly W.Shellshear, consolidated does that proposition apply? You are dealing with a consolidated concern, and not with a Esq., M.I.C.E. pioneer line. If you have heavy traffic ballast is essential, because with an earth-road the action of the traffic in wet weather will churn it into a state of puddle, but where you run one or two trains a day, the 21 May, 1894.

ballast, according to their experience, is unnecessary. 1061. Were you not able to arrive at any conclusion as to the cost per mile of the pioneer lines, apart from the flotation and other expenses? It would depend upon the class of country—from about £,2000 in the easy country to £3,000 or £4,000 per mile, according to the amount of earthworks.

1062. You do not think there would be much constructed on a 4 ft. 81 in gauge in America under £2,000 per mile? I do not think there would be any of it constructed under that amount.

1063. I want to ascertain the practicability of using split sleepers from the matured tree without squaring, but treated in the manner indicated by Mr. Hoskins, namely by grooves being cut with a machine upon which to lay the rail? A sleeper of that sort, provided it was of equally as good quality as a finished sleeper, should have almost a correspondingly long life unless the fibre was opened out in the action of splitting.

1064. And it would be less expensive? I do not know, because the extra weight of it would add to the

cost for the carriage and handling.

TUESDAY, 22 MAY, 1804.

Bresent:

JACOB GARRARD, Esq. (CHAIRMAN).

The Hon. WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR.

The Hon. JAMES HOSKINS.

The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY.

The Hon. John Davies, C.M.G.

The Hon. WILLIAM JOSEPH TRICKETT.

WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq.

WILLIAM McCourt, Esq. JOHN CABII NEILD, Esq.

EDWARD WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN, Esq.

CHARLES COLLINS, Esq.

HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Thomas Rhodes Firth, Esq., M.I.C.E., Acting Engineer-in-Chief, Railway Construction Branch, Department of Public Works, sworn, and examined :-

1065. Mr. Suttor.] You have seen the evidence which Mr. Deane gave before the Committee? Yes. T. B. Firth, 1066. Have you anything to add to his evidence, or any information to give which you think would Esq., M.I.C.E. strengthen it? I do not know that I have. No information has come in from the surveyors since Mr. 22 May, 1894. Deane was examined which would alter his evidence in any way.

1067. Have the surveyors examined the line since Mr. Deane gave his evidence? They were at work

when Mr. Deane was examined, and they are still out there.

1068. How many surveyors are there out there? Four-Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Calvert, Mr. Gillet, and Mr. Cummings.

1069. Have you any information as to the probability of the line paying? That is a question which I have not gone into; I have left it entirely to the Railway Commissioners and the Committee. We simply carry out our instructions.

1070. Mr. Humphery.] Have you formed an estimate of the probable cost of the line? I have gone into

Mr. Deane's estimate, and I do not see any reason to differ from him.

1071. Have you any personal knowledge of the country? No; I have not been beyond Temora. 1072. What is the lowest estimated cost of a pioneer line through comparatively level country? I think such a line could be made for about £2,500 a mile—that is, if we got the rails carried at low rates. The Commissioners usually charge 2d. per ton per mile, unless they get return freight. If they charge at

reduced cost there would be a saving of £150 a mile. 1073. How is your estimate of £2,500 per mile made up? I have estimated for earthworks, including box-drains, bridges, level-crossings, and a very small portion of fencing, £486 per mile; for permanent-

way material, freight, laying, ballasting, and sleepers, £1,490 per mile. 1074. Chairman.] What would the weight of the rails be? They would be 60-lb. rails, thus making a total of £1,976 as the cost of the line alone. Then, for station buildings, water supply, and supervision, I allow £455 per mile, and adding 5 per cent. for contingencies, the total cost comes to £2,553 per mile. 1075. Mr. Humphery.] What have you allowed for freight? Two hundred and fifty-five pounds per mile. I have assumed that we shall get the rails from the last indent, which is at a much lower rate than we have got them before, and indeed, the lowest rate at which they have been delivered in the Colony. 1076. Then, without freight, and excluding the cost of station buildings, &c., your estimate comes to about

£1,700 per mile? Yes; about that. 1077. Mr. O'Sullivan.] I think you heard the evidence given yesterday by Mr. Shellshear? Yes. 1078. I presume that what they have done in America in level country, your Department could do here?

1079. That is, making allowance for difference in conditions and circumstances? Yes; there is no reason

1080. Have you noticed the low estimate given by the Commissioners for the line as a pioneer line? Yes; and I believe that the reason why the Commissioners' estimate is lower than ours, is that they propose to deliver the rails for from £3 to £3 10s. a ton, while they would charge us £2 8s. a ton for freight alone. 1081. Three pounds or £3 10s. a ton includes the cost of the rails? The cost and everything. We

have a little over £3 a ton more to pay for our material than they offer to deliver it at. 1082. But that would not make up all the difference? Then they propose to leave out ballast, which would come to £300 a mile, and would make a difference of about £20,000 in the whole estimate,

1083. Making these allowances, your estimate is practically the same as that of the Commissioners?

1084. What the Commissioners would do for their own line they ought to be prepared to do for a Departmental line? Yes.

22 May, 1894.

T. R. Firth, 1085. If they did so your Department would construct the line as cheaply as they propose to construct it?

Esq., M.I.C.E. Yes; within a few pounds, if they supplied satisfactory material at the price they name. 1086. I presume that such a line would fit in well with the character of the country round Wyalong? I suppose it would. It would carry a light, slow-speed traffic. I believe they intend to supply old second-

hand rails. 1087. Where will they get them from? They would be rails which they are now taking up as unfit for

heavy traffic. They would get their rails for nothing.

1088. Those rails would be available for your Department if the proposed line were authorised? Yes; the Commissioners have made such an arrangement in connection with the line from Narrabri to Moree, and it becomes a question whether they would have a sufficient number of rails for the two lines, supposing

that both were being constructed at once. I am not sure that they would.

1089. Was the line from Nyugan to Cobar constructed as a pioneer line, or as a strong line to form part of the railway to Broken Hill? It was first intended to be a light line. Then, at the request of the Commissioners, the gauge was altered from 1 in 75 to 1 in 100. After the work had been going on for about nine months, I went up there, and I found that, owing to the wet weather, miles of the line had been washed away, and the ground was so soft that you could not walk on it. I made arrangements for the embankments to be raised out of the wet, and the subsoil to be drained by a drain on each side. That work, of course, has increased the cost of the line very considerably, but now we have a good line, and one that will stand in almost any sert of weather.

1090. Can you recollect what the additional cost of the line was above the contract price-something like

£40,000 was it not? I think it was quite that.

1091. That line would not be regarded as a pioneer line? Not now.

1092. But even at first? To some extent it was. It was to be a cheap line, but the gradients were kept

down, having in view the possibility of its becoming the main line to Broken Hill.

1093. Do you think that if a pionoer line were made to Wyalong, you would have to go over it and strengthen it? That is very likely. In these flat districts, once you make an embankment by depositing ballast, you stop the water which runs over the surface, even though the volume of water is so small that you cannot see it, and this water washes the embankment away. The ground is so flat that you cannot get enough fall to drain the line unless you raise up the embankment. If the embankments are made on the surface of the ground, we must naturally expect them to be washed away after heavy rain.

1004. But they have similar deluges in America? Yes; and I suppose with similar results.

1095. Anyhow they find it safe enough to work these light lines there? We hear nothing of trains being delayed every week or two. Such a line might work here for twelve months without being stopped. 1096. If the line were carried out on the estimate supplied by the Commissioners, it is quite probable that

it might be worked for a considerable time without any alteration at all? Yes; it might be. 1097. Mr. Davies.] Would such a line carry ordinary traffic at a slow rate of speed? Yes, during fine

weather.

1098. The rolling-stock used on the main lines could be used on the line you have been speaking of? Yes; such a line would carry any of the ordinary rolling-stock, provided the Commissioners did not use very heavy engines upon it. 1099. How much ballast did you allow for? Seven-and-a-half inches deep; that is, 5 inches under the

sleeper in the middle, and 21 inches up the sides.

1100. Is that in excess of what Mr. Deane allowed? No; it is just the same.

1101. Is not 3s. 6d. a yard a very high estimate for ballast? I do not think so. I have not been over the line, and I do not know where the ballast would be got from; but the price would be rather a low one, if the ballast had to be carried any distance. We generally pay 4s., 4s. 6d., and 5s. a yard for ballast.

1102. Is not Is. 6d, a very high price for laying the road? I do not think so. We must bear in mind that that includes the cost of taking material right through from Temora, spiking the road, lifting and straightening it, curving the rails, re-drilling fresh holes in rails, and a lot of contingencies. 1s. 6d. is the cost of laying the rails alone, apart from the ballast.

1103. Is not the cost of sleepers very high? Until the present time, we have never had them delivered at the price named; but we are getting some delivered at Narrabri station now, for 2s. 6d. They, how-

ever, have yet to be taken on to the line. 1104. Are you aware that the estimate for half-round sleepers in connection with the Moree line was about 1s. 6d.? I never heard of that estimate; I do not know who made it.

1105. It was made by Mr. Deane? I think there is some mistake about that.

1106. These are dressed sleepers that they are getting for 2s. Gd.? No; half-round sleepers, dressed on the bottom side.

1107. You do not regard the prices as excessive for a cheap line of railway? No; I do not.

1108. Would you advocate the construction of lines, such as Mr. Shellshear described yesterday? I should not.

1100. More especially in our black-soil country? I should prefer to put ballast under the sleepers in any kind of country. I think that in wet weather the sleepers must work into the soft material. Apparently, in America, they put them so close together that they really make a corduroy road. Even then they must work into the soft mud.

1110. You would use ballast in preference to an additional number of sleepers? Yes; the additional number of sleepers referred to by Mr. Shellshear would cost £142 per mile, while the ballast would cost £308. 1111. So that the saving would not be very great? There would be a saving of about £150 a mile in

first cost.

1112. But the cost of maintenance would be heavier? Much heavier, and I think stoppages would be

much more frequent.

1113. While traction over a properly-formed road would be safer? Yes. I may say that we have altered the shape of our formation from the original drawings, in order to give it more drainage. We have always had a convex surface to the formation; but now we have sloped the sides more, so that the ballast may be even better drained.

1114. Do you think that the present rolling-stock could be run over a line costing £1,700 a mile, at a rate

of 15 to 20 miles an hour? Yes, up to 20 miles an hour.

1115. Is the Temora line fenced in on both sides? Yes; but in the estimate for the Wyalong line very little fencing is allowed for. We should probably have to fence, in cases where the line went through 1116. private allotments and round the station yards.

1116. Are you aware that it is contemplated that the trains shall only run in daylight? I am not aware T. R. Firth, that the Commissioners will be bound down to running their trains in daylight; but I suppose that Eq., M.I.C.E. restriction would be advisable by the want of fencing.

1117. Would there be any occasion for fencing, if the trains ran only in daylight? Of course, the want 22 May, 1891.

of fencing always increases the danger of running trains.

1118. Would there be much danger if the trains only ran at the rate of 15 miles an hour? Perhaps not much danger; but still there would be some.

1119. More than there is with our street-trams? Of course, there is danger with them; but then we do not have cattle running about the streets here.

1120. You do not know anything about the Wyslong gold-field? No. 1121. You do not know whether it is desirable to construct a line? No.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS. Railway from Temora to Wyslong.

APPENDIX.

[To Evidence of H. Deane, Esq.]

ESTIMATED Cost of a Single Line of Railway 38 miles 46 chains in length, with 72 chains of Sidings -60-lb. rails.

Description.				Estimated out.			Average per mile.	
Earthworks Box drains and timber bridges Level crossings				£ 11,677 5,563 1,000	7	0 6 0	£ 303 144 26	
Permanent way materials Ballasting, at 3s. 6d. Laying, at 1s. 6d. Sleepers, at 3s.	891	2 18	0	34,578		0	896	
Station buildings £4, works 3, Sidings, 72 chains 1,	750		0 0 0	28,545	10		740	
Supervision and engineering expenses				9,770 4,821 3,000 500	17 0 0	0 6 0 0	253 125 77 13	
Contingencies, 5 per cent.				£99,456 4,972			129	
				£104,429	10	8		
Average cost per mile		,		£2,707	3	8		

If the quotation for rails lately received can be made use of, the estimate can be reduced by about £150 per mile-£5,786 5 0 H.D., 9,4/94.

[To Evidence of C. J. Saunders, Esq.]

RETURNS OF LAND ALIENATED BETWEEN COOTAMUNDRA AND TEMORA AND BETWEEN TEMORA AND WYALONG.

RETURN showing land alienated within 20 miles on each side of the Railway from Cootamundra to Temora since the date on which the construction of the Railway was authorised by Parliament, viz., 25 September, 1890, and the average price obtained.

	Area	Average price per acre.	Total amount that may ultimately be realised.
Taken up under ordinary conditional purchase and conditional lease Taken up under conditional purchase within special areas Country lands sold at auction Town and suburban lands sold at auction	1,941 ,,	£ a. d. 1 0 0 2 0 0 2 15 0 23 10 0	£ 34,500 70,000 5,322 3,390
Total area alienated	71,585 acres		£113,212

Nors. -It has been assumed in this return that land conditionally leased will eventually be converted into conditional purchases at £1 per acre; this, however, is a privilege which may or may not be exercised by the conditional leastholders. Payments for conditional purchases are made by instalments extending over a period of thirty-three years with interest payable on the outstanding balances.

C.J.S., 20 April, 1894.

RETURN showing land taken up between Temora and Wyalong since the passing of the Contamundra to Temora Railway Act, viz., 25 September, 1890, within 20 miles on each side of the proposed route; and the average price obtained.

	Area	Average price per acre.	Total amount that may ultimately be realised.			
Taken up under ordinary conditional purchase and conditional lease Taken up under conditional purchase within special areas Country lands sold by auction	041 12	£ s. d. 1 0 0 2 0 0 1 15 0 76 5 0	£ a d. 83,839 0 0 40,910 0 0 1,121 15 0 915 0 0			
Total area alienated	104,947 acres		£126,785 15 0			

Norma-it has been saumed in this return that land conditionally leased will eventually be converted into conditional purchases at £1 per acre; this, however, is a privilege which may or may not be exercised by the conditional leaseholders. Payments for conditional purchases are made by instalments extending over a period of thirty-three years with interest payable on the outstanding balances.

In

APPENDIX. $\mathbf{2}$

In reply to a question from the Under Secretary for Lands as to whether the construction of the railway line from Cootamundra to Wagga Wagga has had the effect of stimulating settlement on the land in the vicinity of the line, Mr. William Orr, the district surveyor at Wagga Wagga, reports as follows :- "The construction of the Cootsmundra-Temora railway had very powerful effect in stimulating settlement in the vicinity. Settlement commenced soon after line was mooted, and out of six hundred and fifty-six conditional purchases made during last four years at least five hundred were made owing to railway. The town, Temora, increased by about eleven hundred persons during same period, and Crown derived full benefit improved prices of land alienated."

"Since April, 1890, the date on which the Public Works Committee recommended the construction of the Cootamundra to Temora railway, an area of about 87,000 acres, previously included in reserves within 20 miles on each side of the railway line, has been made available for selection, of which about 67,000 acres have been selected up to date. About 10,000 acres of this area were thrown open to ordinary selection at £1 per acre, and the residue in special areas at prices averaging about £2 per acre."

C.

RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

· Proposed extension of the Cootsmundra-Temora Branch Line to Wyslong.

Office of the Railway Commissioners of New South Wales, Sydney, 11 May, 1894. In reply to your letter of the 29th March, I am directed by the Railway Commissioners to inform you, for the Sir. information of the Secretary for Public Works, that they have, at the carliest possible moment (having regard to other pressing matters of business), inspected the proposed extension from Temora to Wyalong.

It is estimated that the line should, if constructed as a pioneer line, as described by the Commissioners, in a paper dated the 10th October, 1892, and referred to in their Annual Report for the year ending June, 1891, be made, and all

necessary accommodation provided, at a cost of £85,000.

The estimated annual cost would, under these circumstances, he :-£3,400 Interest on estimated cost of construction at 4 per cent. Estimated cost of working :-Traffic expenses £800 Permanent-way expenses 2,000 £3,550

As regards the probable revenue, really nothing definite can be stated. In railway construction the proposal, from a traffic point of view, is unique, as the future entirely depends upon the permanency of the gold-field at Wyalong, which it is understood is the basis of the extension. There is country adapted for agricultural purposes around Wyalong, and en route thereto, but there is no present necessity for providing it with railway communication, while there are large areas suitable for the purpose contiguous to existing railway lines available.

The present population of Wyalong (about 5,000) cannot be accepted as any indication of the future. Everything there at the present may be said to be in an abnormal condition, as was the case at Peak Hill, where, it is understood, there were, when the field was first discovered, 12,000 people, the present population being 1,500; however, basing the estimate of traffic on the assumption that there will be a permanent settlement at Wyalong, to the extent that now exists at Temora-about 1,800--the value of the annual revenue will not exceed £2,800.

In view of the great uncertainty of the future of Wyalong, the Railway Commissioners recommend that the proposed extension of the Cootamundra-Temora branch line be deferred for six months, or until such time as there can be

no reasonable doubt as to the future of the place.

I am to add that the Commissioners have ascertained that both passengers and goods are being carried at reasonable rates between Temora and Wyalong, and therefore no hardship would be consequent upon the postponement auggested.

To the Under Secretary, Public Works Department.

H. McLACHLAN, Secretary.

£6,950

Submitted. J.B., 12 5,94. Forward to the Public Works Committee. - W.J.L., 12 5,94.

Extract from Annual Report of the Railway Commissioners for the year ending 30th June, 1891.

We would suggest for consideration in dealing with railway extensions in districts like Jerilderie and Deniliquin, Narrabri and Morce, Byrock and Brewarrina, where the country is practically level and the traffic will be very light, that lines to be designated "Pioneer Railways" be constructed at a cost of about £1,750 per mile, exclusive of bridges and land (which latter we hope can be dealt with as suggested on page 7), the trains to be worked at a speed of about 15 miles per hour, and during daylight only. Later on, when the traffic has developed, and will justify the class of line being raised, a capital vote to be granted as to make the line capable of carrying the traffic under the same conditions as on other parts of the railway.

NARROW-GAUGE RAILWAYS.

Office of the Railway Commissioners of N.S.W.,

Sydney, 10th October, 1892. To the Honorable the Minister for Railways. As the Public Works Committee, in dealing with the Eden-Bega Railway proposal, has been taking evidence with regard to the introduction of narrow-gauge lines into the Colony, and as the question is of such vital importance, we

deem it our duty to place before the Government clearly our views upon the whole question of narrow-gauge lines. If the question had to be settled afresh as to what the gauge for railways in Australia should be, the whole gauge question might, perhaps, be open for discussion; but now New South Walce has practically over 2,500 miles of the universal gauge open or under construction, the introduction of a break of gauge within ourselves could only be looked upon as a national calamity. The fact that the various colonies have departed from uniformity of gauge is already causing grave

inconvenience. We may mention that the question of the adoption of narrow-gauge lines in this Colony was thoroughly considered about 1870, and we think that a perusal of the evidence and facts produced at that time should satisfy everyone as to the

wisdom of adhering to the decision then arrived at of not departing from the 4-ft. 81-in. gauge.

There is a grave misapprehension in the minds of many people in regard to the comparative cost of narrow-gauge and standard gauge lines, and this has been brought about by comparing the cost of narrow-gauge lines remain the ordinary gauge without consideration of the difference between the character of the lines constructed. If a narrow-gauge line and an ordinary-gauge line were made through the same district under the same conditions as to weight of rail, amount of ballast, &c., the difference in the cost per mile of the two systems would be much smaller than is generally thought. A Royal Commission, which reported upon Irish Public Works in the year 1888, and which was composed of some of the ablent men in the country, gave the difference between the relative cost of a 3-ft. and 5-ft. 3-in. gauge (the Irish gauge) estimated on a length of about 200 miles of railway, as about £500 per mile. The New South Wales gauge is the standard gauge, 4-ft. 81-in., and the difference in cost would, therefore, not be so considerable. Sir George R. Bruce, the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1890, in a discussion before the Institution in that year, estimated the difference in connection with the metre (3-ft. 3-in.) and standard gauge (5-ft. 6-in) of India at about £200 per mile, assuming, of course, that the construction was of a light character in each case.

But when we come to consider that the introduction of the parrow gauge would necessitate the creation of a new class of rolling stock, and would add very largely to the cost of transhipping of goods, the saving thus effected would be practically extinguished by these additional costs and disadvantages. In the daily working of a narrow-gauge

line

APPENDIX.

3

line there is a far heavier cost in wages per ton of traffic, as the men employed on the locomotive engines and the guards would have to be paid the same wages as on the ordinary-gauge road, although the load that could be hauled would be very much less, and at a lower speed, this latter point also causing a greater staff to be employed. The engines would also be of a smaller character, and the smaller wheels, and consequent greater friction, would lead to greater cost in repairs and consumption of fuel. Rolling stock to meet the maximum traffic of each branch would have to be provided, and a great proportion of this would probably be lying idle for the greater part of the year, as rolling stock could not be drafted from other parts of the system to meet the exceptional pressure of the busiest times, as the standard-gauge road would intervene. There would, therefore, be an unnecessarily large amount of rolling stock provided, which would be standing idle for a great part of the year, and this would in itself be a considerable set-off against any reduced cost in the original construction of the line.

With regard to the cost of transhipping, in the division of through rates in England where break of gauge intervened, an allowance of 20 miles was granted to the company that undertook the transferring of the traffic from the vehicles of the one gauge to the other. In England wages are low as compared with those given in this Colony; in fact, our wages are more than double those paid in England. Practically, therefore, we should be adding at least a cost equal to the conveyance of goods an additional 40 miles on all traffic so transhipped. As bearing on transhipping, nearly the whole of the traffic carried on any connecting narrow-gauge line would have to be transhipped, as there is very little purely local traffic on our country lines; nearly the whole of it is live stock, wool, or produce for Sydney or Newcastle, and merchandise sent

in the reverse direction.

In a new country it is impossible to foresee the great changes which may come about even in twenty years; therefore it would be most disastrous to introduce sections of narrow-gauge lines. In England, the last of the exceptional gauge on the Great Western Line was swept away in May last, and in North America nearly the whole of the narrow-gauge lines have been abolished and converted to the standard gauge, until at this moment 94 per cent. of the lines in North America

are of the same gauge as in this Colony.

That the country is right in insisting on cheaper railways where it is a question of "a railway or no railway," there is no doubt; but it would, in our opinion, be absolutely wrong to introduce a different gauge from the standard gauge. We do not think it is practicable or desirable to construct a subsidiary trunk line, or a line likely to convey any amount of traffic upon it, on cheaper principles than that carried out in connection with the Cobar line, the cost of that line, including all construction charges, being about £3,300 per mile. There is no doubt, however, that for purely pastoral and level country, where the traffic would be exceedingly light, a line capable of carrying a light locomotive with the ordinary class of rolling stock, at a speed of about 15 miles per hour, in daylight only, could be constructed, exclusive of bridges, waterways, and station accommodation, which latter should be of the most simple nature, for about £1,750 per mile, money being voted ater on, when the traffic had increased sufficiently to justify a better class of line, to raise the line to the ordinary standard. This could only be considered a " Pioneer Railway," and would be altogether different from a standard railway line even of light construction, such as that to Cobar; it would be simply a line to carry traffic with reasonable speed at a lower rate of charge than it is now carried by road. The rates for such lines, on whatever scale fixed, would bring about a material saving to the users of it as compared with the rates now paid for carriage by road, and the scale of charges fixed should be such as to avoid any material loss to the country in connection therewith. Lines of this character would avoid the great disadvantage of break of gauge; they would cost scarcely anything more in the first instance than a narrow-gauge line, and the whole of the ordinary rolling stock, exclusive of engines which could be selected from the lightest types existing in the Service, could pass over them.

In summing up the whole question, we think we cannot do better than to quote the words of the Royal Commission

on Irish Public Works in connection with the subject, viz. :-

"We are persuaded that if the outlay which is required on a narrow-gauge line to provide for extra rolling stock, repairing shops, transhipping sheds and cranes, be deducted from the additional first cost of constructing the line on the standard gauge, the excess will disappear or be very largely reduced, and if the annual expenses and permanent drawbacks, to which we have referred, be set against any additional interest on the balance, the result will show that there is no real saving in adopting the narrow-gauge for extensions in Ireland. The inconvenience of two gauges has already been felt, but in our opinion it will become more and more serious, and will greatly detract from the value of the extensions both from a public point of view and considered as the property of those who make them."

E. M. G. EDDY,
Chief Commissioner.
CHARLES OLIVER,
Commissioner.

D.

[To Evidence of John Harper, Esq.]

PROJECTED RAILWAY-TEMORA TO WYALONG.

New South Wales Government Railways, Goods Superintendent's Office, Sydney, 23 April, 1894.

Projected Railway—Temora to Wyalong. Length, 39 miles. Estimated cost, £104,000, including station buildings. As directed by the Commissioners, I have traversed the course of the proposed line, and made such inquiries as were necessary as to probable traffic and accommodation.

I may incidentally remark that owing to the extremely unsettled opinion which prevails as to the permanency of the gold-field, and the abnormal influx of population which its discovery has introduced to the district, any estimate of traffic is extremely subject to future conditions of settlement, which at present can scarcely be gauged on anything like good grounds.

Although the proposal submitted to the Commissioners simply embraces the extension to Wyalong, and the facts and figures I have elicited are confined to the area of country likely to be served by this extension, it is, I understand, proposed to form part of a scheme of railway construction to Hillston on the Lachlan via Lake Cargellico, the distance being:—

Temora to Wyalong Wyalong to Cargellico Cargellico to Hillston	38 67 54	50	
Total	160	0	

The more direct route, Temora to Hillston via Barmedman, is 150 miles. The only existing township between Temora and Wyalong is Barmedman (22 miles) which has a population of between 300 and 400 engaged in mining and

agricultural pursuits in a small way. The country is almost exclusively devoted to pastoral pursuits.

In the Barmedman district 78,000 acres have been taken up by about forty selectors, but the total area which has been cropped only amounts to 1,235 acres, and this with uncertain results. The production last year was about 9,000 bushels of grain. The country is thickly timbered with worthless scrub, belah, box, mallee, with isolated clumps of pine and rather inferior ironbark, and is necessarily expensive to clear; so that although some of the soil is good, the uncertain rainfall and initial expenses of preparing the ground for the plough does not appear to promise very speedy agricultural settlement.

The following list of annual rentals paid by lessees of country through which the line passes will in some degree serve to illustrate its value for pastoral purposes:—

Upper Wyalong	1,20 d. 1	er Bere.
Upper Wyalong No. 2	1,2,d.	19
Upper Wyalong No. 3.	ld.	55
Buddigower	ugu.	**
Mandamah	Hand.	17

There is at present a population of about 5,000 or 6,000 on the gold-field, and it is claimed that it will continue to support a population of about 1,000 or 1,500 for some time to come. Up to the present the yield of gold has been under 1,000 ounces.

Estimate

Estimate of Traffle.

As I have stated, the abnormal influx of population, accompanied by stores and building material, causes even an estimate of the traffic taken to Temora to be an uncertain guide. During the seven months ending March the sectional sarnings of the Temora branch have amounted to £5,830; but it must be borne in mind that this period not only embraced the whole of the wheat and wool seasons, but also the unusual traffic of the gold-field.

The wool and wheat alone yielded nearly £11,000 of through earnings, and whilst the average number of passengers per month during October, November, December, and January booked to Temora was only 182, it reached 1,695 during

March, and the goods tonnage also doubled itself.

For the purposes of my estimate of goods traffic, given under the most favourable circumstances, I propose to consider Wyslong as a town which will carry a population of 1,500 people (Temora is said to contain 1,800), and allot a proportionate goods and passenger traffic to that dealt with at the latter station during the normal condition of its trade, and taking into consideration its outlying natural business as a distributing centre.

The clips of wool as per list attached embrace all that it is likely to carry, and possibly more. I have extended the area likely to come in for between 40 and 50 miles from the proposed station site at Wyalong in a north-westerly direction,

towards the Lachlan, in order that the proposed line may have the full advantage of any possible traffic.

Of course our competitive rates on the South-western will always tend to induce these clips in that direction, especially in view of local rates on the Temora branch. I have also allowed 250 trucks of stock, but as this is not a fattening country the estimate is more than liberal. The allowance of about thirteen passengers per day, based on a triweekly service is also ample. I have allowed for 2,000 tons of wheat.

The rates on goods are based on an extension of existing Temora rates, and assuming that the existing truck rate of

£32 10s. will be increased proportionately.

Inwards to Wyalong—	Goods Traffic.			a	
1,100 tons @ 2d. per ton per mile, 39 miles 6s. 6d. per ton. 600 tons @ 4d per ton per mile, 39 miles 13s	Inwards to Wyalong-				
22 miles @ 2d., 3s. 8d. per ton for 238 tons 22 miles @ 4d., 7s. 4d. per ton for 192 tons Ontwards ex Wyslong— 6,700 hales wool and sheep skins, 1,100 tons, 39 miles at 3d. per mile, 9s. 9d. 1,000 tons wheat @ 9d. per ton Ontwards ex Barmedman— 3,600 bales wool, 600 tons, 22 miles @ 3d. per mile 5s. 6d. per ton 1,000 tons wheat @ 6d. Coaching Traffic. Mails Passengers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each 500 1st @ 5s. each 100 0 0 125 0 0 127 0 0 137 10 0	1,100 tons @ 2d. per ton per mile, 39 miles bs. od. per ton				
22 miles @ 2d., 3s. 8d. per ton for 192 tons 70 8 0 Ontwards er Wyslong— 6,700 hales wool and sheep skins, 1,100 tons, 39 miles at 3d. per mile, 9s. 9d. 1,000 tons wheat @ 9d. per ton Outwards er Barmedman— 3,600 bales wool, 600 tons, 22 miles @ 3d. per mile 5s. 6d. per ton 1,000 tons wheat @ 6d. Coaching Traffic. Mails Passengers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each Soo 1st @ 5s. each. Parcels, &c. Live stook, 250 trucks, 11s.	Inwards to Barmedman—	52	16	0	
6,700 bales wool and sheep skins, 1,100 tons, 35 miles at 3d. per mile, 3s. 3d. 1,000 tons wheat @ 9d. per ton 3,600 bales wool, 600 tons, 22 miles @ 3d. per mile 5s. 6d. per ton 1,000 tons wheat @ 6d. Coaching Traffic. Mails Passengers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each 500 1st @ 5s. each. Parcels, &c. Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s.	22 miles @ 4d., 7s. 4d. per ton for 192 tons				
Outwards ex Barmedman—	6,700 bales wool and sheep skins, 1,100 tons, 38 miles at 3d. per mile, 3s. 5d. 1,000 tons wheat @ 9d. per ton	536 37			
Coaching Traffic. Mails Passengers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each 500 1st @ 5s. each. Parcels, &c. Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s. Coaching Traffic. 468 0 0 125 0 0 125 0 0 137 10 0	Outwards ex Barmedman— 3.600 bales wool, 600 tons, 22 miles @ 3d. per mile 5s. 6d. per ton	165			
Mails Passesugers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each 500 1st @ 5s. each Parcels, &c. Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s. 468 0 0 125 0 0 125 0 0 100 0 0 137 10 0					
Passengers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each 500 1st @ 5s. each Parcels, &c. Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s. 300 0 0 125 0 0 100 0 0 137 10 0	Coaching Trattic.				
Passengers— 1,500 2nd @ 4s. each 500 1st @ 5s. each Parcels, &c. Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s. 300 0 0 125 0 0 100 0 0 137 10 0	Maile	468	0	0	
1,500 2nd @ 4s. each	Pagengers-	000			
800 1st @ 5s. each	1.500 2nd @ 4s. each			_	
Parcels, &c	800 let @ Sa. each	120	_	_	
Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s.	Parcels &c.	100		_	
	Live stock, 250 trucks, 11s.	137	10	0	
			19	0	

D 1. LIST OF STATIONS THE WOOL OF WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE TRUCKED ON PROPOSED WYALONG RAILWAY.

Name.	Estimated Bales Wool.	Remarks.	Name.	Estimated Bales Wool.	Rema	irks.
Sarmedman	468	Trucked at Barmedman	North Yalgogren .		Trucked at	Wyalong
V. Mandamah	164	33 51	Merringreeu		12	91
Spper Wyalong, No. 3		57 21	Youngara Creek		22	9.9
No. 2		11 11	Wollengough	234	31	11
ildary	292	Doubtful.	Ungarrie	The second secon	11	31
luddigower	402	Trucked at Barmedman	Euglo		11	
lack Creek and Nobby's		11 11	E D-b Co	. 121	11	
Lagoon			Bygalore	341	11	39
Vest Bland Plains	463	11 11	Nariah	348	11	11
he Bland	011	Donbtful.	Malonga	276	21	33
urraboorarama	0.00	11 17	Tr	48	- 11	
Jpper Wyslong	00.4	Trucked at Wyalong.	Wargambega	72	11	P
Billabong	675	11 11	Wooyeo	444	51	99
ake Cowal	1.019	11 12	FTables	288	11	21
Youngee Plains	195	77 11				
Bolygamy	140	11 12	Total			

E.

[To Evidence of H. McLachlan, Esq.]

PASSENGER TRAFFIC BETWEEN COOTAMUNDRA AND TEMOBA.

Government Railways of New South Wales, Secretary's Office, Sydney, 17 May, 1894. Sir, During the course of my examination before the Committee yesterday, questions were asked with regard to the passenger traffic between Cootamundra and Temora on the days the railway was not open; and I submit hereunder copy of a wire from myself to local station-meater, together with reply in regard to the same.

As bearing upon the exceptional traffic created by the Wyalong rush, I may point out that in January of the present year the total bookings of passengers from Sydney to Temora was 43, but in March the traffic was 708. This is

again dropping down, as from the 1st to the 16th of the present month 141 passengers only have been booked. I have, &c.,

H. McLACHLAN,

The Secretary, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Sydney.

Secretary.

Telegram from Secretary to Station-master, Contamundra.

REPRESENTED there is considerable coach traffic between Cootamundra and Temora on days train is not running; four regular coaches said to be running. Please wire facts at once.

Telegram from Station-master, Cootamundra, to Secretary.

Re coach traffic between Cootamundra and Temora, -No coach running, only double-seated buggy on days train does not run; no accommodation whatever for passengers as all room taken up by mails. Not the slightest foundation for the representations made.

F.

[To Evidence of E. F. Pittman, Esq., A.R.S.M.]

REPORT BY MR. EDWARD F. PITTMAN, A.R.S.M., ON THE WYALONG GOLD-VIELD.

Geological Survey, New South Wales, Department of Mines and Agriculture, Sydney, 10 May, 1894.

Sir, I have made a geological examination of the Wyalong goldfield, and have the honour to hand you the following report :-

Situation.

The Wyalong goldfield is situated on the Wollongough Road, about 40 miles in a north-westerly direction from the terminus of the railway at Temora.

Topographical and Geological Features.

The country where the gold has been discovered consists of level plains covered with dense mallee scrub, and occasional belts of ironbark and box, while at long intervals are seen low ridges covered with cypress pine.

The surface of the plains consists to a depth of 2 feet or 3 feet of red and black clayey soils, of Pleistocene age, with

ironstone pebbles and occasional subangular fragments of quartz.

The pine ridges in the vicinity of the Government township of Wyalong are formed of hard rocks, consisting of normblendic granite, diorite and felsite, with slates, sandstones, and quartzites, the three latter probably of Upper Silurian age. The hornblendic granite, the diorite, and the felsite appear in the form of intrusive dykes, which have burst through, tilted, and transmuted the slates and anndatones, while the diorites and felsites have also intruded the granites. Some of the sedimentary rocks in the surveyed township are garnetiferons; and, generally speaking, it may be said that the rocks over this area show great evidence of metamorphism. About two miles west of the main camp there is a low ridge upon which there is an outcrop of solid micaceous granite. A large lode of quartz with much tourmaline occurs here, and contiguous to it is a narrow belt of pure mica schist. There is another outcrop of solid micaceous granite about 31 miles north of the Main Camp, near the north-west corner of conditional purchase portion 4, Gagie's selection. In the granitic rocks, hard, white, irregularly-shaped nodules of magnesite (carbonate of magnesia) are occasionally found.

Immediately underneath the two or three feet of Pleistocene clay, which form the surface of the plains, decomposed granitic rocks occur; and herein is one of the most interesting features of the gold-field, for whereas the rocks forming the pine ridges are all of a very hard nature, the decomposed granitic rocks underlying the plains are so soft that no explosives are necessary for mining operations, and all the work of excavation has hitherto been easily done with the pick and shovel. These decomposed rocks are of various shades of grey, yellow, brown, and red, and while some of them have evidently been micaceous granites, others are probably decomposed felsites and hornblendic granites, the brown or red colour being caused by the peroxide of iron resulting from the decomposition of the hornblende. It is also probable that the felsites and horn-

blendic granites are of later age than the micaceous granite.

The decomposition of these granitic rocks over such a large area, and to a very considerable depth, is a matter of much interest. It may probably have been caused by oft-recurring inundations of the plains during Pleistocene times. The flood-waters were probably never more than a foot or two in depth, so that the low ridges where the hard rocks still occur were not covered or affected, and as the surface of the granite on the plains became gradually softened by the action of the water and of the atmosphere, successive flood-waters carried down into it carbonic and other acids in solution until the decomposition reached a considerable depth.

Mode of Occurrence and Character of the Reefs.

The reefs are found underneath the Pleistocene deposit in the surface of the decomposed granitic rocks, where they generally appear as narrow threads, which widen out as they are followed down. Occasionally, however (as in Pettaford's claim, Stanley's Blow and others), they are found to be of considerable width at the surface, and as a rule they are then found to thin out, and eventually "make" or widen again as they descend. In fact, the reefs of this district are of the variety known as lenticular reefs, such as are commonly met with in granitic rocks. The quartz has been deposited in fissures in the granitic rocks by the percolation of waters carrying silica in solution. The lens-like form which the reefs have in section is due to the fact that when crystalline rocks such as granites are fractured, the resulting fissure follows a more or less curved, rather than a straight line, and as the fracture is accompanied by a movement downwards of one of the walls, the resulting fissure will consist, not of a space between two planes, but of a series of more or less regular lensshaped spaces. The formation of these reefs can best be illustrated by laying a sheet of paper on the table and drawing the point of a sharp knife across it in an undulating line, so as to separate it into two portions with curved edges. If one of the curved edges be then moved along the other, several lenticular spaces will be formed.

One of the characteristics of the Wyalong reefs therefore is that they "thin out" and "make" again at intervals, and this variation in width may be expected as a recurring feature in their horizontal course, as well as in their downward

extension.

The general course of the reefs is about north 20 degrees east, and as a rule they have an easterly dip. In and around the Main Camp there appear to be at least eight approximately parallel lines of reef following this course. A few others, however, have a north-easterly course, while a few others again, such as The Pioneer, The Dead Rabbit, Bolte's Reef (on Bolte's selection), Saunder's Reef, &c., strike about east 20 degrees north, and have a northerly dip.

Some of the reefs, notably those in Stanley's and Pettaford's claims, are of solid white quartz, containing a considerable amount of mispickel (arsenical iron pyrites), but as a rule they consist of more or less vesicular quartz, much stained

with peroxide of iron, and easily broken down with a hammer and gad.

Many of the principal reefs, such as those in Neeld's prospecting claim (Mallee Bull line), Gorman's shaft and others,

are characterised by a considerable amount of black oxide of manganese.

Mispickel is of common occurrence in most of the reefs, and in Neeld's prospecting shaft (Mallee Bull line) small quantities of galena and iron pyrites were also seen. Gold can be seen in a considerable number of the reefs. It is mostly of a fine character, and has the appearance of having been set free by the decomposition of pyrites. In several of the recis, such as Bolte's, Conway's, &c., ironstone nodules occur. These nodules when broken in two are each seen to consist of a nucleus of mispickel (arsenical pyrites), surrounded by an envelope of limonite or brown iron ore (resulting from the decomposition of the mispickel), in which fine gold can be seen freely. In one instance the kernel of one of these ironstone nodules was found to consist of finely crystallised gypsum.

The greatest width observed on the field was in Neeld's prospecting shaft (Mallee Bull line) where, at a depth 35 feet, the reef has a thickness of 5 feet for a short distance, where a change of dip occurs. In Stanley's Blow the width of the reef at the bottom of the shaft is nearly 4 feet, and a similar width was observed in Gorman's reef at a depth of 90 feet. In the latter case, however, it was found that in a horizontal distance of about 10 feet the reef had pinched to a few inches, while on the other side of this point it was making again rapidly. Speaking generally, the reefs may be said to vary in width

from an inch or two to several feet.

Inclusions of country rock, known amongst miners as "horses," are of common occurrence in these reefs, and

"faults" or "heaves" are also frequently met with.

There is one instance on the field of a reef occurring in a belt of slate. The reef referred to is situated rather more than a mile in a southerly direction from the surveyed township. The belt of slate is here very narrow (about 20 feet wide), and is bounded by dykes of diorito. In the prospector's claim this reef was 15 inches wide, and showed good gold. In Doyle's claim, adjoining the prospector's, on the north it had a width of only 10 inches, at a depth of 6 feet from the surface, but appeared to be very rich; while in No. 2 north, Gritten and Party, auriferous stone had also been struck, the reef appearing as a narrow thread and widening out as it descended.

This belt of slate or a parallel one extends through the surveyed township of Wyalong, and is surrounded by intrusive rocks, which have separated it from the main body of sedimentary rocks, the western boundary of which may be

Outlying Discoveries.

During my visit a rush occurred at a place called the Nine-mile, in the parish of Hiawatha, county of Gipps, about 9 miles in a north-cast direction from the Main Camp at Wyalong. Several roofs were discovered here, but very little work has been done upon them. One of these reefs (Gagic's claim) showed good gold, but was cut off by a fault, and they are now driving with the object of recovering the lost or heaved portion of the reef. This reef was also characterised by the occurrence of the nodules of limonite, containing kernels of mispickel, which have already been described. The reefs at the Nine-mile rush occur close to the junction of the main body of sedimentary rocks (just referred to) with decomposed granitic rocks similar to those at Wyalong. Gagic's reef and several others are in the latter formation, but other reefs have also been found in the slate. A small patch of tertiary drift (probably pliocene) consisting of well-rounded pebbles of metamorphosed rocks, occurs on the side of a small ridge at the Nine-mile rush.

On Lange's selection, portion 11, parish of Wyalong, about 4 miles west of the Main Camp, a vertical reef having a width of 4 feet, has also been discovered in similar decomposed granitic rocks. I was informed by the owners, West and Party, that specimens showing gold had been taken down to Sydney from this reef, but on the occasion of my visit I could

not see any. Comparatively little work has been done on this reef pending the granting of a permit to mine.

About 2 miles north-cast of the surveyed township of Wyalong a reof (the Little Darling) has been discovered by Barker and Party. This was 6 inches wide just beneath the surface, and showed good prospects. Here again, and for a further distance of at least 2 miles eastward, the country consists of the same decomposed granitic rocks covered by pleistocene clays.

About 2 miles to the south of Wyalong on George Bolte's conditional lease, portion 21, parish of Wyalong, is another reef showing good gold. This reef, which is being worked in the prospecting claim by Bolte and Party, bears cast 20 degrees north, and dips north 20 degrees west at an angle of about 44 degrees. It is nearly 3 feet wide in places, and

prospects well. The formation in which it occurs is again the same decomposed granitic rocks.

Extent of Auriferous area already prospected.

It will thus be seen that the area in which auriferous reefs have already been proved to exist in the same soft rock extends for at least 7 miles in a north and south direction, by a similar distance cast and west. Only the central portion of this area, or about 1 equare mile, has been anything like systematically prospected; while the outlying discoveries, such as the Little Darling Reef on the extreme cast, the Nine-mile Rush to the north-cast, West and Party's reef on Lange's selection to the north-west, and Bolte's reef on portion 21 to the south, appear to point to the probability of many other auriferous reefs existing within the area bounded by them.

Difficulties in the way of Prospecting.

The outlaying reefs just described must not be regarded as the ascertained boundaries of the gold-bearing area, but merely as the extreme limits to which prospecting had been carried at the time of my visit. The extremely level nature of the country and the occurrence of a continuous surface covering of pleistocene clays renders it a very difficult matter to define the limits of the auriferous area. In fact it is only by digging costeaning trenches or sinking shafts that the presence of reefs can be discovered, and hence it is that prospecting on this field becomes purely a matter of patient and careful work, there being little or no surface evidence to guide the miner.

Credit is undoubtedly due to the Neeld family for the manner in which they have developed the field. They came there without any experience in mining, and their success must be entirely attributed to their industry and determination. The method followed by them was to break and examine any fragment of quartz which they saw on the surface, and whenever they saw colours of gold in the stone they sank through the 2 feet or 3 feet of clay or soil. In most instances they succeeded in finding the reef immediately below, and in this manner they become the owners of some of the most promising

reefs at Wyalong. Their example might be advantageously followed by many men whom I saw on the field.

Conditions of Mining.

It has already been stated that, with one exception, viz., where an auriferous reef occurs in slate country, the Wyalong reefs are found in decomposed granitic rocks, and these are so soft that no explosives are required for mining purposes.

In addition to being very easily excavated this decomposed rock appears to "hold" fairly well, or in other words,

does not require a very great amount of support in the shape of timbering.

It is evident, therefore, that at present the reefs are being worked under the most favourable conditions for

economical mining.

The question as to the limit in depth to which these decomposed rocks may be expected to extend is one of considerable interest, as it will influence in no small degree the future of the field. In Taylor's shaft, which at the time of my visit had reached the depth of 107 feet, no perceptible difference could be observed in the character of the country rock, nor had the reef shown any alterations worthy of note, beyond the variations in width, which have already been alluded to as characteristic of all the reefs on the field. Moreover, I was informed that in a shaft which had been sunk on a selection 4 or 5 miles distant from Wyalong a depth of 192 feet had been attained without striking water, and without getting below the limits of the decomposed granitic rocks. It may fairly be assumed, therefore, that the same favourable conditions as those under which the reefs are at present worked will obtain to a depth of about 200 feet. But, on the other hand, there can be little doubt that the decomposed rock will eventually give place to hard granite, and when this is reached the cost of excavation will be a very much more expensive matter. In addition to this, when the hard rock is reached, it is probable that water will be met with to some extent, and the gold will be found (partly, at any rate) in a more or less complex ore. Much of the gold showing at present has the appearance of having been set free by the decomposition of pyrites, and, therefore, it is fair to assume that below the water level roasting and chlorination, or some analogous process, will be required for its extraction from the sulphurous ores.

Mention has already been made of the level nature of the country at Wyalong, and the covering up of its geological features by a uniform deposit of pleistocene clays. Owing to these conditions the discovery of old river valleys or alluvial deposits is rendered even more difficult than the discovery of new reefs. Judging by the shafts already sunk, the bed rock appears to come within a nearly uniform distance of the surface around the Main Camp, and there does not seem to be a very good prospect of alluvial drifts being discovered in the immediate vicinity. The field, however, is about 800 feet above sea level, and there is every reason, therefore, to expect that in tertiary times the drainage from this area found its way into deep valleys and deposited therein the gold which was derived from the denudation of the reefs. The search for these old valleys will probably require time and patience, but in the meanwhile it appears to me that one of the most likely looking outlets, viz., between the 16-mile tank and Doyle's claim (south of the surveyed township) has been scarcely prospected.

There is, I think, little doubt that the hornblendic rocks may be regarded as the immediate source of the gold at Wyslong. The hornblendic granites, as well as the diorites, are probably of later age than the micaceous granites and sedimentary rocks, which they have burst through in the form of dykes. These emptive rocks when in a molten condition probably carried a small proportion of gold from great depths, and it was subsequently leached from them and deposited in the reefs by the gradual percolation of thermal waters. The occurrence of such hornblendic rocks in proximity to gold-bearing reefs is characteristic of New South Wales gold-fields.

Up to the present date 488 tons of stone from Wyalong have been crushed for a total yield of 869 oz. of smelted gold.

Summary.

In conclusion I may state that while the Wyalong reefs may all be expected to vary considerably in width, I can see no reason why they should not be persistent in depth. On the other hand at a depth of 200 feet or thereabouts the decomposed rocks in which the reefs are now being worked may be expected to give place to solid granite, and it is obvious that the cost of mining will then be materially increased, while the gold will probably be more difficult to extract.

In the meanwhile a considerable number of reefs have been proved to contain gold, which should certainly be payable while the present conditions of mining obtain, and there seems to be every reason to suppose that the auriferous area will be considerably extended.

Preparations were being made for the erection of three batteries at Wyalong when I left the field.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD F. PITTMAN, Assoc. R.S.M., Government Geologist.

The Under Secretary for Mines and Agriculture.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

SECTIONAL COMMITTEE

RAILWAY FROM TEMORA TO WYALONG.

REPORT.

THE Sectional Committee appointed on the 11th April, 1893, to inspect and take evidence and report on the proposed railway from Temora to Wyalong have the honor to report to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works:—

That the Committee, accompanied by Mr. Surveyor Kennedy of the Railway Construction Branch, left Sydney by train at 9 p.m. on Wednesday, 11th April, and arrived at Temora at 9.30 the following morning. From Temora they immediately continued their journey by special coach to Barmedman which was reached shortly before 3 p.m. The Committee opened their inquiry at the Court-house, Barmedman, at 7.30 on the same day, when the evidence of local witnesses, which was generally favourable to the construction of the proposed railway, was taken. The Committee left Barmedman for Wyalong early on Friday, 13th April, and arrived at the Government township at 1 p.m. During the afternoon they visited what is known locally as the Main Camp, where most of the present population is located, that place being in close proximity to the principal mines. They were afterwards driven through the outlying district and inspected a number of the more important claims. At 7.30 p.m. the Committee held a meeting at Spring's Hotel, Government township, when witnesses from Hillston and Cargellico were examined, adjourning at 9.30 p.m. until 10 a.m. the following day. The Committee accordingly met at Jacob & Co.'s store, Main Camp, at 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 13th April, and examined several working miners and a number of local and district residents. It seemed to be the general opinion of the witnesses that the mines would give employment for a considerable population for some time to come, and that if the land around Wyalong were thrown open for selection and the railway extended to Wyalong a great deal of land would be put under cultivation. The members of the Committee were driven to the New Rush where new discoveries had been made during the previous week, and they met again at 9.30 a.m. on Monday, the 15th April, at Spring's Hotel, and examined Mr. Plumb, who intends erecting crushing machinery upon the field, and Mr. Cassin, a prominent resident of Barmedman, at present engaged in mining operations at Wyalong. Both these witnesses were in favour of the proposed extension. At 2 p.m. the Committee commenced the return journey to Barmedman. They stayed the night at Barmedman, and left there early on Tuesday morning for Temora. A meeting was held at the Court-house, Temora, at 2.30 p.m., and the evidence of local Government officials showed that the settlement of the district was increasing and that it had received considerable help from the opening of the railway from Cootamundra.

Since the proposed line, after leaving Temora, follows the main road very closely almost all the way to Wyalong, the Committee were able to form a good idea of the nature of the country traversed by it, which presents no engineering difficulties. The country through which it passes is very slightly undulating, covered for the most part with box, and a close scrubby undergrowth with occasional belts of belar and pine until near Wyalong where the mallee is reached. There are also in places clumps of ironbark which if suitable for sleepers will be easily accessible. The soil is mostly a rich red loam, and, according to a report by the Agricultural Department upon a sample

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sample submitted to them by Mr. Surveyor Kennedy, of high chemical and mechanical value. Most of the land which is not in the occupation of large pastoralists under lease has been taken up in blocks of from 2,560 to 7,680 acres, the latter being what are called family selections. Smaller holdings are the exception, because owing to the distance from market and the low price now obtained for wheat it has not been found profitable to cultivate much more ground than will produce sufficient for local requirements; the settlers have consequently turned their attention almost entirely to the raising of sheep. The road travelled by the Committee, although broken in places, is fairly good as far as Barmedman, but would not carry continuously heavy traffic in wet weather. The same may be said of the road between Barmedman and Wyalong, with the exception of about 2 miles, where it passes through gilgai country and is dangerous for wheel traffic. Owing to the sticky nature of the soil it is extremely heavy after rain. It is understood that the Roads and Bridges Department have put in hand the formation of corduroy roadway through the bad country, work which is rendered necessary by the ceaseless traffic to and from the gold-field.

Temora, the present terminus of the western Cootamundra branch railway, came into existence with the discovery of gold on Temora station, and is now supported by the settlement which has continued after the exhaustion of the alluvial deposits, and the failure of the few reefs which were regarded as likely to be payable. Since it was decided to extend the railway to Temora, there has apparently been a steady progress in the business of the town and the development of the surrounding district. Local statistics disclose the fact that during the last twelve months the population of the place has grown from 1,500 to 1,700, while the area under wheat has some-

what increased and is still increasing.

The first place of any importance that the proposed railway will serve is Barmedman, a small township 23 miles from Temora. Some years ago, the discovery of gold-bearing quartz there led to the expenditure of considerable sums upon mining operations in its immediate neighbourhood, and the erection of a crushing plant of 25 stampers, which is now used principally in crushing stone sent to it from Wyalong. The town, however, has until recently been supported chiefly by the surrounding stations and selections.

Wyalong, which will be the temporary terminus of the proposed extension, can hardly yet be called a town, although buildings are being speedily erected in all directions. It has at present a population of about 5,000. With regard to its prospects as a gold-field, the evidence of experienced miners confirms the opinion freely expressed by local residents and endorsed by the Chief Inspector of Mines, that even should no further discoveries be made, remunerative employment will be found for upwards of 1,500 people for a considerable time to come, though sufficient work has not yet been done to enable anyone to speak confidently as to the permanency or otherwise of the reefs. So far eight parallel reefs have been discovered, distributed over an area of about a mile in width by 5 miles in length. Further discoveries have also been made at a place called the New Rush, 7 miles to the north of Wyalong, though as the reefs there have not been opened up to any extent the character of the find remains doubtful. Rumoured discoveries have also been made in other directions. In the mines in which the reef has been followed to any depth the stone has been found to be of varying thickness, though in no case does the reef exceed 2 feet in width, the average being from 8 to 12 inches, and the crushings have produced from 2 oz. to more than 4 oz. a ton. About 200 tons have been carted to and crushed at Barmedman up to date, and have yielded 670 oz. of gold. It is expected that a similar quantity of stone which is now at Barmedman awaiting treatment will give even better results. The soil in and around Wyalong is similar to that which has already been described, and it is estimated that it could be cleared and put under cultivation at a cost of from 30s. to 40s. per acre. Much of it, if available, would be readily taken up, and it is thought that many of the miners would form homesteads, and thus even should Wyalong not prove to be a permanent gold-field, an industrious and desirable class of selectors are likely to become permanently settled near the recently surveyed township. It may be incidentally mentioned that the prices of provisions in the district are very moderate, so that the cost of living is less than in the metropolis.

Although the discovery of gold, and the sudden rush of large numbers of people to Wyalong have brought about a great development of trade in the district, it would be premature under existing circumstances to construct a railway simply to serve Wyalong.

The Committee are of opinion that the proposed grade of 1 in 100 could be obtained with scarcely any cutting, that sleepers could be procured near the line at a minimum cost, and that the railway is one which could be very cheaply constructed. Having regard to these considerations and to the agricultural and pastoral capabilities of the country which the proposed railway will serve, the Committee feel justified in recommending its construction, if viewed as a section of a main line to the Lachlan at Hillston, via Cargellico; but they consider that the question of ultimate extension to the Lachlan should first be decided. Unless it be the settled policy of the country to extend the Cootamundra-Temora branch to the Lachlan, the Committee feel that their recent inquiry would not justify them in recommending the immediate adoption of the proposal now under consideration.

In connection with their suggestion that the proposed line should only be constructed as part of the main railway to the Lachlan, the Committee would point out that much of the traffic from the stations beyond the Lachlan now going to Whitton and Carrathool passes into Victoria, and does not appreciably swell the returns of the New South Wales railways.

In conclusion it may be added that witnesses whose holdings would be affected by the railway, readily assented to the equity of applying the betterment principle to the properties thereby benefited.

F. T. HUMPHERY, Chairman.

Sydney, 24 April, 1894.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM TEMORA TO WYALONG.

[TAKEN BEFORE THE SECTIONAL COMMITTEE.]

THURSDAY, 12 APRIL, 1891.

[The Sectional Committee met at the Court-house, Barmedman, at 7:30 p.m.]

Present:-

The HON. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY (CHAIRMAN). WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq. HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Sectional Committee proceeded to consider the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Henry Beccroft Copeland, Esq., Crown Lands Agent and Clerk of Petty Sessions, sworn, and examined:-

1. Chairman.] What is your position in the public service? I am Crown Lands Agent and Clerk of Petty

Sessions at Barmedman. 2. How long have you occupied that position? Since the 22nd of September, when the Lands Office was

Copeland,

Raq.

12 April,1894.

first opened here. 3. And previously to that? I was Land Agent at Tarce for three years.

4. Then before last September you knew nothing of this district? No. 5. Can you tell us how much land is in occupation between Temora and Barmedman, and, say, within a radius of 10 miles of Temora? There is very little land open for selection between here and Temora. My district commences 6 miles this side of Temora.

6. Well, what settlement is there between Temora and Barmedman? With the exception of a few small blocks, the whole of the land within 5 or 6 miles of the proposed railway on each side is occupied.

7. Has it been taken up in large holdings? As a rule the holdings are large; there are some which have

been taken up as special areas of 320 acres, but as a rule they are 2,560 acres. 8. Is there much settlement beyond Barmedman in the direction of Wyalong? No selection has taken place along the proposed line from Barmedman to Wyalong, except in one or two instances where people have taken up land within about three miles of the line.

9. Have you been over the selections between here and Temora? No.

10. Can you speak as to the settlement which has taken place here? No, only as it is shown on the map. 11. You do not know from your own observation whether the land is being used for agricultural or for pastoral purposes? I could not say, though the Police Stock and Crop Report for the Barmedman Division would give a fair idea as to how the land is being used in this portion of the district.

12. Will you be good enough to give us the figures that have been collected? The area of freehold and conditionally purchased land is 49,291 acres. That is, in the police district.

13. Mr. Wall.] Is the police district comprised in your land district? Yes.

14. Chairman. Between what points? I cannot speak for certainty as to the area covered by the police district.

15. You cannot say how many miles it goes west and north of Barmedman? Not with certainty. 16. Will you tell us the boundaries of your district? It starts six miles from Temora, and extends south to the parish of Mimosa; then north by west through Buddigower, Drumston, Mildil, Bolvgamy, Hiawatha, Wyalong, Mugga, Back Creek, and Binabulla; and is bounded on the east by the Bland Creek down as

far as the parish of Moonbucka, and so south. 17. Mr. Wall.] How far east of Temora is Bland Creek? About thirty-two miles from the southern boundary of my district. The number of acres under wheat in the district is 1,235, producing 9,072 bushels. The total area held under conditional lease and pastoral lease is 201,315 acres.

18. Chairman.] Can you separate the pastoral leases from the conditional leases? There are five pastoral

leases, containing 133,500 acres.

19. The rest of the land is conditionally leased? Yes.

20. What stock is raised on the conditionaly leased land? I cannot say; but the totals are, 534 horses, 1,262 head of cattle, and 145,391 sheep.

21. You cannot say how many sheep are owned by the pastoral lessces? Yes, 92,565.

22. Can you give us similar information with regard to cattle and horses? Yes; there are 140 horses and 650 head of cattle on the pastoral leaseholds.

23. The balance would be on the selections? Yes.

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24. How much land has been taken up in your district since you have been here? Eight conditional purchases, having an area of 1,658 acres, and seven conditional leases, having an area of 3,796 acres, or altogether 5,454 acres. The total amount of revenue collected between the 22rd of September, 1893, and the 31st March, 1894, amounts to £9,458 15s. 9d. According to the census returns, the number of sheep in the district is 194,466. 25.

H. B. Copeland, Esq. ~ 12 April,1894.

25. Have you been over the country between Barmedman and Wyalong and Wyalong and Lake Cargel lico? I have been from Barmedmen to Wyalong; but I only know the country along the road.

26. Mr. Wall.] The proposed railway passes right through your district? Yes.

27. What is the distance from your north-east boundary to the proposed line? About 30 miles,

28. And from your south-west boundary? About the same distance.

29. Can you furnish the Committee with any information as to the approximate quantity of land available in your district within 20 miles of the proposed line? Of course, all the leaseholds will be available next year.

30. Is the whole of the land marked white on the plan leasehold land? Yes.

31. Do you know whether preparations have been inade in the district, since the construction of the railway to Temora, to bring land under cultivation? Only from hearsay. 32. What is the nature of the information which you have received? Several selectors have prepared

land to grow wheat next year, and others are extending their area. 33. Have any large contracts for clearing been let in the district, to your knowledge? Not to my knowledge.

34. This is not essentially a wheat-growing district at present? No.

35. The area under cultivation does not represent the maximum contained in any one conditional purchase? No.

36. Can you tell the Committee how much of the resumed portion of the runs it represents? No; I

cannot.

37. The area is not indicated on the map? No; of course the conditional purchases and conditional

leases have been taken out of the resumed area.

38. You are not in a position to say what amount of land in your district, within 20 miles of the proposed line, is available for conditional purchase - that is, irrespective of the pastoral leaseholds? Comparatively speaking, very little. Since I have been here I have had several inquiries for land situated within the leasehold area.

39. Have you any information about a gold-mining reserve of 50,000 acres in the vicinity of Wyalong?

Yes.

40. Before the land was reserved was it available for selection, or has it been taken out of the leasehold area? Within the parish of Wyalong the land was open for selection.

41. Then this reservation locks it up? Yes.

42. I suppose you are aware that the Lands Department propose to reserve a mile on each side of the proposed line from Temora to Wyalong? The land has been reserved between Temora and Barmedman. 43. But between Barmedman and Wyalong? There will be no need to make a reservation, because the railway will run through the leasehold area.

44. Does the amount of revenue which you have just given us represent the total annual payments, or are there any arrears due in respect of conditional purchases? Some of the payments are due and over-

due; but, as a rule, the land has been paid for up to date.

45. Mr. Dawson.] In what position was the land at Wyalong before the reservation? The parish of Wyalong was open for selection. 46. That is 50,000 acres? Yes.

47. Has this been a favourable season for wheat here? I should think so; but I could not speak from my own knowledge, because I know nothing about it.

48. The season has been fairly wet. Do you know whether the crops were spoiled? I have not heard of such a thing.

49. Do you not think that an average of 71 bushels to the acre is very small? I could not say,

50. If this has been a fair season, and the average crop has been less than 71 bushels to the acre, it would not pay to sow wheat here? The rain only came after Christmas, when the wheat crop was finished. 51. The small yield to the acre may be the reason why there are only 1,235 acres under cultivation here? Well, that is all the land under cultivation. I should like to add, in regard to a previous answer, that the stock returns I quoted do not compriso Mimosa, West Mandemah, Kildare, Buddigower, Ariah, Bygo, Yalgogrin, Bolygamy, and ten or twelve other stations.

Mr. Joseph Charles Wentworth, storekeeper, Barmedman, sworn, and examined:-

Mr. J. C. 52. Chairman.] How long have you been in Barmedman? I have been about fifteen or sixteen years in Wentworth. the district, and it is going on for three years since I settled in the town. 53. And before you came here? I was living on Barmedman station.

12 April, 1894. 54. Mr. Wall.] What has been regarded as the principal industry here? Patoral pursuits, until within the last eight or nine years.

55. Are there many small holdings in the district? Yes; a good few. 56. Can you give us the number approximately? No; I cannot.

57. I suppose all the selected land is comprised in small pastoral holdings? They are hardly pastoral holdings.

58. Has much of the land in the district been alienated in the interest of persons holding large pasteral leases? I do not think so.

59. You think all the settlement has been bonû fide? Yes; a great number of the selectors have been bonå fide.

60. What is the average crop which the land here is capable of producing? With a fair season, I should think about 15 bushels to the acre, on the average. I do not think that that is an over-estimate.

61. How long have you known land in the district to be under cultivation? I know one paddock within 3 miles of this place which has been under cultivation for over twenty years. 62. What has been its average production? I could not tell you. As a rule the crop has been used for

hay, though last year it was stripped. 63. What did it give last year? Of two paddocks at this particular place, the lowest yield was something

like 15 bushels to the acre. 64. Can you give the Committee any idea of the average cost of clearing land for cultivation here? I lot a contract for another person not long ago for 15s. an acre. It was certainly old ringbarked country; but the men had to clear it fit for the plough, grubbing out the stumps so that the plough could go 6 or 7 inches deep. 65.

Mr. J. C.

Wentworth.

65. How long must the timber have been rung before you can let a clearing contract at prices ranging up to £1 an acre? Three or four years, I should say.

66. What is the cost of ringbarking? On an average I should think 1s. an acre. That does not include 12 April, 1824.

cutting away the scrub and undergrowth.

67. For how much could you bring the land about here under cultivation, and what time would it take? Supposing you commenced to-day and finished four years hence, I should say that, taking the whole of the district within a radius of 10 miles, the work ought to be done for £2 an acre. That is taking in the mallee and everything. It might cost a little more.

68. Do you think the construction of the railway will bring much land under cultivation? I do. I have heard a great number of selectors say that if they had the means of getting their wheat to market they would put in a great deal more than they have put in hitherto. This year there has been a great deal

more clearing.

69. What has been the effect of the construction of the Temora line;—have any large contracts for clearing been let in the vicinity of Temora or on the Sydney side of it? I do not know much about Temora; but I know that a large quantity of land in this district has been cleared within the last few months which

would not have been cleared had not the railway been brought to Temora.

70. But according to the land agent here there are only about 1,200 acres under cultivation in the whole district? I heard what Mr. Copeland said; but I know that one man within 2 miles of the town has a 200-acre paddock, and another man has 100 acres, under cultivation. There is only a road between them. 71. What number of sheep will the land carry to the acre, taking an average? On the Barmedman run they have something like 30,000 sheep, besides cattle and horses, and I think they are only using about 40,000 acres. Then on Wyalong No. 3, I do not think they can have more than 20,000 acres, and they carry 20,000 sheep. I believe that this year they leased some land,

72. Do you regard this as fairly good pastoral country? There is no doubt about its being good, sound

country.

73. If that is so, is it not more likely that the land will be held for pastoral purposes than that it will be brought under cultivation? No, I think it would be more profitable to bring it under cultivation. It is only the distance from railway communication that has prevented cultivation. For instance, up to last year at Barmedman station they only grew a bit of hay for themselves; but last year they had something like 70 acres under wheat, and that they stripped, and sent the wheat to be made into flour. This year they have cleared another 70 acres; but that would not have been done had the railway not been brought within 23 or 24 miles.

74. Are any other crops besides wheat grown in the district? Yes; oats have been grown, though wheat

is the best crop here.

75. Is there much business connection between this place and Lake Cargellico? No.

76. There is a considerable pastoral population located between this place and Lake Cargellico? Yes. 77. And the construction of the proposed line would command the whole of the traffic? No doubt. There are a great many selectors to the north of Wyalong who would be prepared to go in largely for cultivation if they could be brought near a railway.

78. Having been for some time engaged in pastoral pursuits here, can you say what quantity of land in the resumed area was available for selection when the division of the runs took place? A large amount. 79. Has much of that land been selected since? Very nearly all of it, I think, immediately round here.

Take Barmedman run, for instance.

80. Can you give the Committee any information as to the number of people that have been employed here in connection with the mines? There have not been a great number of late years; but a few years ago, when the Barmedman United Gold-mining Company was in full swing, a large number of men were employed here.

81. How long was that company in full swing? For three or four years, perhaps more.

82. I suppose you are aware that the company spent £16,000? I do not know what they spent here; but I believe it was a fair sum.

83. You cannot give the Committee any information as to how much they got out of the mines, or whether they were mantained by contributed capital brought here? No; but I know that a large amount of gold has been won here. 84. At the present time the mines are not working? They are working about 11 miles out on the pro-

posed line from Temora to Barmedman-1 refer to the Princess Edith Company.

85. The mining population here is not sufficient to justify the construction of a railway? Not at the

present time. 86. The railway must depend for traffic upon the development of other local resources? Barmedman, as regards mining, is not at its werst. Every man that could possibly get away has gone to Wyalong. The people working on the Hill when Wyalong broke out threw down their tools and went right away. One small crushing just before that time won 4 oz. to the ton.

87. I see, on referring to the evidence given in connection with the inquiry into the extension of the line to Temora, that the number of men then employed here was very limited? It would be, about then. During the last four or five years the number of men employed here has considerably diminished.

88. Why is that; -is it because of the inability of the mine-holder to cope with the water in the mines?

Partly that, and partly because of the want of means. 89. You have some knowledge of the character of the reefs that have been worked here? Very little. I am no miner. The general report is that they have left good stone under the water.

90. Chairman.] Can you speak generally as to the progress of the district, confining yourself to the period subsequent to the recommendation of the Temora line in 1890? The district has improved since

91. In what respect? In an all-round manner. There is more population here, and we have bad four or five very good seasons, which have helped us along.

92. Has more business been done in Barmedman? Yos.

93. Was that so before the Wyslong rush commenced? Yes. 94. If no the population increased? It must have done so, from the number of selectors who have come

here during the time. 95. Do you know if the number of stock has increased? It must have done so. 4

12 April, 1894.

96. Do you know, as a matter of fact, that it has? Yes.

Wentworth. 97. Are you familiar with the holdings of the various selectors in the district? With some of them. 93. Can you say what area of new land has been placed under cultivation since the railway was opened

ast year? Yes; I know of one paddock containing nearly 100 acres which was placed under cultivation. 99. I mean, speaking generally; I do not want you to specify any particular selection? I should say that immediately round about here, there were 400 or 500 acres of new land cultivated last year, if not more -that is, within 8 or 9 miles of Barmedman.

100. Have the settlers any difficulty in conserving water? None whatever, if they make tanks. I do not think there is better country in the Colony for holding water, if you make the tanks deep enough.

101. Do you know of any permanent water in the district? Yes

102. Where? Three miles to the south-east you get springs. Certainly they are very small ones; but they are permanent. There is one spring at Trungley, 7 or 8 miles from here, which I do not think has ever been dry. I have known it for sixteen or seventeen years, and it has never been dry in that time.

103. When did the Fiery Cross Mining Company cease operations? I could not tell you.

104. Before you came here? Before I settled in the township.

105. Is the Hard-to-Find Mining Company still carrying on work? That is what we call the Princess

106. How many men are employed there? I do not know; but there must be over twenty men there,

including those out in the bush getting firewood. 107. Mr. Wall.] Mostly, when people have selected in this district they have had to conserve water, have they not? Yes; unless they took up land on which tanks had been put by the run-holder, and for which they would have to pay compensation, which would come to the same thing.

Mr. Patrick McRoberts, pastoral lessee, Barmedman, sworn, and examined :-

Mr. P. 108. Chairman.] How long have you been in the district? Eight or nine months.

McRoberts. 109. And previous to that? I was residing in Sydney. 110. Mr. Dawson.] Can you give us any idea as to how the proposed line, if constructed, is to earn 12 April, 1894, enough to pay interest on its cost? I believe it will open up land suitable for cultivation, but I think it will mainly depend upon the Wyalong gold-field and the intermediate traffic. I think they will got gold

right along here. That is my opinion from the inquiries I have made.

111. Have you any personal knowledge of gold mining? I have had a good deal to do with it, but I have not seen very much of it in this district. When last I was at Wyalong I looked more into the mining going on there than I have done since I have been in the district. I was there about five days.

112. I suppose all the wool in the district goes to Temora? Yes.

113. Do you not think that a station 25 miles from a railway is fairly well served by it? A station in such a position would have nothing to grumble at, and I have known people to send in wheat from a much greater distance and not grumble. Personally, I am served well enough; but I think the railway would be a good thing for the country. It would open up a lot of land.

114. You have heard that the average wheat production of the district is not quite 71 bushels to the

acre? Yes; but last year the season was bad.

115. Mr. Wentworth said that on the average it would take about £2 per acro to clear this land fit for the plough? It all depends upon the timber upon it. If it has been rung for six or eight years, and the fire will run through it, you can get the work done for about 15s. an acre; but where the timber is green I should be sorry to take anything like that.

116. Could the clearing be done for £2 an acre? I do not think it could be done for £2 an acre.

117. Of course you know something about the price of wheat? Yes. This year it was very low. I think that was because of the over-production.

118. Then, even if you get a railway, how are you going to make a wheat crop pay? I could not answer

119. I suppose you know something of the country between Temora and Cootamundra? Yes; I have seen a little of it.

120. I suppose that is equally good, if not better, land than the country between Temora and Wyalong?

In my opinion, yes, for agricultural purposes.

121. Can you tell us why that land has not been put under cultivation for wheat? I think I can, though I am only giving you my experience. My opinion is that it is because they cannot get a price for wheat. It seems to me that every year wheat gets cheaper. Last year they wanted to buy wheat here for 2s. 7d. a bushel, landed in Cootamundra. I had no wheat to sell, but a traveller called at my place and told me that he was buying wheat at that price.

122. Do you think it at all probable that if the proposed line were constructed any land would be put

under wheat? Yes.

123. How much land do you think would be put under wheat? I could not say. I have heard people speaking about putting more land under cultivation.

124. Can you give us an idea of the probable yield within a few hundred bushels? No; I could not

give you an idea as to what it would be.

125. Do you think there would be enough wheat grown to pay anything like interest on the proposed line, supposing it were made for £2,000 a mile? Well, it would not depend upon the wheat alone, because there would be the station produce and all that.

126. How much wool would be sent from here? Last year I sent a little over 57 tons. 127. It costs 2d. a mile to send wool from Temora to Cootamundra? Something like that.

128. Where would you load your wool? At Barmedman.

129. Suppose you sent away 60 tons, the freight on that for 23 miles would be about 4s. per ton, or £12 altogether-that is all the railway would get out of you? But there would be the things that I should get up by it.

130. Would you bring up 60 tons? No, I should not; but you must remember that there are others who

would send away more than I send.

131. The interest on the cost of the line would be £5,000 a year, so it would require 500 people to send 60 tons over the railway each way to meet that, without paying working expenses; do you think anything

Mr. P. thing like that could be done? Putting it in that way, I do not think it could; but of course if the McRoberts. Wyalong gold-field turns out to be permanent, there will be a great amount of traffic there. 132. We want to get evidence as to whether it is going to be a permanent field or not? Well, if the 12 April, 1884. Government do not make a railway they will have to put the road in repair. I do not know what it is like between here and Barmedman; but to put it in repair between here and Wyalong would cost more than half of what it would take to build a railway.

133. But a road would not produce revenue? No.

134. Of course the passenger traffic on the proposed line would be nothing at all, except so far as Wyalong was concerned? I cannot say what it would be like; but I do not think it would be very great.

135. I understand that you have to conserve water here? Yes.

136. That is easily done? Yes, you cannot beat this for holding country.

137. How many sheep have you here? About 22,000 I think.

138. And they cut a good fleece in sound country like this? Yes, very good.

139. Do you send many fat stock away? Yes, we send a good many.

140. If you had better means of communication with the metropolis, would you be likely to fatten and send away more? That would entirely depend upon what the market was like. If we had the Sydney market, the railway would not keep us from sending the stock.

141. Is the country between here and Wyalong similar to that between here and Temora? I have not

been along the road to Temora. I go from Trungley to Temora.

142. But is there not a great similarity in all this country? Well, on the road from Trungley to Temora the country is very different. It is not so scrubby.

143. Is there much ironbark between here and Wyalong? Not that I know of, immediately on the line; but there is off it.

144. Good ironbark? What I saw was very fair. There is an ironbark ridge down here, I believe.

145. You have no idea as to what sleepers would cost, I suppose? No; but I think you could get them pretty reasonably.

146. It is proposed, instead of having square sleepers, to have half-round sleepers. They could be got much more cheaply? Yes, a great deal more cheaply than the sleepers we have been using hitherto.

147. Do you think an extension of the present line on through Wyalong to Cargellico and Hillston would constitute a main trunk line by which this portion of the country would be fairly well served? Yes; I do. 148. Have you any personal knowledge of the character of the country towards Hillston;—is it reputed to be good pastoral land? It is reputed to be very good pastoral land all the way pretty well. It is many years since I was on the Lachlan, but I know it to be good pastoral country.

149. If the line were constructed, do you think it would interfere with the renewal of the pastoral leases?

I could not any.

150. Has there been any agitation in the district against the renewal of those leases? Not that I am aware of; but there may have been.

151. I suppose you are aware that it is a vexed question whether any renewals should take place in the

western and central divisions? Yes, I am aware of that,

152. Can you say whether the small holdings carry more sheep proportionally than the large holdings? I do not think they do.

153. Do you think this country would be more profitably occupied if held in areas of 2,560 acres than if held in areas of 10,000 acres? I do not think the areas ought to be less than 2,560 acres, because in this part of the country, after a bit, most of the people will go in for pastoral pursuits.

151. If the Wyalong gold-field proves a success, do you think it will have the effect of settling an agricul-

tural population along the proposed line? That I could not say.

155. The settlement of an agricultural population between Temora and Barmedman would depend upon the cancellation of the leases? It would depend a good deal upon that.

156. Of course people cannot select upon the leasehold area? Not at the present time.

157. And most of the land is held under lease? Yes.

158. Therefore the expansion of the agricultural industry will depend upon the non-renewal of the leases? Exactly; but then, again, there is any quantity of land to be improved at present under the same conditions—thousands of acres.

159. The land agent informs us that there is very little land available here for settlement? The land is

taken up, but it is not cultivated.

160. The land is held under lease? Yes; but there is a lot of land that has been selected.

161. But the selection area could not be increased unless the leases were cancelled? Certainly; there is not much other land available.

162. Therefore, unless the leases were cancelled the population of the district could not increase very

much? Not very much.

163. Do you think that the discoveries at Wyalong are likely to be of a permanent character? Well, I cannot make out the formation of the reefs. Most of them are jumbled up. There are two or three good claims there, but they have not run into a reef yet. They call them reefs, but I never saw reefs like them.

164. How many reputedly payable claims were there when you were at Wyalong? I believe there are

eighty.

165. They have not all crushed, I believe? No.

166. Have you any knowledge of the present population of Wyalong? They compute it at from 7,000 to 8,000.

167. Are there many leaving the field? Yes; lately a good many have left for the new rush, 7 miles from Wyalong.

Mr. Herbert Bertram Christie, manager of Wyalong No. 2 Station, sworn, and examined:-168 Chairman.] Who are the owners of the station managed by you? Mr. T. F. Knox is the owner. 169. What is the area of the run? About 19,000 acres of leasehold and about 5,000 acres in the resumed area.

170. Have you any freehold? Yes, about 1,200 acres, 171. How many sheep do you carry? At present we are carrying very few. It is not advisable to carry many with the number of people there are roaming about the paddocks.

Mr. H. B. Christie. 12 April, 1694.

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Mr. H. B. Christie. 2 April, 1894.

Mr. H. B. 172, What is the carrying capability of the stati no Well, there is a great deal of mallee upon the run,

but I think it will carry a sheep to 2 acres.

178. What distance are you from the nearest railway station? We are 37 miles from Temora.

174. Do you send your wool there? Yes.

175. Before the line was opened to Temora, where did you send it? To Cootamundra.

176. How long have you been in the district? Three years.
177. And before that where were you? In the Cobar district.

178. How long have you been engaged in pastoral pursuita? For nearly ten years.

179. Can you speak as to the progress of this district since you have been here? I think considerable progress has been made in the last three years.

180. In what respect? The country is far more settled now. The greater part of Wyalong No. 2 has been selected since I have been here.

181. Has there been any very considerable increase in the population? I think so. I think that most of the selections to the north-west of Wyalong have been taken up within the last four years.

182. Can you say that the settlers are in a fairly prosperous condition? I think a great number of them are.

183. Are they putting their land under cultivation, or are they combining pastoral with agricultural pursuits? They are combining pastoral with agricultural pursuits. A good number of them have started putting in crops.

184. Would you like to make a statement to the Committee showing reasons for the extension of the railway from Temora to Wyalong. No, though I am quite willing to answer any questions.

185. Have you considered in what way the railway could be made to pay working expenses? No, I

have not. I do not know what the line would cost or what the working expenses would be.

186. Have you noticed whether the traffic between Temora and Barmedman has increased since the railway to Temora was opened? I live between Barmedman and Wyalong, so I could not say much

about the country between Barmedman and Temora.

187. Do you know anything of the mining that has been carried on in this district during the past three

years? No, I know nothing about mining.

188. Mr. Wall.] Can you tell me what was the extent of the resumed area of your run at the time of the division? I think about 19,000 acres.

189. Then about 14,000 acres has been selected there? From 12,000 to 13,000 acres have been selected there.

190. Can you give me any information as to the grazing capability at which your run was appraised? No; I have no knowledge on the subject.

191. Have you any knowledge of the country between Barmedman and Cargellico? I know the country from Barmedman to about 12 miles the other side of Wyalong—that is, I know portions of it.

192. Is it all regarded as good pastoral land? I think a lot of it is more suited for agriculture; but there is a large area of country on the Bland and Lake Cowal which would all be served by the railway, and which I suppose is second to none in Australia for pastoral purposes.

193. You cannot give us an idea of the value of the coaching traific between Barmedman and Temora? No, I cannot.

194. Mr. Dawson.] If the railway were taken to Wyalong, would it get any of the Bland traffic? I think it would get a considerable amount of the traffic from there and from Lake Cowal.

195. I see that Forbes is 40 miles and Wyalong 22 miles from Lake Cowal? Yes. 196. How far would Wyalong be from the Bland country? Ten or fifteen miles.

197. Where does the wool from the Bland go to now? The greater portion of it would go to Young.

198. How far is that? Young is about 60 miles from Marsden.

199. How far would that be from Wyalong? About 40 miles. The Marsden traffic if it goes to Young now would then come to Wyalong.

200. Then the Wyalong railway, if constructed, would only take traffic from the Young line? You might say of any line that it was robbing some other line; but a railway to Wyalong would give much better communication to the district.

201. Where does the Lake Cargellico wool go to? I know that a great deal of that wool goes to Temora.

202. And would be carried by the proposed line? Yes.

203. A good deal of wool comes from Lake Cargellico and Lake Cowal? I cannot speak as to Lake Cowal; but a tremendous lot of wool comes from Lake Cargellico.

204. And that wool would come to Wyalong if the railway were taken there? Yes, all the wool from Bolygamy, about 20 miles from Wyalong, comes to Temora now, and would be carried by the proposed line.

205. Do you think the people here would be satisfied with a light line of railway over which trains could travel at a speed of from 10 to 15 miles an hour? I think they would be only too glad to get such a railway, if they could not get a faster line.

206. If a line costing from £2,500 to £3,000 a mile, upon which trains could run at the rate of 15 miles an hour, were constructed, would that serve the traffic for seven or eight years to come, allowing for a great increase in the wheat production? Not if the Wyalong gold-field went ahead. They would want faster trains then. What speed do they travel at on the Temora line?

207. About 22 miles an hour, I believe? I think that would be ample.

208. But suppose Wyalong turns out to be, what in mining parlance is termed, a duffer? At any rate the line would open up a large area of country.

209. And will cause a great increase in settlement? I think so.

210. If Wyalong turns out to be a good thing the line must pay at once, because the passenger and goods traffic will be very considerable, independent of the outlying country? Yes.

211. Chairman.] Is there much cultivation at present on the Bland and Lake Cowal? No. What I know of Bland country is not very suitable for agriculture. It is good fattening country.

212. What about Lake Cowal? Part of that is very good agricultural land.

213. But it is not at present under cultivation? No, not at present.

214. Mr. Dauson.] I suppose that is from want of a market? The distance from market is too great.

215. Mr. Wall.] If the proposed railway is constructed, do you think the holders of land within a certain zone would be willing to pay 75 per cent. of the cost? No, I do not.

216.

216. You think they would object to pay such a tax? Yes, most strongly. I do not think they would Mr. H. B. Christie. be able to pay it.

217. The payments would extend over sixty years? Yes, but I do not see where these men could find 12 April, 1804.

the money to pay more than they are now paying.

218. Do you think they would regard it as unreasonable to be charged freight, and at the same time to have to pay three-fourths of the cost of the line? Certainly. We must have carriage pretty low to make the production of wheat payable.

219. Mr. Dawson.] You think it right that the State should make a railway through your property and through mine, and that we should pay nothing in return? I do not think property here would be

benefited anything like 75 per cent. by the construction of a railway.

220. Supposing it increased 50 per cent. in value, should not part of that increase be returned to the State? That might be fair; but at the same time the man who is employing labour to put in crops is benefiting the State more than the State is benefiting him. I think it is the duty of the State to build railways to open up the back country.

Mr. Denis Byrne, farmer, Barmedman, sworn, and examined:-

221. Chairman.] What is your occupation? I combine grazing with farming.

221. Chairman. I what is your occupation? I bought it from a conditional purchaser.

223. How many acres have you? 2,560.

224. Where is your farm situated? About 7 miles west of Barmedman.

225. How many acres have you under cultivation? This year I am putting in about 140 acres.

226. Of wheat? Well, about 10 acres will be sown with oats.

227. How many acres had you under cultivation last year? Seventy-five.

228. And the year before? I have only been about three years in the district. The year before I had 4 acres of hay.

229. What was the result of last year's crop? We got about 15 bushels to the acre.

230. Where did you send it? To Temora.

231. What did you pay for carriage to Temora? About 4d. a bushel, which is about what it costs to send it from Temora to Sydney.

232. Then it costs you, in all, 8d. a bushel to send to Sydney? About that.

233. If the railway were constructed where would you send your wheat? To Barmedman.

234. What would be the cost of taking it to Barmedman? Very little; I suppose about 3d. a bag.

235. Do you keep sheep? Yes; I have about 2,800.

236. Do you send your wool to Temora? Yes.

237. Are you familiar with this district? Yes; I know it fairly well.

238. What portion of it are you familiar with? I know all the land to the west and south-west pretty well, together with the country on the Bland, and out north beyond Wyalong to Bolygamy.

239. That is on the way to Lake Cargellico? Yea; but it would be a few miles off the line.

240. What is the character of the land between here and Wyalong? The proposed line just about divides

the agricultural from the pastoral country.

241. On which side of the line would the pastoral country be? To the east and north-east—the Bland country. I have gone 30 or 40 miles to the west, and four-fifths of that country is agricultural land of the best quality.

242. Similar to the land you possess? Yes.

243. Can you give any reason for the low average of production here? The past year was a very bad one for crops throughout the colony generally; but we had a higher average, or at least as good an average, within 15 miles of this place as in any other part of the colony.

241. You heard Mr. Copeland's evidence that 9,000 bushels of wheat were obtained from 1,200 acres of

land—a little over 7 bushels to the acre? Yes.

245. But you say that you got 15 bushels to the acre? Yes; and I know of several paddocks that produced more, up to 18 bushels to the acre.

246. In that case a great deal of land must have yielded considerably less than 7 bushels to the acre? I think that that land lies nearer Temora. I know a great many of the farms there, and I do not think

they produce anything.
247. Can you give any reason for the failure? There was no rain here until the middle of November.
248. Then why were you not similarly affected? It must have been because of the soil, and we happened to get rain in time to save the crop. In places like this the rain is very patchy. We may get rain, and 5 or 10 miles away there may be none. As it happened, we got a fair rainfall, not enough to benefit the crops as much as they might have been benefited, but sufficient to save them. That was between the 1st

and 15th of November.

249. You attribute the success of your crops and the failure of other crops in the district to the partial

rainfall? Yes. We had not anything like our average rainfall.

250. Can you say how the carnings of the proposed line would meet the working expenses, suppose the Wyalong gold-field were not permanent? I think the proposed line would encourage agriculture to a very much greater extent than its extension to Temora did. When I came here three years ago, a farmer named Clements had 80 acres under cultivation, and now he has 250.

251. Where is his farm? About 4 miles west of Barmedman.

252. Can you speak as to the effect of the opening of the Temora line upon the country within 10 miles of Temora and on each side of that line? Yes; I think the area under cultivation there has been very much increased.

253. Have you been over that portion of the district recently? Not over the country within 10 miles of Temora.

254. How long is it since you were in that part of the district? Eighteen months.

255. Then I suppose you were speaking from hearsay? Yes. I know that all the land under cultivation round here was put in since the railway was started. I had at first only 6 acres; but when I knew that the railway was coming I increased the area to my present acreage. A neighbour of mine who now has

150 acres had only 5 acres twelve months ago. 256. Are you interested in mining? Not at all. 12 April, 1894.

Mr.

D. Byrne.

257.

Mr. D. Byrne. 12 April, 1894.

257. Mr. Wall.] Were the results you obtained last year sufficient to warrant you in continuing to increase your cultivation area? Yes, if I get means of transit.

2571. With the present prices, would you get more from the land by growing wheat than by using it for

pastoral purposes? Yes. 258. I presume that a great deal of the wheat here has been grown for hay? Yes.

259. That would account for the small average yield per bushel? A great many of the crops have been cut for hay, and that would reduce the average yield. My experience of several paddocks is that they all yielded from 14 bushels upwards.

260. Have you been in the habit of sending in returns? Yes.

261. I suppose the custom is to state the area actually under wheat and the amount of grain produced, without taking into consideration the yield of hay? Yes.

262. How many sheep do you graze? Since I have been here I have been grazing from 2,800 to 3,000 sheep, together with horses and cattle.

263. Is it your intention to increase the area under cultivation? Yes; I have very good farming land, and it is my intention to go in principally for farming. This year a good deal of land would have been out under cultivation had not the rush broken out.

264. What, in your opinion, will be the cost of making this laud fit for the plough Well, I get my land

cleared for £1 an acro. 265. How long had the timber been ringbarked? It was ringbaked by the lessed years ago, and a great

deal of it is going back to its natural state. 266. What do you consider the avereage cost per acre of making land fit for cultivation? Taking green timber and all it would be from 30s, to £2 an acre. In favourable localities you could get it done for 15s, an acre.

FRIDAY, 13 APRIL, 1894.

[The Sectional Committee met at Spring's Hotel, Wyalony Township, at 7:30 p.m.]

Bregent:-

The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY (CHAIRMAN). WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq. HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Sectional Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Mr. Thomas Pearce, solicitor, Hillston, sworn, and examined.

Mr.

267. Chairman.] How long have you resided at Hillston? Nine and a half years. T. Pearce. 2671. Do you desire to make a statement in connection with the proposed railway from Temora to Wyalong, which is likely to form part of an extension via Cargellico to Hillston? Yes. I think it is necessary to 13 April, 1894. take the railway to Hillston; but I think it should go direct from Wyalong to Hillston?

268. Without touching at Cargellico? Yes. One reason I have for saying this is that on the Lachlan there is already a great quantity of purchased land, and the remaining Crown land there would naturally be selected, even if no railway is constructed, while the direct line to Hillston would pass through what I believe to be the best agricultural land in New South Wales. At any rate the last 60 miles on the Hillston side would pass through what is unquestionably the best agricultural land, taking into consideration its area, in the Colony. Of course you may get small pieces of land in other places, but taking the area into consideration, it is not to be surpassed.

269. What is the distance from Wyalong to Hillston? One hundred and thirty miles. The whole of the land is good, but on the last 60 miles from Hillston the land is exceedingly good.

270. Is it tolerably level? It is very level, except at one or two places, such as Mona Gap. 271. Do you not know that the country between here and Hillston on the direct route is very rough?

No, it is very smooth. 272. Do you not know that a direct line would make a very considerable difference to the grade of the railway? I do not think it would.

273. Have you travelled the whole distance? Yes. Another reason why I think the line should go direct is that the Lachlan country is very heavily infested with rabbits, and the only thing that will destroy them is population. A direct line would open up the land for at least 40 or 50 miles on each side of it, and that land would be immediately taken up by selectors, who would destroy the rabbits and keep them in check. Suppose, however, the line went to Cargellico, and then down the river, it would be impossible for settlers to send grain or hay from the land of which I am speaking, and it would consequently become infested with rabbits, which would breed there and spread all over the Colony. I am not prepared with statistics in regard to Hillston, because I only knew, half an hour before I left, that I was to come here; but I am fairly acquainted with the neighbourhood from my long residence there, and from having been about it a good deal. Last year there were between 13,000 and 14,000 acres under cultivation in the immediate neighbourhood of Hillston, and this year I think the area will be 14,000 or 15,000

actes. 274. What is the crop? Wheat. If the farmers there could get a market for their produce there would be hundreds of thousands of acres under cultivation; but at present they have to send their grain between 70 and 80 miles to get to the nearest station.

275. Which is? Carrathool. The average rainfall for the last four or five years has been fully 15 inches, and the rain, as a rule, is seasonable for wheat, falling in April and May and early in the spring. That starts the wheat and ripens it.

276. Do you know the country between Cargellico and Wyalong? No, I have never been through it.

277. Do you know Cargellico? Yes.

278. Do the conditions exist there which you have described as existing at Hillston? I should say that there was better agricultural land close to Hillston than there is round Cargellico, but the Cargellico land is very good.

279. You said just now that the land between Cargellico and Hillston had been taken up? Not all of it; but a great quantity of it is freehold land.

281.

280. What is it used for? Partly for grazing and partly for farming.

281. Why do you consider the fact that the country there is already settled a reason for not giving the settlers along the banks of the Lachlan railway communication? I do not say that it is a reason, but I say that to do good to the greatest number the line should go direct. The land on the river has a water frontage and will always be taken up.

Mr. T. Pearce. 13 April, 1894.

282. The people having settled there, should we not give them railway communication instead of denying it to them? Not in my opinion. I think a railway should be made to induce people to go out there. 283. And that those already settled there should be neglected? I do not say that they should be

neglected. They would have communication to a certain extent, but in any case population would remain there, because of the river frontage, while the railway would spread population over new country.

284. How would the people at Cargellico be served by a direct line to Hillston; -what distance would they be from it? About 31 miles, which would not be too far, considering that they have a water frontage.

285. Do you think a direct line to Hillston would serve the Cargellico population? I think so, and a

direct line would open up far more country.

286. Where is the wool sent to now from stations in the vicinity of Hillston? To Carrathool, which is 80 miles away. The selectors are on the routh side of Hillston, and are, therefore, a little nearer to the railway.

287. Do you know the quantity of wool sent from Hillston to Carrathool? No, I am not prepared with

the figures.

288. Can you give the Committee an idea of the probable amount of the Hillston traffic if the railway were taken there? A railway would draw all the wool from a considerable distance to the north of Hillston towards the Cobar line, and also from out Mossgeil way, where they have a great number of sheep.

289. Besides would what else would be sent by the railway? Wheat and live stock. It is utterly impossible in time of drought for stations to get their live stock away under present conditions. The stock routes are always eaten bare, so that the stock would die on the road if travelled along them. With railway communication, however, stock could be sent to market or to the hills where there was feed.

290. When you speak of the hills where do you mean—beyond Cootamundra? Yes, and out Tumut way.

291. You think that the line would be used to transfer sheep in dry seasons? Yes.

292. Do you wish to give any other reasons in support of your suggestion? The strongest reason in favour of a direct line is that it would bring a great number of settlers on to what is very good land. If, however, the railway is not taken direct, the whole of that country will be over-run with rabbits. Wire netting will check the rabbits, but it will not destroy them.

293. If the line were taken via Cargellico, would Hillston be served? Hillston itself would be served. 294. Do you know what difference it would make in the length of the line to take it to Cargellico? I am

informed that it would make a difference of 10 miles.

295. Do you think that that would make a material difference, when, by taking the line to Cargellico, it would serve two places instead of one? I think a direct line would serve the country better, and would save 10 miles. It would bring population into the district, and be the means of checking the rabbits. The land between the railway and the Lachlan would be filled with selectors, and they would stop the rabbits.

296. Are you not expressing somewhat parochial views;—are you not in favour of a direct line simply

because you reside at Hillston? No; I wish to do good to the greatest number.

297. Mr. Dawson.] How often do you have droughts in this "best country in New South Wales"? We have not had a drought since 1888.

298. Are the droughts here very severe? The 1888 drought was very severe. There was a failure in the crops then.

299. Have you ever seen the Liverpool Plains? I know the country there.

300. Is this country better than that? From what I have heard, I should say that it was, for agriculture, 301. I mean generally? I would not say that, but there is a greater area of good country here.

302. But how much of the good country is taken up? I do not know exactly. The selectors hitherto

have gone entirely for open country.

303. How many selectors are there on this land? Very few.

304. Would not the line you suggest go through any amount of land held by large stations? No; tho leases will expire in 1895.

305. Then this land is held under lease? Yes. 306. Do you know if many selectors went on to the land when the leases were divided in 1889? Not very many. Some selectors took up land; but the want of a market for produce prevented others from

doing so, and some of those who had taken up land threw it up and left the district. 307. Surely a man could make a living on 2,560 acres of really good country with sheep? The land on this side of the Lachlan is not so suitable for pastoral purposes as the land on the other side of the

Lachlan; but it is more suitable for agriculture. 308. Is it lightly timbered? It is heavily timbered with box, myall, mallee, yarran, various sorts of scrub,

and a great deal of pine. 309. Is it anything like the Carrathool country? No; it is different country altogether. I resided in

Hay for nine or ten years, so that I know the Hay land as well as the Hillston land. 310. Do you not think it would be better, instead of taking the railway direct to Hillston, to serve the people who have already taken up land in the district? No; because if you take the line direct it will run between the selectors to the south and the selectors to the north, while if you take it to the Lachlan the selectors to the south will not be benefited by it, and it will not benefit an additional number of selectors on the north side of the Lachlan, because the land there is not suitable for selection nor available.

311. It is only the land on the Cargellico side that is suitable? Cargellico is on the southern side of the river.

312. Is there a fair amount of settlement between Lake Cargellico and Hillsten? Not a great deal, though there is a fair number of selectors round Cargellico. 313. Much more than on the line you advocate? Yes; taking it all through. There are a number of

selectors on the last 20 miles of the route which I recommend.

314. How far from the proposed railway? Some would be close to the railway and others would be 30 315. or 40 miles from it.

283 (a)—B

Mr. T. Pearre. 18 April, 1894

315. You are perfectly satisfied that the milway should be taken from Temora to Wyalong? You; that would be a move in the right direction. I do not know much about the country down here, but the line would be coming towards good agricultural land.

316. You are perfectly satisfied that there should be a railway to Wyalong? It is part of the line which

should be constructed.

317. Would you sooner have the line taken direct from Temora to Hillston without touching at Barmedman or Wyalong? I could not say. I have travelled from Wyalong to Hillston, and I know that for about 30 or 40 miles out from Wyalong the land is not so suitable for agriculture as it is on the last part of the journey.

318. Although you advocate a direct route, you say that at present there is not much settlement along it, and that the land is not suitable for sheep? It is not so suitable as the land on the northern side of the river. 319. Fifteen inches of rain is not sufficient for wheat unless you happen to get it just at the time you

state? I go by the crops that have been grown.

320. What is the average yield per acre? Fifteen bushels was the average last year. I may say that I have grown about 20 acres of wheat for the last three years, and I have never had less than two tons of hay to the acre. One year I had three tons.

321. Suppose the line were made, do you think a yield of 15 bushels to the acre would pay at the present

price of wheat? Yes; if that were the average.

322. What price do you get for wheat? 2s. 6d. a bushel.

323. It brings 2s. 7d. a bushel in Sydney and 2s. 1d. a bushel in Melbourno? I believe they were

getting something near 2s. 6d.

324. That means that you have to plough, sow, and harvest, for £1 17s. 6d. an acre, and that that would pay you? Yes, it does pay. I have spoken to a great number of selectors, and they are perfectly satisfied if they get 2s. 6d. a bushel. I know one man who has 1.500 acres under cultivation, and who carts his produce 50 or 60 miles to the railway station. He says that if he gets 2s. 6d. a bushel he is perfectly satisfied, and he has done very well so far. He had 1,000 acres under cultivation, last year, and he has put in 500 more this year.

325. What does it take to clear the land? Most of it is easy to clear; but some of it is mallee, and

although that is good land, it is difficult to clear. I do not know the actual expense of clearing.

326. Can you get 2s. 6d. a bushel for wheat, this year? I believe that most of them realise something like 2s. 6d.

327. Where is that? By taking it to Carrathool, and sending it on to Sydney.

328. Where do they get the 2s. 6d.—in Sydney? Yes. They get semething like that.

329. What would it be to them net? Well, they get a little more in Sydney.

330. It would cost 6d. a bushel to send wheat from Carrathool to Sydney, and I suppose from 4d. to 6d. a

bushel to deliver it at Carrathool? But most of them cart it down themselves.

331. But if a man uses his own labour and horses, and gets 2s. 6d. a bushel for his wheat, that is not 2s. 6d. net. His own labour is worth something, and it seems to me, that at that price he would be about 3d. in debt when he had finished? No, they are perfectly satisfied if they can realise 2s. 6d. a bushel, in Sydney, and are able to make ends meet. If the railway went to Cargellico and then down to Hillston, the selectors to the south, who are quite as numerous as the Cargellico selectors, would be in the same position as the Cargellico settlers are now, and the land there would consequently soon become a rabbit warren.

332. Mr. Wall. I suppose you recognise that this line has not been proposed simply for the purpose of

serving Hillston? Perfectly.

333. There is a national object to be gained? Yes.

334. You state that construction of a direct line would open up more country on the banks of the Lachlan? No; it would open up all the country through which it passed. Land on the Lachlan will be taken up

because of its water frontage, even if the people have to go some distance to get the railway.

335. Would not a line to Cargellico, and thence to Hillston, afford more facilities to settlers than a direct line? To some extent, I dare say there would be a little more land taken up if the line ran down the Lachlan: but I believe that the land there would be taken up whether the railway were constructed or not. 336. Railways are conducted on commercial lines, and unless there is some possibility of a line paying its expenses it is not the custom of the Government to construct it, nor is it probable that in such a case they will construct this one? That is exactly why I advocate a direct line. I think it would pay better than a line ria Cargellico. As far as I am personally concerned, I do not mind which way the railway goes. I should like to see an extension from Parkes.

337. To what extent would you consider this back country served by railway communication? It is all according to the character of the country through which the railway passes, and depends upon whether the selectors use the line for agricultural or for pastoral purposes. I should say that if a farmer were

within 40 or 50 miles of a railway station he would be near enough. 338. He would be fairly well served? He would be fairly well served.

339. Are you aware that a direct line would be running parallel to and not 35 miles from the Hay line, so that the people you desire to serve are already well served? The two lines may be only 35 miles apart at the commencement; but the distance between them broadens out to about 100 miles.

340. Would not the line proposed by the Department serve the country better? I do not think it would

pay as well as the line which I suggested.

311. You advocate a line running almost parallel with the Hay line? It is 50 or 60 miles from the Hay line, pretty well all through.

342. Is the Cargellico land fair for agricultural settlement? Yes.

343. Is there any permanent water in the vicinity? Yes.

344. Is the rainfall there greater or smaller than the rainfall at Hillston? I am not able to answer that;

but I should think it would be about the same.

345. What distance would the direct line be from the line proposed by the Department? Thirty-one milea, I think.

346. That would be at its furthest point? I suppose the average distance would be 15 or 16 miles.

347. The proposed Government line would be about midway between the Hay line and the Cobar line, while the line you suggest would only be from 30 to 60 miles from the Hay line? It would run through the best country. As far as Hillston itself is concerned the Parkes line would be the best.

348.

848. You recognise that there is not much probability of a second line intersecting the tract of country

between the Cobar line and the Hay line? I do not know about that,

349. Well, assuming that the Department intended to construct only one line to intersect that country, which line would you suggest? I think a direct line would benefit the greatest number of settlers, and therefore pay best, besides there is every prospect of gold being discovered in that country. There are a great number of people at Yalgogrin now; I was there this morning.

350. Do not men always take the best land available? Yes.

351. Then if the land in the neighbourhood of Lake Cargellico has all been taken up, does not that show that it is the best land? No, because selectors will not go out 30 or 40 miles by themselves where they

have no chance of selling their produce.

352. Inferentially we must arrive at the conclusion that if they prefer to go 30 miles away from the railway, they regard the land on which they have settled as the best available? They have gone there because the district was already populated. People living there have written to their friends, and thus the land has been taken up in a block. If the proposed line is taken direct, however, thousands of acres of new land will be taken up.

353. Would a greater actual settlement be served by the Departmental proposal than by the line of which

you speak? Yes; it would serve a few more.

354. What is the population of Hillston? Roughly speaking, about 1,000.

355. Is it incorporated? Yes.

356. Can you give us any information as to the value of ratable property? I think about £450 a year. That, of course, is exclusive of Government endowment.

357. And is based upon annual values? Yes. 358. Have you a Lands Office there? Yes.

359. Can you give us any information as to the amount of land selected in Hillston during last year? No; I cannot.

360. Is Lake Cargellico within the land district of Hillston? Yes.

361. So that any returns would show the settlement in the vicinity of Cargellico, as well as that in the

vicinity of Hillston? Yes.

362. I suppose you recognise that at the present time the people of Hillston are better served by the railway than the people at Lake Cargellico? Yes; I think they are a little nearer the line. I think the Cargellico people go to Whitton.

363. If the proposed railway were constructed, would the freight and passenger traffic pay interest on its cost? I think so. I know that I would take a good many shares if we were allowed to make a light line

ourselves.

364. I suppose you are aware that it is proposed to construct this line on what is known as the better-

ment principle? So I understand.

365. Do you think people would take up land in this vicinity if they thought they would have to pay a proportionate share of the cost of the line? I feel certain that they would be prepared to pay part of its cost; but I do not know how much they would be prepared to pay.

366. The payments would be spread over a very long period, and the tax would perhaps be very small; do you think there would be any objection to the construction of this line on the betterment principle? I do not think so; I am certain that if the tax is not very heavy, the line will bring a tremendous population here, provided, of course, that the pasteral leases are thrown open when the railway is finished. I would not be in favour of throwing them open until the line is constructed.

367. How far would the country of which you have been speaking be from the Departmental line? The

distance would vary from next to nothing to about 60 or 70 miles.

368. If the Department took the line through unsettled country, do you think people would take up land 20 miles from it to avoid coming under the provisions of a Betterment Act? No; because I believe that the increased facilities which they would have if they were nearer the railway would pay any betterment tax.

369. You cannot give any information as to the number of stock in the district of which you have been

speaking? No; I cannot.

Mr. James George Carroll, land agent, Hillston, sworn, and examined :-

370. Chairman.] How long have you been in Hillston? Over seventeen years. 371. Have you a knowledge of the surrounding country, the extent of the pastoral holdings there, and J. G. Carroll. the number of stock carried? I am not able to tell you the number of stock upon each station; but I 13 April, 1894. know the country for nearly 100 miles round Hillston.

372. You desire to make a statement in connection with this proposal to take the railway from Temora to Wyalong, and perhaps extend it to the Lachlan? Yes, I have been sent here by the people of Hillston and the surrounding districts to advocate their right to a railway. I may tell you that they are not particular what way the railway comes, so long as it suits the greatest number of people, and is a line that

will benefit the Colony generally. 373. Do you agree with Mr. Pearce that the line should go direct to Hillston instead of touching at

Cargellico? I was not sent here to advocate any particular route.

374. From your knowledge of the country, and the extent of the existing settlement, and having regard to the traffic which would be created by a railway, do you think the Government proposal a better one than that suggested by Mr. Pearce? I must say that the proposed line would benefit more people.

375. Do you know Cargellico? Yes; my knowledge of that district is considerable, because I acted as

land agent for them for a number of years.

376. Has the land been taken up in large areas? In 2,560-acre blocks.

377. How much land is under wheat there at the present time? There is not so much at Cargellico as at Hillston. They do not go in for farming so much there, they go in more for stock.

378. The selectors are using their land for grazing? Yes; they do not go in for agriculture so much. 379. Where do they send their produce at the present time? I think they consume it locally pretty well, and a little of it goes out back.

380. It does not go to Sydney? I do not think so. Of my own knowledge I do not know where they send the local produce. 381.

Mr. T. Pearce, ~ 13 April, 1894.

Mr.

381. Where does the wool go to? It goes to Whitton. The wool from the other side of Cargellico, out Mr.

J. G. Carroll. Mount Hope way, also goes there. 382. Do you know the country between Wyalong and Cargellico? I know the country from Cargellico

18 April 1894 to Merringreen. 383. About how many miles from Cargellico? About 50 miles. It is near the Humbug Creek.

384. Can you speak as to the scattement of that part of the country? There were not a great number of selectors along the road I came, but I understand that towards Galore, and in the Condobolin Land District, there are a number of selectors. I have only been connected with the Hillston District; but I understand that at Galore there are 60,000 acres under settlement.

385. Would they be served by a railway from Wyalong to Cargellico? Certainly,

386. Within what distance of the railway would they be, approximately? I do not know; but they

would be served by it. 387. Can you say for what purpose the land to which you are referring could be profitably used? land from Galore to Merringreen is all varran country, and excellent country for sheep.

388. Is it suitable for agriculture? Yes, and it is well adapted for sheep.

389. It is better suited for pastoral than for agricultural use? It is suitable for either; but I consider that while there is land better adapted for agricultural purposes, it would be a pity to cut it up.

390. Can you speak as to the land round Lake Cargellico? Yes.

391. Is it superior to this land, or of similar character? It is red chocolate, and they have not much boroe on it. The timber is pine, and growth of that kind.

392. Hillston, you say, is now partly served by Carrathool? Yes; it is 80 miles from Carrathool.

393. How many sheep are there within 50 miles of Hillston, the wool of which at present goes to Carrathool? Hillston would serve Mossgiel, which is 60 miles away from it, Ivanhoe, which is 35 from Mossgiel, Whealbah, which is 22 miles south-west of Hillston, and Cooble Station, and all stations between Ivanhoe and Hillston.

394. How many sheep would be shorn in that district? I am not able to say how many sheep they shear; but I should say that they shear over 100,000 sheep at Trida Station, which is considered a very large shed. I cannot say what they are carrying now, but they have carried 100,000 sheep. Mossgiel would carry 150,000 sheep, Willandra, to my knowledge, has shorn over 200,000 sheep, besides running a number of horses and cattle, though it is now being subdivided.

395. Cattle and horses would not help the railway to any extent? Cattle would, because they send fat cattle to Melbourne. I should say that Bundarra Station runs 100,000 sheep, and Merungle about

80,000.

396. Are those the principal stations which would be served by the line? Yes, and there are others. Cowl Cowl, which is on this side of the river, has shorn 150,000 sheep. I have not mentioned half the stations which would use the railway.

397. Are we to understand that the stations you have mentioned would be directly served by the extension

of the railway to Hillston? Yes.

398. And the wool would be sent from Hillston to Sydney? Yes; the stations I have mentioned send

their wool on to the Hay line, while out beyond they go to Balranald.

399. Would there be an increase of revenue to the railway if the wool was sent from Hillston to Sydney, instead of coming as it does now? Yes; because when they go to Carrathool they can choose between sending by train to Sydney or by steamer to Victoria. Wool passing through Hay goes mostly to Victoria. 400. There would be an increase in railway revenue if the wool went to Hillston? Yes; if it came to Hillston it would have to go on to Sydney, whereas now the greater part of it goes to Victoria.

401. Do you wish to give any other reasons in support of this line? I consider that the land between Hillston and Ivanhoe is equal to any of the land in the Western Division. It is certainly the best pastoral land in that division, and their sheep have for years topped the Melbourne market. Sheep from there have brought as much as 17s. 6d. in the olden times. The wool, too, fetches a good price, coming as it does from very superior land. Portions of that country, too, are well adapted for cultivation. A Mr. Thomas, who has lately taken up land near Hillston, told me that he had travelled a great deal through the Colony, and that he considered that, with the exception of the land round Narrandera, it was the best wheat-growing country he had seen. He had seen Mildura, Wentworth, and those places, having travelled for a land syndicate, but he settled near Hillston, considering that land to be the best he could obtain.

402. How many coaches are there running between Hillston and Carrathool? There are two a week to Carrathool, one to Hay, and two to Booligal.

403. And to Cargellico? There are two a week each way, and a weekly mail.

404. How many teams are there on the road? A great number. One storekeeper stated to the Commissioner that he got up 600 tons of goods in the year.

405. I am speaking of the average number of teams on the road between Carrathool and Hillston? There are a great many; but I could not say how many.

406. Mr. Wall.] How long has your railway league been established? We have been advocating a railway for a number of years.

407. Were any representations made to the Minister prior to the opening of the Wyalong gold-field? There was no deputation, but we have had plenty of communications with the Minister.

408. Can you tell the Committee where the boundary of the Western and Central Divisions would be intersected by the proposed line? The Lachlan is the boundary between the Western and Central Divisions.

409. Then the proposed line would not go into the Western Division at all, though it would serve a large portion of it? Yes; it would serve Euabalong, which is about 15 miles from Cargellico.

410. Would it not serve Coan Downs and the country to the north? Yes.

411. Can you give us an idea of the number of adult settlers that would be served by the construction of this line, taking the population of Hillston, Lake Cargellico, and the intervening country; -what would be the probable value of the passenger traffic on the line? I cannot say. Most people travel in their own conveyances now.

412. Can you give us any idea of the number of people who would be likely to avail themselves of the railway in order to get to Sydney? At Mossgiel there are about 400 people, and about 1,000 at Hillston and just immediately around it.

413. Is that the adult population? No.

13

414. Can you give us an approximate idea of the number of settlers that would be served by the proposed line? The line would serve every settler already in the district; but I cannot tell you how many there J. G. Carroll. are. I may say, however, that when the land was thrown open by the 1884 Act, the largest area of land, 13 April,1894. in the Colony but one, was taken up near Hillston.

415. Can you give us any idea as to the number of people between Hillston and Wyalong, or Cargellico and Hillston, who would be served by the line? I could not tell you how many would be served by it. 416. Has settlement in the vicinity of Cargellico and along the proposed line increased during the last

few years? Very little; it has gone off. 417. As a rule, has the land been taken up in the bond fide interests of those who selected it, or have many of the selectors sold it to the large pastoralists? Latterly not much land has changed hands in

that way. I think there are very few aclections which are not genuine. 418. Has there been any petition by persons requiring land for settlement against the renewal of the pastoral leases? The feeling has been against their renewal. The people are waiting for a new Land Act which they hope will be more liberal than the last. That is why there has not been much settlement.

419. Do you think that the division of the holdings would have a tendency not only to increase population, but to increase the carrying capacity of the land? Subdivision would certainly increase the carrying capacity of the land.

420. You think that, proportionately, the land held by selectors in the vicinity of Hillston carries more stock than that held by pastoral lessees? Yes. I know one selector with 640 acres of land who runs 800 sheep, and they are now so fat that he can hardly get a poor one to kill. His land has carried over a sheep to the acre because of the subdivision.

421. I suppose you know the old soldier's motto, "Guns overcharged recoil the most"? Well, I know he has been there over twenty years, and is likely to remain there.

422. Can you give us any idea as to the returns received in a year by the Lands Office at Hillston? They have been very good indeed until lately; but there has been a falling off this year.

423. This year has been worse than other years? Yes; very little land will be taken up until a new Act comes into force.

424. You think that the construction of a railway would have a tendency to increase settlement? I am sure of it. If the line is not constructed at an early date a great number of people will desert the back country.

425. Mr. Dawson.] If the leaseholds are thrown open to selectors, is there not a great likelihood of the pastoralists securing the whole of them? It would depend upon the conditions under which they were thrown open.

426. Under conditions under which you and I or anyone else could take them up? Not if you had continuous residence, and one man one selection, insisting upon a certain amount of cultivation.

427. Would you hamper selection with all those conditions, and then say that poor people should take up the land? Certainly. If poor people want land, they will put a house upon it and cultivate it.

428. But poor people cannot do all that you refer to? That is how they get a living.

429. Is the man who owns the 800 sheep the only one in the district who has got such sheep? No. 430. More than a sheep to the acre is the general thing in that district? No. The man to whom I was referring has a river frontage. My experience is that sheep in small lots get quiet, and do not run about and lose their condition.

431. Is it the feeling of the people in this district and round about Hillston that all the land should be thrown open? The majority of the people whom I meet are in favour of no renewal of the leases until the public get the first cut at the laud.

432. I agree with you that the public should have the land, but do you not think that the pastoralists will get their share along with the others? If you pass workable and liberal Land Acts and construct a railway, you will have any number of prosperous and successful people in the back country. I know people who have used the plough there most successfully, small as is the price of wheat.

433. If the country is as you have described it, and will carry 800 sheep to 610 acres, could they not all live by fattening sheep? The river frontages are so good that a small area of such land is sufficient for a man, but back in the timbered country it takes three or four and perhaps even ten acres to carry a sheep. That land could be profitably cultivated.

434. Would you compel a man to take up land such as that and cultivate it? Yes; because it will grow better wheat with less rainfall than the land nearer the river. Further away the land is sandy and loamy. 435. It must be wretchedly poor land if it takes five acres to feed a sheep? Well, the resumed area of the Cowl Cowl run, which they reckoned to carry a sheep to ten acres was abandoned, but now a man has selected there and cleared the land, and has got a crop of thirty-two bushels of wheat to the acre. This year he got a good crop of wheat and twenty-four bushels of oats to the acre. That land is not suitable for stock but it is suitable for cultivation, and there are hundreds of thousands of acres of such land about Hillston.

436. Is it open? Yes. 437. Then why is it not taken up? Because there is no railway by which to send away produce. I have heard men say, as Mr. Pearce has told you, that they would be satisfied with 2s. 6d. a bushel. I was there before any wheat was grown in the district, and I know that the 1988 crop has been the only one to completely fail. Wheat this year has brought from 2s. 3d. to 2s. 5d. at the flour mill in Hillston, and at Carrathool they get 2s. 7d. for it delivered at the railway station, or at least that is what I have been told. 438. You say that it is really good wheat-growing land, and that if the railway is made, hundreds of thousands of acres will be put under wheat? I consider that where there is one acre now, there would be ten if the railway were made.

439. How many acres are there under cultivation now? They are all taking in fresh land every year. One man who cultivated about 800 acres last year is putting in 1,500 acres this year.

440. Can you tell us what area is under cultivation now? About 12,000 acres this year. 441. Then there would be about 120,000 acres under cultivation if the railway were made? Yes.

442. This land would be held by smaller men? Yes; in blocks of from 1,400 to 2,560 acres chiefly. 443. Is anything else likely to be grown ;-how does barley grow there? Barley will grow, but it has not been cultivated there. Oats were put in for the first time last year, but that was a particularly dry year, and I am certain that land which would give thirty-five bushels of wheat last year would give over Mr.

forty bushels in a good year. Potatoes and onions grow there, and I think the onions on the Lachlan are J. G. Carroll. the finest in the Colony. Fruit, too, does remarkably well; and the grapes and peaches are equal to anything in the Colony. They are a month earlier than the Albury fruit.

18 April, 1894. 444. Is there any wine-making there? No. There is land on the Lachlan which is suited for vine

growing and for all sorts of fruit.

445. Except apples and cherries? Apples grow well at Booligal, and cherries grow well at Hillston, and I think the peaches are equal to anything in Australia.

446. But you do not get cherries and peaches together? I have seen good apples to come from Booligal; but the peaches are equal to anything I have tasted in the best shops in Sydney. The country there is capable of producing anything, and is free from disease. There is no disease among the sheep, cattle, or horses. Now and then there is a little complaint about a horse, but we have neither fluke nor pleura.

447. Chairman.] Mr. Pearce expressed the opinion that the railway would be serviceable for the removal of stock in times of drought, is that your opinion? Yes; the stock routes are completely caten away; they are let and sub-let, and it is really impossible in the summer months to get stock to market. I know men in the back country who, if they move their fat stock, can only get them to market as stores. If there were a railway, however, they could send them to other places where there was grass, or take them direct to market, and get full value for them.

448. Mr Wall.] Do you not think it would have materially assisted you if you could have submitted an estimate of the probable inward and outward tonnage on the proposed line? Certainly; hut I did not get sufficient notice, and I have been travelling night and day to meet the Committee. Had we got more

notice, instead of there being two witnesses from Hillston, there would have been ton.

449. But in making previous representations do you not think that that would have assisted you? The Department have got it all in print. Mr. Gilliat was down there and helped in the inquiry.

450. Have any recommendations been made in connection with the deputations which have waited on the Minister as to the produce of the district? I think so; but I would not be quite sure. We have been working hard in connection with the matter for some time.

451. Have you any statistics at your disposal which you could forward to the Central Committee, in Sydney, giving an approximate estimate of the probable tonnage which would be carried by the proposed line? Yes, we could give that information.

Mr. John Brett, selector, Molonglo, sworn, and examined :-

Mr. J. Brett. 452. Chairman.] How many miles are you from Wyslong? About 30.

13 April, 1894 453. In what direction? Towards Cargellico. 454. Near the route of the proposed railway? Not far off the direct line.

455. How many acres do you farm? I have a family selection—three selections.

456. How many acres have you altogether? A little over 7,000 acres. 457. How many acres have you under cultivation? I only grow enough for my own use.

458. How much is that? I have about 10 acres under cultivation.

459. How do you use the rest of the land? For grazing purposes; but there is very little grass on it until it has been improved.

460. How many sheep have you? About 4,000. 461. Where do you send your wool? To Sydney.

462. By what railway? From Temora.

463. What do you pay for carriage? It is pretty expensive to Temora.

464. Can you say how much a bale? It used to cost £6 a ton to Coolamon; but we got it taken to Temora for about £4 a ton.

465. How many bales do you send away? Sixty or seventy.

466. That would be 10 or 11 tons? Yes.

467. You would be served by an extension of the line via Wyalong to Cargellico? It would be almost immaterial to me which line was made. I consider that this is the very cream of the country.

468. How long have you resided on your selection? About four years.

469. Why have you not put more land under cultivation? Because the produce would not pay for carting away.

470. Did you hear Mr. Pearce's evidence? Yes.

471. It would not pay you to grow wheat? No. I should never have selected, but for the expectation of a national line some day.

472. What is the character of your land? Magnificent country. It wants improving; but it is all limestone country.

473. In what way does it want improving—by manuring? By clearing. The land itself is good. It could not be better land.

474. Is the rainfall sufficient? The rainfall is quite sufficient, but for an exceptional year. The country does not require so much rain as poorer country.

475. Is there much settlement round you? Yes; there is a large amount of settlement.

476. Is the land held in large areas like yours? Yes; it is principally held in large selections, because small selections would not do much good there.

477. Is there much land under cultivation? Not much. It is only cultivated for the use of the selectors. 478. You are nearly all sheep farmers out there? Yes; we combine that with a little agriculture.

479. But the extension of the railway will enable you to put the land you are now using for grazing under cultivation? Yes, most of that country will be put under agriculture.

480. It could be profitably used for agriculture if you had better railway facilities? Yes.

481. Mr. Dawson. You came from Victoria? Yes.

482. From what part? From Warrnambool. 483. That is particularly good country? Yes.

484. Then, I take it, you know what you are talking about? Yes; I went all round Now South Wales before I settled down, I have been in New England and at Tamworth. 485. You know Tamworth? Yes.

486. Is your land as good as that on the Peel River? Fully as good.

487. And you say that the line proposed by the Government goes through the cream of that country? I have not the slightest doubt of it.

488. A good deal of land would be taken up there if the road was good? It would be eventually taken Mr. J. Brett. up if there were a railway. 13 April, 1894.

489. You want a market for your produce? Yes.

490. If the railway is taken from Wyalong to Cargellico and then on to Hillston, the land through which it passes will be used for agriculture instead of having sheep running over it to the end of time? It will all be taken up. There are 75,000 acres in a gold reserve there, which are as good as anything between here and Sydney.

491. As a practical man you have no hesitation in making that statement? Not the slightest.

492. If this land is settled upon and taken up in small areas the settlers will be able to run sheep upon it as well as use it for agriculture? It will, when improved, carry a sheep to the acre.

493. And no doubt people will get store sheep and fatten them after the crops are off? Yes. The land is so far from market that agriculture and pastoral pursuits will be combined.

494. The climate is something like that of Tamworth? Yes.

495. Would lucerne grow there? Yes.

496. If you could get lucerne to grow, you could raise five times as much stock as you raise now? Yes. 497. If the railway were taken through your property, would you be prepared to pay a fair amount to the State for its construction? Certainly, I would be in favour of paying a fair amount.

498. You think it fair that if a man's land is benefited by the State he should pay part of the benefit

back to the State? Certainly, because he reaps the benefit indirectly.

499. Mr. Wall. You pay about 2s. a bushel to send wheat to Temora? About that.

500. The agricultural development of that country would be impossible without a railway? Yes. A great many people have gone there with the expectation of getting a national line some day.

501. If the railway were constructed, would you bring a large area of land under cultivation? Certainly,

because it would pay better.

502. Do you think the other settlers in the vicinity would follow your example? Yes. There are a great

many cultivating there now. Mr. Smith has 400 or 500 acres.

503. Mr. Dawson. I suppose you are aware that in England wheat has not been so cheap for two centuries as it is to-day, owing to the good seasons which they have had all over the world. What is the lowest price at which you could profitably produce wheat, if the railway came within 3 or 4 miles of your land, allowing for labour, use of teams, cost of seed, and so on? Not much less than 2s. 6d. a bushel. 504. That is delivered at the station? Yes.

505. Chairman. Is Mr. Lowenthal your neighbour? Yes, his property adjoins mine.

506. Is he a selector? Yes, a selector and manager.

507. How many acres has he under his control and management? About 30,000 acres. 508. How many sheep does his land carry? He owns something like 30,000 sheep. 509. Has he any land under cultivation? Yes; he grows artificial grasses principally.

510. How many acres has he under artificial grasses? About 20 acres.

511. Do you know where he sends his wool? By teams to Temora, and then on to Sydney.

512. Do you wish to add anything to your evidence? No further than that it is a magnificient little estate he has got there. It is reckoned a small estate in that part of the country. 513. Is it a freehold? A great portion of it is; but part of it is Crown land.

514. How much is freehold? About 5,000 acres. 515. And the rest is held under lease? Yes. 516. Will the lease expire in 1895? I think so.

517. Do you wish to say anything as to the character of the land? It is very good land.

518. Is it all suitable for the production of wheat? Not all. A great portion of it is boree country, which is first-class grazing land.

519. But not so suitable for agriculture? But not so suitable for agriculture.

520. Unless the railway were extended beyond Wyalong could agriculture be profitably undertaken? A great many small holders would go in for agriculture if the railway came to Wyalong, because it would then be within 30 or 40 miles of a great many of them.

521. You think they would bring more land under cultivation then? Considerably more land would be brought under cultivation, even if the railway came only to Wyalong.

522. But to serve you and your neighbours the line would have to be taken past Wyalong? Well, if it came to Wyalong it would make a difference of £2 a ton in regard to our wool.

523. Do you know anything about Cargellico? Yes.

524. Did you hear the evidence which has been given in regard to the character of the settlement, and the nature of the soil there? I heard Mr. Pearce's evidence; but I do not think any Government would be justified in running a line direct to Hillston.

525. Do you know the country between Wyalong and Hillston in a direct line? Yes.

526. Do you think it is as good for railway construction as the country along the proposed route? I think the proposed line runs through the cream of the country.

527. Mr. Wall.] Can you give the Committee any idea of the cost of clearing boree and yarran country?

The cost of clearing borce country would be very little.

528. About how much an acre? I think you would get that country grubbed for 10s. an acre.

529. Are there any blocks of country along that line where 20,000 acres could be selected suitable for village settlements? Only in the vicinity of the lake, which will become a great district for creameries if the railway goes there. I think it will be one of the greatest cream districts in the Colony. The only

530. Do you think that if the railway were constructed a 20,000 acre block could be obtained? drawback would be the water supply; but there could be no better land.

531. Is there that quantity of land available? There are hundreds of thousands of acres available where the line runs. There are 75,000 acres on the gold reserve alone, from what they call Four Corners to Lake Cargellico.

532. Chairman.] Do you know the country in the elbow formed by the line near the lake? Yes.

533. There is a large basin there supplied with water from the lake, which is estimated to contain from 20,000 to 80,000 acres? There is fully that.

534. Have you ever seen it dry? I have seen it pretty well dry.

535. What kind of land is there there? It is very good land-splendid country.

Mr. J. Brett. 536. Would that land be suitable for agriculture;—if a dam were put across the lake, it would be dry in a couple of years? Yes.

18 April, 1894. 537. Would that land be suitable for agriculture? Yes, it is black soil.

538. Could it be irrigated from the lake by means of a pipe passed through the embankment? Easily.
539. Would it be possible to have a village settlement under those conditions? Yes; that is just the place for one.

540. With complete irrigation? Yes.

SATURDAY, 14 APRIL, 1891.

[The Sectional Committee met at Jacob and Co.'s Store, Wyalong, Main Camp, at 10 a.m.]

Present:-

THE HON. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY (CHAIRMAN).

HENRY DAWSON, Esq. WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq.

The Sectional Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Mr. Thomas Pearce, solicitor, Hillston, sworn, and further examined :-

Mr. T. Pearce. 541. Chairman.] You desire to correct a portion of the evidence you gave yesterday? I desire to say with regard to my evidence as to the price of wheat, that there is a local market at Hillston, and when I 14 April, 1894. mentioned 2s. 6d. a bushel, I meant that the farmers would be satisfied with that price either at Hillston or at Carrathool.

542. That is the local price? Within a certain radius for carrying.

543. It is the ruling price? This year it was about the ruling price. The price varied from 3s. 6d. to 2s. 5d. at Hillston itself.

514. Is there anything you wish to add to your evidence? No; I do not think so.

Mr. Robert Edward Moore, farmer, Youngie Plains, sworn, and examined :-

Mr. 545. Chairman.] Where is your place located? About 14 miles from the surveyed township of Wyalong. R. E. Moore. 546. How far will you be from the railway as shown on the plan? I should think Wyalong would be the nearest station to me.

14 April, 1894. 547. Would Wyalong be as near as the 340 mile post? That might be within 10 miles of me.
548. You would be served by the railway if it came to Wyalong? Yes; I should be quite satisfied with

a railway within 20 miles.

549. What is the area of your holding? 2,560 acres.

550. How do you use it? For agricultural and pastoral purposes.

551. How much land have you under cultivation? Over 200 acres this year.

552. In wheat? Wheat and oats.

553. How many sheep do you graze? About 2,500.

554. Did you grow wheat last year? Yes.

555. How many bushels did you get to the acre? Last year it averaged about 20 bushels to the acre. 556. How many acres had you under cultivation last year? 120 acres. I have grown wheat for the last four years.

557. Where do you send it? I sent part of it this year to Sydney.

558. To what station on the railway? To Temora. 559. How far are you from Temora? About 52 miles.

560. What is the cost of carriage? About 2s. 6d. a bag. I sold one load of sixty-four bags at Temora at 2s. 9d.

a bushel. The Sydney wheat is not sold. They store it.

561. Has the construction of the railway to Temora led to a large increase in the area under wheat? There can be no doubt about it. If there were a railway to Wyalong I should have at least 500 acres under cultivation.

562. Did you sell your wheat last year? Yes; principally for local consumption at 3s. a bushel.
563. You did not send any to Sydney? No; this is the first year that I have sent any to Sydney.

564. Did you send your wheat in the direction of Cargellico? No; I sent it all to Temora. Temora is the nearest railway station.

565. Mr. Wall.] How much did you send to Sydney this year? About 104 bags.

566. Nearly 500 bushels? Yes.

567. Are there many other farmers growing wheat in this vicinity? Yes.

568. What was the total tonnage forwarded by you last year to Sydney in the shape of wool and wheat?

Last year I forwarded 104 bags of wheat and about 5 tons of wool.

569. What number of selectors within 20 miles of Wyalong in each direction would be served by the proposed line? There would be a vast number of selectors served by the line shown on the plan. That line taps some very good country.

570. Is there much land available for settlement? Very little now; but when the leaseholds are resumed

there will be a lot of agricultural land available.

571. Suppose they are not resumed? The rest of the land is nearly all taken up.

572. Can you give us an idea of the number of conditional purchasers who would be served by a line from Wyalong to Cargellico? No? I have not had time to get the information.

573. You say that the construction of a railway would induce you to put a larger area under cultivation?

Yes; and all my neighbours would go in for agriculture.

574. Would it pay them to forward wheat to Sydney at 2s. 6d. a bushel? It would not pay at the present price.

575. Have the majority of the selections between Wyalong and Cargellico been taken up in the interests of those who made them? That is a question I am not prepared to answer.

576.

Mr. M. N. Carter.

576. You cannot express an opinion upon it? Most of the selectors in my immediate neighbourhood, R. E. Moore. that is on Hiawatha, Lake Cowal, and so on, are bond fide men. 577. But is there not a current rumour that a large quantity of land in that district is being alienated in 14 April, 1804. the interests of pastoralists? That question I am not prepared to answer.

578. Has there been any great demand on the part of people requiring land for settlement that the leases shall be thrown open? Yes; I have had several inquiries from Victoria within the last three months from bond fide men who would use the land for agricultural purposes, asking when the leases would be thrown open.

579. Have you been agitating for a railway for any length of time? I only selected on the 3rd of April,

1890. We have been agitating for a railway during the last two years,

580. Has there been a general effort on the part of the settlers to induce the Government to take a line through this country? Yes, there is a general feeling in favour of it.

581. Have you never taken the trouble to prepare statistics showing what the probable traffic on the line would be? I do not know if our league has done so, but the league at Barmedman took that trouble some time ago.

582. And how have the local farmers endeavoured to make their voices heard ;--have they made representstions to the Minister? There was a deputation at Cootamundra upon the occasion of the opening of the Temora railway; I was present upon that occasion. That was the last deputation from this district so far as I am aware.

588. Do you know of the character of the country through which the proposed line would pass? Yes, for most of the way.

584. For how far along the line? As far as Lake Cargellico.

585. Is the land generally good? The line marked on the plan could not go in a better direction to open up agricultural land.

586. Do you think it goes through land which would yield 15 bushels to the acre? I do, honestly. 587. I suppose you are aware that this railway has been proposed subject to the application of the betterment principal? Yes.

588. Would you, as a landholder, be prepared to contribute towards the cost of the line? Yes, very freely, because it would enhance the value of my property and give me access to market. At present we cannot afford to grow wheat, and send it to Sydney for the price given.

589. Is that the general feeling of the farmers who would be served by the construction of the line? Yes.

Mr. Miles Nicholson Carter, manager of the Billabong holding, sworn, and examined :-

590. Chairman.] Who are the owners of your station? Mr. Henry Ricketson is the holder.

591. How long have you been in the district? Twenty-three years.

~ 592. Have you been managing during the whole of that time? Yes. 593. Mr. Dawson.] What is the extent of your run? One hundred thousand acres, counting in the 14 April, 1894, resumed area as well as the leasehold area.

591. Is there any freehold? Yes, about 18,000 acres of freehold.

595. What leasehold is there? About 35,000 acres.

596. And the balance is what? The balance forms part of the resumed area. 597. That is about 50,000 acres? Yes; the resumed area is 46,000 acres.

598. Is your country pastoral or is it agricultural? The land adjoining this township is altogether of an agricultural character, while on the Bland it is pastoral country. The two districts are quite distinct in character—that round here is agricultural land, while the other is salt bush and myall plain.

599. But both of their class are good? Yes.

600. The Bland country is very good for pastoral pursuits, and this is good for agriculture? Yes.

601. Do you go in for agriculture? No, except to grow hay for our own use.

602. How many sheep do you run? From 50,000 to 70,000.

603. Where do you send your wool? To Sydney. Last year we sent to Temora; but before that we used to send to Young.

604. If the railway were brought to Wyalong, to which station would you send? We should be within 8 miles of Wyalong.

605. And all your wool would come here? Yes; all our business would be done here.

606. If the railway were brought to Wyalong, would you part with any of your land? Yes, under certain conditions. We have here about 10,000 acres in the resumed area, and about 26,000 acres in the leasehold area-all splendid agricultural country. Our land, however, has been very much cut up by the diggers, and our tanks have been used by them. Three or four of our tanks have been resumed by the Government, and I would suggest-though I have no authority from Mr. Ricketson for making this offer-that for full compensation for our improvements and lease we should throw up our lease for the benefit of this township and the railway.

607. Do you mean, throw up the whole of your lease? The 26,000 acres of leasehold, and the resumed area, receiving compensation for improvements and lease. While I suggest that this country should be

thrown open for selection, I have no authority for making the offer.

283 (a)—C

608. These 26,000 acres, if thrown open to the public, would be settled upon? At once.

609. By bona fide men? Yes. 610. You would not suggest to Mr. Ricketson that he should get any of it back? The station would not take an acre of it back. We have had several such blocks as that of which I am now speaking, and we have asked that they might be thrown open for selection in exchange for other land. The offer was so highly thought of by the District Surveyor and the Chairman of our Land Board, Mr. Edwards, that they fell in with the suggestion, and highly recommended that it should be carried out.

611. You would concentrate your holding by throwing open this land to the public? Yes.

612. But it is a matter of arrangement between Mr. Ricketson and the Government? Yes. 613. Suppose the land were taken up, what would be the average crop per acre obtained from it? Not being a farming man I should not like to give an opinion on the subject. 614.

Mr. 14 April,1894.

614. Do you know what the people round you are getting? There has only been an agricultural

M. N. Carter. population settled here for a very few years, so that I could give you no idea. 615. As an old resident of the district you believe that if the railway were brought to Wyalong, a vast amount of country would be used for agriculture? I have no doubt whatever about it. I am positive that the country to which I have referred would be selected within a month if the construction of a

railway were assured. 616. How many sheep would this country carry, if selected; -would its carrying capacity be materially increased? It would depend upon the season, but it would make a difference of from 10,000 to 12,000

sheep. 617. Where do you send your surplus fat stock—to Homebush or to Melbourne? To Homebush.

618. How many do you send away in a year? This station is worked with Baratta, and we send our store sheep down there.

619. And then they go to Melbourne? Yes; and any fat stock we have we send to Homebush.

620. How many store cattle have you? Eight hundred or 900 at present. As a rule we do not have over 100.

621. How many store sheep do you send away from here? Something like 10,000 a year.

622. The railway will make no difference to them? I have no doubt whatever that if the railway were made we could send our sheep to Sydney, fat, quite as well as Mr. Ricketson would send them from Baratta.

623. Then you would have from 5,000 to 10,000 fat sheep to send to Homebush if the railway were made? Yes; it would entirely alter the management of the runs. The reason that the fat sheep go to Baratta is that there they are nearer to the railway. We have quite as good fattening country here as

they have there. 624. I suppose if a railway were constructed it would make this estate much more valuable? Yos. 625. Do you think Mr. Ricketson would object to pay a proportion of the cost of the railway as a betterment tax, the tax extending over a period of about seventy years? I could not tell you. I do not

know what Mr. Ricketson's opinion on the subject is. 626. What else does the district produce? I think that if a railway were made a great many things

would be grown here that are not grown now. 627. I noticed a lot of very fair ironbark timber round here yesterday; -could railway sleepers be got from them in any quantity? There is a great deal of ironbark all round here, and there is very

628. But pine is not good for sleepers? No; but it is good for other purposes. 629. Is the ironbark close to the proposed line? Well, it is a few miles off here.

630. Do you know anything of the country between Wyalong and Lake Cargellico? No; I only know it as far as Hiawatha.

631. What is that country like? It is similar to this.

632. Is it good land? It is our resumed area, and you can imagine what it is like, when I tell you that the whole of it has been selected, with the exception of 10,000 acres.

633. By bond fide men? Yes.

634. I suppose you can tell us better than auyone else whether they are bona fide men or not? I believe they are all bond fide men. As regards this station, there are none but what are bond fide.

635. You heard Mr. Moore say that all his neighbours would increase the area they had under cultivation if the proposed railway were made? Yes. I know Mr. Moore's land very well indeed, having had charge of the same country for years, and I believe it to be excellent agricultural land. I believe there would be a very large agricultural population there.

636. Do you know anything about the growing of barley? No; I do not know anything at all about it. 637. If the land were used for agriculture, I suppose a great many more sheep could be fattened by the farmers and sent away? Yes; because the areas would be smaller.

638. Can you give us any idea of the tounage you get inwards for station purposes? For station purposes alone, not including wire netting or anything like that, we get something like 25 tons a year, and with

fencing material we have had as much as 50 tons a year. 639. If the railway were made, would you get other commodities up, such as rock-salt? Yes; and suppose the Government were to favour my suggestion, we would have to improve our place very much

by cutting it up into smaller areas. 640. Mr. Wall.] Do you think that if the Government were to adopt your suggestion, a large amount of land would be cultivated in the vicinity of Wyalong? I feel certain that it would be taken up at once. 641. Are you aware that the Government have issued a proclamation reserving 50,000 acres in the vicinity of Wyalong for mining purposes? Not on our leasehold.

642. You know the proclamation? Yes, I saw it.

643. Is the land referred to in it of an auriforous character, and likely to be required in the interests of mining? I could not tell you.

644. I suppose you are aware that it would not be required for agricultural purposes? The 10,000 acres is the only portion that has been resumed. The 26,000 acres has not been resumed.

615. It is the intention of the Department to resume the land within a mile on each side of the line, and to dispose of it in special areas at an increased price; -do you think the construction of the line will enable the Department to get an increased price for land so reserved? Yes, I think so.

646. Is there any great quantity of vacant land between Wyalong and Lake Cargellico adjacent to the proposed line? I do not know any of the country between Hiawatha and Lake Cargellico.

617. Is there much land available for settlement close to the proposed line between Wyalong and Hiawatha? It has nearly all been selected.

648. Do you think the railway would fairly serve the pastoral country between Cowen Downs and Cargellico, and Cargellico and Hay? It would be of immense benefit in time of drought, because stock could then be moved from the dry country towards the mountains.

649. Do you think the pastoral interest would be fairly well served if the country were intersected by a line going nearly midway between the Cobar line and the Hay line? I think that such a line would be of untold benefit to the sheep farmers in the district, especially in dry seasons.

650. And is it your opinion that the more central that line was, the better the pasteralists would be served by it? I imagine that would be so. 651.

651. Have you any knowledge of the approximate number of sheep depastured within 30 or 40 miles of M. N. Carter. the line as far as Cargellico? No; I have not. 652. Is it customary for pastoralists here to shift a large part of their stock in times of drought? Yes; 14April, 1894.

or else the stock would die. 653. Do you think the railway would be used for that purpose? I feel certain of it. In times of drought we have had to shift nearly all our sheep to another place owned by Mr. Ricketson.

654. Chairman.] At what do you value your freehold at the present time per acre? Really I do not know. We gave from £1 to 25s, an acre for it, and we have improved it very largely, so that it is of great value now. We have only three miles of permanent water, and as we run 40 miles back, we have had to conserve water all over the place. The land would have been totally useless otherwise.

655. Could you put a price upon the land in the vicinity of Wyalong? We have no freehold in the

vicinity of Wyalong; it is all leasehold.

656. How far away is your freehold land? Nine or ten miles from here.

657. Would it be served by the railway? It would be all served by the railway.

658. I want to know what the increased value of your land would be if the railway were constructed?

It would not increase the price so much.

659. Would it increase the value of the land £1 an acre? No, it would not make any difference to the carrying capacity of the land; though of course it would benefit us to have nearer railway communication. 660. You would save in the cost of carriage? We should save about 30 miles of carriage. Our nearest station now is either Forbes or Temora.

661. Have you in past seasons been obliged to send many stock from here to the mountain district? Yes.

662. Is that in the direction of Gundagai? You pass through Gundagai to get to it.

663. Do you use the railway to Gundagai? We have not had to send stock away since that railway has been opened.

664. You have had good seasons since then? Fair seasons. It would scarcely be worth our while to truck sheep over the 30 miles from Cootamundra to Gundagai.

665. But from here? That would make a considerable difference.

666. Would it be worth your while to use the railway from here for that purpose? It would.

667. And would the railway be equally serviceable to stockowners in the neighbourhood of Hillston? It would.

668. Do you know the locality proposed as a site for a tank on No. 12? Yes; I have a tank there now. 669. I believe it is the intention of the Government to resume that land? So the surveyor told me.

670. Do you know the area which it is intended to resume? We have a purchased block there of 225 acres.

671. Do you think the whole of that will be resumed? Mr. Wade told me so the other day, together with another tank to the east.

672. Will it be a suitable site for a tank? Yes; if the catchment area is sufficient.

673. What is the catchment area? It must be 300 acres.

674. What do you think should be the capacity of a tank that would serve the town? It would all depend upon the number of the inhabitants.

675. I think it is proposed to have a tank of 10,000 yards capacity? I scarcely think that would be sufficient.

This is a very dry part of the country, our rainfall being, I suppose, from 15 to 20 inches in the year. 676. Can you say what quantity of water could be conserved by means of a 10,000 yards tank? I really do not know. Mr. Wade said that the Government would resume a tank of ours about a mile and a half or two miles to the east of this one. The tank has a capacity of 13,000 yards, and I should not think it at all too big.

677. Is the evaporation here very great in summer time? Yes; and the earth which is excavated should

be built up to a great height around the tank.

678. Have you had great experience in making tanks? Yes.

679. Can you offer any suggestion as to the best shape and mode of construction? I have a great objection to square tanks, because the smaller the surface is the better. Oblong tanks are the best, and you cannot have them too deep.

680. Would it be possible to construct a tank of that description and obtain the benefit of the whole drainage area? Yes, and the tank which is there now could be used as a silt tank.

681. What are the dimensions of the existing tank? About 2,600 yards.

682. What is its shape? It is nearly square.

683. You propose to lengthen the tank? I would not use that tank for the purpose of supplying the

township. I should use it to eatch the silt.

684. You would make it a filter? Yes; that is what I do with all my tanks. The water would settle in the first tank before running into the big tank. I have always found these small tanks very beneficial. 685. You mentioned that there had been a considerable amount of selection near to you. Has the land been taken up in large or in small areas? That is on the resumed area. The full quantity has been taken up.

686. Two thousand five hundred and sixty acres? Yes. I think there are only two or three who have

not taken the full quantity.

687. Can you say whether they are using the land for pastoral purposes only, or for agriculture, combined with pastoral pursuits? They have not been there long enough yet to clear the land for cultivation. 688. How long have they been there? I do not think it is more than four or five years since the first selection was taken up there.

689. It is since the Temora railway was recommended? That is just about the time.

690. Of course, you know the site selected for the new township? Yes.

691. Are you of opinion that it is the most suitable site for the purpose? Yes: I think it is very suitable.

692. Do you know of any better site nearer to the Main Camp? No; I do not.

693. Do you know the difference in elevation between here and the Main Camp? No, I do not; but I do not think it would be much. I should say it would be from 15 to 20 feet. 694. Have you travelled the road between here and Temora? I have gone onco or twice from Barmedman

to Temora, but never from this township to Barmedman. 695. What road do you use? A road which goes from Marsden; the stock route to Barmedman.

696.

Mr. M. N. Carter. 14 April, 1894.

696. Do you go to Temora? We go through Barmedman, striking the road about 5 miles from here. 697. Do you get your stores by the same road? Hitherto we had always got them from Grenfell. The

Temora line has only lately been opened, and our supplies came up before it was opened. 698. Do you think it probable that a railway to Wyalong would create a traffic in addition to that now existing, which would pay interest and working expenses? I have no hesitation whatever in saying that

699. Mr. Wall.] Do you know if the railway to Temora is paying expenses? I do not; but I should

700. Do you think there would be better prospects of the railway paying if it were extended to Wyalong?

Yes; prospects would be still better if it were taken further west. 701. Has there not been a fall in the value of pasteral property during the last ten or twelve years? Pastoral properties now are nearly unsaleable, and so is produce.

702. Chairman.] I suppose this depression has been common through all the colonies? Yes.

Mr. William McFadyean, builder and farmer, Cargellico, sworn, and examined:-

Mr. W. 14 April, 1894.

703. Mr. Wall.] How long have you been at Cargellico? Twenty-one years. McFadyean. 701. Has the growth of that place been rapid during the last two years? No, it has not; its progress of

late has been very small. 705. What is the number of buildings in Cargellico, approximately? There are three or four stores and

three hotels. I suppose the population is about 500. 706. Do they do a large business in most of the stores? Lately they have done very little.

707. Is there much settlement in the vicinity of Lake Cargellico? There has not been a great deal

during the last two or three years. 708. Is there much land available for settlement there? Very little of the resumed area is available. 709. What justification is there in asking for an extension of the railway to that part of the country, having regard to the prospect of its paying interest on construction? Mount Hope is 40 miles away from Cargellico, and all the traffic from Sydney there would come over the proposed line, and there would also be the traffic back. We are from 110 to 108 miles from Whitton, and the traffic that now goes there

would come over the proposed line. 710. Do you know the distance between Mount Hope and Herbertdale on the western line? No. I am

not as much acquainted with that country as I am with the country on this side.

711. You say that all the traffic from that country would be taken by the proposed line. Do you know the extent of that traffic? No; but if I had known that I was to appear before you to-day I should have been prepared with an estimate of it.

712. I suppose you know that the Mount Hope mines are now practically closed down, and have been for some years? They are open again.

713. They are let on tribute? Yes. 714. Do you know what the output of the tributors has been during the last few years? I cannot say what it has been.

715. You are not aware that the balance-sheet showed a very serious loss on last year's operations? I was not aware of that.

716. I suppose you are not aware that the mines would have been closed altogether had it not been for some compensation paid by the Government, which has enabled them to defray their expenses? No; but I am not connected with the mines. I should like to point out that it is all good agricultural country within 10 or 12 miles on the other side of the Lachlan.

717. Do you think the construction of the proposed line would bring about a large agricultural settlement? I am sure of it, because it is all agricultural country from here to there.

718. Have you any idea of the cost of growing wheat there? Yes; at present there is no market for wheat. 719. What is the cost of cultivation per acre? It all depends upon how the land is worked. The small areas which the farmers are now cultivating are worked at twice as much as it would cost to work 500

or 600 acres. 720. What is the cost of clearing that land? From £1 to £2 an acre; it all depends on the timber

upon it. 721. I suppose the soil is fairly light; they could use double-furrow ploughs upon it? Yes.

722. Have you any knowledge of the area of land available near the existing railways, and nearer to the metropolis than the land of which you are speaking;—can you give us any reason why that land has not been taken up? I do not know much about other land, because I have always been living near the Lachlan. 723. You say that the land in the vicinity of Lake Cargellico would be cultivated? Yes; all the resumed portion is taken up already.

724. For pastoral purposes? It is to be used for pastoral purposes. There is no market for produce. 725. Can you give us any idea of the return per acre from that land when used for pastoral purposes?

No, I could not at present. 726. If we were told that that land would carry more than a sheep to the acre, and it is utterly impossible

to find one of them poor enough for killing, is that your experience of it? No. 727. Do you think that this land could be better used for cultivation than for raising stock? I am

sure of it. 728. And has there been any strong desire to have the leases in that part of the country thrown open for settlement? There has been a unanimous desire of late.

729. Almost an agitation? Yes. 730. You do not think that the throwing open of the leases would bring about the defeat of settlement? I am sure it would not.

781. Can you say whether, as a rule, the land will carry more when held in small areas than when held in pastoral lease? Yes; it seems to carry about four times as much.

732. And you think that not only would the population be greatly increased if the pastoral leaseholds I am sure that were thrown open, but that the carrying capacity of the land would be quadrupled? Mr. it would.

Mr.

E. Townsend.

-

14 April, 1894.

Mr. Edward Townsend, station overseer, Lake Cargellico, sworn, and examined :-

733. Chairman. Who is the owner of your station? Mr. D. Mackellar.

731. What is its area? It was originally 300,000 acres.

735. How much purchased land is there? Something over 20,000 acres.

730. And the rest is leasehold? Leasehold and resumed area.

737. You are using it under an occupation license? We are not using the resumed area.

738. What stock are you carrying? I do not know what they are carrying now. I have left there.

739. But when you were there? 40,000 sheep. 740. Where was the wool sent? To Whitton.

741. Mr. Dawson.] Does it take 71 acres to keep a sheep? In some cases it does.

742. How far are you from the country where 800 sheep are fattened on 600 acres? I never heard of that country, though I have seen country that would do that for a time. There are odd places within 100 miles of us that would do it.

743. Would the grazing and agricultural capabilities of the land be increased to any extent by the construction of a railway? Yes.

744. Do you know a better route for the line than that proposed by the railway? I do not know how you could get a better route.

745. You do not know anything about the engineering difficulties along the route? No.

746. To what extent would the grazing and agricultural capabilities of the district be developed by the construction of a railway? To my knowledge they would be more than doubled.

747. That is, if the land were cut up into small holdings? Even if the land were left as it is. Half of that country will carry a sheep to 3 acres. The country that only carries a sheep to 7\frac{1}{2} acres will never be occupied.

748. How far is that bad country from the railway? One corner is about 5 miles south of the line.

749. Is it no good at all? It is like the country behind here, but the soil is sandier.

750. Could not that country grow wheat if the mallee were cut down? Yes; but there is plenty of other country which would be taken up first, unless the land were classified.

751. Chairman.] How far is your station from Whitton? ()ne hundred and ten miles.

752. What do you pay for railway carriage from Whitton to Sydney? I never had anything to do with that part of the business. I was simply the sheep overseer.

753. How long were you there? I was in the district twenty years. 754. Where is the most settlement? Around Lake Cargellico.

755. Will the proposed line serve most of the selectors? Most of the selectors are east from Lake Cargellico.

756. Along the proposed line? Yes.

757. How far out from Lake Cargellico are they—in a north-westerly direction? About 15 or 20 miles. 758. They will all be served by the proposed extension? Yes. Then there are a number of settlers to the south and south-east.

759. At what distance from the proposed line? The nearest would be only 5 or 6 miles away.

760. And the more distant? Fifteen or 20 miles. There are also a number of selectors about 20 miles to the north of the 380-mile post.

761. They would be served by the proposed line to Cargellico? Yes.

762. Do you know the country in a direct line from Hillston to Wyalong? No.

763. Have you any knowledge of any other part of the country, from a pastoral point of view? I just know a few of the stations around.

764. Do you know anything about the Barwon country? No.

765. You could not make a comparison between this and any other place in regard to productiveness?

No; I know nothing at all about other places.

766. Do you know anything at all about the Hay country? I have only passed through it. A large industry would be opened up by the railway in the sending of pine from Cargellico to Sydney.

767. How could that district compete with Narrabri and Boggabri? Well, the Lachlan pine is white-

ant-proof.
768. Is any of it sent to Sydney now? No.

769. Mr. Dawson.] What could it be sent for? I do not know.

Mr. Alexander Gordon Huie, labourer, Cargellico, sworn, and examined:-

770. Chairman.] How long have you been residing at Lake Cargellico? About eleven years.

771. What have you been doing there? I take any work that I can get. I have been working at the building of a bridge over the river.

772. Do you know of any reason for the construction of the proposed railway;—is there any prospect of 14April, 1894.

772. Do you know of any reason for the construction? I should say that there would be a very considerable

amount of settlement on both sides of the line if it were constructed.

773. Is that land available for settlement now? Most of it is not. For instance, the leasehold on

Wheyo run will not be available for selection for twelve months.

774. Have you had experience of cases where great promise of settlement has been held out before the construction of railway, but where the land still remains a wilderness? I have been along the Hay line, and I know that there is a large amount of land there which is not used; but I think a great portion of that land is locked up in large estates. I think that all the land along the proposed line should be leased that land is locked up in large estates.

in suitable areas, which would be a guarantee that it would be used.
775. Do you think the character of the country is such that the people would settle upon the land if a

railway were constructed? Yes.

776. Has the place gone abead much during the last few years? Not recently. They feel the depression here as well as elsewhere.

777. Is this regarded as a good district by those who are settled here? Yes.

778. Have many of those who have selected here parted with their land? Yes. Some of them took it up with that intention, but others still hold it. These people would go in for farming if they had a market. Their

Their only market at present is Mount Hope, where they send chaff. The rest of their produce is consumed Mr. A. G. Huic. locally. 779. But they grow very good hay and chaff in the vicinity of Mount Hope? Not such a great deal. I know

a man who has been sending chaff up there as long as I have been in Cargellico. 14 April, 1894. 780. They grow good wheat and chaff there! They grow some, but very little.

781. But wherever cultivation has been tried it has been fairly successful? I believe so.

782. Is there a very large area of land available in that vicinity? I believe the leases there have a great

many years to run. 783. Do you think it is likely that if there was any great demand for produce at Mount Hope they would send to Lako Cargellico, when they could grow it near at hand? It is 85 miles from Gilgunyah to

784. But if they had tried to grow it closer to Mount Hope, would not the experiment have been success-Mount Hope.

ful? No doubt, if the season had been good; but the season is not certain there.

785. You do not suppose that a very extensive market would be opened up for the sale of produce in that district? Not a very extensive market; but that is the only market they have.

786. Have many transfers of selections taken place during the last year or two? I could not say; but

787. Do you know if the scarcity of these transfers is attributable to the bond fide nature of the selection, some have. or to the impecuniosity of the pastoral tenants? If the pastoral tenants had had more money, they might have taken over more land.

788. Can you say whether those who have taken up land near Lake Cargellico are, as a rule, bond fide men, and make a fair living in depasturing stock there? I should say that the bulk of them were bond fide

759. And you think they are doing fairly well with their selections? There are not many of them who selectors. make a living from the land alone, though some of them do. Others get outside work, such as contracting, or carrying, or working in a sawmill.

790. As a matter of fact, then, they are not all small pastoralists? As a rule they put in a small crop, and they run sheep.

791-2. And carry on the roads? Yes.

793. Do you think that if the railway were constructed a great number of them would live on the land? Yes; I think a great many selections would be taken up if the railway were constructed, because they would then be able to get their produce away. With regard to what Mr. Townsend said about the export of pine, I may mention that pine has been taken to Whitton, a distance of 24 miles, and if it pays to send it there, surely it would pay to send it to Sydney if the proposed line were constructed.

794. Was that pine taken to Whitton for any special purpose? It was taken to Whitton and sent along the line. I should say that the betterment principle should be applied to the proposed railway.

Mr. Edward Thomas Clark, selector and farmer, Hiawatha, sworn, and examined:-

795. Chairman. What is the area of your holding? 2,560 acres.

Mr. E. T. Clark. 796. When did you take it up? In 1891.

797. For what purpose are you using it? For pastoral and agricultural purposes.

14 April, 894. 798. How much have you under cultivation? About 100 acres this year.

799. Had you any under cultivation last year? About 40 acres. 800. How many sheep are you carrying? About 1,500 sheep.

801. What distance are you from the route of the proposed railway from Wyalong to Cargellico? About 6 miles.

802. Out from the 350-mile post? Yes; about there.

SO3. Can you speak as to the settlement in that locality? Yes; nearly all the land in that district is settled upon.

804. Is it held in large blocks similar to yours? Yes; about the same. 805. Are all the selectors following pastoral pursuits, combined with agriculture? Nearly all are going in for agriculture, combined with pastoral pursuits. 806. All to the same extent? Some are going in for agriculture more than others.

807. Would the whole of that district be served by the proposed extension? Yes; but I believe that if the line were bent up from Wyalong so as to go in a more northerly direction, it would serve more country than it will if bent to the south.

808. Do you know if there would be any difficulties in its construction? I am not aware. 809. Are you familiar with the country there? No; but I think the country is level.

810. By keeping the line in a southerly direction, it is not necessary to have a bridge over the Humbug, while, if you went north, you would require a bridge. With that explanation, do you think the best route has been selected? Yes, I think so.

811. Would you like to make a statement in reference to the proposed railway from Temora to Wyalong? The district between Wyalong and Woolengough is nearly all settled upon, and the most of the settlers there would go in for agriculture, if they could make it profitable. They do so now to a certain extent; but if a railway were constructed they would largely increase the area under cultivation.

812. You think that land could be profitably used for agriculture if the railway were extended to Wyalong? Yes; providing a fair price could be obtained for wheat.

813. What do you regard as a fair price, in Sydney? 3s. a bushel in Sydney.

814. You think wheat would pay at that price? Yes.

815. I suppose you produce other things besides wheat? Yes, hay. We get from 30 cwt. to 2 tons an acre.

816. Mr. Wall.] Did you take up your land yourself? Yes.

817. Chairman.] What are you paying now for cartage to the nearest railway station? £2 a ton. I find that my selection would be only about 24 miles from the proposed line.

818. And how far from Wyalong? About 16 miles by the road. 819. How far would it be by the proposed railway? Five or 6 miles.

820. Has any land in your locality changed hands within the last three or four years? No.

821. I suppose people are not in a position to transfer their land? None of them are certificated yet. 822. Would the construction of a railway make any difference to the value of your land? Yes; from 10s, to 15s, an acre.

Mr.

Mr. R. Gagie,

14 April, 1894.

Mr. Robert Gagie, selector and carrier, near Wyalong, sworn, and examined :-

823. Chairman.] Where is your holding? About 31 miles from where we are now.

824. How far from Wyalong township? Five miles.

825. In what direction? North-west.

826. Would you be served by the proposed railway from Temora to Wyalong? Yes.

827. What is the area of your holding? It is a family selection.

828. How many acres have you? 7,500 acres.

829. How much land have you under cultivation? Twenty acres.

830. The rest you use for pastoral purposes? Yes.

881. How many sheep do you run? 4,500 sheep, and 100 cattle. 832. Where are you sending your wool? By team to Temora.

833. What does it cost you per bale? I take my own.

884. But suppose you had to pay somebody else, what would it cost? £2 15s. a ton. 835. There are five or six bales to the ton? Yes; five and a half bales on the average.

836. Is the surrounding country all settled? Yes.

837. Has there been much selection? There has been a good deal of selection to the north; in fact, all the selection is to the north of where we are; there has been none to the south.

838. Will the selectors be fairly served by the proposed line? Yes.

839. Do you think its construction will lead to an increase in the area cultivated for wheat? I think so.

I am prepared to do a little when the railway comes there.

840. Have you formed an opinion as to what price is required to make wheat pay? At Wyalong, or in Sydney?

841. At Sydney? 3s. 6d. a bushel.

842. You do not agree with a former witness that 3s. a bushel would pay? No. 843. Do you find it more profitable to grow wool than to cultivate wheat? Yes.

844. Do you wish to make any statement in reference to the proposal now under consideration? The construction of the railway will cause a lot of traffic to spring up. All the people within 20 miles of the line would go in for agriculture, and, no doubt, vineyards would be started here. At the present time, because of the distance from market, these industries do not pay.

845. But the land is suited for agriculture? Yes; it is suitable for the vine. I knew the Albury district for eighteen years, and I have some vines here two years old, which are as healthy as any in the Albury district. 846. Mr. Wall.] Do those engaged in pastoral pursuits here find their occupation fairly remunerative?

Fairly remunerative.

847. Do you think that if the land now under lease in this district were thrown open for selection, it would readily find occupants who would engage in pastoral pursuits on small holdings? I think so.

848. Do these small holders depasture more stock proportionately than the large holders? Yes; a great

many more.

849. And they improve their land to a greater extent? Yes. On the land I now hold they used to run 2,500 sheep; but I run 4,000 sheep and 100 cattle.

850. I suppose the improvements you speak of invariably consist of ringbarking? Ringbarking and scrubbing.

851. Are those improvements made to any extent on the leaseholds? No; the leaseholds have gone back.

852. The grazing capabilities of the land are considerably increased by them? Yes.

853. Do you think the Government would be justified in constructing this railway in the expectation that it would receive sufficient traffic to pay interest on the cost of construction? I think so.

854. You think that the district will compare favourably with other parts of the country where railways have been constructed? I think so.

855. With what other parts of the country are you conversant? I know the Hay district.

856. Do you think the settlement in this district is as great as the settlement was in the Hay district before the railway there was constructed? Yes; it would be more.

857. Do you think there is as much justification for constructing this line as there was for constructing the Hay line? There is more settlement in this district now than there was in the Hay district when the railway was taken there.

858. Do you think there is as good a prospect of settlement increasing here as there was of its increasing in the Hay district? That depends upon how the land is thrown open.

859. Assuming that the leases will be thrown open? Yes.

Mr. James M. Jamieson, conditional purchaser, near Wyalong, sworn, and examined:-

860. Chairman.] Will you point out on the plan where your holding is? Yes; it is about 16 miles Mr. J. M. north-west of Barmedman.

861. How far from the proposed railway? I should say about 10 miles.

862. Would you go to Barmedman if there were a station there? Wyalong would be nearer than 14A pril, 1894. Barmedman.

863. But you would have less freight to pay if you went to Barmedman? It would not make much difference.

864. What is the area of your holding? 2,560 acres.

865. When did you take it up? Four years ago.

866. After the Cootamundra to Temora line was decided upon? Yes.

867. Did you take it up because of the known intention of the Government to make that line, or had you decided before to take it up? I took it up because I thought the railway would come through.

868. Where did you come from? From Cootamundra.

869. You were at Cootamundra then when the Public Works Committee inquired into the advisability of taking the line to Temora? Yes.

870. How are you using your land? For sheep; and I have cultivated a little.

871. How much have you under cultivation? About 40 acres.

872. And how many sheep? About 3,600. 873. I suppose the land under cultivation is growing wheat? Yes. My children have selections along-874. side mine.

Jamieson. ~~

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS. Mr. J. M. 874. What is the area of all the selections? About 6,000 acres. 875. And you have 3,000 sheep on the whole selection? Yes. Jamicson. 876. And what area under cultivation? All the land under cultivation is on my selection. 14 April, 1894. 877. What has been the yield of wheat? About 15 bushels to the acre. 878. Have you any land under lease? Not from the Crown. 879. Where are you sending your wool now? To Temora. 880. What do you pay for carriage? About £2 a ton. 881. What distance are you from Temora? Forty miles. 882. Can you say whether the proposed line will serve the whole of the settlement near you? Yes. 883. What is the greatest distance any of your neighbours would be from the proposed line? From 20 to 25 miles, I should think. 884. Do you think they would be fairly served by it? Yes. 885. And in the event of the line being constructed, do you think it probable that you would put more land under cultivation? Yes. 896. At what price would wheat pay you? At about 3s. a bushel. 887. Three shillings in Sydney? 3s. 6d. in Sydney. If you sold locally at 3s. it would be much about the same as selling in Sydney at 3s. 6d. 888. Mr. Wall.] How far is your place from Temora? Thirty-eight or 40 miles. 889. That is the nearest point on the railway? Yes. 890. Has the construction of the railway to Temora promoted settlement in the vicinity of the line? Yes. S91. Can you say to what extent the wheat production of the district has increased since the construction of the railway? I could not go into figures, but I know that it has increased very much. 892. Is there a general tendency on the part of people holding land close to the railway to bring it under cultivation? Yes; at Barmedman there has been a great increase in cultivation since it was known that the railway would come to Temora. 893. You have been practically engaged in pastoral pursuits? At present I could not do anything else; but I used to do farming in the Cootamundra district. 894. Are we to infer that those who have taken up land here in small holdings are making a fair living from pastoral pursuits? My experience is that it is best to combine agriculture with pastoral pursuits. 895. Can you point to any case where increased areas have been put under cultivation by people living in the vicinity of Temora because of the construction of the Temora railway? I could not name anyone. 896. But you say generally that there has been an increase in cultivation? There is one farmer named Clements who used to only grow a little hay, but he has now about 200 acres under hay. 897. Is that hay used for local consumption or is it consigned to Sydney? All the hay he grows he sends to Barmedman for local consumption. 898. Does it pay to send hay from this district to Sydney? I do not think he has sent any hay to Sydney. I think he has sold all his produce locally.

899. Has there been any tendency on the part of holders of agricultural land to increase their agricultural area with a view to disposing of their produce in the metropolitan market? Yes, I believe so. 900. No doubt everyone in this district would advocate the construction of a railway? Yes, because they

have no market now.

Mr.

901. Do you think the construction of a railway would promote settlement in the district to such an extent as to make it pay? I do. 902. You feel convinced that the railway would be remunerative, and that its returns would meet the

interest on the cost of construction? Yes, if the pastoral leases were thrown open for selection.

Mr. Donald Hugh Rankin, conditional purchaser, near Wyalong, sworn, and examined :-9021. Chairman.] In what direction is your holding? It is about a mile and a half from the Government D. H. Rankin. surveyed township, in a southerly direction. It is a little bit off the road. 903. What is the area of it? 1,900 acres. 14 April, 1894. 904. Is any of it under cultivation? Not yet. I have not been here sufficiently long to cultivate it.

905. When did you take it up? Two years ago.

906. What improvements have you put on it? I have a dwelling-house, kitchen, store-room, buggy shed, fences, and two tanks.

907. Have you any stock? Not at present. I had before the rush took place; but the location of a large population at Wyalong has given me facilities for disposing of it. 908. What induced you to take up land here? I thought the land was good enough to make a home on.

909. What family have you? I have a family of five.

910. Are you able to live by the profits of your selection? I have not been here long enough to test that question, but I think I shall be able to do so.

911. You intend giving it a fair trial? Yos.

912. You will be served by the proposed line? Yes. 913. Do you wish to make any statement or give reasons for the construction of the line; -do you think its earnings will fairly cover the interest on construction and working expenses? In my opinion the land is good enough for settlement; and if the Government deal with the leases about to be thrown open in a way that will bring about their occupation by an agricultural population, there will be a large amount of traffic.

914. The settlement would then be in smaller areas? Yes.

915. Do you think the people here have taken up more land than they can manage? No; but if there were a railway people could live on smaller holdings than they have now.

916. What is the smallest holding that a man could live on? A 640-acre selection, if he were within

10 miles of the proposed terminus.

917. I suppose you can give us no information as to the average yield of wheat here? No. I have been farming for the last nine years, and I came here with the intention of farming, even before the railway was proposed. If the railway were constructed I would make a certainty of it.

918. Where were you farming before? At Junee.

919. Can you speak as to the suitability of the land near the proposed railway for agriculture? Yes; Mr. not from my own experience, but from what I have seen on other selections. The land is scrubby and D. H. Rankin. more heavily timbered, and consequently harder to clear than the Junee land, but it is equal to it in every respect.

920. Was your land cleared when you took it up, or have you been clearing it since? What I have got cleared has cost me about £2 an acre.

921. That is to get it ready for the plough? Yes.

922. What does it cost you for seed and harvesting? About 12s. an acre for ploughing, sowing, and harrowing, and about 3s. an acre for seed.

923. And for bagging? For stripping and all that—it could be stripped for 8s. an acre.

924. What do you estimate the total cost per acre of taking your produce to the nearest railway station? At the present time?

925. Yes? It would all depend upon the yield.

926. What would be the cost of labour, irrespective of the yield? I suppose something like £3.

927. With the clearing it would cost you £1? Hardly £1; but it would all depend upon circumstances. The more a man cultivates the less the proportionate cost. If a man cultivates a small piece, he has to employ as many men as if he cultivated a large piece.

928. Suppose he cultivated 100 acres? At the present price 100 acres would hardly pay.

929. What would be the smallest area you think would pay? About 200 acres.

930. What do you estimate the cost per acre of all operations, including bagging? It depends a good deal upon the crop.

931-2. Taking an average crop? About 18s. per acre.

933. What does it cost for bags and stripping? Fivepence three farthings for bags and about 8s. an acre for stripping.

934. Then it costs you altogether about 25s. an acro? Very nearly; £1, speaking from memory.

935. How many bushels an acre would you consider a fair average yield? About 16.

936. At what price could you sell at a profit? For 2s. 8d. a bushel.

937. Two shillings and eightpence in Sydney? No, in Temora. We always sell in the local market.

938. What would you deduct from that for carriage and selling? About 6d. a bushel.

939. So you think that that 2s. 2d. is a very fair price? I could live on that.

940. That would give you 34s. or 35s. an acre? Yes, and it would leave me about 10s. an acre profit.

911. Would that pay you? Yes; if I had 200 acres under cultivation.

942. One hundred pound would provide interest on your outlay and pay for your own labour? I daresay if I went into the thing very particularly, and charged for my own labour, I could not possibly do it for the price; but so long as we have a surplus at the end of the year we are satisfied.

Mr. John Richmond, Staff Surveyor, Department of Lands, sworn, and examined:-

943. How long have you been in the Department? About 15 years.

944. Were you told off specially to report upon the land and the nature of the water conservation in the J. Richmond. Barmedman district? To report upon the character and value of the land and the facilties for settlement in this district.

in this district.

945. Have you received special instructions with regard to Wyalong? I have received instructions to inspect the whole of the country around here and to go through the leasehold area of every run.

946. How long have you been engaged on this special work? Since last October.

917. Have you furnished your report? I have furnished several on the country between here and Temora.

948. What is the date of the latest report sent in by you? The last I sent in on 31st January.

949. Since you have been here have you recommended that any area should be resumed for a township? Do you mean at Wyalong.

950. Yes? Yes; I selected the site for a township, and a plan of it is now being prepared.

951. How many acres have been reserved? About 500.

952. How many have you surveyed for a township? About 400.

953. How many allotments are there? About 280.

954. What is the area of each allotment? A quarter of an acre.

955. Has that land been taken up? Yes.

956. The whole of it? I believe so.

957. For business sites chiefly? For business and residence purposes. Other land has been pegged out under miners' rights.

958. Have you provided any reserves in the new township? One-fifth of the whole-100 acres.

959. Have you put any value upon the surveyed portion? I have not yet recommended what price should be charged.

960. Have you made an estimate? I have estimated that the allotments should be valued at from £5 to £15—an average of £10.

961. That would give a value of very nearly £3,000 to the whole of the surveyed portion? Yes.

962. And what would the other land cost at the same rate? About £2,000 more.

963. So that the value of the town would not be less than £5,000? It would not be less. Those values are under rather than over.

964. And have you made any provision for water? I examined and inspected the whole country, and recommended as far as possible the resumption of Carter's tank on No. 12, referred to by him in his

examination.

965. The resumption of what area? I would recommend that about 320 acres in the catchment area should be reserved.

966. Would that comprise the whole of the catchment area? I think it would take the best of it.

Mr.

967. Have you made any recommendations as to the commencement of the tank? Not yet. I suppose

J. Bichmond. it would not be less than 10,000 yards.

968. What quantity of water would that hold? 1,500,000 gallons. 14 April, 1894. 969. Do you think that that would be a sufficient supply for the town? I should think so, because the people would not depend entirely upon it; they would have their own supplies as well.

970. Have you discovered any other place within a reasonable distance of the town which you think would be suitable for water conservation? Yes; there are good catchments in all directions-that is, good catchments for this country.

971. So that if it is ascertained that the supply to which you have referred is insufficient, there will be no difficulty in obtaining a further supply? No; another tank further on, of about 13,000 yards capacity, is

972. Why did you recommend the existing site for the Government township instead of the place we are now in? Because it was more suitable, from a sanitary point of view; more central, having regard to the future of the place; and nearer to the course of traffic. This place to a certain extent, is out of the way, because most of the traffic comes along the main road from Barmedman and Marsden, and the

Government township will be near to that. 973. Is the Government township higher than the main camp? Yes; apparently it is.

974. What is the difference in elevation? I have not measured it exactly; but I think 20 or 30 feet,

not more. 975. What was your reason for recommending that the main camp should not be surveyed for business sites? I did not report against it, because I have not been asked to report about it at all. My instructions were to choose the best site for a town.

976. And you believe you have chosen the best site? Yes.

977. Can you speak as to mining matters? No.

978. You think that the site you have selected for a town will be central as far as the mines which are at present being discovered are concorned? I think so-more central than the main camp.

979. Mr Wall.] Have you any connection with the Water Conservation Department? Not any. 980. What do you estimate will be the fixed population of this place within the next twelve months?

Do you mean the population of the town or the main camp? 981. Of the gold-field generally? I estimate that there will be at least 800 men working here, besides

their wives and children and others dependent upon them.

982. Taking an average of five to a family, that would represent a population of about 4,000? Yes. 983. Do you not think that 300 acres is a very small water catchment for a population such as that? It seems to me sufficient.

984. Have you any idea as to what rule engineers follow when estimating the supply of water required by country towns? Yes; I have had to do with catchment areas before.

985. What is the maximum and minimum supply allowed by the officers of the Country Towns Water Supply Branch? That I do not know.

986. You have examined the country around here pretty fairly? Yes.

987. Is there any place where you could get a larger table drainage for a tank than the place you have recommended should be reserved? Yes, where there is a tank about 11 mile further on, on the same Blope.

988. What would be the area drained by that tank? I do not know. It would be very large.

989. Sufficient to meet the requirements of the place? More than sufficient.

990. Would the water supply be sufficiently close for the Railway Department to avail themselves of it, supposing the railway were brought to Wyalong? I think the Railway Department would require a tank nearer the line. I do not think they could make use of the tank that I have been speaking about, because it would not hold enough. There would be nothing to prevent another tank being put there, however.

991. Were your instructions definite in regard to the laying out of a town, or have you acted upon your own judgment as regards the permanency of the field; -did you consider it necessary to lay out a town? I acted upon my own judgment in selecting a place, and then obtained the approval of Wardens Slee and Sharp.

992. Did you recommend the laying out of a township here? No.

993. Do you know who recommended it? No one. I am responsible for it, and my recommendation was approved of by the two wardens.

994. Acting upon your own judgment as to the permanency of the place, you have laid out a township 2 miles away from here? Yes.

995. And you are taking steps to resume a tank to supply water to a population of 4,000? Those steps are being taken by the Water Conservation Department, who were represented here by Mr. Wade. He was here yesterday or the day before to report upon the matter.

996. Has he inspected the locality where you propose to resume the tank? Yes. 997. Does be regard it as likely to suit the requirements of the place? I believe so.

998. Has he so expressed himself? I think he told me that he considered that it would do; but I am not certain, because we discussed such a great many things that I do not remember exactly. 999. Is he preparing a report for the Water Conservation Branch? Yes; it is probably in now

Mr. Walter Barnet, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined:

Mr.

9991. Chairman.] How many years have you been mining? Thirty-five or thirty-seven years.

W. Barnet. 1000. When did you come to this district? At the end of January.

1001. Mr. Wall. Have you any interest in the place? Yes.

1002. What number of claims are you interested in? I am, with my sons, interested in three claims. We 14 April, 1894. have a claim each.

1003. What are the names of the reefs on which the claims are situated-are they all on the one line of reef? I am No. 3 north of the original prospectors, and No. 4 south of the Niddergold.

1004. Are those claims on the one line of reef? Yes.

1005. Can you give the Committee any accurate information as to the number of lines of reef which have been opened up since the discovery of this field? I should think there are about eight lines of reefs. 1006.

Mr.

14 April;1894.

1006. Let us start from the most westerly ; -what is the name of that? Gorman's.

1007. How far is it from Gorman's to the next line of reef? The next is the Two-up-about 200 or W. Barnet. 300 yards,

1008. And how far is the next to the east? Another 200 yards,

1009. What is the name of it? I think they call it Fraser's line of reef.

1010. What will be the next, still going east? The next is the original prospector's, Neeld Bros.

1011. And further east again? The line of reef known as Stanley's Blow. 1012. And east of that? Erwin and Party's, and east again there is Thompson's.

1013. What is the course of these reefs? They run parallel, varying a little north-cast.

1014. What would be the distance from Frasor's line to Neeld and Party's line? About a quarter of a mile.

1015. And from there to Stanley's Blow? That might be about a quarter of a mile, the line strikes due east.

1016. And from Stanley's Blow to Erwin and Party's? Three hundred yards, I suppose.

1017. And from Erwin and Party's to Thompson's line? As far as my judgment goes, about 300 yards. 1018. What is about the distance from Thompson's line of reef to Gorman's line of reef? I suppose it must be over a mile.

1019. Has there been any crushings from Gorman's line of reef? Yes; the first crushing was 42 tons.

1020. From what claim? Gorman's claim. It went 2 oz. 7 dwt. to the ton.

1021. Have any other claims on that line of reef reported gold? Lynch and Party have a line of reef, but whether it is the same as German's line I do not know. There are so many intersecting veins.

1022. Are there any more claims on gold on that line of reef? I do not think so.

1023. To what depth has the reef on Gorman's line been tested? About 50 feet. They are deeper now. 1024. Have there been any crushings from the Two-up line of reef? I do not know.

1025. How many claims on it have reported payable gold? About four.

1026. To what depth has the reef been tested? To various depths-20, 50, and 60 feet. I think there has been a crushing from Elderbranches.

1027. What is the reputed average thickness of the reef? From 4 to 18 inches, or 2 feet.

1028. I am speaking of the reef on the Two-up line? I think it averages from 6 inches to a foot. 1029. What would be the average thickness of the reef on German's? From 1 foot to 18 inches.

1030. You cannot speak from your own personal knowledge? No; I have been down and seen it, but I have not been down since they sunk the new shaft. I hear that it is now about 18 inches.

1031. Have there been any crushings from Fraser's line of reef? Yes; I believe they got 3 oz. 12 dwt. to the ton.

1032. Do you know how many tons were crushed? I do not, but I believe 20 tons were crushed.

1033. How many claims are there on gold on that line? I could not say. I am not always there. They may be getting fresh gold every week.

1034. Have there been any crushings from Neeld and Party's line of reef? No; Neeld's Prospectors'

Claim has not crushed.

1035. What is the average thickness of the reef? It goes from 8 or 9 inches to 4 feet. I have been

down 68 feet, and it is 4 feet wide at that depth.

1036. Have any claims along the line of reef, besides Neeld and Party's, reported gold? No. 4 is supposed to have payable gold; but they have not crushed yet, and No. 1 is on very rich gold—ironstone. Neither of them have crushed yet.

1037. What is the distance between the Prospectors' Claim and No. 4 where gold has been obtained? About 400 yards-500 yards altogether. There are three claims.

1038. Then the reef has been proved to be gold-bearing for a distance of 400 yards? Yes, to my knowledge. They have got it further on, too, but I have not seen it.

1039. Has there been been any crushing from Erwin and Party's line of reef? Yes; they got 3 oz. 6 dwt. to the ton.

1040. How many claims on that line of reef have crushed? Only Erwin's.

1041. How many tone did they crush? I think 40 tons.

1012. Has gold been discovered in any other claims along the line of reef? I believe so.

1043. How far along? I think No. 3 got gold this week. 1044. At what distance? About 300 yards ahead of Erwin's.

1045. Then that line of reef has been proved for a distance of 300 yards? Yes; it has been proved to be gold bearing. 1046. What is the average thickness of the stone? They took the first crushing out 2 or 3 feet in thick-

ness.

1047. And it yielded 3 oz. 6 dwt.? Well, at any rate, over 3 oz. I am not quite certain about the penny weights.

1048. Now coming to Thompson's line of reef? There has been no crushing there. They have a paddock of stone, but I cannot say what it will go.

1049. How many claims on that line of reef are raising stone? Only one at present. 1050. That is the most easterly line of reef? Yes. Stanley's has not been crushed yet.

1051. What is the average thickness? Last time I saw it, it was from 4 to 6 feet wide, and carrying very good gold.

1052. But there has been no crushing? No; No. 2 from there crushed, and the stone went 1 oz. 2 dwt. to the ton.

1053. Then there has been a crushing in Stanley's line of reef? Well, if you call it a line. It is north of Stanley's.

1054. To what distance along that line has gold been discovered? As far as No. 3 claim—about 300 yards along.

1055. Can you point to any other discovery? Thompson's has not crushed yet.

1056. Are there any lines of reef lying east from Thompson's? Not that I am aware of.

1057. Now we will come to the reefs which have been opened up in other directions? Then we come to the south-east-Conway and Party's.

1058. That is regarded as a separate line of reef? It is, in my opinion, and I have had some experience. 1059

Mr. 14 April, 1894,

1059. Have any other rects been opened up in the belt of country between Gorman's and Thompson's W. Barnet. lines of reefs? There are reefs in every part. The intersecting veins run east and west, and some nearly north and south.

1060. The other discoveries, if I understand correctly, occur within these parallel lines? Yes; and north

1061. At the present time it is not known whether they are continuations of those lines of reefs? It is and south of them.

not proved yet; but I should say they were, as near as practicable. 1062. Starting from Gorman's line, can you give me the distance north and south to the next series of reefs that have been opened up? Several other reefs have been opened up, but I could not give the

names of the parties working them. 1063. How far south of Gorman's have the most westerly of these other reefs been opened up? Southwest, and in the malice here. Reefs have been opened up to the west of late, though I cannot say to what extent, because I have not been there. I hear, however, that they are getting very good gold. three quarters of a mile south-west of Gorman's there are some who are getting very good gold.

1061. You are not in a position to say whether they are on a continuation of Gorman's reef or not? No;

it is not proved yet. 1065. Taking Thompson's line and bearing south, have any discoveries been made there? Not that I am aware of. Lots of reefs have been discovered in the mallee south of Thompson's, and they run in all directions-east, west, north, and south.

1066. How far south of Thompson's? From a quarter of a mile to 12 mile that way.

1067. Taking a line north and south from Neeld and Party's claim, and bearing south, how far is it to the furthest reef that has been opened up? There would be seven claims.

1068. What distance would that be? Seven hundred or 800 yards.

1069. What is the distance from Neeld's to the furthest discovery hearing south? There are about six claims, and each claim averages 100 yards, so that the distance would be about 600 yards.

1070. What is the distance from Neild's to the furthest discovery that has been made north of it? As far as I can hear, payable gold has been obtained in No. 4, and, I believe, No. 5 has also got gold.

1071. That would mean, practically, that a belt extending 900 yards has been proved? Yes; that has been proved. There are 960 feet on a prospecting claim, and there are four or five claims from Neeld's to the north.

1072. That would give an area upon which gold has been discovered of about 1 mile in an easterly and westerly direction, and something over 1,000 yards in a line bearing north and south? Yes; on that line of reef. Conway's is rather longer than that.

1073. Which way does Conway's line run? Nearly north and south, bearing a little to the east of north. 1074. I want now to ascertain the furthest discoveries that have been made north and south, taking Neeld's, say as a centre? The last southerly discovery of what is supposed to be payable gold is called the Mallee Cow, which would be about 11 mile from Neeld's.

1075. Can you give us the furthest discovery north? That is the last new find which, I suppose, in a

direct line, would be about 7 miles.

1076. Are there any other discoveries in a northerly direction between the new find and Neeld and Party's? There are several claims working on gold. I was out looking at the new find, and I saw gold there. I have heard since that it has been opened up and looks very well.

1077. Can you give the Committee approximately the number of claims reported to be on payable gold?

I should say there must be from 70 to 80 claims on payable gold.

1078. What is your opinion as to the permanency of these reefs, speaking from your experience as a miner? I think there is a great future for this field. The country is not hard, and the further you get down the better the find becomes. I have been down Neeld's and several others, and they are looking well at the bottom.

1079. What do you think the inclosing rock is? Decomposed granite.

1030. Have you had much to do with reefing? I have been reefing for thirty years.

1081. What fields have you been reefing on? I have been in Victoria, at Wood's Point, Buckland, Crooked River, and in all parts of New South Wales nearly.

1082. Have you known permanent reefs to continue for any distance in granite? Yes.

1083. Where? In Victoria, at the Evans.

1084. At what depth have the reefs been worked to on the Evans with a granite formation? The Homeward Bound was working at a depth of over 300 feet.

1085. Was the granite soft? The granite was hard there.

1086. What is the formation in which permanent reefs usually occur? Slate and granite. There are different formations in different fields; but I have never seen anything like this before in all my travels. At Grenfell the stone was a kind of porphyry, but it was hard and more like granite.

1087. Is not granite below the stratigraphical position in which reefs usually occur? Granite is supposed to be the bottom; the Siluriau rock generally rides over the granite.

1088. Has this granite continued soft to any depth? In some places it has. I have been working at depths of between 200 and 300 feet.

1089. From the surface? Yes.

1090. In granite? Yes; through decomposed granite walls. One side is generally a great deal softer than the other. It is generally the scam that carries down alongside the reef that is the softest.

1091. Is it not characteristic of granite that the cleavage should be very imperfect, and the reefs vary in size? Yes; the reefs vary in size, sometimes pinching in to 2 or 3 inches, and perhaps widening out again to 3 or 4 feet. You can never get a reef to run true.

1092. What is the prospect of an alluvial discovery here, seeing that gold is being found so close to the surface? Alluvial has been got within a few miles of this place, but not close at hand. Between here and Billy's Lookout, and Buddigower, there ought to be alluvial obtained.

1093. Has any prospecting for alluvial been done in the district? Not much between here and Billy's Lookout; but a good deal has been done at Billy's Lookout. This formation carries right through for some 20 miles-from Billy's Lookout to Buddigower.

1094. Have there been any indications of drift showing that a denudation of country has taken place at any time? Yes; a slight amount of wash has been found at different places. Good prospects have been 1095. got here and there, but nothing to continue.

Mr. W. Barnet.

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1095. The reefs of which you have spoken have not been tested longitudinally;—they have been picked up at different sections? Yes.

1096. Have you been down any of the claims that have had crushings? Yes.

1097. What is the extent of the stoping along the reef? Some have stoped for 20 to 30 feet. Some have driven shafts for 12 feet, or even 6 or 8 feet, and have taken out the whole body of stone from the surface right down to the bottom. In none of the claims have I seen 1 cwt. of stone on the surface; it has all been taken out and crushed.

1098. The country appears to be very regular in its gold-bearing formation? Yes. You will not see

many rich specimens, but the gold is pretty regular right through.

1099. Do you not think that with the limited amount of prospecting that has been done on the field it is rather premature to speak as to its permanency yet? I think so; but I judge it to be permanent.

1100. From present indications you regard its prospects as good? I do. I do not think any miner on the field has ever seen such a surface show before, considering the intersecting veins and the main lines of reef that have been opened up.

1101. How long do you think the working of the respective reefs will maintain anything like the present population? They ought to maintain from 1,000 to 2,000 people for the next five or six years, and

perhaps be better then.

1102. You are speaking of the present discoveries and the prospects of further developments? I do not think half the reefs have been found yet that will be found out towards Billy's Lookout and Buddigower.

1103. When you speak of a population of 2,000, do you mean a population of miners, or a general population? I mean that when the country is properly opened up, and the men are at work, there will be from 1,500 to 2,000 miners here.

1104. You have told us that there are seventy or eighty claims on gold? Well, I am under the mark; there must be more than that.

1105. I suppose you infer that connections will be made on the line of reef between the claims which are now getting gold? Yes.

1106. What do you think will be the number of miners maintained by these eighty claims? There are

from four to eight men on each claim.

1107. Suppose there were eight men on each claim, that would afford employment for 640 people altogether? The claims are what are called eight men's ground, six men's ground, and four men's ground; but most of them on this field are eight men's ground.

1108. If gold is found along the reef between the various claims in which it is now being worked, you think the field will maintain a population of from 1,500 to 2,000 men? Yes, and probably more.

1109. Do you mean working miners, apart from the business people? Yes.

1110. Is any machinery going up here now? There are two lots of machinery being erected, and it is expected that a third lot will be put up.

1111. Do you think there will be any difficulty in obtaining water for the machinery crected here? I do not think so.

1112. Are there any catchments? There are any number of splendid catchments.

1113. Has not some discovery of water been made by sinking here? Not that I know of. I think we are about 200 feet higher than Barmedman. They get water there at a depth of 90 feet. I was working there for some years.

1114. You have been on all the rushes in New South Wales? On nearly all the rushes in New South

Wales. 1115. I suppose it is a most usual thing to undertake the construction of a railway to a place directly gold has been discovered there? I think so.

1116. Do you think the prospects of this field would warrant a departure from the usual custom? I should not think they would.

1117. I suppose you are aware that it is proposed to proclaim a mining reserve of 50,000 acres; that land will be locked up from settlement? I think there is a vast amount of auriferous country for miles around,-from here to Lake Cargellico. 1118. Do you think it is necessary to lock up so much land for mining purposes? I do. I think the land

ought to be thrown open to the diggers.

1119. Do you think an arrangement might be arrived at by which both agricultural and mining operations could be carried out together, giving people speedy access to the land? Well, the selectors and miners generally clash, and the miners have always found it difficult when they have found gold on private land to get permits to mine there. They have been kept off such land for three, six, and even twelve months, and perhaps after finding gold they have not been allowed to go on the land to mine for it.

1120. Assuming that the power of dealing with this matter were vested in the warden, and applications to mine upon conditionally purchased land could be granted by him, these permits could be obtained at once? Yes, and then things would be different.

1121. Do you think that system would tend to case the friction which now exists in the relations between miners and free selectors? Yes; if the miners could get on to the land in a week.

1122. I suppose you are aware that in the Mining on Private Lands Bill applications will have to be lodged with the warden, who will have full power to give permission immediately without reference to the Minister; -do you think that under that system agricultural and mining industries could be simultaneously developed here? I think so.

1123. Has it not generally been the case with respect to gold-fields that men who have made money on the fields have had afterwards to go to other districts owing to the land been locked up, even though they

desired to settle there? So they have. 1124. If a system were introduced by which miners could get ready access to any land alienated in the vicinity of Wyalong, do you think this field would be the means of establishing an agricultural popula-

tion there? I think so. 1125. Have there been any crushings on Conway's line of reef? Yes; there have been two crushings on

that line of reef. 1126. Do you know what quantity of stone has been crushed? Twenty-two tons, yielding 103 oz.

1127. What is the average size of the reef? It varies from 6 inches to 1 foot.

1128.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS, 1128. To what extent has gold been discovered along the line of reef? For one and a half mile. W. Barnet. 1129. Do you think that if greater facilities were given to the miners to go upon the land here this field would be developed more than it is now? I do. Many of the men would have got good claims, and 14 April, 1894. perhaps have formed homes for themselves. 1130. Do you think that the development of the field has been retarded by administrative delay? I do. 1131. And that the progress when those obstacles are removed will be very much greater than it has been in the past? I do. Mr. William Bowman, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined :-1132. Chairman.] How long have you been at Wyalong? Since the 2nd January. Mr. W. Bowman, 1133. Mr. Wall.] Have you heard the ovidence given by the previous witness? I have. 1134. Do you agree with his evidence? I do, in every particular. 14 April, 1894. 1135. Is there any additional evidence you would like to give in reference to discoveries that have been

omitted? There have been a few discoveries omitted-that is outside, to the south.

1136. What discoveries have been made, apart from those already referred to? A discovery was made about 41 miles from here, in a south-easterly direction.

1137. What is the nature of the country? Diorite.

1138. Have they got payable gold there? They say they have; but there has been no crushing there.

1139. Have you seen any of the stone? Yes.

1140. What is your opinion of it? I believe that it is payable stone. 1141. Is it in a well-defined reef? Yes; between two hard walls.

1142. What is the width of the reef? About 2 feet 6 inches. 1143. Have you inspected any of the reefs that have been opened up on the field? I have seen them all.

1144. Do you consider that they are fairly well-defined reefs, and likely to be continuous? Some of them are better defined than others.

1145. From your experience as a miner, do you regard the eight lines of reef referred to by the previous

witness as likely to be payable? I think they have pretty well proved themselves so.

1146. What is your opinion in regard to them ;-do you think they are fairly well-defined reefs, and likely to be continuous, or are they merely patches which may run out? They are not patchy; but whether they are coutinuous is more than I can say.

1147. Are you working in any claim here? Yes.

1148. In what claim? The Santa Claus, on Conway's line.

1149. Have you had a crushing? No.

1150. Has there been any crushing on that line? Yes; for Conway and Party's claim.

1151. What distance are you from there? Eight hundred yards.

1152. Have you discovered gold? Yes. 1153. Do you regard it as payable? I do.

1154. What do you say it will crush? I reckon it will go 3 oz. to the ton; it might go more.

1155. What is the width of the stone? It varies from 4 and 8 inches to a foot.

1156. What depth has it been tested to? Sixty-eight feet perpendicular.

1157. Have you only opened it up in one place? In two places.

1158. At what distances apart? About 40 yards.

1159. Do you regard it as the same line of reef as Conway is working on? Yes.

1160. Are there any surface indications by which it can be traced? Yes; you can trace the surfacestone; in fact all the claims right through from Conway's have got the gold.

1161. But there has been only one crushing from that place? There have been two crushings.

1162. Do all between where you are and Conway's regard their discoveries as payable? I think they do. 1163. Do you regard this field, taking it as a whole, as likely to support a large population for any length of time? As nearly as I can estimate it will support 2,000 miners.

1164. For how long? For four or five years, but it may be longer. I can see that there is over two years of working in our claim.

1165. Do you think there will be any difficulty in crecting machinery here to treat the stone? I do not think there will be any difficulty.

1166. Is there a good water catchment? Yes, if we only get rain. 1167. At present you have to take your stone to Barmedman? Yes. 1168. That militates against the testing of the various claims? Yes.

1169. Has there been any prospecting done in the district for alluvial? Yes, a little.

1170. What is the general opinion with regard to the discovery of alluvial here? It has been discovered about 5 miles from here.

1171. Has there been much drift discovered? There has been no washes yet immediately round the field, except a little ironstone wash. There has been no quartz wash.

1172. Has any prospecting been done for surface gold? No; except at one place on Conway's line. 1173. I suppose the development of the field would have been much greater but for the difficulty of

obtaining permits? Yes. 1174. Had the discovery been on Crown lands the place would probably have been further developed than it is? Yes; because the men would have had to work their claims or get someone to do the work for them. 1175. Mr. Dawson.] Do you know of any crushings which Mr. Barnet omitted to mention? Yes; there

have been several other payable crushings. There has been one from the Mallee Bull. 1176. What number of ounces have been got from the Mallee Bull claim? Cusack and Party got an average

of 2 oz. 7 dwt. from 27 tons, and the Mallee Bull claim gave an average of 11 oz. to six tons. 1177. Is the stone easily got? Very easily got.

1178. What would be the least result that would be payable? About 15 dwt.

1179. I am speaking of the field as a whole? I do not believe that there is one claim on the field on gold where the stone is not payable.

1180. How many do you know to be on payable gold? Between 70 and 80 claims are on payable gold.

1181. How long have you been mining? Twenty-two years.

1182. Whereabouts? This side of Gulgong.

1183. Chairman.] Do you know the total quantity of gold produced to date? I could not tell you that. 1184.

1184. Have you any idea of the quantity of stone new at grass? I dore say there are over 600 tons on the field.

1185. That is payable stone? It is nearly all payable stone.

W. Bowman. 14 April, 1894.

Mr.

F. Channon.

Mr. Ernest Joshiah Polkinghorne, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined :-

1186. Chairman.] For how many years have you been a miner? For eight or nine years.

1187. You have heard the evidence of Mr. Barnet and Mr. Bowman with reference to this field; do you Polkinghorne.

confirm their evidence? Yes, in every particular.

1188. Do you desire to add anything which they may have omitted, and which you think will be useful to 14April, 1894. the Committee in considering their report? They omitted to report the latest find, about 7 miles north from here. I believe there are 500 or 600 men there; but what they have done I cannot say. Several men who have claims there, however, speak very highly of the place, and three or four of the claims are already raising stone. They are on what is known as Gagie's Find. I would also like to add that Mr. Barnet was a little bit mixed in regard to the most westerly reefs. He put Gorman's first, and the Two-Up second; but between there is what is known as the White Reef, one of the best-defined reefs in the place.

1189. What distance is it from Gorman's? About 150 yards.

1190. That would make eight reefs? Yes.

1101. Gold-bearing stone has been obtained from that reef? Yes; they have had one crushing from what is known as O'Brien's. They got 21 oz. from 6 tons of stone, and since then they have sent away 10 tons more. This stone has been sent to the Clyde chlorination works, and treated there.

1192. Do you agree with the previous witnesses in regard to the area covered by the eight lines of reefs?

Yes; if anything, they were under rather than over the mark.

1193. Do you think there has been any other inaccuracy in their evidence? No; in other respects their evidence was accurate.

1194. Mr. Wall.] To what depth has the White Reef been tested? The party who have already had a crushing are down about 55 feet; but we are adjoining them and down about 80 feet, and the reef looks better than it did higher up.

1195. What is the width of the reef? From 9 to 15 inches, carrying splendid walls.

1196. To what distance has the reef been tested along the line? About a quarter of a mile.

1197. Is it fairly continuous? So far as one can tell. There is similar stone in all the claims which are considered to be on the reef.

1198. How many claims are on gold? Five.

Mr. Frederick Channon, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined :-

1199. Chairman.] You heard the evidence of the two previous witnesses? Yes.

1200. Do you confirm their evidence? I do in every particular.

1201. Have you any additional information which you can supply to the Committee? I have been acting as reporter for the Tumut and Adelong Times since the 15th January, and I have the original entries of 14 April, 1894. crushings written down in my pocket-book.

1202. Will you read them to us? The first crushing recorded in this field was for Taylor and Party's claim.

1203. On what line of reef? It would be on the Two Up line-to the extreme south-west of the Two Up claim. They crushed 6 tons and got about 24 oz. The next crushing is from Cassin and Party's claim, on Conway's line, who, from 121 tons of stone, obtained 9 oz. 3 dwt. of gold. Then Neeld's No. 2 prospecting area, an east and west line, crushed 13 tons for 26 oz. 4 dwt. Conway and Party crushed 22 tons for 103 oz. Keith, who is on about the Two Up line, crushed 143 tons, and got 35 oz. Neeld's Pioneer claim, an ironstone reef, running east and west, crushed 17 tons for 72 oz. 14 dwt. Perry's claim, which is on the Two Up line, so far as I can judge, crushed 22 tons for a result of 2 oz. 12 dwt. to the ton. Fraser's claim*, on the Two Up, or slightly to the east of it, crushed 101 tons for 39 oz. 6 dwt. McMahon and Party, who have an east and west reef to the east of Conway's, crushed 3 tons 5 cwt. for 9 oz. 19 dwt. Gorman and Party crushed 38 tons, getting 2 oz. 4 dwt. to the ton. Hilderbrand and Party, on the Two Up line, crushed 9 tons, getting 3 oz. 11 dwt. to the ton. McDonald and Party, of the Mallee Bull claim, crushed 6 tons 12 cwt. of surface stone or spuds, and got 11 ez. to the ton. From a second crushing in Barmedman, Taylor and Party got 2 oz. per ton for from 15 tons. Then Davis and Party, on the Two Up line, from 101 tons, got 2 oz. 12 dwt. to the ton. Cusack and Party, on the Mallee Bull line, for 13 tons got an average of 2 oz. 7 dwt. to the ton. Pettyfoot and Party, on Stanley's blow line of reef, crushed 40 tons for 42 oz. 12 dwt. J. King and Party, crushed 14 tons for 2 oz. 3 dwt. a ton; they are on Taylor's line. Thomas O'Brien and Party, crushed 6 tonsat the Clyde Works, for 17 oz. Arthur Hassock and Party also crushed at the Clyde Works, 6 tons for 21 oz. 11 dwt. There are between 50 and 60 tons of stone at Barmedman, or on the road there-2 to 3 oz. stone.

are between 50 and 60 tons of stone at Darmedhar, of on the field? Yes; and the 1204. So that, in round figures, about 700 oz. of gold has been obtained from the field? Yes; and the gold has not been obtained from picked stone. A lot of headings and other rubbish has been crushed.

They send everything from the surface to be crushed.

1205. Mr. Wall.] Can you give the Committee any idea as to the number of claims on gold? About forty or forty-one proved payable, while there are about eighty between them, which, I have no doubt, will prove payable when they have had a crushingt.

1206. Can they not discover the gold by dollying? Yes; the stone crushes well in the dolly.

1207. Other witnesses have estimated that there are about eighty claims on gold; is that estimate in your opinion excessive? Well, I reckon that there are about 120 claims on good gold, but they have not been proved. I reckon there are about forty which are certain, and about eighty others which will prove payable in the course of a week or two, after the stone has been crushed.

1208.

NOTE (on revision): Fraser and Party and Davis and Party are all one and the same.

† NOTE (on revision): Sixteen claims have proved payable by crushing, twenty-five claims are raising stone, which is almost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable when crushed, while there are from thirty-eight to forty more in various stages of developalmost certain to prove payable quartz.

Mr. F. Channon.

1208. Do you think there are a sufficient number of claims on gold to support a considerable population for some time to come? Yes; I believe that in the near future this will turn out to be a great agricultural district. I have travelled round a good part of the country, and I know that the soil in the mallee here 14 April, 1894, is very rich. From my experience, it is second to none in New South Wales; and taking that fact into consideration, together with the existence of the gold-fields, I think you would be perfectly justified

in running a line of railway to Wyalong. 1209. But the absence of the railway would not in a great measure retard the development of the field? It would not retard it, but it would greatly assist it. The fact of a railway being constructed will greatly

assist development. I think the field will go ahead in spite of the want of a railway.

1210. You say that you have no doubt that a railway here would promote a very large amount of settle-

ment? I have no doubt of it, 1211. Does it not usually happen that agricultural settlement is greatly retarded by the reservation of land for mining purposes? I think there is any amount of agricultural land hesides that which it is proposed to reserve for mining purposes.

1212. It is proposed to reserve 50,000 acres here? So I heard a little while ago.

1213. And it is proposed to reserve the land for a mile on each side of the proposed railway from here to

1214. Do you not think, from your experience as a miner, that some satisfactory arrangement must be come to whereby wardens could authorise immediate entrance upon private property? Yes.

1215. Do you think a compromise could be come to whereby it would be possible to develop agriculture

and mining simultaneously? I do.

1216. Do you think that persons desiring to go in for agriculture would object to take up land upon which miners had the right to search for gold? I do not. I think such an arrangement will be beneficial to

1217. I suppose it will be of great advantage to the selectors to be close to a large mining community? both parties. It has been proved so aircady. The selectors have done remarkably well out of this little rush to Wyalong. 1218. Can you give the Committee any idea as to the approximate number of claims on Gorman's line of

reef? Between five and six have found gold on it. 1219. You have already given the Committee some information with regard to the crushings from the Two Up line; can you give us an idea of the number of claims on gold on Fraser's line? There are five or six on that line; but it is difficult to determine which is the line, because the mallee is so dense.

1220. Then there are Neeld and Party's, Erwin and Party's, and Thompson's lines of reef; do you think they are fairly developed? Yes, and every week I visit them I find some improvement. A miner understands his business, and by questioning him you can get to know pretty correctly what he is doing. They all agree that the reef is improving as they go down, both in width and in quality.

1221. Do you think that if the selection here was resumed, it would expedite the development of the field

to a great extent? Yes, and from 1,000 to 1,500 more miners would be employed.

1222. What is your opinion about the site of the new township? It is generally known as Slee's Mistake. 1223. Did you not hear that the land there is higher than this land, and that provision is to be made for the conservation of water there? It is a boautiful site for a township; but if people will not go there to live, you cannot force them to do so. The population has settled at the White Tank, and the business people have followed them there, and now no one can force them to move. I might say that I was introduced to Mr. Wade by Mr. Polkinghorne. He stated his business to us, and we hired a trap and took him round to pretty well all the tanks in the district. We also took him out to a water catchment about half a mile or three quarters of a mile on Bolte's conditional lease which he acknowledged to be one of the best catchments he had seen on the field, and he informed me he would report favourably upon its resumption as a Government tank for the use of the field.

1224. How far would that be from the present camp? Half a mile or three quarters of a mile.

1225. Have you seen the water? Yes, I have waded in it.

1226. You are not using that water at the present time? The water has dried up now; but there is a natural catchment there formed by a blind creek.

1227. A dam could be made there and sufficient water conserved to supply the whole field? Yes, if the tank were large enough.

1228. Did you hear from Mr. Wade his reason for not recommending the resumption of that land? I

did not know that he had not done so.

1229. Do you know that he has not recommended its resumption? No, I do not. As far as I know he may have done so. I took him out to Carter's tank, and he told me that he was trying to make arrangements with Carter to allow the miners to use his tank temporarily.

1230. But there is a legal difficulty in the way? Yes. 1231. Have you heard anything about the new rush? Yes.

1232. Can you give us any information about it? Not authentic information, because you cannot rely upon what you hear on the field. You must visit the place and make personal inspection before you can give a correct account of it. I would like to add that James Channon, of Beaconsfield, Concord, and John Plumb, of 60 King-street, have purchased a boiler and engine and have ordered rollers from the foundry for the erection of machinery on the field. They intend to establish chlorination works here.

Mr. Armand Thierman, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined :--

1233. Chairman.] You desire to give evidence in regard to some machinery you intend to erect on the Mr. A. Thierman, field. Will you tell us the value of that machinery and its nature? The machinery my syndicate propose to bring here is new machinery, and negotiations are now pending to have it made at a foundry in Sydney; 14 April, 1894. but I do not know which foundry is making it. One of my syndicate was up here a little while ago, and on my recommendation it was decided to bring new machinery here instead of second-class plant.

1234. Do you know what the probable cost will be? Somewhere about £1,500.

1235. Has the order been given for the machinery? I cannot tell you. I should have had word to-day we are excavating a tank for it.

1236. You have procured a site? Yes.

1237. Have you any doubt about the machinery being sent here? No, I have no doubt about it.

1238. Mr. Wall.] Is it crushing machinery? Yes; I recommended a 10-head battery with concentrating A. Thierman.

1239. What sort of concentrating appliances -fulvanners? No; because the percentage of pyrites is 14 April, 1804.

1240. Have you formed a syndicate for the express purpose of creeting this machinery? Yes.

1241. With a capital of £1,500? The capital of the syndicate is not limited to £1,500; the capital will be what it costs to erect the machinery.

1242. If you require more money you will call it up? Yes.

1243. You do not expect to erect machinery here with concentrators for £1,500? Yes; it can be done. Machinery is a lot cheaper now than it used to be.

1214. Are you excavating a tank? Yes; we have got about 2,000 yards out already. The tank-ainkers are still at work.

1245. Do you think that the prospects of the place are sufficient to warrant such an expenditure? Yes; as far as present indications go. The field is almost certain to be a permanent one.

1246. Your machinery is in course of manufacture at Sydney? My syndicate wrote to me asking certain questions with regard to it, and it is certain that it will be made.

1247. Mr. Dawson. You are a working miner, I suppose? I have been connected with mining in New

South Wales for fifteen years.

1248. Getting syndicates together to buy machinery is not being a miner. Where were you working?

I was four years at Broken Hill.

1240. Were you working there? Yes, and I creeted several batteries for Alfred Bennett at Peak Hill.

I let out his tanks and fixed his machinery.

1250. I suppose you have got a great many promises of support when the machinery is crected? Yes; but promises do not count for much. Good machinery will carry the day here.

1251. Mr. Wall.] You would not require many promises for a 10-head battery? Only 80 or a 100 tons a week.

Mr. John Neeld, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined: -

1252. Chairman.] Are you one of the original prospectors? No.

Mr. J. Neeld.

1253. What information can you give which you think will be of assistance to the Committee in deciding upon the matter now under their consideration? I have been about the district a good deal, and have ¹⁴April, ¹⁸⁹⁴. noticed the country right through from here to what they call Rankin's Springs, a distance of 60 miles. I have also travelled from Broken Hill through Wilcannia, Cobar, Lake Cargellico, and Eubalong to Wyalong. Then I have been from Barmedman to Woolengough. Close to Wyalong and out towards Rankin's Springs there is ironbark which I think would be suitable for sleepers.

1254. Could the sleepers be obtained at a reasonable price? Yes.

1255. Have you any idea of the price at which half-round sleepers can be obtained? No; but I know

that a large quantity could be got within 15 miles from here.

1256. Have you any other information? I can give information with reference to the cost of settlement here. If the land were thrown open, people would come over from Victoria and settle here. Between Lake Cargellico and Wyalong the land is very suitable for agriculture and pastoral pursuits, and when I came here first I was so much taken with the country that I wrote to my father and brothers and advised them to come here and select.

1257. How long ago was that? A little over twelve months ago. After they selected here other people followed to see the country, and they considered that the land was as good as the Goulburn Valley land from which they had come, and that is the finest land in Victoria.

1258. But is there not a better rainfall there? No.

1259. What is the rainfall? It has been as low as 5 or 6 inches.

1260. But the average rainfall? It is something about the same as this.

1261. About 18 inches? Yes. We came as close as Wyalong simply to be near the railway, and as the full area could not be obtained, only one brother selected, the other six following to take up land as soon as it was thrown open. I have no hesitation in saying that as soon as the railway comes to Wyalong a tremendous lot of land will be taken up between here and Lake Cargellico.

1262. Do you think the land is suitable for agriculture as well as for pastoral pursuits? Yes.

1263. And if the anticipated mining population were to settle at Wyalong, the surrounding farmers would be able to supply all necessary provisions with the exception of tea and sugar? Yes.

1264. Is there anything else you would like to add? On my way to Lake Cargellico from Cobar I passed through Mount Allen, where they have just discovered good gold. There was no water in the district then, and there has been no water since; but I have no hesitation in saying that there is a good gold-field there. At Cargellico I bought some peaches and grapes, which were as good as I had ever seen before. The gentleman from whom I hought them said that he grew them on the bank of a creek from 4 or 5 miles on the other side of the Lachlan, where he has a homestead of 2,560 acres. He had a lot of sheep with him at the time, which he was taking to Mount Allen to kill. He said it was too far to send to Sydney, and, therefore, he thought it better to open a butcher's shop, and dispose of his sheep in that way.

Mr. Thomas Andrew Crowe, Editor of the Wyalong Star, Wyalong, sworn, and examined:—1265. Chairman.] Have you any other occupation here besides that of journalist? No.

1266. You have heard the evidence given by the various witnesses. Do you generally confirm their T. A. Crowe. opinion? Yes; as far as I have been able to judge, they are correct.

1267. Can you give any additional information which you think would be of assistance to the Com- 14April, 1894. mittee? When I came here three weeks ago, there were only a certain number of claims on gold;

mittee? When I came here three weeks ago, there were only a certain number of claims on gold; but in my visits round the field I found the number increasing, and a calculation I have made to-day, shows that it has just about doubled itself. With regard to the list of crushings given to you by Mr. Channon, I think he has given one crushing twice over, because Fraser and Party's, and Davis and Party's crushing was only one crushing.

1268. Then his return of gold is incorrect by about 30 oz.? Yes; I might also say, that to my knowledge, there are very nearly 100 tons of stone either at Barmedman or on the road there. That is as near as I can 283 (a)—E

can judge, by seeing the loads that have gone away; and in visiting the claims from which crushings have Mr. T. A. Crowe, taken place, it seemed as if the men had gathered up all their stone, expecting gold to be in it, and sent it away. There was no evidence of any stone having been picked.

14 April, 1894. 1269. You think that fair average stone was sent away? I think that all the stone was sent away from

claims which had crushings.

1270. So that the results obtained from further crushings will be better than those obtained hitherto? The opinion among the miners is that the returns from the next crushing will exceed those which have hitherto been obtained. I know that claims which, when I first came here, were only turning up moderate stone are now getting splendid stone. In my opinion, the quality of stone on the field is improving. 1271. Mr. Wall. Can you give us any idea of the number of crushing plants in course of erection? I only know of Mr. Gough's; but Mr. Plumb and Mr. Channon have called for tenders for the excavation of large tanks, because they intend to erect machinery here.

Mr. Charles McHardy, Mining Registrar, Wyslong, sworn, and examined :-

1272. Chairman.] You wish to hand in a return? Yes. The number of miners rights issued since the Mr. C. McHardy. 19th March, is 970, in addition to a large number previously issued at Barmedman. Twenty-five business licenses have been issued, and over 100 surveyed town allotments have been conditionally registered. About 14 April, 1894. fifty more have been applied for. Three hundred and twelve quartz claims have been applied for since the 19th March, and from seventy to eighty applications for permits to mine on conditionally purchased and conditionally leased land have been lodged at the Mining Registrar's Office here since that date. Previous to the 19th March, a large number of permits were applied for at Barmedman.

1273. What amount of revenue have you received since the 19th March? About £580. These figures

are very nearly accurate.

1274. The information has been compiled from records in your office? Yes.

MONDAY, 16 APRIL, 1894.

[The Sectional Committee met at Spring's Hotel, Wyalong Government Township, at 9:30 a.m.] Present:

> THE HON. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY (CHAIRMAN). WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq. HENRY DAWSON, Esq.

The Sectional Committee further considered the proposed Railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Mr. John Plumb, grazier, Marrickville, Sydney, sworn, and examined :-

Mr. J. Plumb. 1275. Mr. Wall.] How long have you been on this gold-field? I first came here about two months ago; but I have not resided here continuously.

16 April, 1894 1276. You have been largely interested in mining in this Colony? Yes.

1277. For how long? Over twenty-five years. 1278. Did you visit this field to engage in mining pursuits? Partly with that object, and partly to introduce machinery here if the prospects of the field would warrant it.

1279. You have had a fair opportunity of judging of the merits of the field? Yes. 1280. Do you think it likely to be a permanent field? Yes; that is my impression.

1281. Have you received sufficient encouragement to warrant you in undertaking the erection of machinery here? Yes; my friends and myself have ordered machinery, and I have let a contract since I came here for the excavation of an \$,000-yard tank.

1282. Where do you propose to excavate your tank? Just below Neeld's prospecting claim, on his con-

ditional lease.

1283. What work will be done by the machinery you propose to erect? At first we shall erect machinery which will do about 150 tons weekly; but ultimately, as the field develops, we shall increase our plant until we can do 300 tons or more each week.

1284. You have been for some years engaged in mining in the Carcoar district? Yes; and in the western, southern, and northern districts. I have been in nearly all the districts in the Colony.

1285. Comparing the prospects of this field with those of others in which you have been interested, do you think it likely to be permanent? That is my impression, otherwise I should not have embarked my money,

and that of my friends', in a venture here. 1286. What population do you think is likely to be located here for any length of time—say two or three years? I imagine that if the reefs were developed, they would employ 500 or 600 miners, and they,

together with their families and tradesmen, would form a population of about 2,000. 1287. The present development of the field warrants you in coming to that conclusion? That is my impression. Of course the place is practically untried yet in many parts, and there is a prospect of further

developments. 1288. It is possible that the reefs may go down 200 or 300 feet? Yes; I saw Mr. Taylor when he was down about 120 feet, and he told me that the reef was then looking as well as it looked before, and showed no signs of giving out.

1289. What line of reef is his claim on? It is in the Mallee, south of Neeld's No. 2 prospectors' claim. 1290. Mr. Dawson] Do you know how many of the claims are on payable gold? I could not say accurately; but I should estimate that there are between twenty or thirty on really payable gold.

1291. It has been stated that between thirty and forty are on payable gold, and that eighty had struck gold? That is quite possible. I have been away from that place for some time and developments have taken place in my absence.

1292. Suppose eighty claims have struck payable gold, they would employ more than 600 men? Yes; if they went vigorously to work.

1293. Do you feel perfectly satisfied that you are justified in expending your money here? Yes.

1294. What do you think is the extent of the auriferous belt which has been opened up? From what I have been given to understand this particular belt is 2 miles in width by 5 or 6 miles in length. There

is another belt more to the west, out towards Lang's selection, which I do not know much about. Mr. J. Plumb, That, I think, is distinct from this. 16 April,1894.

1295. The 2-mile by 5-mile belt takes in Conway's line of reef? Yes. 1296. Chairman.] In addition to the machinery you have already ordered, is it your intention to establish chlorination works here? Yes; if the prospects of the field warrant it, and we get sufficient patronage. I think they will be necessary soon because of the nature of the ore here. Some of it is pyrites will have to be treated in that way here or else they will have to send their concentrates to Sydney. 1297. In round figures, what do you propose spending here? The cost of complete chlorination works

will be about £5,000; we should be working very economically to put them up at that.

1208. Their immediate expenditure will be how much? From £2,000 to £2,500. 1299. Mr. Dawson. Do you think it would be advisable to construct a light line of railway from Temora here? I think so with the ultimate object of extending it to the river. I think it would be much

cheaper than the cost of a good road. 1300. Have you made an offer to construct such a line? Yes; after my first visit to this field, I wrote a letter to a friend of mine, and asked him submit to the Government a proposal to construct a railway from Temora to Wyalong, which should be a sort of object lesson to people in other parts of the country, that is to say, we should use the present roadway, and old (fovernment rails and fastenings, putting down rough sleepers. I estimated the distance at 40 miles, and proposed that the Government should allow us to use some of the light tram motors. With the consent of a firm of contractors, I offered to complete such a line within three months, at £500 per mile, using box and ironbark sleepers, rough split and flattened on the top and bottom.

1301. Were the contractors bond fide men? Yes; and they were quite prepared to enter into any

reasonable guarantee or bond. 1302. Chairman.] Would the formation of the permanent-way be undertaken by yourself and friends? Yes; the permanent-way would have no ballast, and in some places there would be no formation. The

sleepers would be laid flat on the carth. 1303. What kind of sleepers? Sleepers such as I have just described, 8 or 9 inches wide, and the regula-

tion length. 1304. Do you not think that in wet weather the sleepers would sink? Possibly they might; but they could be raised a little above the surrounding country. The ballast would sink in a little. I think it would be possible to use steel rails, which are now of no value at all. They would be good enough for

carrying light tram-motors, running at a speed of 8 or 10 miles an hour, and only in the daytime, 1305. Do you think you could ensure the use of hardwood sleepers all through? Yes; from what I can learn from people in the district. I was speaking to Mr. McGregor, of Merringanowrie, and he told me that he has box on his property which was put up forty years ago, showing that it is durable wood.

1306. Do you think it is sufficiently durable for sleepers? I think so.

1307. In the event of your offer being accepted, what would you expect from the Government in the way of materials? Rails, fastenings, and everything necessary for the line, except labour and sleepers.

1308. Would you find all the necessary labour? Yes. Of course the Government would have to put up station buildings, if they were required.

1309. But you would find all the necessary labour, if the Government contributed the material you have described? Yes; they would complete the survey, and then would merely have to supervise the construction of the line.

1310. Mr. Wall.] What would be the gauge? The ordinary gauge.

1311. Do you not think it would be risky to run trucks over a line laid on the earth? It might if the trucks were heavy; but why not run light trucks?

1312. That would necessitate the construction of special trucks? I think that in this dry country, where it is only at odd times that there is heavy and continuous rain, sleepers laid at a distance of from 18 to

20 inches from centre to centre would hardly sink. 1313. Can you give us any information regarding the cost of a light line such as the Government have constructed to Cobar, and the extent to which such a line would meet the requirements of this district? I have not considered the matter, though I have read what those lines have cost. They, however, are ballasted, and are much heavier and more permanent than the line I suggest would be.

1314. Do you know of any place, either here or elsewhere, where the Government have constructed railways such as you refer to? I have not heard of the Government constructing such railways; but in America sleepers are laid on the ground, and the same thing is done here in connection with mine tramways. Of course the rolling stock used is not so heavy; but they serve the purpose for a time.

1315. Chairman.] You would regard this as a temporary, not as a permanent line? Not as a permanent line. If it lasted for five or ten years, it would have served its purpose in opening up the country, and a permanent line could afterwards be put down more cheaply, because the sleepers and the material intended for it could be carried on the temporary line.

1316. Mr. Wall.] Is it not a new thing to propose to construct a railway to a place immediately gold is found there? Yes; but seeing that the land both here and further on is good land, I think the line has been proposed more with a view to open up the country at less cost than that of a macadamised road. 1317. Have you any idea of the amount of agricultural land available close to existing railways? I could

not say what the extent would be. 1318. Can you tell the Committee whether the construction of the Temora line has increased the sottlement round about Temora? I have been told by residents in the place that it has increased the acreage

1319. Then you think that if the construction of a line to the Lachlan is justifiable, the development of under cultivation. this field will be sufficient to warrant its construction as far as Wyalong as a matter of urgency? If it were to meet the requirements of Wyalong only, I should say no; but with the ultimate object of making a national line to the Lachlan, I should say, "Yes; go on with the work."

1320. You think the development of Wyalong a strong justification for the immediate construction of this section? Yes.

Mr. Robert Cassin, miner, Wyalong, sworn, and examined :-

Mr. R. Cassin, 1321. Mr. Wall.] How long have you been on the field? I came here the day on which the gold was reported—the 18th December last.

16 April, 1894. 1322. You have been engaged in mining pursuits in this district for some time? Yes, for ten or eleven

1323. Have you any interest at Wyslong? Yes, I have an interest in one mine.

1324. You have a general knowledge of the field and its development? Yes. 1325. What is your opinion with regard to its permanency? I think, from the number of blocks of stone that have been found, and the extent to which the reefs have been proved, that this will be a good wages

field for perhaps 1,000 men for five or six years.

1326. Can you say anything as to the cost or difficulty of getting supplies from Temora; -what is the cost of cartage at present? About £2 per ton. It has been as high as £3 10s. per ton; but when the roads are good you can get your stuff carted for £2 a ton.

1327. Do you think there will be any difficulty in getting supplies if the wet season sets in? I think there will be considerable difficulty; but it is possible that supplies would only be stopped for a fortnight or three weeks, and even within that period it might be possible to bring up something by the road. 1328. Have you any knowledge of the country in the direction of Cargellico and Hillston? Yes; I

travelled over that country when working at my trade as a saddler after leaving Wagga Wagga.

1329. Do you regard the proposed extension of the railway from Temora to Hillston as likely to open up a large extent of country? My knowledge of the settlement between here and Yalgogrin is not recent. I knew the country a number of years ago, when no settlement had taken place there.

1330. But there has been a considerable amount of settlement since then? Yes; but I have not been there. 1331. Then you cannot say much as to the value of this line, regarding it as part of an extension from Temora to Hillston? Only from the communications which I have received from people along the route, urging its construction in order that they may be able to use their land.

1332. Do you regard the land which it will traverse as good agricultural land, which would support a large population if the railway were made? There are large belts of land on either route which could be put to agricultural use; but the line would serve a larger population if taken via Cargellico, and would also go through better land. Then, too, at Cargellico there is water which might be used for irrigation.

1333. You are managing some crushing machinery at Barmedman? Yes.

1334. Several crushings have been put through there? Yes.

1335. You heard evidence given ou Saturday with regard to the results obtained? Yes.

1336. Were those statements correct? There were only fractional differences; but I will furnish the Committee with the correct returns within a few days, showing the weight of stone, and the amalgam retorted, and afterwards smelted.

1337. Do you regard the Wyalong stone, crushed at Barmedman, as better than anything that has been opened up in the district before? Yes. The development of this field will employ more people than Barmedman and Temora put together. I think there is a better mine in Barmedman than any of those here; but there we have to contend with water, and it will take a considerable amount of capital to develop it.

1338. You look upon the average yield from Wyalong stone as satisfactory? It is very satisfactory. I made a calculation in connection with the various crushings, and I found that sometimes the men carn £15 a week for the time they work. In only two instances did they not carn wages. As a rule, they

earn from £2 10s, to £8 and £15 a week.

1339. Are the different claims in which gold has been discovered regarded as generally satisfactory? The miners express themselves as very well satisfied with the returns which they have obtained.

1340. Chairman.] Can you give us any information in regard to the coaching traffic between Temora and Wyalong? Before the rush, it was not worth considering, because the people living about here use their own vehicles, and in fact, there was no regular coach, which could be depended upon. There was a mail coach once or twice a week; but it started at an hour which suited nobody.

1341. And since the rush? Since the rush there has been such a number of coaches running that I could

give you no idea of the traffic.

1312. What was the fare before the rush? There was no stated sum; but as it was 7s. 6d. from Temora to Barmedman. I should think you could have got here for 15s. 1343. What is the fare now? It was £1; but I believe it has now come down to 10s.

1314. Is the traffic very great? Yes; it is considerable.

1345. Are there many teams along the road? Yes; I should think there are as many as forty or fifty on the road.

1346. Do you wish to add anything to the evidence you have already given? Yes. Several witnesses were asked if they thought the Government were justified in making mining reserves here, and if such reserves were detrimental to settlement. With regard to that matter, I should like to say that I think it was very wise to make the reserve which has been referred to, because, had it not been made, there would have been a rush of selectors here to pick out the eyes of the place, some of whom would probably have taken up the full area. In my opinion, 2,560 acres is too much to give to a man near a population such as there is here.

1347. Mr. Wall.] I asked if the agricultural interest would be affected by reserving 50,000 acres here, and if some system might not be adopted whereby agriculture and mining could be simultaneously developed? When the Department has had time to look round, they can revoke such reserves as are suitable

for agriculture. That would tend to develop the field more profitably in the long run.

1345. I suppose you are aware that when once these reserves are created, it often takes years before they are thrown open again? Yes; but at Barmedman we succeeded in getting some of them thrown open. There are others that will be thrown open as soon as the requirements of the Railway Department are understood.

1349. How long is it since these reserves were first proclaimed? When Barmedman was first a goldfield; but some of them were revoked three years afterwards, and were sold as special areas.

1350. How long is it since Barmedman came into existence? Ten or cleven years.

1351. And some of these reserves are only about to be opened now? They have all been surveyed; but. since it was not certain what route the railway would take, they have not yet been thrown open.

1352.

1352. Were any of the reserves thrown open until the greater part of the population left the field? No; Mr. R. Cassin. the diggers would have protested against the land being thrown open, because the feeling of the mining population would have been that land was being closed on which alluvial mining existed. The land, 16 April, 1894. however, would not have been taken up with a view to obtaining compensation for its resumption, but because there was a population close at hand.

1353. Do you think that the area allowed to a man should be smaller in the vicinity of population? Yes;

or alongside a railway. Two thousand five hundred acres is too much in such a case.

1354. Do you know of any instance where, when large blocks of land in the vicinity of a gold-field have been locked up in reserves, they have been thrown open again before the mining population left the field? I have had no experience in that respect.

1355. I suppose you are aware that something like 100,000 acres were locked up at Gulgong? Yes. 1356. And that hundreds of miners who had made sufficient money on that field to enable them to become independent settlers had to leave the district because they could get no land there? I believe so; but I think some system could be adopted by the Department which would enable men to go upon the land

and settle on it, and allow others to mine under it.

1357. If the simultaneous development of agriculture and mining could be allowed to take place, that would have a greater tendency to establish settlement than the present system? I do not hold with locking up the land for a long time, and I do not think that mining and agriculture are antagonistic industries; but still I am of opinion that it would have been unwise not to make these reserves. I have been speaking to the settlers in the district, and I find that they are auxious for a market to be provided for them, so that they may go in for farming. There is a very fair class of selectors here; the men are not land jobbers. I formed that opinion from hearing them speak, and from the fact that since the extension of the line to Temora they have made a marked effort to clear land and get ready for increasing their income by means of farming instead of continuing to depend solely upon the raising of sheep, which most of them find does not bring in enough for them to live on and to pay their instalments.

1358. Chairman.] Are you the owner of much land round Barmedman? No, I have a very nice selec-

tion; but the Bank has the best hold of it.

1359. What is the area of your selection? One thousand two hundred and ten acres.

1360. Had you that selection at the time of the projection of the Temora railway? Yes; I had it cleared and fenced and subdivided, and I built houses and put a garden, orchards and dams upon it. In the first year after the railway came to Temora, I cleared 40 acres; but I found that I was likely to lose it, and therefore I did not spend any more upon it.

1361. Was that land suitable for the production of other crops besides wheat? I grew very nice fruit on it, and I had every prospect of making a good orchard there. An adjoining neighbour grows very

nice oranges, grapes, and other fruit of a similar description.

1362. Can you say whether the land beyond Temora has been taken up for bona fide settlement, or merely for speculative purposes? I only know two men who have sold out, except those whom the Banks have compelled to sell. There was only one land jobber who came to Barmedman, and he did better than the genuine men, I think. I do not know a man in the district who is considered to be a dummy.

1363. You know that the land has been taken up in very large areas? Yes; in blocks of 2,560 acres, and in some cases where men have selected for their sons and daughters who are not of age, the holdings

are as large as 7,000 or 8,000 acres.

1364. Do you think the land has been selected so that people may settle upon it, or has it merely been taken up so that it may be sold to the pastoral lessee? Except in one case, I think, men have taken it up in order to make homes and keep their families around them, and, of course, they get as much land as they can. The danger is, however, that they may not be able to work it profitably, and that the Banks will then come in.

1365. Do you think they have taken up more land than they can possibly use? I am certain of it. Their capital is exhausted by the time they have got their fencing and scrubbing done, and they cannot complete their improvements without borrowing. If they could do without borrowing, they would be able to make good homes for themselves; but being short of capital, when their instalments have to be paid, at the end of three years, they have not got the money to stock with, and are thus placed at a disadvantage. They probably buy their sheep on bills, and then, in order to meet these bills, have to sell the sheep again at what is, in a measure, a forced sale, because they have to look for a customer within a given time.

1366. As soon as their instalments become due, men who have taken up large holdings find themselves in such a crippled condition that they are obliged to sell at the first opportunity? Yes; they cannot pay their instalments from wool. The payment of 1s. per acre, if a good crop can be put in, is nothing; but when the money has to be paid out of wool, the selectors are not able to do it. They might get through

if they farmed a good part of their land.

1367. And is it your opinion that the land in this district should not be thrown open in such large areas? I think that people should either not be compelled to pay their instalments until a railway is brought within a given distance of them, or that they should be compelled to remain leaseholders. In my opinion 2,500 acres is enough for a family, if the children are not of age. As a matter of fact, when a large family selection is taken up, the head of the family becomes the owner of it.

1368. Mr. Wall.] Seeing that the people who came to the district as pioneers were compelled to turn their attentions to pastoral pursuits, and were only allowed to take up 2,560 acres, it would be possible for a man, if a railway were made, to get his living on a smaller area? I would prevent men from taking up more than 2,560 acres; but I would not compel them to pay their instalments until a railway had been

brought somewhere near them. 1369. Do you think that if the Government were to clear the land alongside the railway, and subdivide it, they would have any difficulty in letting it to farmers who would be willing to pay rent for it? I do not

think there would be the slightest difficulty about that. 1370. You attribute the failure of the existing settlement to the want of capital; -if people could obtain a lease of the land alongside the railway, so that they would only have to put their labour into it, and would not require capital, do you think there would be any difficulty in getting tenants for it? Not the Blightest.

The

[The Sectional Committee met at the Court-house, Temora, at 2:30 p.m.]

Present:-

The Hon. FREDERICK THOMAS HUMPHERY (CHAIRMAN).

HENRY DAWSON, Esq. | WILLIAM CHANDOS WALL, Esq.

The Sectional Committee further considered the proposed railway from Temora to Wyalong.

Mr. John Richardson, relieving station-master, Tomora, sworn, and examined :-

Mr. J. Richardson, 16 April, 1894

16 April, 1894.

1371. Chairman.] How long have you been here? Thirteen days.

1372. Have you had access to the railway returns at Temora from the time of the opening of the

line? Yes.

1373. Are you in a position to give the Committee information as to the volume of traffic here? I received a telegram from the Committee this morning, asking me to prepare information in regard to

goods and passenger traffic, but as I have not had very much time the returns are only approximately correct.

1374. What would the difference be—a few pounds one way or another? Yes; the difference would not

be more than £5 at the outside.
1375. Will you hand in your returns? The revenue received here since the opening of the railway has

been £1,130.
1376. Outwards and inwards included? Yes.

1377. How many tons does that represent? Four thousand seven hundred and sixty-four tons. The outward traffic has been very heavy, but we get no revenue from that, because it is collected at other places.

1378. The amount you have stated was received at this end? Yes; it includes both passenger and goods takings. What we send from here is collected at Sydney or Goulburn, or at other places, and what they send here we collect at Temora.

1379. Mr. Wall.] Are we to understand that £4,130 are the earnings of the line between Cootamundra and Temora, or is it the amount collected upon goods conveyed from other places to this station? That is it.

1380. Can you give the Committee any idea of the value of the traffic on this branch line alone? No, I cannot; but you could get it from the Commissioners.

1381. What has been the classification of the tonnage? It would take a week to get out a roturn classifying the tonnage; but in Sydney they make out returns of what they call sectional expenditure, so there would be very little difficulty in getting the information from the Commissioners.

1382. The earnings on this section of line would be much greater from here to Sydney than from Cootamundra here, because on the up journey they would represent a contribution to the main line? Yes.

1383. Chairman.] What is the charge between Temora and Cootamundra? Third class, £1 3s. 7d.; second class, 17s. 8d.; first class, 14s. 7d.

1384. Under what head would the bulk of the traffic come? It would be second and third class.

1385. If over 4,000 tons of goods passed between Temora and Cootamundra, the earnings upon this branch line would probably exceed £4,000 for goods alone? Yes.

1386. Has the coaching traffic been heavy? It has been very heavy during the last six weeks—since the rush to Wyalong broke out.

1387. Can you say what it was before the Wyalong rush? Well, in January, the number of passengers from Cootamundra to Temora was 190, and from Temora to Cootamundra 187. In February, it was 1,400 from Cootamundra and 217 from Temora; in March, it was 1,250 from Cootamundra and 303 from Temora, and this month we have had 450 from Cootamundra and 250 from Temora. Great numbers of people are returning from the rush.

1388. Mr. Wall.] Can you give us any information in regard to the increase or decrease of goods traffic? The revenue for January was £582 16s. 11d.

1389. From goods? No, the total revenue.

1390. Can you give us the tonnage for the respective months? Yes; the inward tonnage in January was 152 tons, in February. 195 tons, in March, 555 tons, and in April 345 tons.

1391. Mr. Dawson.] Does that include parcels and everything? No.

1392. Mr. Wall.] So that the inwards traffic was nearly four times as great in March as in January? Yes. 1393. Is not January considered rather a busy month? No, December is considered to be a busy month, and January is supposed to be a quiet month, after the rush of Christmas traffic.

1394. What is the rate for third class goods from Sydney to Temora? £7 5s. a ton.

1395. And from Temora to Sydney? It is very much higher than that; but I do not know exactly what it is.

1396. Has there been a gradual increase in the traffic of the line since it was opened? Yes.

1397. I suppose that would be accounted for mainly by the fact that the cereal crops came in at the end of the year? It would be attributable largely to that.

1398. Can you say whether there has been an increase in general merchandise? It has been about the same all through.

1399. Has much grain been sent from Temora since the railway was opened? Yes. I was given to understand by my predecessor that they had something like 30,000 bags of grain stored here awaiting the opening of the line.

1400. It is reported that a large quantity of grain is stored here now awaiting a rise in prices; is there any truth in that rumour? I cannot give you any information about that.

Mr. John Maurice Foley, Post and Telegraph Master, Temora, sworn, and examined :-

J. M. Foley. 1401. Chairman.] How long have you been in the district? I have been connected with the office here since 1880.

1402. You have watched the growth of the district since then? Yes; it has been very great.
1403. Will you give us what information you can in regard to the Post and Telegraph Office returns here?
I have only got them from August last.

16 April, 1894.

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1404. That was the last month before the opening of the railway? Yes; the sale of postage stamps has increased to the extent of £50, being £80 this month as against £30 in August. There has been a steady J. M. Feley. increase in the returns, and the telegraph revenue has increased to the extent of £20 a month. The Savings Bank business has also greatly increased; but I could not say from momory to what extent. The amount of revenue transmitted to Sydney between the 11th August, 1893, and the 16th April, 1894, was £5,907, which greatly exceeded the returns of the previous six months. We receive and despatch about 800 letters more a month now than we did before the railway was opened, and we now transmit nearly 400 telegrams a month, or 200 a month more than we used to transmit. 1405. Has the population of Temora increased? Yes; we can tell that in the increase in Post Office

business.

1406. Mr. Wall.] Can you tell us the amount of revenue you received in August last? No, I cannot.

1407. You have been giving us the totals to date? Yes.

1408. Has not the rush to Wyalong greatly helped to increase the revenue of your Department? Yes. 1409. Can you give us a return comparing the business of January with the business of August, and showing the increase which has come about since the construction of the railway? No, I cannot.

Mr. John Joseph Buckley, Sergeant in charge of the Temora police station, sworn, and examined :- -

1410. Chairman.] How long have you been at Temora? About ten years.

1411. Do you collect the statistics here? Yes, for the Temora portion of the Young electoral district. 1412. Can you speak as to the progress of the district during the past four or five years? It has progressed materially. Last year the population of Temora proper was about 1,700, while the year before it was 1,500.

no 16 April, 1894.

Mr.

J. J. Buckley.

1413. Over what area does your district extend? We are very near the extreme boundary of the Young electorate, so that the district extends a good way in one direction, and not far in the other. The population of the district this year is 2,326, made up by 2,291 Europeans and 35 Chinamen.

1414. Can you speak as to the population that would be fairly served by the railway? There has been

considerable increase in the population.

1415. An increase of how much per cent.? I should say an increase of from 8 to 10 per cent. 1416. Since the construction of the railway was commenced? Within the last three years.

1417. Mr. Dawson.] Is the population of the district increasing by reason of fresh arrivals, or because children are born here? In both ways. Last year the railway works were in full swing, and that brought a large number of people to the town; but, notwithstanding the fact that that railway is now completed, the statistics show that the population of the town has permanently increased.

1418. Can you speak as to the number of stock raised in the district, and the area under cultivation?

Yes; both have increased considerably. Farming pursuits have increased fully 10 per cent.

1419. Then the district has materially progressed since the construction of the railway was determined upon? The railway gave a great impetus to farming operations in the district. If I said that they had increased 15 per cent. I would be nearer the mark.

1420. Can you add anything to your evidence which you think would be useful to the Committee in considering this proposal? I think the construction of the proposed railway would open up a tract of good agricultural country out towards Wyalong and Condobolin. I have not been out further than Woolengough. It seems all good agricultural and pastoral land out there, except for a few belts of mallee; but even that is good country when cleared.

1421. You have not been on to the Lachlan? No.

1422. Mr. Wall.] Have you any returns showing the area under cultivation this year and last? No; all the statistics we collect we send to Sydney. We do not keep any record here.

1423. Have you collected any statistics in regard to the quantity of wheat produced this year or last?

Yos; but they have been sent to Sydney.

1424. Has there been an increase in the production? Yes.

1425. Has there been any tendency on the part of persons holding large areas of land before the construction of the railways, to bring them under cultivation? Yes.

1426. Can you mention any special case? Yes; there is Prior's, at Sebastapol. I think they had 500

acres under cultivation last year.

1427. How much did they add on to what they had before? They must have added 100 or 150 acres to their farm, and there are several such instances. At almost every season of the year they are extending their agricultural area.

1428. Was the same sort of thing going on prior to the construction of the railway? Yes, but not in such a marked degree. A tremendous lot of wheat was brought to the railway station last year; but when I camo to Temora, ten years ago, there was very little agriculture.

1429. Do you know whether there is much land available for agriculture here? Yes; there is no dearth of land.

1430. Mr. Dawson. Is this likely to be a fruit-producing place? Yes.

1431. Is it a fact that the grapes can be grown here to perfection? To great perfection.

1432. And figs? Yes; and they grow beautiful apples here.

[4 plans.]



