



WITH COMPLIMENTS  
FROM  
**THE PREMIER**  
OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA.



## Memorandum

*From the Premier of Western Australia, in  
reference to the proposed Transcontinental  
Railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta.*

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1. The question of constructing a railway from Kalgoorlie (Western Australia) to Port Augusta (South Australia) is one of such great moment to the State of Western Australia that it is thought desirable to set forth very briefly some of the reasons which justify that work.

No attempt is made to be exhaustive, the desire being to state sufficient facts to show that the work is one worthy of serious and sympathetic consideration.

2. The distance from Fremantle (the chief port of Western Australia) to Port Augusta (the nearest point on the South Australian railway system) is 1,487 miles, made up as follows :—

Fremantle to Kalgoorlie	...	387 miles.
Kalgoorlie to the Border	...	475 "
The Border to Port Augusta	...	625 "

A railway is in full working operation between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, a distance of 387 miles, and also between Port Augusta and Adelaide, a distance of 259 miles.

The length, therefore, of the line to be constructed from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta is 1,100 miles.

3. The engineering questions which arise in connection with this suggested work have been dealt with in reports by—

- (a.) The late Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, and by
- (b.) The Conference of State Engineers which recently sat in Melbourne, at the invitation of the Commonwealth Government.

The report of the late Mr. O'Connor was based upon a long and practical acquaintance with the cost of railway construction in localities similar to that which the proposed line will traverse. His estimates as to probable receipts were based on the Statistical Returns published by the State from time to time, and showing the volume of freight and passenger traffic to and from Western Australia.

Shortly after Mr. O'Connor made his report, a survey party was equipped under the leadership of Mr. Muir, the Inspecting Railway Surveyor, a man of much experience and ability in railway engineering in various States. The party examined the route to ascertain the cost of construction, and also to inspect the class of country.

Mr. Muir made a full report, and, in referring to the capabilities of the country traversed, reports that "Taken as a whole, this stretch of country is one of the finest I have seen in Australasia, and, with water (which doubtless could be obtained if properly prospected for), it is admirably adapted for grazing purposes, and will, without doubt, be taken up some day from end to end."

Western Australia has for some time past had, and still has, an engineer and party on the proposed route, for the purpose of testing the water supply. It was upon the data obtained by these parties, and upon the published trade returns, that the recent Engineers' Conference based its report.

The report of the Engineers in Conference states that the line can be built on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge, with 70lb. rails, for a sum of £5,090,183, inclusive of the interest on loans during the course of construction; that the probable estimated revenue would be £205,860, leaving a loss, after payment of interest and working expenses, of £86,696 per annum. The report, however, proceeds to point out that the development of Western Australia is proceeding at a rate which justifies the confident anticipation that within ten years after the opening of the line the returns will show a net profit of upwards of £23,000 per annum, after payment of all working expenses and interest.

The report states:—"Further investigation of the sources of expected revenue would probably lead to our being able to increase these estimates."

This report very largely confirms the earlier report of the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor.

Some of the engineers who sat in conference in Melbourne have since visited the route of the proposed line, and their further report will be based on data acquired at first hand. It is believed that this examination will lead to reduced estimates of cost and increased estimates of revenue. Even on the data available when the Conference met in Melbourne, the engineers expressed the opinion

that, if the past progress of Western Australia were maintained, the line would ultimately become "a necessity and a financial success."

3. Breaks of gauge will occur at Kalgoorlie, Port Augusta, and Terowie, but these objectionable features could be lessened by—

- (a.) Western Australia building a 4ft. 8½in. line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, and by
- (b.) South Australia making provision to enable 4ft. 8½in. rolling stock to run from Port Augusta to Terowie.

A break of gauge at Terowie is unavoidable, until the standard gauge is in use between Terowie, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Albury.

Western Australia would, it is believed, be prepared to provide a 4ft. 8½in. line to Kalgoorlie at once, should such a work be immediately necessary; in any case, that State will not be long in carrying out such a work, not only as part of the main scheme which must ultimately be constructed, but also because of local traffic necessities.

The extent to which South Australia would go in making the necessary changes between Terowie and Port Augusta is for the Government of that State to decide. It is, however, confidently asserted that the early success of the line would commend this work to that State.

4. The construction of this Railway is urged by Western Australia on two main grounds:—

1. As a work which can alone make Federation a reality for Western Australia : make her, in fact, and not geographically only, an integral portion of the Commonwealth ; and
2. As a work which can alone provide for that essential freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse between the States which Federation undertook to secure.

5. The first ground is one upon which the facts of geography leave no need or room for argument. No mere appeal to the existing territorial connection will convince the resident Western Australian that he lives in an integral part of the Commonwealth. His own daily experience proves to him that the very extent of that territory cuts him off from the East, and from that community of trade, commerce, and intercourse which alone justifies the Federal compact.

To leave one-third of the Continent, with its rapidly increasing population and expanding trade, without adequate means of protection ; without adequate means of inter-State transit, and without adequate regard to the State's enormous resources, is a position intolerable to those who realise the duties as well as the privileges of Federation. The want of knowledge and indifference in relation to Western Australia, which is so prevalent in the East, is due to the isolation which surrounds that State. A railway can alone destroy that isolation, and with it that indifference which promises, if unchecked, to breed in the West a distrust of and apathy towards that union which makes no effort to extend its benefits to those who have gladly accepted and borne its burdens.

There can be no real union whilst Western Australia is separated from the East by 1,100 miles of territory untraversed by a railway.

6. In dealing with the second ground upon which this work is urged, it may not be out of place to state, as tending to create a truer conception of the Western State, that—

- (a.) Its population numbers 220,000 people, of whom an exceptionally large proportion are adult males.
- (b.) Its territory embraces an area of upwards of 640,000,000 acres, and comprises almost one-third of the area of the Continent.
- (c.) Its revenue amounts to upwards of £3,600,000 per annum, although no Income or Land Tax has yet been imposed.
- (d.) Its Savings Bank shows a sum of £1,908,898 to the credit of depositors, while the ordinary Banks have local assets of nearly six and a-half millions sterling.
- (e.) Its Imports amount to upwards of £7,000,000 per annum, and its Exports to upwards of £9,000,000 per annum.
- (f.) It has eighteen declared Goldfields, for which full administrative facilities are provided: a Warden, Registrar, Mines Inspector, and Surveyor being located in each, while a competent geological staff operates throughout the whole of the fields. These Goldfields have produced



more than forty and one-half millions of pounds worth of gold, weighing upwards of 330 tons (avoirdupois), the output for 1902 being worth £7,947,663; whilst for the last four years the output has exceeded £6,000,000 per annum.

- (g.) Its branch of the Royal Mint, established in 1898, with a capacity of minting half a million sovereigns per annum, has now a plant capable of minting 5,000,000 sovereigns per annum; and during the last year turned out 4,289,122 sovereigns and £385,987 of bullion.
- (h.) It has paid upwards of £8,000,000 in dividends from gold mines. Last year it paid no less than £1,424,272; and for the four months ending 30th April this year it paid £615,290 in dividends.
- (i.) It has upwards of 400,000 cattle and two-and-three-quarter millions of sheep, and more than 250,000 acres of land under cultivation. Its pastoral leases comprise upwards of 100,000,000 acres.
- (j.) It produces almost a million bushels of wheat, yielding an evenly distributed average of ten bushels to the acre.
- (k.) It produces over £86,000 worth of coal, £110,769 worth of copper, £52,102 worth of tin, and £73,931 worth of sandalwood.
- (l.) It exports seven and a-half million pounds worth of gold bullion and specie, half a

million pounds worth of timber, half a million pounds worth of wool, over one hundred and eleven thousand pounds worth of hides and skins, one hundred and seventy-eight thousand pounds worth of pearls and pearlshell, and about two hundred thousand pounds worth of other products.

- (m.) Its total trade per head of mean population amounts to £78 10s. 10d.
- (n.) Its yearly tonnage, entered and cleared at all its ports, is 3,358,074, to and from ports outside the State.
- (o.) Its Railways, after providing from Revenue for £35,000 for permanent improvements, and £54,000 for replacing stock, will return this year a surplus of £280,000.
- (p.) Its expenditure from Revenue for the year includes—£20,000 for State Batteries, £73,000 for Railway Construction, £30,000 for Rabbit-proof fences, and over £100,000 for Road-making. It has expended nearly £1,500,000 in public buildings, of which sum only £65,000 has been provided from Loan.
- (q.) It provides a Sinking Fund for every Loan; it invests that fund in the name of trustees in London, so that it cannot be touched by any State Treasurer. By the 30th June next, that fund will amount to £809,000.

- (r.) Of its Loan indebtedness of £15,000,000, no less than £13½,000,000 is reproductive, and becomes yearly more directly profitable to the State.

These facts should impress upon all those interested in the Commonwealth, not only the sound position of Western Australia, but the solid and permanent basis upon which that prosperity rests. The development now going on so rapidly in connection with agriculture will soon approach, if not outrival, the magnificent mineral development, and will yield almost as great a return.

It is necessary to bear in mind these statements, as they point so unmistakably to a steady and continuous growth in the development of the State. A grasp of the position as it stands to-day need not be clouded by apprehensions as to the future.

7. The passenger traffic between East and West is an important element in the consideration of the present question.

A sea journey from Fremantle to Adelaide involves four days by mail steamer, and five days by coastal steamer. From Adelaide a train can be taken Eastwards. Should the passengers keep to the steamer, the additional time involved is much longer proportionately, owing to stoppages at each port after the mail is once delivered. The time element alone is of much less weight as a deterrent than is the fact of a sea voyage, and its consequent discomforts, to at least 75 per cent. of travellers.

Over 30,000 passages are taken between the East and West every year. The number is an increasing one, but

quite disproportionate to what it would be were the journey shorter and free from the unpleasant effects of sea-sickness.

The proposed railway would take 60 hours to pass from Fremantle to Adelaide; the passage now takes from 100 to 150 hours. Moreover, the population on the Eastern Goldfields, amounting to upwards of 60,000, form a large proportion of the passengers between East and West. These residents live 400 miles to the East of Fremantle, and when going to the Eastern States have to travel to that port, wait for a steamer, and then commence a voyage of four or five days' duration. From the time these passengers leave home until they reach Adelaide a period of from six to seven days elapses. By railway that journey would be shortened to such an extent that passengers could arrive in Adelaide 48 hours after leaving Kalgoorlie—a saving of from four to five days.

The saving in such cases is enormous, and the advantages of the railway over a sea trip to all those who desire to come East from the Fields, and also to those who desire to go from the East to the Fields, are apparent.

8. The passenger traffic is by no means the only factor involved; the earlier delivery of the mails will justify a liberal mail subsidy, while the termination of the oversea mail contract at Fremantle should reduce the existing mail steamer subsidy.

9. The goods traffic will be appreciable from the outset, and will increase as inter-State commerce expands. Few people in the Eastern States appreciate the value of the Western market, and the extent to which it has benefited the Eastern manufacturer and producer. In 1892

Western Australia imported from the Eastern States to the extent of £654,417; in 1901, to the extent of £2,559,020. This increase is the more striking when it is remembered that each year Western Australia more largely imports its overseas requirements from Europe direct, instead of doing so through Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney, as in the past.

In 1902 Western Australia imported no less than £873,338 worth of agricultural produce from the Eastern States, and £264,416 from New Zealand. In addition to the above importations, not less than £278,183 was paid for cattle imported. This enormous importation went largely to the Goldfields, which for all time will continue to contain a purely consuming population. To-day that volume of trade has to undergo a railway journey from Fremantle of at least 387 miles to the Eastern Goldfields. The proposed railway will avoid that on all its freight.

In relation to all goods and passenger traffic with the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia, with their population of over 60,000, it cannot be denied that the railway offers to the Western resident and the Eastern producer distinct and obvious advantages over any possible steamship service.

That the railway is an absolute necessity, if the Commonwealth is to protect Western Australia as required by the Constitution, has been admitted by every military authority. So patent a fact needs no elaboration.

10. In putting forward this memorandum, it is desired to submit an outline of the work in which Western Australia is so deeply interested, and to solicit a consideration of the above facts.

Any work which would lessen the existing obstacles in the path of free intercourse between the people of the various States is essentially one which best serves Federal ends. In such a connection the Commonwealth has no more urgent duty than that of connecting East and West by railway communication.

It may be confidently stated that few, if any, State railways have been undertaken upon more satisfactory estimates than those submitted; where the probable loss has, having regard to the cost involved, been proportionately less; where the probable benefits have been proportionately as great, and where the indirect benefits so far transcend those that could possibly flow from any purely State work.

11. Western Australia believes that the case is established as soon as the facts are known. She asks no favour but that of earnest and Federal-minded consideration. As a State of the Commonwealth she appeals to every sister State that no provincial jealousies or local interests shall be allowed to stand in the way of the early accomplishment of the first great Federal work which the Commonwealth is called upon to consider. Whether the Federal spirit is a reality or a mere phrase to cover the ambitions of the more powerful electorates will be shown by the manner in which this great work is treated. Western Australia asks for just and full consideration: she is entitled to nothing less.

Perth, 1st June, 1903.



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