

1922.

VICTORIA.

REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE PROPOSED

WEST BRUNSWICK ELECTRIC
TRAMWAY;

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

RETURN to an Order of the House,
Dated 19th July, 1922, for --

A COPY of the Report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on the proposed
West Brunswick Electric Tramway; together with Minutes of Evidence.

(*Mr. Barnes.*)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 19th July, 1922.

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REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Honorable the Minister of Public Works (the Hon. F. G. Clarke, M.L.C.), in accordance with the requirements of section 35 of the *Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Act* 1918, No. 2995, referred the scheme of the West Brunswick Electric Tramway, has the honour to report as follows :—

WEST BRUNSWICK AND WEST COBURG DISTRICTS.

1. The West Brunswick district is a "V"-shaped area, the western or left boundary extending from Flemington-bridge along the valley of Moonee Ponds Creek to Moreland-road, and the eastern side from Flemington-bridge railway station along the Royal Park and Brunswick railway to Moreland station. Moreland-road runs east and west on the north or top end of this area, being the northern boundary of the City of Brunswick. Across that road is the West Coburg district. The lower portion of this "V"-shaped area is occupied by the western part of Royal Park Reserve and by Government institutions, such as the Mental Hospital, Victorian Home for the Infirm, and the industrial schools for neglected children. On emerging from this portion at Park-street, Brunswick, the residential area of West Brunswick is entered upon, and continues northward for a mile and a half to Moreland-road. It is mostly good building land, and though the eastern part towards the Brunswick and Coburg railway is somewhat flat there is a good slope on the western side into the valley of Moonee Ponds Creek, affording ample drainage for the district. West Brunswick is fairly well built upon. There are, however, several large vacant spaces which have been divided into building allotments and sold. But the absence of a cheap and direct means of reaching the city has deterred many of the purchasers of these allotments from building residences on them. Approaching Moreland-road the country rises gradually, and from these higher elevations an expansive view is obtained. Most of this land has been sold for residential purposes. There is no doubt that, given electric tramway facilities, this part of West Coburg and on beyond to Reynard-street and Bell-street west—the former being half-a-mile and the latter a mile north of Moreland-road—would soon be built upon. West Brunswick and West Coburg are within 5 miles of the General Post Office and the shopping and business centre of Melbourne. Water mains and electric lighting wires are in many of the streets, and all that is needed to cause these localities to become thickly populated is a rapid and direct means of travelling to and from the city. At present the residents have to either walk from half-a-mile to over a mile to the railway stations on the Brunswick and Coburg railway or to the Brunswick cable tramway, which is a few chains beyond those stations, or pay a 3d. fare for a cab ride from Melville-road, West Brunswick, *via* Albion, Pearson, and Victoria streets, to Brunswick railway station, or from West Coburg along Moreland-road to Moreland railway station, or from Sussex-street along Bell-street to Coburg station. These cabs run at irregular intervals, mostly waiting till they get a full load, or nearly so, before starting the trip. What is wanted to send the district ahead is a tramway running at stated times.

POPULATION AND NUMBER OF DWELLINGS.

2. No other metropolitan area contains such a large population residing more than half-a-mile from a railway or tramway. It is therefore fitting that the West Brunswick district should be selected by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board as the first to receive from it the benefits of nearer tramway facilities. In West Brunswick there are close on 900 acres with 1,519 dwellings, having a population of 6,989, more than half-a-mile from any railway or tramway, while in the southern part of West Coburg, between Moreland-road and Reynard-street, there are about 300 acres, with about 300 houses, having a population of close on 1,500. It is largely an industrial population, the majority of the householders and some members of the family having to gain their livelihood by working in the local factories and brick or pottery yards or in establishments in the city, so that there would be more than the average daily travel by the residents of this district.

ROUTE OF PROPOSED TRAMWAY.

3. In locating the route of the proposed electric tramway the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board decided that people in outlying districts who are within half-a-mile of a railway station or tramway are served with travelling facilities. Considering the existing high costs of tramway construction and operation and the necessity of avoiding heavy annual loss on new undertakings, the Committee concurs in that opinion. The Board also rightly took the view that in determining the route of a new tramway it must not only have regard to the location of the present population but to the positions of vacant allotments of suitable building land on which dwellings are likely to be erected if tramway facilities are provided, thus placing the tramway in streets as convenient as possible to both the existing and future population in the district. The difficulty in selecting a tramway route through West Brunswick is that originally the land was divided by the Crown into farm holdings extending from Sydney-road, Brunswick, to Moonee Ponds Creek, with roads running east and west separating the farms. At the outset there were no north and south roads. When the farms were subdivided by the owners and sold north and south roads were provided here and there, wherever the land-holders thought fit. Consequently there has been no uniformity in these subdivisions, the roads varying in width, and except in the case of Pearson-street no continuity north and south in a direct line for any considerable length. In passing, it may be said that this portion of the metropolis shows the need of some authority exercising greater care over town-planning and private subdivisions of land for future residential purposes, so that suitable street accommodation may be provided.

4. The Board proposed that, pending a decision to bring the West Brunswick electric tramway into the city by a route of its own, probably by way of Flemington-road and Peel-street, North Melbourne, and thence either down William or Queen streets, this new tram line should start at the intersection of Abbotsford-street and Flemington-road, North Melbourne, where the passengers could transfer to or from the North and West Melbourne cable tram cars. The new tramway would proceed northerly through Royal Park to an unused road at the rear of the Zoological Gardens, where it would pass through an embankment under the Brunswick-Coburg railway, about 10 or 12 chains west of Royal Park station, and thence north-west for about 100 yards to the fence on the east side of the Receiving Home, and northwards along that fence and the fence of the Home for the Infirm to Park-street, Brunswick. From here the tramway would go diagonally across a market garden to Grantham-street, and proceed north along that street to Dawson-street; west along Dawson-street (passing the south ends of Pearson and Daly streets) to the southern alignment of Melville-road; and thence northward along Melville-road for three-quarters of a mile to Albion-street, West Brunswick, where the Board intended to terminate the tramway for the present. This tramway would be 2·81 miles in length. The Board's scheme, however, provided for an extension of 30 chains from Albion-street northward along a new street to be formed in alignment with Melville-road, across a small water-course to Moreland-road, the boundary between West Brunswick and West Coburg. This would make a total length of 3·19 miles. Grantham and Dawson streets are 66 feet in width, but Melville-road varies from 40 to 66 feet. The Board, however, provided £3,000 in its estimates of costs for extending that road south to Dawson-street and north to Moreland-road, and making it 66 feet in width throughout.

. LENGTH AND ESTIMATED COST OF TRAMWAY.

5. The West Brunswick tramway, which the Board proposed should be of double track throughout, and of its standard design as regards rails, sleepers, ballast, drainage, overhead construction, &c.; would be 2·81 miles in length from Flemington-road to Albion-street, West Brunswick, and 3·19 miles to Moreland-road, West Coburg. Its estimated cost was £69,527 to Albion-street, comprising £56,897 for permanent way: £6,758 for overhead construction: £3,583 for land resumptions; and £2,289 for bridges and subways. The double line of tramway to Moreland-road would cost £81,484. A single-line track with crossing loops at suitable points was estimated at £51,573—from Flemington-road to Moreland-road. Construction costs are double what they were prior to the war. The rolling-stock at the outset, consisting of five cars, was estimated to cost £10,000, or £2,000 each. The seating capacity of each car will be 36. It was intended to purchase the electric power from the State Electricity Commissioners at a cost of ·9d. per kilowatt hour, or about 2·4d. per car mile. The Board based these estimates on the cost of recently-constructed electric tramways in the metropolis. There are indications of a substantial drop in the prices of rails and other materials used in constructing an electric tramway, and if this occurs the Board will, of course, take full advantage of that decrease, and thus lessen the cost of construction and equipment of the tramway. Under these circumstances the Committee accepted the estimates of the Board.

SECTIONS AND FARES.

6. It was proposed by the Board to have two sections on the electric tramway, one from Flemington-road, North Melbourne, to Brunswick-road, West Brunswick, 1·37 miles, and the second from the latter road to Albion-street, 1·44 miles, the fare for any single section being 1½d., and for the two sections 2½d., these being the same as on other electric lines of the Board's tramway system. But, in order that the through fares to the city should not be unduly high compared with the 2d. fare charged on the Brunswick cable tramway between its terminus at Moreland-road, Coburg, and Flinders-street, Melbourne, the Board proposed to grant concession fares over the new electric tramway where passengers transferred from and to the North and West Melbourne cable cars. This concession would be a reduction of ½d., making the concession fare 1d. for one section, and 2d. for two sections, which, added to the 2d. fare over the cable line, would mean a through fare of 3d. between Brunswick-road, South Brunswick, and the city, and 4d. between Albion-street, West Brunswick, and the city. The rate per mile at the above fares is respectively ·79d. and ·76d., as compared with a rate of ·45d. per mile on the Brunswick (Sydney-road) cable line.

7. When, however, the proposed electric tramway is extended to Moreland-road the Board intended to divide the route into three sections, as two sections only for a length of 3·19 miles, or 1·59 miles per section, would be too long in comparison with the lengths of sections on other electric tramways under the control of the Board, where the distance averaged but 1·13 miles per section. The three sections would be from Flemington-road to Park-street, 1·16 miles; from Park-street to Smith-street, ·97 miles; and from Smith-street along Melville-road to Moreland-road, 1·06 miles. The fares would then be 1½d. for one single section, 2½d. for two sections, and 3½d. for three sections, with the concession of ½d. where passengers transferred to or from the North Melbourne cable lines, thus making the through fare between Moreland-road, Coburg, and the city 5d., as against 2d. second class and 3d. first class by rail between Moreland station and Flinders-street station, and 2d. by the adjacent Brunswick cable tramway. The Board considered that a through fare of 5d. by the new tramway between Moreland-road, West Coburg, and the city would cause a loss of traffic to the electric tramway, as it would cause residents near that road—especially those along the east side of Moreland-road—to patronize the cheaper train or cable tramway. By the respacing of the sections into three in lieu of two the passengers between Albion and Smith streets, who under the previous proposal could travel for 4d. into the city, would have to pay 5d., and consequently some of them would walk to Smith-street to avoid a sectional fare. This difficulty received special attention from the Committee, and it later on makes a recommendation which, if adopted, will lower the through fare between Moreland-road and the city to 4d., and thus secure the West Coburg traffic to the new tramway instead of diverting it to either the train or cable tramway at Moreland-road.

REVENUE AND ANNUAL CHARGES.

8. With a service at ten minutes intervals in the busy hours of the mornings and evenings and twenty minutes during the other times of the day the Board estimated that a revenue of £7,010 would be earned by the proposed electric tramway in its first year of operation if it terminated at Albion-street, West Brunswick. On other tramways having a density of population corresponding to that of West Brunswick the passengers per route mile varied from 300,000 to 750,000. A rate of 400,000 passengers per route mile was taken in estimating the revenue of this new tramway. The riding habit of the population also varied on the Board's electric systems, ranging from 85 to 300 journeys a year. In this case 120 had been allowed for. The revenue per head of served population in other districts having electric tramways varied from 13s. 9d. to 50s. per annum, and for West Brunswick it was calculated at approximately 20s. per head of population for the first year of operation of the tramway. Working expenses, exclusive of annual charges, averaged 15d. per car mile to Albion-street. The Board's estimates of annual expenses, including interest at 6½ per cent. on the cost of construction and statutory contributions to renewals and sinking funds, totalling 5½ per cent., were as follow:

ALBION-STREET TERMINUS.

Annual charges on cost of construction	..	..	..	..	..	£8,265
Annual charges on cost of rolling-stock, buildings, and plant	..	..	..	..	..	2,200
Operating expenses	..	..	..	..	..	9,675

Total	..	..	..	..	..	£20,140
Estimated revenue	..	..	..	..	..	7,010

Estimated loss first year of operation	..	..	..	..	..	£13,130

MORELAND-ROAD TERMINUS.

Annual charges on cost of construction	..	..	..	£9,778
Annual charges on cost of rolling-stock, buildings, and plant	..	..	..	2,500
Operating expenses	..	..	..	10,965
Total	..	..	..	£23,243
Estimated revenue	..	..	..	6,950
Estimated loss first year of operation	..	..	..	£16,293

9. It will be seen that whilst the estimated annual charges and operating expenses are increased by the 30 chains extension to Moreland-road the estimated revenue is slightly less than for a tramway terminating at Albion-street. As already stated, the cause of this is that there would be an extra section if the tramway went on to Moreland-road, and this additional fare would lead to a decrease of traffic from the vicinity of Moreland-road and Albion-street.

10. The total car mileage per annum with a service of ten minutes in the busy hours and twenty minutes at other times of the day would be 154,825 to Albion-street, and 175,450 to Moreland-road. The revenue per car mile was estimated at 10·90d. to Albion-street and 9·51d. to Moreland-road. The estimated passengers in the first year of operation numbered 1,140,000 to Albion-street if the tramway terminated there, with a through fare of 4d. either to or from the city, and 1,065,000 if it went as far as Moreland-road, with a fare of 5d. to or from the city. The passengers per car mile were set down at 7·36 to Albion-street, and 6·07 to Moreland-road.

OTHER ROUTES SUGGESTED.

11. During its inquiry other routes than the one outlined by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board to serve the West Brunswick district were brought under the attention of the Committee. The first was that the proposed electric tramway should start in Union-street, Brunswick, at Sydney-road, so that the passengers could either travel to or from the city by the Brunswick cable tramway or by railway from the adjoining South Brunswick station. The proposed tramway would proceed westward along Union-street to Grantham-street, and thence along the Board's route to Albion-street, West Brunswick, and on to Moreland-road, West Coburg. It was considered that this proposal, being only about half the length of the one submitted by the Board, would be a better paying proposition, as it would pass through a populated district for its full length, not traversing a large unoccupied area like Royal Park, and would, moreover, enable the residents of West Brunswick to reach their shopping centre in Sydney-road. The objections, however, to this proposal were that it would necessitate the tramway crossing the Brunswick and Coburg railway on the level at Union-street, which the Railways Commissioners were opposed to, and that it would bring additional traffic to the Brunswick cable tramway, which is overcrowded in the busy hours of the mornings and evenings. There was no local support given to this route.

12. Another proposal was that the electric tramway, instead of starting at the corner of Abbotsford-street and Flemington-road, North Melbourne, should commence close to the terminus of that cable tramway at Flemington-bridge, and proceed northward along Church, Manningham, and Oak streets to Park-street, where it would join the Board's route at the south end of Grantham-street, and follow it to West Brunswick and West Coburg. The advantages claimed for this route were that it would avoid any severance of Royal Park, being on the western edge of that reserve, and that, by depositing the electric tramway passengers at the terminus of the North Melbourne cable tramway, instead of at Abbotsford-street, half-a-mile nearer the city, the West Brunswick residents would have an equal opportunity with the Flemington and Essendon tramway passengers of getting a seat in the North Melbourne cable tramway cars. When the Committee was at the corner of Abbotsford-street and Flemington-road inspecting the route of the proposed electric tramway it saw a cable tramway car come from Flemington-bridge terminus, where it had been filled with passengers who transferred from the Essendon tramway. The Board admitted that starting its West Brunswick route at Abbotsford-street had this drawback, but it would be overcome by running special cable tramway cars from Abbotsford-street into the city. In any case, it pointed out, the transfer of passengers at Abbotsford-street was a temporary expedient only, pending either the electrification of the North Melbourne cable tramway or bringing the West Brunswick electric tramway into the city by a route of its own, along Flemington-road and some other suitable thoroughfare into King, William, or Queen streets. The objections to the Manningham-Oak streets proposal were that it would obtain very little traffic between Park-street and Flemington-bridge, as it would for the greater part of its length be passing such

Government institutions as the Mental Hospital, Home for the Infirm, and schools for neglected children, to and from which there would be few passengers, and that tramway passengers, on alighting at Flemington-bridge, would not care to climb the steep approaches leading to Flemington-bridge station, which is on a high embankment. From the railway aspect it would be better to terminate the proposed tramway close to Royal Park station, which, being on the surface, could be easily reached, while the railway fares to and from Flinders-street station were the same from Royal Park and Flemington-bridge stations. Moreover, this western route along Manningham and Oak streets would lose the passenger traffic in connexion with the Zoological Gardens.

VALENTINE CROWLEY ROUTE.

13. In 1915 the Melbourne, Brunswick, and Coburg Tramway Conference, consisting of municipal representatives, which met at the Town Hall, Melbourne, engaged Mr. Valentine J. Crowley, consulting electrical engineer, of Melbourne, to report on an electric tramway from the city to West Brunswick and West Coburg. After inspecting the districts he recommended a route from Flinders-street up Queen-street; thence along Franklin, William, Howard, Courtney, and Errol streets to the corner of Flemington-road and Gatehouse-street, Parkville; and thence northward through Royal Park to the unused road at the rear of the Zoological Gardens. From that point to Dawson-street, West Brunswick, the route was practically the same as the Board's, passing under the Coburg railway west of Royal Park station and along Grantham-street. Instead, however, of going west along Dawson-street as far as Melville-road Mr. Crowley selected Pearson-street, and used that chain-wide thoroughfare as the route as far as Albion-street, where it made a slight curve into Shamrock-street (formerly known as Pearson-street north). Towards the north end of that street it turned north-west to the corner of Moreland-road and Donne-street; thence along the latter street to Reynard-street, and along Bruce-street to Bell-street, West Coburg; and thence along Sussex-street, terminating at Gaffney-road. He proposed a spur track running eastward from near Donne-street along Moreland-road to Sydney-road to link up with the East Brunswick electric tramway system, allowing the cars to reach the latter's car-shed and repair shop. The length of this proposal was $8\frac{1}{4}$ miles, of which 5 miles were double track, and $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles single. At the then wages for labour and prices of materials (1915) this tramway was estimated to cost £123,900, or about £15,000 a mile, including eight cars at £1,250 each. The estimated revenue in the first year of operation was £23,437, and the annual charges and operating expenses, £24,275, or a loss of £838. The city section was set down as showing a surplus of £725, and the Brunswick portion a profit of £721, whilst the Coburg section had an estimated loss of £2,284.

PARKVILLE AND ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS TRAFFIC.

14. A further route suggested was that the proposed tramway should leave the city by way of Queen, Franklin, and Peel streets, and on reaching Flemington-road should turn into Park-street, Parkville, and enter Royal Park at the rear of the lodge at the entrance to that reserve, and thence along the horse tramway to the main entrance on the east side of the Zoological Gardens, turning into the unused road on the north side of those gardens to Royal Park station, crossing the Brunswick-Coburg railway either at the level crossing in Poplar-street, on the "up" side of that station, or passing over the line on a bridge at the entrance to the cutting close to the "down" side of Royal Park station, and then joining the Board's route on the west side of the north portion of Royal Park, proceeding on to Grantham and Dawson streets, West Brunswick. It was claimed that this route would take the place of the horse tramway to the Zoological Gardens, and would also serve the residents of Parkville, who could not, owing to the cable cars being often overloaded on leaving Brunswick, board the cars on their reaching Parkville. Evidence was given that during the busy hours between 7 and 9 a.m. intending passengers to the city had frequently to stand on the street at Parkville while one, two, and occasionally three tram cars fully loaded passed before one would come along and stop to pick them up. Frequently then standing room only was available on the car. It was stated that the Brunswick cable tramway cars were rushed at the city termini at Lonsdale and Flinders streets in Elizabeth-street between 5 and 6.20 p.m., all the seats being rapidly filled, passengers having to stand on the platforms of the cars and footboards of the dummies. The Committee, on coming into the city from Brunswick Town Hall about 6 p.m. on 14th February, 1922, saw two cable tramway cars bound for Brunswick refuse to stop at Parkville to pick up three intending passengers, as the cars were overcrowded. The third car stopped and took these passengers aboard. Witnesses stated that another tramway route into the city was urgently needed to relieve the overcrowding of the Brunswick cable tramway cars in the mornings and evenings, and provide reasonable travelling facilities for the residents of Parkville.

CITY SECTION OF TRAMWAY.

15. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board has placed on it by Act No. 2995 the responsibility of suggesting the route into the city of this proposed tramway, whether it will be by converting the North Melbourne cable tramway into an electric one, and using that line to bring the West Brunswick electric tramway cars into the city, or by having a separate route for this new tramway along Peel and Queen streets or some other city thoroughfares. The Board stated—

“ Within the city proper the only roads leading to the north which are available for new tramways are Queen, William, and King streets, and to connect these with the route in the vicinity of Royal Park it will be necessary to select roads in North Melbourne. As the selection of tramway routes in the city and its approaches is one of the problems being investigated in the preparation of the general scheme, it is necessary, for this reason, to defer the location of the city portion of the West Brunswick route. This is also advisable for financial reasons, as heavy construction costs would be entailed over this section, and the initial revenue expected from the tramway will be so small as to warrant all possible reduction in construction costs.”

Consequently, until the Board submits a scheme for bringing the West Brunswick tramway into the city, and also estimates of cost, traffic, revenue, and annual charges, the Committee would be exceeding its powers in considering or suggesting a route.

COMPETITION WITH THE BRUNSWICK RAILWAY.

16. Section 36 of Act No. 2995 requires the Committee “ to take into consideration the effect on the railway revenue likely to result from the construction of any tramway, and make such recommendations with respect thereto as it thinks fit.” The Railways Commissioners, when asked by the Committee for their views, pointed out that the Brunswick railway had been subjected for many years to keen competition by the Brunswick cable tramway. The railway to that suburb was first in the field, being opened for traffic in 1884, whilst the cable tramway was not completed till 1887. This competition caused exceptionally low fares to be charged on both the railway and tramway, and for a long period the trains were run at a loss. The frequency of the tramway service, the cars being run in the busy hours at intervals of a minute, and of two minutes at other times, or 723 cars per day, and being able to deposit its passengers in the centre of the city—about 60 per cent. alighting at the intersection of Elizabeth and Bourke streets—aided the tramway competition. Since the electrification of the Brunswick railway the faster, cleaner, and more frequent service, averaging fifteen minutes throughout the day and night—as compared with the former steam trains, caused an increase of 43 per cent. in railway passenger journeys, and 77 per cent. in revenue last year. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board said that the Brunswick cable tramway had suffered little loss of traffic by the electrification of the railway to that suburb, and it accounted for this result largely by the increased facilities inducing a travelling habit among the residents of Brunswick. An analysis of the passenger traffic, outwards and inwards, on the Brunswick and Coburg railway for six months ended June, 1921, disclosed that 61·6 per cent. travelled to and from Melbourne, 11·3 between stations on the line, and 27·1 to all other stations. The population of the City of Brunswick at the end of 1920 was 42,000, as compared with 30,000 in 1910. The Railways Commissioners reported that practically the whole of the passenger traffic from Royal Park, South Brunswick, and Brunswick stations, representing 18,330 persons, originates in the district west of Sydney-road. The area that would be served by the West Brunswick electric tramway contains 6,989 persons, and, therefore, represents 38 per cent. of the population from which the present railway traffic is obtained. It was estimated by the Commissioners that half this traffic—19 per cent. of the population, representing 394,942 passenger journeys at 2d. each—would be diverted from the railway to the proposed electric tramway and the North Melbourne cable tramway, thus causing a loss to the railway of £3,291 in the first year.

TRAMWAY TERMINUS AT ROYAL PARK STATION.

17. The Railways Commissioners went on to say there would be no objection to a deviation in the route of the proposed tramway in the northern part of Royal Park, so as to bring it closer to Royal Park station, but they were opposed to the tramway crossing the Brunswick railway on the level at that station, owing to the interference with both the railway and tramway traffic and the risk of accidents. They added that “ while this deviation would no doubt be favorable to the retention of a small portion of the traffic from West Brunswick now dealt with at Royal Park, South Brunswick, and Brunswick stations, it is considered that the greater proportion of the residents would still utilize the proposed electric tramway service, making a connexion with the

North Melbourne cable tram at Abbotsford-street to the disadvantage of the railway revenue." The Commissioners favoured the proposed tramway stopping at Royal Park station, saying—"The continuation of the electric tramway beyond Royal Park station through the park lands to Flemington-road would establish an extravagant and unnecessary duplication of facilities. It would involve the Tramway Board in the heavy expense of construction and operation of the line through an unpopulated, and, therefore, unprofitable area. . . . Furthermore, the provision by the Railway Department of an independent approach from the North Carlton line to Royal Park station (at an estimated cost of £6,391), which will permit of all electric trains now terminating at North Carlton being extended to Royal Park without interfering with the traffic on the Melbourne-Coburg line, will provide direct communication between stations on the Coburg, Collingwood, Heidelberg, and Preston Reservoir lines, and avert the present necessity for travelling the longer route by rail or tramway by way of the city." In answer to questions asked by the Committee, the Railways Commissioners stated they would neither operate the West Brunswick Tramway nor bear any portion of its annual loss if it terminates at Royal Park station, as suggested by them.

VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE.

18. Any tramway extension in the outer metropolitan suburbs is likely for a time to affect the revenue of a railway in its neighbourhood. The question, however, is whether a suburban area having a fair population, and capable of rapid expansion, because of the large number of suitable building sites available, is to be withheld from residential development and kept beyond a reasonable distance of train or tram because the railway revenue will suffer a decrease for some years. The whole of the West Brunswick and West Coburg district is from half-a-mile to a mile from either the Brunswick-Coburg railway or tramway, and, being on the east side of Moonee Ponds Creek, it is all over half-a-mile from the Essendon electric tramway. It is the most thickly-populated suburban area without a railway or tramway at a convenient distance. In the opinion of the Committee it is entitled to better travelling facilities, both because of the distance the residents are from a train or tram and the prospects of rapid development as a residential district. The Committee believes that the interests of the Railway Department can be safeguarded and its estimated loss of revenue in the first few years of operation of the tramway lessened by having the proposed tramway brought within 2 chains of the entrance to the Royal Park station; by prohibiting concession fares to through tramway passengers, which would penalize railway passengers who used both the tramway and the railway to reach the city, or *vice versa*, thus unduly favouring the tramway in competition with the railway; and by stipulating that, as far as practicable, the electric tram cars should be so timed to reach Royal Park station as to give tramway passengers coming from West Brunswick and West Coburg in the mornings sufficient time to leave the tram car, purchase their tickets, and catch the "up" train to Flinders-street station without having to unduly wait on the platform. In the evening the tram cars should leave their stopping place adjacent to Royal Park station within a few minutes after the arrival of the "down" train. In short, the tram and train services should be operated in harmony as if under one controlling body, anxious that both should convenience the travelling public as far as possible instead of being regarded as antagonistic undertakings.

19. As the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board has not yet prepared its scheme for bringing this tramway into the city, and as there is such a divergence of views as to whether the tramway should pass on the west or east side of the Zoological Gardens, the Committee considers that the tramway should in these circumstances terminate for the present close to Poplar-street adjacent to the entrance gate to the "down" platform on the west side of Royal Park station. This would cause the tramway to pass through the north-west part of Royal Park immediately on the west side of the walk leading from Park and McVean streets to that station. The last few chains of this tramway should be of temporary construction, being unfenced, and with open ballast, so that it may be easily removed later on should it be decided that the tramway is to be curved to cross the railway either by an overhead bridge at the entrance to the cutting on the "down" side of Royal Park station, or by a subway under the line on the "up" side of the station at the place suggested by the Board's Chief Engineer. The tramway terminus at Royal Park station should be only till such time as the route into the city is considered by the authorities interested and approved by Parliament, the Committee being of opinion that the increase in the number of railway passengers at the restricted area at Flinders-street station in the busy hours, both mornings and evenings, coupled with the growth in the tramway traffic in Elizabeth-street, will before long necessitate an additional line of tramway being brought into the city from the north-west portion of the metropolis to assist in relieving that congestion.

20. By starting the tramway at Royal Park station instead of at Abbotsford-street, North Melbourne, 70 chains of double-track construction costing nearly £20,000 will be saved at the southern end. But the Committee suggests that a length of 30 chains should from the outset be added to the tramway at its northern end by constructing it as far as Moreland-road, West Coburg, where the best building sites are, in place of terminating at Albion-street, West Brunswick, for some time, as intended by the Board. The length from Royal Park station to Moreland-road would be about 2·30 miles. As the Board proposed to carry tramway passengers between Flemington-road and Albion-street, a distance of 2·81 miles, for a concession fare of 2d., it surely ought not to object to carry passengers between Royal Park station and Moreland-road, 2·30 miles, for the same fare. The second-class single fare between Royal Park and Flinders-street stations is 2d., and the return fare 3d. The former would make the through fare from Moreland-road to the city by electric tramway and railway 4d. in lieu of the Board's proposal of 5d. by electric and cable tramway *via* North Melbourne. This extra 1d. per trip would, the Board said, drive the Moreland-road traffic to either the Brunswick railway or cable tramway in Sydney-road, which is already crowded in the busy hours, and should be relieved of some of its traffic. The Committee is at a disadvantage in referring to fares, as the Board has neither determined on the length of the route of the new electric tramway from Royal Park into the city nor suggested the fare for that journey. But it is assumed, in view of the fare being 2d. on the adjacent cable lines to Brunswick and North Melbourne, the charge for travelling by the electric tramway between Royal Park and the city will not exceed 2d., which will keep the through tramway fare from Moreland-road to the city and *vice versa* at 4d. As the Board is being asked to forego its proposed $\frac{1}{2}$ d. concession in the fare on this new line to through tramway passengers, the Committee suggests that when the electric tramway is brought into the city the Railways Commissioners should consider the question of increasing the second-class return fare between Royal Park and Flinders-street stations to $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 4d. to bring it more in keeping with the probable electric tramway fare into the city. The first-class single railway fare between Royal Park and Flinders-street stations is 3d., and the return 5d., and if these prices are retained they will be roughly a set-off against the periodical tickets, which are issued at a cheaper rate.

21. Bringing the electric tramway close to Royal Park station and the decision of the Railways Commissioners to run the North Carlton electric trains daily through to Royal Park station will give a much-needed short and rapid connexion between the trains and trams to the northern and eastern suburbs.

22. With regard to the differences of local opinion as to the electric tramway route through West Brunswick, the Committee approves of the proposal of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board to take the tramway along Melville-road instead of Pearson-street, because it better divides the district seeking nearer travelling facilities. At present the Pearson-street route would serve a larger population, but in locating a tramway future residential development must be considered, and undoubtedly that expansion will be more in the neighbourhood of Melville-road than Pearson-street. On the east side of Pearson-street, at its south end, are the extensive clay pits of the Hoffmann brick works, and on the same side, going northward, is Brunswick Park and football ground, occupying 13 acres, so that there would be no dwellings erected on these areas. It was claimed that if the tramway went along Pearson-street it would obtain the traffic in connexion with the football matches during the winter months. But, as against that, it was pointed out that the Melville-road route would secure traffic equally as large on twenty race days a year from Moonee Valley race-course. Another objection to the Pearson-street proposal is that the tramway, on emerging from the north end of that thoroughfare, would pass from a street 66 feet wide into Shamrock-street, which has a width of only 45 feet. The land-owners in Shamrock-street consented to their footpaths being narrowed to give a greater width to the portion of the road used by vehicles. But, in any case, a street no wider than 45 feet between the fences is too narrow to permit of a double-track tramway being run along it, and at the same time provide for other necessary vehicular traffic. The grades of the tramway will practically be very little steeper on the Melville-road route than on the Valentine (Crowley) (Pearson-street) one, and the former will be a straight run along Melville-road, thus having no bends or curves, which add to the maintenance and operating costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE.

23. The Committee agrees with the view of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board that the West Brunswick district will so rapidly increase in population if tramway facilities are provided that within five years or so the annual loss on the proposed electric tramway will be largely reduced if not wiped out by the additional traffic. In the meantime the general tramway fund will be able to bear the loss on this tramway, so that its construction and operation will

not dislocate the finances of the Board nor lead to any increase in fares on other lines in order that the Board may meet its financial obligations. The Committee is also of opinion that the development of this residential area will add to the railway revenue, as some of the people who will be attracted to live there will travel daily to work in the parts of the city close to Spencer-street or Flinders-street stations or to suburbs connecting by rail, and will consequently prefer to use the train from and to Royal Park station.

24. The Committee therefore recommends that, pending a scheme being prepared for the construction of an electric tramway from Royal Park into the city, and the authorities interested sanctioning the same, a double-track electric tramway of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board's standard design be constructed from within 2 chains of the western entrance to Royal Park railway station, north-west through Royal Park to Park-street; thence, as proposed by the Board, across private land to Grantham-street, and along Grantham and Dawson streets to Melville-road, terminating from the outset at Moreland-road, West Coburg, instead of at Albion-street, West Brunswick, as intended by the Board; that this tramway be divided into two sections, and the sectional fares be the same to all passengers, no concession being allowed to passengers who travel wholly by tramway between West Coburg and the city or *vice versa*, as against those who travel partly by tramway and partly by railway; that the railway and tramway officials confer from time to time to obtain as far as practicable harmony between the arrival of tram cars and "up" trains in the busy hours of the mornings at Royal Park station and between the "down" trains and the cars in the rush period of the evenings, after making due allowance for the passengers to enter or leave the railway platform; and that should these officials or the Railways Commissioners and the Board be unable to come to an agreement on this matter the Minister administering the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Act should decide the times for the arrival and departure of the tram cars at their stopping place adjacent to Royal Park station.

R. F. TOUTCHER,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House,
Melbourne, 7th March, 1922.

[*Minutes of Evidence are not printed.*]