

1911.

VICTORIA.

## FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON RAILWAYS

ON

PROPOSED EXPENDITURE UNDER RAILWAY  
LOAN APPLICATION ACT No. 2285.

(GRAVITATION GOODS YARD AT NORTH MELBOURNE.)

---

RETURN to an Order of the *House*,  
Dated 12th July, 1911, for—

A COPY of the First Progress Report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on Proposed Expenditure under Railway Loan Application Act No. 2285 (Gravitation Goods Yard at North Melbourne).

(*Mr. A. A. Billson.*)

---

*Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 12th July, 1911.*

---

By Authority:

J. KEMP, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.



# R E P O R T.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Honorable the Premier referred for inquiry the question of constructing the proposed Gravitation Goods Yard (New Goods Train Sorting Yard) near North Melbourne, in connexion with which an expenditure of £99,771 was authorized in the *Railway Loan Application Act 1910*, has the honour to report as follows :—

1. Goods for despatch from Melbourne to country districts are received in different parts of Spencer-street goods yard, according to their description and destination. Drapery, groceries, furniture, &c., are loaded under cover in the general goods shed; timber, fencing wire, &c., are put into the trucks in the open yards; and perishable products are dealt with separately. Trucks when filled with such goods are hauled out of the sheds and open sidings to beyond Dudley-street signal-box, where they are "kicked" back by a shunting locomotive into the various gravitation goods sidings, which have a slightly declining grade, and are situated between Dudley-street and the goods sheds, Spencer-street. In this way the trucks are rapidly classified or sorted out into train loads. Trucks are placed in the order of the stations along country lines so as to reduce shunting operations and lessen the time of the mixed and goods trains operating those lines. Similarly, when a goods train from the country reaches Spencer-street the trucks composing it have to be sorted out. For instance, trucks of wheat intended for export at Williamstown or Victoria Dock, or for the flour mills at Kensington, have to be put on different sidings; wool for delivery at stores in Melbourne is run on one line, and that consigned to stores at South Kensington or Newmarket on other lines. Trucks containing live stock have to be separated from the others, and the same with those carrying fruit, butter, and other perishable products. The existing gravitation goods yard at Spencer-street was constructed in 1903 at a cost of £44,000, but that sum did not include several sidings which were in existence at that time and became part of the gravitation goods yard. The yard has proved of much value, enabling the Railway Department to expeditiously and cheaply classify the trucks according to their contents and destinations. It has also resulted in goods trains being made up and despatched with greater promptitude, and in consignees receiving their goods earlier than would otherwise be the case, thus freeing the trucks and permitting them to carry more merchandise, and consequently earn more revenue in a year.

2. The enormous increase in the goods business during the past few years through the expansion of the wheat, lamb, and butter export traffic, and the rapidly growing trade with country towns as the outcome of closer settlement and successive good seasons, has caused the existing gravitation goods yard to become badly congested. It is therefore essential that additional gravitation sidings be constructed if a serious block in the goods traffic of the railways is to be avoided next season. In 1903 the number of trucks dealt with in Spencer-street goods yard was 762,659. Last year (1910) it rose to 1,310,794, or an increase of about 72 per cent. Experience has shown that about 3,000 trucks can be handled per day without any appreciable congestion taking place in the yard. In 1910, however, the daily average was 4,187, and on certain busy days in each week upwards of 5,000 trucks had to be dealt with. Such a congested state of the yard makes the cost of shunting operations and yard working unduly heavy. Relief cannot be obtained by increasing the shunting locomotives, as the full number of engines that can be advantageously employed in the yard are now in use. To add to their number would "accentuate the trouble and increase the risks of collisions, besides adding very considerably and unnecessarily to the cost of working the yard."

3. A further difficulty in working the existing gravitation goods yard is the location of the large brick locomotive shed between the yard and North Melbourne railway station. In that shed 170 locomotives are stabled, and about 80 of them are required for ordinary services at Spencer-street and Flinders-street passenger stations. They have to cross all the goods lines twice or more daily at Dudley-street Junction in their passage to and from the locomotive shed. There are also locomotives arriving daily from engine depôts in country districts, and they also have to cross all the goods lines at Dudley-street Junction when entering the shed to be cleaned and attended to. These engine movements seriously hinder the working of the goods traffic, and consequently prevent the congested state of the yard being relieved.

4. To overcome these difficulties the Railways Commissioners proposed to construct an additional gravitation goods yard to the west of North Melbourne railway station, extending from the road bridge over the lines adjacent to that station to near the junction of the Essendon and Footscray railways. The new goods yard will be on the south side of the existing lines occupying the vacant ground between them and Dynon or Swamp-road. There will be raised approaches from Kensington station on the north side and from South Kensington on the west side, leading to the new gravitation goods yard. These raised approaches will enable the new goods tracks from Kensington station to be carried on a bridge over the Footscray and Bendigo lines, thus avoiding any risk of the North-Eastern goods trains colliding with the passenger trains running on the Footscray and Bendigo lines, or interfering in any way with their operations. The approach from Kensington will be on the west side of the Essendon line, and will have an ascending grade of 1 in 100, while that from South Kensington will have a grade of 1 in 90 till the two approaches meet on the south side of the Footscray and Bendigo lines near the junction of those lines with the Essendon railway. Each approach will carry four sets of rails. As the space between Bellair-street, Kensington, and the existing line to Essendon is restricted, it will be necessary to build brick retaining walls on either side of this approach so as to lessen the width of the embankment, and as the available space between the existing lines to Footscray and Bendigo, and the sidings of the Australian Mortgage Land and Finance Company, South Kensington, is also limited, retaining walls will have to be erected there. The two ascending approaches will converge on an embankment on the east side of Lloyd-street, and will then descend on a grade of 1 in 100 to a bridge over Moonee Ponds Creek, close to which it is proposed to have weighbridges. The 18 gravitation sidings, with grades varying from 1 in 150 to 1 in 300, will extend eastward from Moonee Ponds Creek to the North Melbourne station. Portion of the £30,000 authorized by Parliament in 1909 towards carrying out this work has been expended in extending Dynon-road bridge, adjacent to the North Melbourne station, so as to give an additional railway approach under the bridge to Spencer-street goods yard. Some money has also been expended in erecting the bridge over Moonee Ponds Creek to carry the lines of the new gravitation goods yard. The total expenditure authorized by Parliament for the new yard was £99,771, but the estimate submitted to the Committee by the Railways Commissioners came to £129,000, of which £125,148 is to be charged to capital account, and the remaining £3,852 to working expenses. The principal items of the proposed expenditure were :—Earthworks, £33,690 ; bridges and retaining walls, £49,277 ; permanent way, including rails, points, crossings, sleepers, and ballast, £20,445 ; engineering, supervision, and general expenses, £5,800 ; and 10 per cent. provision for miscellaneous items and contingencies, £11,727. It was intended, the Commissioners said, to obtain portion of the earth to form the embankments from the cuttings which would have to be made along the Caulfield railway in the event of that line being regraded as had been suggested. As, however, this work had not yet been undertaken, it had been necessary to obtain filling-up material from elsewhere, and this would, in any case, increase the proposed expenditure by £3,000. If the regrading of the Caulfield line were not gone on with shortly, the "spoil" would have to be got from other places around Melbourne at an extra outlay of £12,000, or £15,000 in all. The Commissioners proposed to proceed first with that portion of the new gravitation goods yard required for the Midland, Western, and South-Western services by constructing the rising approach from South Kensington station, carrying the four goods roads to the receiving sidings and weighbridge on the south side of the Footscray and Bendigo lines, and thence over the new bridge across

Location  
locomotive shed.

New gravitation  
goods yard.

Moonee Ponds Creek to the nine gravitation or classification sidings to be constructed between the creek and the new approaches under Dynon-road (adjoining North Melbourne station) leading to the Spencer-street yard. These works were expected to be completed by 31st December, 1911. In the meantime the retaining walls, embankments, bridges, and gravitation sidings for the North-Eastern goods services would be in course of construction, and it was anticipated that the whole of the works would be completed by the end of 1912.

#### DECISION OF COMMITTEE.

5. After inspecting the existing gravitation goods yard, the locomotive shed, and the site of the proposed gravitation goods yard between North Melbourne and the South Kensington and Kensington stations, and hearing the evidence, the Committee came to the following conclusions :—

(a) That the existing gravitation goods yard at Spencer-street is congested, and to secure economy in working the yard and the more rapid transit of goods immediate steps should be taken to provide additional goods yard accommodation.

(b) Relief cannot be obtained by enlarging the existing yard because the vacant lands abutting on it will, a few years hence, be required either for an extension of the present goods sheds or sidings connected therewith, or for buildings, or lines and sidings connected with the adjacent Victoria Dock and the growing export trade.

(c) It would be unwise at present to remove the existing brick locomotive shed at North Melbourne, which, with the coal stage and sidings, turntables and water supply, cost £112,000, to make room for an extension northwards of the present gravitation goods yard, Spencer-street, because of the delay that would occur in providing the necessary additional goods sidings. Moreover, the expense of removing the shed and erecting another to the west of North Melbourne station would go a long way towards paying the cost of the proposed new gravitation goods yard, North Melbourne.

(d) The best site for the new gravitation goods yard is that selected by the Railways Commissioners to the west of North Melbourne station on the south side of the existing lines to Footscray and Bendigo, with rising approaches thereto from Kensington and South Kensington stations. Should it become necessary, some years hence, to provide for the extension of the existing gravitation goods yard, Spencer-street, by removing the locomotive shed and coal stage to the west side of North Melbourne, between the Essendon and Coburg railways, this site will fit in with any such extension.

(e) The Committee approves of the location, design, and construction of the proposed gravitation goods yard at North Melbourne, but such approval is not to be taken in any way as an indorsement by the Committee of the proposal to duplicate and regrade the Caulfield railway from which it was intended to obtain filling-up material for the new gravitation goods yard. The question of duplicating and regrading that railway is being considered by the Committee.

6. The Railways Commissioners assured the Committee that, if the four tracks for the North-Eastern goods traffic were constructed at Kensington, there would be sufficient room left for the duplication of the Essendon railway (should that work be considered necessary at any future time) without interfering with any rights which the adjoining owners may have in the sidings to the south of Kensington station. They also stated that the elevated approaches for the new goods lines at South Kensington would not interfere with the rights of the owners of the wool warehouses there.

7. The new gravitation goods yard will be worked quite independently of the passage of engines to and from the locomotive shed, North Melbourne, and about a third of the goods traffic coming from the country and intended for Williamstown pier or stations west of Melbourne, or for the wool and grain warehouses and

flour mills at South Kensington, Kensington, and Newmarket, or for the abattoirs and meat works, can be handled and classified at the new yard without coming into Spencer-street yard. This will greatly relieve the latter yard, and by lessening the standing or idle time of the shunting locomotives and their crews will secure economy. It will also result in the more speedy delivery of goods and live stock, and consequently enable the trucks to earn more revenue in the year than they would otherwise do, and so help to pay interest on the cost of the new yard.

Railways Standing Committee Room,  
State Parliament House,  
Melbourne, 13th April, 1911.

E. H. CAMERON,  
Chairman.