

upon which \$348,326 has already been spent, leaving a further estimated expenditure of \$530,000 to complete.

218. But, if possible, even more alarming than the foregoing are the figures which have been supplied to us by the Department which reveal that it has either under construction or in contemplation further extensions to our highway system over a period of years at a cost in excess of twenty million dollars.

219. Investigation into the use of bridges tells the same story. For instance, the Haguelgate Bridge which was built in 1930-31 and cost \$176,415 is crossed by an average of 35 vehicles a day, and the white population of the four small centres in this district is 800. A bridge was built at Terrace in 1923-24, at a cost of \$183,622, and it is reported that not an acre has been developed on the opposite side of the river from Terrace since the bridge was constructed.

220. The following is a statement of the cost of some of the Government buildings generally known as Court-houses:—

City.	Population.	Cost of Government Buildings.
Prince Rupert.....	6,350	\$541,191.00
Vernon.....	3,987	218,289.00
New Westminster.....	17,524	186,391.00
Revelstoke.....	2,786	135,189.00
Nelson.....	5,992	98,896.00
Prince George.....	2,479	77,446.00
Kamloops.....	6,167	67,991.00
Fernie.....	2,732	63,892.00
Grand Forks.....	1,298	57,656.00
Rossland.....	2,848	52,882.00
Nanaimo.....	6,745	39,797.00
Smithers.....	999	38,272.00
Salmon Arm.....	890	35,890.00
Kaslo.....	523	34,976.00
Williams Lake.....	402	31,340.00

221. Assuming that the size of the population served is some guide to the need for these buildings, it is difficult to understand several of the foregoing expenditures. For instance, the building at Prince Rupert cost nine times that at Kamloops, although the population tributary to Kamloops is much greater than that tributary to Prince Rupert.

222. It is apparent that political expediency has for many years been the guiding principle of this Department. This opinion is confirmed by the following quotation from the Budget Address of the Finance Minister when referring last March to public policy, he said:—

"It may be frankly stated that for many years past economic principles have been heavily handicapped in contending with political expediency for the determination of public policy."

223. We make the following recommendations with regard to this Department:—

1. THAT ALL CONSTRUCTION WORK ON NEW HIGHWAYS AND BUILDINGS BE DISCONTINUED AT ONCE, AND THAT ALL EXPENDITURES ON ROADS BE CONFINED FOR THE PRESENT TO SUCH MAINTENANCE AND BETTERMENTS AS ARE ESSENTIAL.

2. That the Dominion Government be asked without delay to discontinue the construction of their section of the Big Bend road.

3. That no further expenditures be made on surveys for the proposed Alaskan Highway upon which \$35,249.42 was spent in 1930-31.

4. That negotiations be entered into with the municipalities having as their object a more equitable distribution of the cost of maintaining many highways running within municipal boundaries because, in our opinion, the Government has taken over an impossible burden in assuming the full cost of maintenance. For instance, as a result of reclassification, during the two years ended March 31st, 1931, the Government is now responsible for the full cost of the betterment and maintenance of 311 miles of roads within municipal boundaries.

5. That there be a reorganization and reduction of the outside as well as the inside staff.
6. That a central drafting department be organized to prepare all plans for the Architectural, Surveying, and Engineering Departments.

7. That all departmental cars and trucks be painted in a distinctive colour so as to identify it readily as a Government car. That when cars are replaced, less expensive ones be provided for the Engineers, and that where it is necessary to supply a foreman with a car it be a light truck to enable tools and supplies to be carried.

8. That a monthly record be kept of the mileage, gas and oil consumption, repairs, etc., of all departmental cars and of private cars used on Government business.

9. That machinery be housed and protected and an inventory of all large construction plant and equipment be made with a view to disposing of the surplus when reasonable prices can be secured.

10. That mechanics and operators of large equipment be experienced and dependable, and employed solely on their qualifications.

11. That the renting or renewing of leases for buildings be studied with the object of reducing the number and cost to a minimum.

12. That the operation of ferries where the cost is excessive for the service rendered, be discontinued.

13. That the eight ferries now in operation on the North Thompson River between Kamloops and Avola be reduced in number.

14. That where possible power ferries be subsidized rather than operated by the Government, and a toll charged on those retained by the Government.

15. That the Highway, Traffic and Utilities Office in Vancouver be closed, and the work carried out by the present staff in Victoria.

16. That no appreciable expenditures be incurred on surveys when a cursory investigation of the project would show that it is beyond the financial resources of the Province.

17. That no new construction be undertaken until a complete report and a definite recommendation is received over the signature of a responsible official and that any subsequent alterations be confirmed in writing.

18. That the classification of expenditures on betterments receive the approval of the Finance Department as there is a dangerous practice in vogue of providing for such costs out of public loans when they should be charged to current revenue.

224. It has been suggested and the suggestion has been endorsed by more than one public body, that a Highway Commission should be created with the object of taking this Department "out of politics." The same idea has been proposed with regard to the Liquor Control Board, and the administration of Mothers' Aid, both of which would undoubtedly benefit if they were made subject to the same cleansing process. We are not surprised at these proposals. But why stop short at Public Works, Mothers' Aid, and the Liquor Control Board? Does not the same condition exist throughout the whole administration? What is the practical object achieved by creating a Highway or any other description of Commission so long as the Commissioners are the appointees of the political party in power and subject to their direction?

DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS.

225. We recommend that the activities of this Department, which are largely concerned with the Fraser River Bridge, be transferred to the Department of Public Works.