

R E P O R T

OF A

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO

INQUIRE INTO CERTAIN SCHEMES

FOR THE

**IMPROVEMENT OF RAILWAY COMMUNICATION
ON THE WESTERN COAST OF SCOTLAND;**

WITH

**TREASURY MINUTE OF APPOINTMENT AND
INSTRUCTIONS.**

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.



L O N D O N :

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1892.

Treasury Minute dated 21st May 1891.

THE First Lord and Chancellor of the Exchequer state to the Board that they have been in communication with the Secretary for Scotland with regard to that portion of the First Report of the Western Highlands and Islands Commission which relates to the improvement of railway communication on the West Coast of Scotland.

Since that report was received proposals have been submitted to the Government for the construction of two of the lines referred to by the Commission, and it is understood that the promoters of others desire to be heard on the subject.

The First Lord and Chancellor of the Exchequer do not, however, feel that the Government have at present sufficient means of judging of the respective merits of the several schemes in question, or of the amount of assistance, if any, which should be afforded from public funds.

They therefore recommend that a committee consisting of the following gentlemen (who have expressed their willingness to serve) should be appointed to consider the subject in detail and report to the Board thereon, namely, Major-General Hutchinson, R.E., C.B., Rear-Admiral Sir George S. Nares, K.C.B., and Henry Tennant, Esq.

My Lords approve :

7871/91.

Treasury Chambers,

May 22, 1891.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM directed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to inform you that Her Majesty's Government have been pleased to appoint you as a committee to report upon certain schemes which have been projected for the construction of railways on the West Coast of Scotland.

Particulars of these schemes will be found in secs. 36-44 of the First Report of the Western Highlands and Islands Commission.

The object which Her Majesty's Government have in view is to promote the interests of the crofting and fishing population in the districts concerned, including the islands, by the development of railway communication on the western seaboard of the mainland.

They recognise that such a development is not likely to be initiated by private enterprise, and they are therefore prepared to recommend Parliament to contribute towards the cost of constructing any one of the lines above referred to, provided that—

- (a) the remainder of the cost can be raised from other sources ;
- (b) arrangements can be made for working and maintaining the line in perpetuity when constructed ; and
- (c) there is a fair prospect of attaining the object which the Government have in view.

Having regard to these considerations, you are requested to inquire—

- I. Which of the projected schemes is best calculated to promote the interests of the crofting and fishing population in the districts in question ;
- II. What amount of assistance would be required from public funds in each case to secure the construction of the line ;
- III. Which of the schemes, if any, you would recommend the Government to assist.

Definite proposals with respect to two of the schemes in question have been received and will be laid before you, but Her Majesty's Government do not wish you to limit your inquiries to these projects, and they will request the persons who are understood to be interested in the other schemes to place themselves in communication with you.

It will probably be necessary for you to make some local inquiry into the circumstances of the several districts affected and the routes of the projected lines, but Her Majesty's Government trust that this inquiry will not be very prolonged, as they are anxious to receive your report with as little delay as possible, so that the decision of the Government on the subject may be made known to Parliament in the course of the present session.

I am, &c.,

R. E. WELBY.

Major-General Hutchinson, R.E., C.B.,
Rear-Admiral Sir G. S. Nares, K.C.B.,
Henry Tennant, Esq.