

1912.

VICTORIA.

THIRD PROGRESS REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE PROPOSED

SUBURBAN ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS
(SOUTH MELBOURNE);

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

RETURN to an Order of the House,

Dated 20th December, 1912, for—

A COPY of the Third Progress Report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on the proposed Suburban Electric Tramways (South Melbourne).

(*Mr. Watt.*)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 20th December, 1912.

By Authority:

ALBERT J. MULLETT, ACTING GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

C.—No. 8.—[6d.]—16878.

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

(Tenth Committee.)

The Hon. E. H. CAMERON, M.L.A., Chairman ;

J. W. Billson, Esq., M.L.A.,
The Hon. A. Hicks, M.L.C.,
W. Hutchinson, Esq., M.L.A.,

The Hon. D. Melville, M.L.C.
(Vice-Chairman),
E. C. Warde, Esq., M.L.A.

APPROXIMATE COST OF REPORT.

	<i>£ s. d.</i>
Compilation,*	
Printing (900 copies)	5 10 0

* The compilation was a portion of the work of the Secretary of the Railways Standing Committee, who is paid by annual salary.

THIRD PROGRESS REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS having, in accordance with the statement made by the Honorable the Premier in the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd October, 1912, been requested by him to inquire into the question of constructing several tramways in the suburbs of Melbourne, has the honour to report as follows :—

1. The suburbs in which it was proposed to construct tramways were East Brunswick, Coburg, and Campbellfield, and also Richmond, Hawthorn, and Camberwell, as well as South Melbourne. The matters referred to the Committee for inquiry were as follow :—

- (a) The advisability of constructing the whole or any portion of the tramways mentioned, from the stand-point of local requirements, by providing transit facilities for the residents of the suburban areas to be served by such tramways.
- (b) Whether the routes advocated by deputations which recently waited on Ministers, or by the municipal councils of the districts concerned, are the best for the traffic requirements and the development of such municipalities.
- (c) Whether such tramways will harmonize with the future development of the metropolitan tramway system.
- (d) The relation of such tramways to the suburban railway system.
- (e) The willingness of the local municipal councils to undertake the financial responsibility connected with such tramways.
- (f) The motive power to be employed for such tramways and the gauge of the tramways.

Recently the Committee presented to the Honorable the Premier its First and Second Progress Reports dealing with the proposed East Brunswick and Coburg, and Richmond, Hawthorn, and Camberwell electric tramways.

ROUTE OF PROPOSED TRAMWAY.

2. The route of the tramway proposed to be constructed and operated by the South Melbourne City Council started at the northern boundary of that municipality, at the intersection of City-road and Aikman and Sturt streets, a few chains from the south side of Prince's-bridge, and proceeded in a southerly direction along Sturt-street, Eastern-road, Heather-street, Park-street, Clarendon-street, and Albert-road, and thence under the St. Kilda railway on the south side of Albert Park station, and along Kerferd-road for about half-a-mile to Danks-street, where the route turned south-eastwards along Danks and Patterson streets, terminating close to the intersection of the latter thoroughfare and Fraser-street, which is the southern boundary of the municipality of South Melbourne. All the streets mentioned are exceptionally wide except Eastern-road and Patterson-street, which are, nevertheless, wide enough to carry a double track. This tramway would be 3 miles 17 chains in length, and it was to be a double track, the lines having a 4ft. 8½in. gauge. It was hoped that by arrangement with the Melbourne City Council the track would be extended at the north or city end by 2 or 3 chains, so as to terminate the tramway for the present close to the western alignment of St. Kilda-road and within a few yards of the southern approach to Prince's-bridge. If permission were obtained for this short extension the cost of that slight addition to

the tramway would be borne by the South Melbourne Council, although the work would be in the territory of the Melbourne City Council. The object of this arrangement was to allow the management and operation of the tramway to be entirely in the hands of the South Melbourne Council until such time as the tramway system of Melbourne and suburbs was vested in one general authority. In answer to a question asked by the Committee, it was stated on behalf of that council that as soon as the authority referred to was constituted the council would hand over the tramway to it at cost price. The tramway would be operated by electricity on the overhead trolley system, it being proposed to purchase the power from either the Melbourne Electric Supply Company or the Melbourne City Council. It was stated that the track would be substantially constructed, being made in the same manner as the Prahran and Malvern electric tramway, and would be finished off with tarred macadam. On the straight 90-lb. rails would be used, and 96-lb. rails on the curves. Span poles would be adopted, except possibly in Albert-road, where centre poles might be used in consequence of the width of that road. The cost of such a double track, including overhead equipment, was estimated at £12,000 per mile, or a total of £38,700. This figure was based on prices paid for the construction of the Prahran and Malvern tramway. It was expected that the car depôt, and converter station and plant would necessitate an outlay of £7,000, and that the ten cars required to operate a five-minutes service in the busy hours of the day would cost £12,000, while alterations to sewers, telephones and telegraph wires, and contingencies would come to £2,300, making a total estimated capital expenditure of £60,000.

AREA SERVED BY TRAMWAY.

3. It was explained that, although there is a cable tramway running through South Melbourne and a portion of Albert Park and also a steam railway (the St. Kilda line) traversing that municipality, there was room for the proposed tramway, as its construction could be justified by the development which had taken place in recent years in the northern or industrial portion of South Melbourne lying between Moray-street and St. Kilda-road, and by the growth of the residential population in the southern end of the municipality around Middle Park, and also on other grounds set forth later on. Close to the city terminus of the proposed tramway were several picture shows and other places of entertainment, as well as the boat sheds on the Yarra River. Passing southwards along Sturt-street were a number of factories, workshops, and foundries, either fronting that thoroughfare or within a short distance of it, employing hundreds of hands, many of whom resided at South Melbourne or Albert Park. On either side of the route were drill-rooms for the cadets, and further on, between Coventry and Bank streets, was the site of the extensive wholesale and retail fruit and produce markets which the Government would be erecting shortly. As it was intended to have a penny section between St. Kilda-road (along Sturt-street) and Clarendon-street, these places would contribute a large daily traffic to the tramway. Proceeding along Eastern-road to Park-street the tramway would turn westward to Clarendon-street, where it would curve southwards and run along that street to the northern entrance to Albert Park. Within a few yards of that entrance is the South Melbourne cricket ground, where frequently from 20,000 to 40,000 persons assembled on Saturday afternoons during the winter months to witness football matches. Cricket, bowling, and tennis matches, and also concerts were held on this ground throughout the summer season. Both the cable tramway and the Albert Park railway station were over a quarter of a mile distant from the South Melbourne cricket ground, so that the proposed electric tramway would be a great convenience to the public attending contests held on that enclosure, and also to those visiting the neighbouring rowing and yacht sheds beside Albert Park lake. Proceeding along Kerferd-road the electric tramway would run parallel with the existing cable tramway in Victoria-avenue, at a quarter of a mile east of it to Danks-street. It would then turn into the latter thoroughfare and run south-east parallel with Beaconsfield-parade to Fraser-street. When asked why the tramway was to be carried along Danks-street instead of Beaconsfield-parade, which skirts Hobson's Bay from Port Melbourne to St. Kilda, and which was suggested a few years ago as the route of the tramway, the South Melbourne councillors explained that since then their council assisted by the Government had expended a large sum in beautifying that popular promenade. On the narrow reserve separating the two sides or roads forming the Parade, rock-work had been built, flowers and ornamental shrubs planted, and lawns made. The existing asphalted roads on either side of the reserve were too narrow to permit tram tracks to

be laid on them without seriously congesting the motor and other vehicular traffic, which was large, especially on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and during the evenings of the hot days in January, February, and March. To uproot the plantations, destroy much of the ornamental rock-work, and remove portion of the lawns to make room for the tram tracks would be little short of vandalism, and would rob this popular resort of much of its attractiveness. Moreover, during the summer months thousands of children played on the adjacent beach, and there would always be the risk of accidents to them from the fast electric cars if they were run so close to the foreshore. Danks-street, it was added, was only 160 yards from Beaconsfield-parade, and about 200 yards from the water's edge. A tramway passing along Danks-street would therefore be almost as great a convenience to the visitors to this promenade as a line running along Beaconsfield-parade, and would avoid any interference with the plantations and with the vehicular traffic along the latter road, besides removing all danger to children visiting the beach. Again, it was urged that by taking the tramway along Danks-street it would have a residential population on either side of it, whereas if the route were in Beaconsfield-parade the dwellings would be on one side only, the foreshore of Hobson's Bay occupying the other side. •

4. Evidence was given that the existing cable tramway in Victoria-avenue was unable to carry the traffic on the hot summer nights to and from the beach and baths and Kerferd-road pier. Tram after tram from the city was overcrowded with passengers from the northern suburbs before reaching South Melbourne, and many of the residents of that municipality had to walk to the foreshore at Beaconsfield-parade. On the return journey the trams were rushed as soon as they reached the terminus. The electric tramway would relieve that overcrowding, it being intended to have a penny section from the corner of Danks-street and Kerferd-road to the intersection of Clarendon and Park streets, which is also the end of the penny section of the cable tramway. It was ascertained by the Committee that the space of the roadway at the intersection of Clarendon and Park streets, between the north-west and south-east corners, excluding the footpaths, was 107 feet, and that the existing cable tramway occupied but 26 feet of the roadway, leaving ample room for the electric tramway to curve from Park-street into Clarendon-street without endangering other vehicular or pedestrian traffic. The reasons for bringing the two tram tracks so close to each other at this point were that passengers travelling from Middle Park and Albert Park by the electric cars desiring to reach Queen's-bridge, the wharfs, or to ride into the heart of the city could change into the cable cars at the corner of Park and Clarendon streets, while passengers from Victoria-avenue and the west side of Albert Park travelling by the cable cars and wishing to proceed to the new fruit and produce markets, or to the factories and workshops adjacent to Sturt-street, or the picture shows and other attractions near Prince's-bridge could change at this corner into the electric cars. It would be about the same distance from the cable tramway at the foot of Market-street to the Elizabeth-street entrance to Flinders-street station as it would be from the terminus of the proposed electric tramway to the Swanston-street entrance to that station. Another advantage of the new tramway was that it would allow the residents of Middle Park to reach Clarendon-street both quickly and cheaply, and to do their shopping in the business centre of their own district instead of elsewhere.

FUTURE EXTENSION OF TRAMWAY.

5. Although the present proposal was to terminate the electric tramway at Fraser-street, the southern boundary of South Melbourne, it was hoped later on to extend the track to Mary-street, St. Kilda, where it would junction with the suggested extension of the Prahran and Malvern electric tramway from High-street across the south end of Albert Park; or eventually the tramway could be carried on to Fitzroy-street, and along Acland-street, to the corner of Carlisle-street to junction with the electric tramway in course of construction from Caulfield along Balaclava-road, thus permitting a continuous journey through South Melbourne, Albert Park, St. Kilda, Caulfield, Malvern, and Hawthorn to Kew, returning to the city *via* Victoria-street tramway, a round trip of nearly 15 miles. In the meantime, however, the South Melbourne City Council considered it advisable to confine its application for authority to construct an electric tramway to a route which was entirely within its own territory so as not to complicate or delay matters by making the co-operation of another municipality necessary to the carrying out of the proposal.

COMPETITION WITH THE RAILWAY.

6. It was shown in paragraph 4 of this Report how the existing cable tramway and the proposed electric undertaking would assist each other by permitting passengers to change from one to the other in Clarendon-street on paying an additional fare, and also how the latter would relieve the cable cars of the overcrowding in the summer evenings in connexion with the beach traffic. The South Melbourne councillors further pointed out that while the electric tramway would compete at Middle Park with the St. Kilda railway for some of the daily traffic other than holders of periodical railway tickets, it would at the same time feed that line to some extent. This was explained by the statement that there would be a penny section from the corner of Armstrong and Danks streets along Kerferd-road to Albert Park station, and *vice versa*. It was expected that many of the residents of Middle Park and Albert Park in the vicinity of those streets would use this section in the morning to reach Albert Park station, where they would take the train into the city, and on returning in the evening by train would enter the electric tram passing Albert Park station to reach their homes. The fare by the proposed tramway from Middle Park to the south side of Prince's-bridge would be 3d., and from the corner of Danks-street and Kerferd-road to the city terminus of the line 2d. Both from Middle Park and Albert Park stations the train fares are—first class, single 3d., return 4½d. ; second class, single 2d., return 3d. Monthly tickets from Middle Park—first class 9s., second class 6s. 6d. ; from Albert Park—first class 8s., second class 6s. The monthly tickets are based on the assumption that the holder will make one journey by rail each week-day to and from the city. But, as a matter of fact, many of the holders of such periodical tickets make two trips daily to and from the city, being carried by rail the second journey practically for nothing. Therefore, the proposed tramway is not likely to affect the railway revenue to any appreciable extent so far as the holders of monthly, quarterly, and yearly tickets are concerned. It will, however, take some traffic away from the trains between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., because of the greater frequency of the electric service. Between those hours the trains run on the St. Kilda railway at intervals of twenty minutes, whereas it is intended to run the tram cars at ten-minutes intervals throughout the slack portions of the day, and at five-minutes spaces during the busy hours, compared with a five and ten minutes train service during those times. Between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. while a person was waiting for a train he could reach the city by electric tram, as the latter would take him to the south side of Prince's-bridge, while the train would land him on the platform at Flinders-street station, abutting on the north side of the Yarra River several chains from Prince's-bridge. It was stated by the South Melbourne councillors that for many years after the railway was built to St. Kilda there was no one residing at Middle Park, and very few on the bay side of Albert Park. At that time the land near Middle Park was used as a rifle butts, so that the line had been constructed apart altogether from any idea of getting traffic from Middle Park. There were now about 8,000 people residing in Middle Park between Kerferd-road and St. Kilda. The cable service was of little or no value to them.

VIEWS OF RAILWAYS COMMISSIONERS.

7. The Committee ascertained that when the cable tramways were constructed to St. Kilda and through South Melbourne to Albert Park they made a serious inroad on the railway revenue during each of the first few years following. The receipts at Albert Park station were reduced by £3,200 during the twelve months after the opening of the tram service to South Melbourne. Mr. E. B. Jones, Acting Secretary for Railways, speaking on behalf of the Railways Commissioners, stated that the proposed electric tramway would be a more severe competitor with the St. Kilda railway than the cable tramway, as the former would pass close to the Albert Park station, whereas the cable tramway was 300 or 400 yards from that station. It was expected that the new competition would reduce the receipts at Albert Park station by £4,356 during the first year the electric tramway was in operation. The daily bookings at that station to and from the city were likely to be reduced by 50 per cent., causing a loss of £3,803, while the periodical ticket-holders would probably be lessened by 10 per cent., causing a diminution of £553 in the annual receipts. The Commissioners were not opposed to the construction of the two end sections of the proposed tramway, from Prince's-bridge along Sturt-street to junction with the cable tramway at the intersection of Clarendon and Park streets,

and also from the terminus of the cable tramway in Victoria-avenue along Beaconsfield-parade towards St. Kilda or from Victoria-avenue along Danks and Patterson streets to Fraser-street, whichever route the local municipality might favour. The Commissioners, however, considered there was no necessity for a tramway along Albert-road and Kerferd-road passing under the St. Kilda railway and running in close proximity to the Albert Park station. Additional rolling-stock was being obtained by the Department as speedily as possible, and when a sufficient number of carriages were available it was intended to increase the train service on the St. Kilda railway, and that would relieve any overcrowding which might now be experienced at exceptionally busy times. In answer to a question, Mr. Jones stated that the Railway Department in estimating the decrease in the receipts at Albert Park station had not taken into consideration any traffic that might be brought from Middle Park by the electric tramway to that station, as it believed very few, if any, passengers would leave the tramway at that station to enter the train.

FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE PROPOSAL.

8. Councillor W. O. Strangward, on behalf of the South Melbourne Council, submitted estimates of revenue and expenditure of the proposed tramway. He stated that a service of five minutes in the busy hours of the day and ten minutes during the slack portion would necessitate the running of 260,000 car miles per annum. Taking the operating expenses, including the cost of power, at 8·6d. per car mile, an expenditure of £9,300 a year would be incurred in running the cars, maintaining the tracks and plant, and managing the undertaking. To that would have to be added £2,700, being interest at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum on the £60,000 capital outlay on the tracks, overhead construction, cars, car depôt, converter station, and plant. A contribution, equal to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the capital expenditure, would be made to the Renewals Fund, bringing the total annual charges up to £13,500. He explained that the working expenses of the Prahran and Malvern tramway for the year ended 30th September, 1912, were 8·4d. per car mile, including cost of power. Councillor Strangward added that a revenue of nearly 12·5d. per car mile would be required to meet the expenditure of £13,500 per annum. The traffic revenue and receipts from advertising obtained by the Prahran and Malvern tramway for the year mentioned was 12·822d. per car mile. The population served by that undertaking, calculating an area extending for half-a-mile on each side of the track, was 48,718, and the revenue earned in 1911-12 per head of this population was 15s. 4d. The population to be served by the proposed South Melbourne electric tramway, taking an area extending for only a quarter of a mile on each side of the route, was 23,750, which, at 12s. per head, would yield £14,100 per annum, or £600 more than was necessary to meet the estimated annual charges. Or to put it another way: On the average each person within the half-mile radius of the Prahran and Malvern tramway made during the year ended 30th September last 119 journeys by those trams. If each person residing within a quarter of a mile of the proposed electric tramway in South Melbourne and Albert Park made on the average but 90 journeys per annum by that tramway and paid a fare averaging $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each journey, sufficient revenue would be obtained to enable the new undertaking to pay its way. The electric tramway would give a comfortable and speedy service, and, like similar undertakings in populous parts of Australia, it would, to a large extent, create its own traffic by supplying handy transit facilities to those who had not that convenience at present, and would encourage local travelling by reason of the penny sections. South Melbourne has a population of 46,150. The new undertaking would, it was urged, also afford a great public convenience without any cost to the ratepayers, and the electric and cable tramways would mutually assist each other, besides which the former would feed the railway at Albert Park station. The proposal, if carried out, would enhance the value of property in South Melbourne, and so increase the sum received as municipal rates. Moreover, it would relieve the local council from the expense of maintaining the part of the roadways occupied by the electric tramway track. But, looking at the matter in its worst aspect and supposing the undertaking were a financial failure and had to be abandoned, all that the South Melbourne Council would be liable for was the £2,700 a year required to pay the $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the capital outlay of £60,000. The rate of 2s. in the £1 levied by that body last year brought in £41,050, so that an extra rate of 2d. would more than meet the interest charges connected with the proposed tramway. There was therefore no likelihood of the tramway becoming burdensome to the ratepayers.

CONCLUSION.

9. Considering that it is upwards of 50 years since the railway to St. Kilda was built, and about 25 years since the cable tramway to South Melbourne and Albert Park was opened, and having regard to the large increase in population which has taken place during the latter period in Middle Park and Albert Park, and also to the growing importance of the northern portion of South Melbourne as an industrial centre, and to the fact that the extensive fruit and produce markets to be shortly erected by the Government in Sturt-street must have tramway facilities, the Committee is of opinion that there is room for the proposed electric tramway, in addition to the existing train and cable tram services. Answering the questions submitted to it the Committee unanimously reports :—

- (a) That, from the stand-point of local requirements, it would be advisable to give authority to the South Melbourne City Council to construct a tramway, starting at the intersection of Aikman-street and Sturt-street, South Melbourne, and proceeding southwards along the latter thoroughfare to Dorcas-street, and thence along Eastern-road, Heather-street, Park-street, Clarendon-street, Albert-road, and Kerferd-road, and thence south-east along Danks-street and Patterson-street, terminating at Fraser-street.
- (b) That this route is the best for the present traffic requirements, and for the development of such municipality.
- (c) That the tramway will harmonize with the future development of the metropolitan tramway system, by eventually being connected with the tramway along St. Kilda-road and Swanston-street into the city when the cable tramway system is electrified.
- (d) That the tramway will at its inception affect the suburban railway system, but the loss of revenue which it will cause to that system will not, in the opinion of the Committee, be so large as to justify withholding authority to construct the tramway, and, moreover, the electrification of the suburban railways will lessen the effect of the electric tramway competition. The South Melbourne City Council stated, through Councillor Strangward, that it would be agreeable to have the fares to be charged on the tramway regulated by Order in Council, so as to prevent the new service competing unfairly with the Albert Park and St. Kilda railway.
- (e) That the South Melbourne City Council has expressed its willingness to undertake the financial responsibility connected with such tramway, and to hand the tramway, rolling-stock, and plant over at cost price to any authority which may be constituted hereafter to control the tramway system of Melbourne and suburbs.
- (f) That electricity be the motive power employed, and that the gauge of the tramway be 4ft. 8½in.

10. The Committee also suggests that power should be given to the South Melbourne City Council to extend the tramway northwards about 2 chains into the territory of the Melbourne City Council, so as to terminate the track on the western alignment of St. Kilda-road.

E. H. CAMERON,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House,
Melbourne, 6th December, 1912.

[*Minutes of Evidence are not printed.*]