

RAILWAY WORKS AND SERVICES BILL 1971.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.

Generally, the Bill seeks Parliamentary sanction for expenditure of the funds allotted to the Railway Department from the Works and Services Account for the 1971-72 financial year.

The funds allotted to the Department for the year amount to \$15,152,000, including amounts specifically allotted for final payments on two air-conditioned diesel rail cars for the Ararat-Hamilton-Portland line, and for construction of new railways from Welshpool to Barry Beach and from Tyabb to Long Island. As this Act must continue to operate until a new Act is passed and has received the Royal Assent—possibly late in 1972—provision is made in the Bill for sufficient authority (\$24,076,983) to cover the Department's estimated expenditure up till 31st December, 1972.

It is pointed out that the Bill covers a period approximately four weeks longer than that covered by the current Works and Services Act, and as a result the authorization sought is \$1,000,000 more.

The 1972 Act, when it comes into operation, will automatically cancel the unexhausted provision in the 1971 Act.

Sub-items 101 to 113 of Item 1, 201 to 206 of Item 2, and 303 and 304 of Item 3 refer to annual provisions, i.e., continuing works and purposes on which expenditure is incurred year by year.

Sub-items 114 to 116 of Item 1 refer to specific works, each of which is estimated to cost \$100,000 or more.

An explanatory statement, setting out, for each sub-item, actual expenditure during the 1970-71 financial year, proposed expenditure in 1971-72 and the proposed provision in the Bill, appears on page 8 of this Memorandum.

The following additional information is supplied for the assistance of Honorable Members in considering the various items and sub-items in the Bill:—

ITEM 1—WAY AND WORKS.

Sub-Item.

(101) *Stations, yards, &c.*

This sub-item provides for the large number of additions, improvements and reconstructions that must be carried out at stations and yards throughout the System each year in order to meet varying traffic requirements or replace obsolete facilities.

It covers such projects as improved station offices; additional or rearranged sidings for goods handling; longer crossing loops; alterations to stockyards; and many other works of a minor nature.

(102) *Accommodation for locomotives, carriages, &c.*

This sub-item provides for improved diesel locomotive facilities at Bendigo, and additions, improvements and reconstructions, mainly of a minor nature, in and around rolling stock workshops, depots and stabling areas.

(103) *Signalling, interlocking and traffic control systems.*

As well as covering a number of minor works in connexion with signalling and safeworking throughout the System, this sub-item provides for the progressive extension of automatic power signalling, which has two important advantages over manual signalling:—

- (a) It enables long block sections to be subdivided into short sub-sections, thus greatly increasing the capacity of lines;

ITEM 1—WAY AND WORKS—*continued.**Sub-Item.*(108) *Staff amenities in depots, workshops, stations, offices and yards.*

This sub-item is to authorize expenditure on a progressive programme of improvements to staff amenities, including meal and locker rooms, showers, sanitary facilities, &c., that is being carried out as rapidly as the available funds will permit.

During the currency of the Act funds are required to enable a commencement to be made on the provision of a new amenities building at Tottenham, with joint facilities for Traffic, Rolling Stock and Way and Works Branches staff. In addition, renovations will be carried out at Wodonga, and extensions to station buildings will be made at Dimboola to provide staff amenities.

(109) *Communication lines, &c.*

This sub-item provides for additions to and modernization of the Department's communications network. In the course of this programme, morse telegraph circuits have been displaced by a system of teleprinter centres located at key points throughout the State, with local communications around each centre being conducted by telephone. The programme also provides for the upgrading of telephone communications between Melbourne and the principal country centres, and this involves the reconstruction of a number of the principal pole lines. During the currency of the Act it is proposed to proceed with this work between Melbourne-Geelong, Melbourne-Bendigo, and Ararat-Horsham.

(110) *Electricity supply, &c.*

This sub-item provides for additions and improvements to electricity supply, both for normal lighting, heating and industrial purposes and for the operation of electrified lines. Under the latter heading the principal item of expenditure is in connexion with a long range programme to convert the high tension supply for the Melbourne electrified lines from 25 to 50 cycles, in anticipation of the eventual discontinuance of 25 cycle supply from the Newport Power Station.

Provision is also made for additional substations to meet traffic demands, the replacement of oil circuit breakers, modifications to protective equipment designed to minimize interruptions to the services through faults on high-tension feeders, and extensions to the supervisory control system to control the additional substations.

(111) *Bridges, &c.*

This sub-item provides for expenditure during the currency of the Act on the reconstruction of bridges, with particular emphasis on the programme of replacing timber, or part timber, bridges, many of which are over 80 years old, with permanent steel and concrete structures.

(112) *Plant and equipment, &c.*

This sub-item provides for the purchase of all plant and equipment other than road motor vehicles and rolling stock plant and machinery.

Much of the new plant is required for extension and improvement to the cyclic system of track maintenance, under which all heavy repairs throughout a district are carried out by specialized, fully mechanized gangs over a fairly long-term cycle, and the local gangs (suitably adjusted in strength) do only such day-by-day work as is necessary to keep the tracks in proper alignment. The cyclic system not only results in a better standard of track maintenance, but also yields considerable economies.

ITEM 1—WAY AND WORKS—*continued.**Sub-Item.*(112)—*continued.*

Also covered by this sub-item are goods handling equipment for traffic purposes such as cranes and fork-lift trucks ; printing machinery ; platform trolleys ; and accounting machines.

(113) *Private sidings constructed on railway land.*

As part of their concentrated drive to obtain new business in the face of intense competition, the Commissioners have adopted the policy of contributing towards the cost of private sidings constructed on railway land in suitable cases where a guarantee of substantial rail traffic is forthcoming.

Previously, the siding owner was required to meet the whole of such costs.

The amount provided is the estimated expenditure on this work during the currency of the Act.

(114) *Melbourne (Flinders-street “ E ” Signal Box)—Richmond : Provision of two additional tracks on Burnley line, including associated works and structures and acquisition of land.*

This work was authorized under previous Acts. Total expenditure to 21st August, 1971, \$1,241,395.

This and the two following sub-items embrace all works still required, in conjunction with work being done by the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority, to enable the desired standard of peak period services to be provided on the Box Hill and Glen Waverley group of lines. The whole programme is scheduled for completion by the end of 1972.

Over recent years train services have been progressively improved on both lines as the result of completion of the following works :—

Eastmalvern—Glen Waverley : Duplication of line.

Richmond—Burnley : Two additional tracks.

Hawthorn—East Camberwell : Third track signalled for two-way running.

This particular sub-item provides for elimination of the two-track bottleneck still existing between “ E ” box (Jolimont Junction) and Richmond. Two additional tracks must be provided in this section to enable more peak period trains to be run on both the Box Hill and Glen Waverley lines and to connect these lines to the underground loop. It is also necessary to integrate the work with construction by the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority of the underpass to connect the Caulfield and Sandringham lines with the underground loop.

(115) *Burnley—Hawthorn : Provision of additional track, including acquisition of land.*

This work was authorized under previous Acts, and the amount provided is required to complete it.

Total expenditure to 21st August 1971, \$901,769.

The existing two-track bottleneck between Burnley and Hawthorn results in delays to both express and stopping trains whenever out of course running occurs, and also precludes the running of additional peak period trains on the Box Hill line beyond Burnley.

ITEM 1—WAY AND WORKS—*continued.**Sub-Item.*(115)—*continued.*

Provision of a third track, signalled for two-way running, will overcome these difficulties and form an essential link in the over-all programme designed to permit improved peak period services to be provided between Melbourne and Box Hill.

(116) *East Camberwell-Box Hill : Provision of additional track, including acquisition of land and roads.*

This work was authorized under previous Acts and the amount provided is required to complete it.

Total expenditure to 21st August, 1971, \$716,883.

In conjunction with the works outlined in the previous two sub-items, this project will permit train services to Box Hill to be both augmented and accelerated.

ITEM 2—ROLLING STOCK, EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY AND OTHER WORKS.

Sub-Item.(201) *Locomotives.*

Other than for the seven steam locomotives retained for special passenger excursions (including "Puffing Billy"), and a number still stored to meet exceptional traffic demands, conversion of the system to diesel or electric traction is now complete and no further purchase of locomotive power is proposed during the currency of the Act.

(202) *Suburban electric trains.*

One of the most urgent tasks facing the Department is replacement of the 97 outworn, outmoded wooden-bodied electric trains still in service. Of the 650 carriages comprising these trains, 264 are over 55 years old, and 42 are over 70 years old, and replacement of this stock is becoming an increasingly pressing problem in the interests of proper operation.

It is simply not possible, with rolling stock of this vintage, to provide the standard of service necessary to meet today's highly competitive conditions.

Arrangements have been entered into for construction, mainly by contract but to the maximum extent practicable in departmental workshops, of 50 lightweight, stainless steel sheathed trains of the most modern design, featuring power-operated doors, forced-air ventilation with heating for winter conditions, tinted windows and quiet, smooth-riding suspension.

The amount provided is to meet expenditure during the currency of the Act on these new trains, the first of which is expected to be in service by the end of the 1971-72 financial year.

(203) *Country carriages, brake vans and sundry stock.*

The amount provided under this sub-item is required to meet expenditure for the construction of two new roomette and two new twinette carriages for the "Overland" to release similar carriages for use on the Mildura line; preliminary expenditure on three economy class saloon cars for use on the "Overland" and divisions; and continuation of the programme commenced last year of construction of bogie brake vans to replace fixed wheel vans on fast goods trains.

ITEM 2—ROLLING STOCK, EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY AND OTHER WORKS—*continued.**Sub-Item.*(204) *Self-propelled rail cars and trailers.*

The amount provided under this sub-item is required to complete payments for two 77 ft., 70 m.p.h. air-conditioned rail cars which are being purchased, with funds specially provided by the Government for the purpose, for service on the Ararat-Hamilton-Portland line. The first of these went into running on 28th June, 1971.

(205) *Wagons.*

The amount provided is to meet the estimated expenditure during the currency of the Act on the construction of approximately 170 new wagons and vans in Departmental workshops.

In order to provide for modern competitive conditions, new construction is being concentrated mainly on high-speed bogie vehicles for general goods and specific traffics, including containers, steel, bulk cement and bulk flour.

All new vehicles are fitted with roller bearings which practically eliminate the possibility of hot boxes, and are suitable for bogie exchange between 5' 3" and 4' 8½" gauges.

(206) *Rolling stock equipment, machinery and other works, including road motor vehicles.*

This sub-item provides for the purchase of plant and machinery for rolling stock workshops, and the purchase of road motor vehicles including departmental cars, buses, goods vehicles and vehicles for servicing, inspection and breakdown purposes.

ITEM 3—CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINES OF RAILWAY, ETC.

Sub-Item.(301) *Barry Beach Railway.*

This work was authorized by Act No. 7642 of 1967 and previous Loan and Works and Services Acts, and funds are required to complete minor works and meet outstanding charges, including unresolved land settlement claims.

Total expenditure to 21st August, 1971, \$228,353.

The line was opened to traffic on 2nd April, 1969.

(302) *Tyabb to Long Island Railway.*

This work was authorized by Act No. 7667 of 1968 and previous Loan and Works and Services Acts, and funds are required to complete minor works and meet outstanding charges, mainly unresolved land acquisition claims.

Total expenditure to 21st August, 1971, \$173,027.

The line, which was opened to traffic on 29th April, 1969, will provide a link between the Stony Point line and new industrial developments, including the major steel works project, planned in the Hastings-Long Island area.

(303) *Surveys, Plans and Estimates.*

This amount covers the estimated expenditure for reports, inspections and surveys, and the preparation of any necessary plans and estimates during the currency of the Act.

ITEM 3—CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINES OF RAILWAY, ETC.—*continued.**Sub-Item.*

- (304) *Expenditure on other lines which have been or may be authorized by Parliament for construction.*

Pending the passing of a separate authorizing Act provision has been made under this sub-item for preliminary expenditure on the Eastern railway, portion of which will be constructed in conjunction with, and within the median strip of, the Eastern freeway.

- (305).

This sub-item provides Parliamentary authority to cover expenditure which was incurred by the Department on preliminary work associated with the *Railways Standardisation Agreement Act* 1948 No. 5343. This Act provided for the ratification of an agreement between the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and of the States of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales in relation to the standardisation of certain railway gauges. In the event the 1948 Agreement was not ratified by all parties and it was void from 1950 when the ratifying Commonwealth Act was repealed. In 1958 the Victorian legislation was repealed by the *Railways (Standardisation Agreement) Act* 1958 No. 6459. However, this legislation did not provide for the absorption of the preliminary expenditure incurred under the 1948 Act in areas of the State not subject to the later standardisation agreement which related to the construction of the standard gauge line from Albury to Melbourne. As a result an amount of \$76,982.51 remains in the books of the Treasury which needs to be cleared by Parliamentary appropriation from the Works and Services Account.
