

1926.

VICTORIA.

SECOND PROGRESS REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON

PROPOSED EXPENDITURE UNDER RAILWAY
LOAN APPLICATION ACT, No. 3417

(Item No. 97, "Various")

(PROVISION OF CONNECTING LINES BETWEEN GLENROY
AND ALBION, TOTTENHAM GRAVITATION YARDS, AND
MELBOURNE GOODS YARDS, ETC.);

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND PLANS.

RETURN to an Order of the House,

Dated 26th October, 1926, for—

A COPY of the Second Progress Report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on Proposed Expenditure under Railway Loan Application Act, No. 3417 (Item No. 97, "Various") —Provision of Connecting Lines between Glenroy and Albion, Tottenham Gravitation Yards, and Melbourne Goods Yards, &c.; together with Minutes of Evidence and Plans.

(*Mr. Mackrell.*)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 26th October, 1926.

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

(*Fifteenth Committee.*)

A. E. LIND, Esq., M.L.A., Chairman.*

The Hon. A. E. CHANDLER, M.L.C., Vice-Chairman.†

The Hon. A. Bell, M.L.C.
J. D. Deany, Esq., M.L.A.

R. H. Solly, Esq., M.L.A.
The Hon. G. C. Webber, M.L.A.

* Mr. A. E. Lind, M.L.A., was appointed Chairman on 3rd August, 1926, in succession to Mr. J. D. Deany, M.L.A., whose term of office expired on that date.

† The Hon. A. E. Chandler, M.L.C., was appointed Vice-Chairman on 3rd August, 1926.

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SECOND PROGRESS REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS has, in accordance with the requirements of Section 21 of the *Railways Standing Committee Act 1915* (No. 2717), inquired into the proposed expenditure of £30,000 towards the provision of connecting lines between Glenroy and Albion, Tottenham Gravitation Yards, and Melbourne Goods Yards; &c., authorized in the Schedule to the *Railway Loan Application Act 1925* (No. 3417), subject to the outlay being first approved by the Committee, and has now the honour to report as follows :—

PREVIOUS REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

1. On 30th June last the Railways Standing Committee reported to the Legislative Assembly on this proposed expenditure, and recommended Parliament to approve of the Railways Commissioners' proposals as under, viz. :—

- (1) To construct duplicate independent goods tracks from West Footscray to the Melbourne Yard, including the necessary regrading of the Bendigo line to abolish the Albert and Nicholson streets crossings at Footscray, also the simultaneous regrading of the Geelong line to abolish the level crossing at Napier-street, Footscray; such goods tracks to run practically parallel with the existing Bendigo railway line from West Footscray to a point approximately 3 chains from the up end of the Footscray station platforms; thence to dive under the main line tracks, cross the Footscray railway reserve in a cutting, pass under the Geelong line and Hyde-street, tunnel under Bunbury-street, emerging at its intersection with Moreland-street; thence across the Maribyrnong River by a new railway bridge; thence to South Kensington, North Melbourne, and the Melbourne Yard, at estimated costs for the section from West Footscray to the proposed Maribyrnong River bridge of £379,000, from the proposed Maribyrnong River bridge to the Melbourne Yard of £113,000, and for the proposed regrading and abolition of the level crossing at Napier-street, Footscray, of £46,200.

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL WORKS.

2. On the 14th ultimo the Committee received a memorandum from the Honorable the Minister of Railways stating that since the date of the Committee's Report the Railways Commissioners had decided that, in the interests of safety, it would be necessary to abolish the level crossings at Victoria-street and Geelong-road, Footscray, and also asked that provision be made for the heaviest type of permanent way (110-lb. rails with sleeper plates), and additional sidings and signals provided for. These and other items enumerated hereafter increased the previous estimate by £88,000, and the total cost of the whole work, including regrading portion of the Bendigo line, was estimated at £580,000.

3. The increases due to the requirements of the Railways Commissioners were—

Substitution of vehicular subway for level crossing at Victoria-street, Footscray	£30,800
Substitution of road bridge for level crossing at Geelong-road, West Footscray	27,000
Heavier permanent way	11,000
Additional cost of signalling, &c.	6,700
Additional sidings and crossovers at South Kensington	5,500

The increases due to changes in design, &c., while working out the scheme in detail were—

Cost of additional land, &c.	2,500
Additional cost of sewer and drain alterations	1,660
Additional cost of subway and bridges	2,840
	£88,000

4. It is intended to raise the roadway at Geelong-road, West Footscray, on a grade of 1 in 20 on each side, to pass over the railway lines. At Victoria-street, adjoining Middle Footscray station, it is proposed to provide a vehicular subway with grades of 1 in 15. It will also be necessary to remove the Middle Footscray station from the east to the west side of Victoria-street.

REASONS FOR DELAY IN PRESENTING REQUEST.

5. The Committee was naturally surprised at the omission of this expenditure from the previous requests so recently dealt with, and informed the Commissioners that they viewed with grave concern the further proposal to expend an additional sum of £88,000. The reasons given by the Commissioners for the non-inclusion of these items in the previous proposals were, firstly—in regard to the abolition of the level crossings at Geelong-road and Victoria-street—that since the original scheme was drafted in 1923 the road traffic had increased to a very great extent, more especially on the Geelong-road, where, apart from private cars and general vehicular traffic, a number of motor buses have recently taken up regular running. Further, although the removal of this Geelong-road crossing is being considered as part of the general scheme in connexion with the new goods lines, the Commissioners state that it would have probably been necessary for them in any case to shortly undertake the abolition of that crossing.

6. With regard to Victoria-street crossing, the Commissioners stated that, while the traffic was not so great as at Geelong-road, the disadvantage of the electric train service crossing over a busy suburban street was a serious factor, apart from the desirability of affording goods trains on the new independent line an uninterrupted run with no public road crossings between the Tottenham Marshalling Yards and the Melbourne Goods Yard.

7. The removal of these crossings, combined with the advantage of getting a better grade for starting and stopping trains at the station platform (the present grade being 1 in 73, while at the proposed station it will be 1 in 250) and the substitution of a straight line for a curve for the station site, has influenced the Commissioners in their desire, which was not expressed previously, to remove the existing Middle Footscray station to a new location 11 chains distant.

REMOVAL OF MIDDLE FOOTSCRAY STATION.

8. The plans of the Commissioners provide for the removal of this station from its present position about 6 chains east to a new site 4 chains west of Victoria-street. Although there is a small lane leading to Raleigh-street on the north side of Middle Footscray station, access is mostly gained from Victoria-street, and the new proposal will, it is claimed, involve a minimum of inconvenience, because the great majority of the passengers will have less walking distance than at present. The passenger traffic at this station is fairly large, nearly half-a-million passengers being carried for the year ended 30th June last for a revenue of £6,550.

9. Evidence was heard from the Mayor and Councillors of Footscray to the effect that they would prefer the station remaining in its present position. Against this, however, the Commissioners pointed out that such a course would mean closing the station for possibly twelve months, or the erection of a temporary station on the west side of Victoria-street while the conversion work was in progress. The provision of a temporary station would involve an expenditure of about £3,500, which would, of course, be almost wholly wasted on the re-opening of the Middle Footscray station in its present position. It was contended, further, that a more important reason for building a new station on the west side of Victoria-street was that, with the closing of the present Middle Footscray station, motor bus routes would be developed for the transport of passengers, and the traffic thus lost would, to a considerable extent, never be regained.

BRIDGE *v.* SUBWAY AT GEELONG-ROAD.

10. The proposal of the Commissioners to provide a road bridge at Geelong-road was opposed by the Footscray Council, which asked that provision be made for a subway at this spot. The Committee was at a loss to see any appreciable advantage in a subway over a road bridge, but the Council considered that it would give greater visibility for passing motorists. However, on the question of relative costs being investigated, the Committee found that, while the road bridge would cost £27,000, the subway would entail an expenditure of £50,000, a disproportion so marked as to leave no room for doubt as to which work should be proceeded with. Of this additional cost of £23,000 for the subway, £15,500 was due to the excavation being in rock, and an amount of £2,800 was included for drainage from the subway to the Victoria-street subway drain, the nearest outlet for storm waters.

FINANCIAL ASPECT.

11. The proposed expenditure of £88,000 was investigated in close detail, and the Committee found that, by using 90-lb. rails for the new goods line instead of 110-lb. rails, a reduction of £3,000 could be effected, while a further £2,000 for relaying the Bendigo main line with heavier rails should not be charged against this work. This reduces the estimated total expenditure to £83,000. Of this sum of £83,000 approximately £7,300 will be charged to Working Expenses, and the balance of £75,700 to Capital Account.

12. The items making up the approximate charge to Working Expenses are—

Signal box, Geelong-road, &c.	..	..	..	..	£1,500
Middle Footscray station	..	..	..	..	1,500
Alterations to electrification masts	..	..	..	..	1,500
Footbridge at West Footscray	..	..	..	..	500
Temporary level crossing at Geelong-road	..	..	..	..	1,600
Temporary crossing at Victoria-street	..	..	..	..	200
Alterations to drainage, signals, &c.	..	..	..	..	500
					£7,300

13. The Committee inquired as to the savings that would be brought about by the proposed expenditure, and found that they consisted practically of the wages to the gate-keepers at Victoria-street, approximately £1,000 per annum, which, over a period of twenty years, might be capitalized at £20,000. The signalman at the Geelong-road crossing controls the gates and, with a level crossing installed, the same expenditure will still be necessary for the signalling work. No saving could be effected by reducing the classification of the box, because there will be more than a compensating amount of work from the increased goods traffic which will pass to and from the Tottenham Yards.

VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE.

14. The Committee has given careful consideration to the proposed works. It has inspected the district several times, and heard evidence from the Railways Commissioners and officers and the residents and councillors of Footscray.

15. The approval previously given to the construction of the independent goods line from Tottenham Marshalling Yards to the Melbourne Goods Yard included the abolition of three level crossings—two on the direct route and one over Napier-street, Footscray, on the Williamstown line. The two crossings now proposed to be abolished are the only crossings on the route of the new line, and their abolition would enable railway work to be carried out at all times, quite independent of the road traffic, over the full 5 miles between Tottenham Yards and Spencer-street. From this point of view it is an eminently desirable thing to effectuate, while in the interests of public safety it is more essential still. The passage of numerous comparatively slow-moving goods trains would prove a serious hindrance to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, while the transit of fast and frequent electric trains over such busy crossings constitutes a serious menace to human life. For these reasons the Committee intends recommending the abolition of the crossings.

16. The representations of the Footscray councillors as to the removal of the Middle Footscray station to its new position were carefully considered, but as their protests were apparently made without the knowledge that agreeing with them would mean closing the station altogether for twelve months, or wasting £3,500 by the provision of a temporary station, the Committee felt that no hardship would be entailed by the proposed removal, and therefore intends recommending it. The distance from Spencer-street to Middle Footscray station is 3 miles 57 chains, and to the new station it will be 3 miles 68 chains. The 11-chains intervening distance is made up of 6 chains between the present station and Victoria-street, 1-chain width of Victoria-street, and 4 chains from Victoria-street to the new station, so that residents using the new station (to which the only access will be from Victoria-street) will really walk 2 chains less than at present.

17. The additional items included in the proposed expenditure have been scrutinized and, in the opinion of the Committee, are necessary adjuncts to the complete scheme. The investigation into the matter of providing 90-lb. rails, and not including the cost of relaying the Bendigo main line with heavier rails, has led to a reduction of £5,000 in the capital cost, and the Committee is satisfied that the 90-lb. rail proposed to be used on the goods line will be sufficient for the purpose.

RECOMMENDATION.

18. The Committee, for the foregoing reasons, recommends Parliament to approve of the proposed further expenditure of £83,000 to carry out the following works, viz.:—

Substitution of vehicular subway for level crossing at Victoria-street, Footscray	£30,800
Substitution of road bridge for level crossing at Geelong-road, West Footscray	27,000
Heavier permanent way	6,000
Additional cost of signalling, &c.	6,700
Additional sidings and crossovers at South Kensington	5,500
Cost of additional land, &c.	2,500
Additional cost of sewer and drain alterations	1,660
Additional cost of subway and bridges	2,840
	£83,000

A. E. LIND,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House,
Melbourne, 25th October, 1926.

[Minutes of Evidence and Plans are not printed.]