

Ballarat is the third largest urban area in Victoria. The population of the residential area is approximately 41,068 (41,068 in 1966), and includes the City of Ballarat (4,662 in 1966), the Borough of Sebastopol (2,222) and the adjacent portions of the Shires of Ballarat/Buninyong. ~~and the Shires of Ballarat/Buninyong~~ The present City of Ballarat comprises the former municipal areas of Ballarat and East Ballarat. The former was created a Municipality in 1855, and a City in 1870. The latter was made a Municipality in 1857 and a Town in 1872. The two merged in 1921 to form Greater Ballarat. Gold was discovered in the area in 1851, and the usual "rush" followed. The population increased rapidly, steadied later in the century, and has continued to grow over the years. Ballarat is noted for the 1854 Eureka Stockade affair, when the local miners resisted police and troops in protest against the extortionate mining licence, its implementation, and a number of other grievances. Although the relatively unorganised miners were overwhelmed by the military, the repercussions were considerable and had a beneficial effect on the colony.

The City of Ballarat was very early in asking the State Government for an Order in Council to enable tramways to be constructed in its area, the application taking place in 1885. Some time elapsed while the Government set out the procedure to be taken, but approval was finally given in September, 1886. The Council called tenders in general terms, leaving applicants a good deal of scope for detail plans. Although the Council favoured a cable tramway system (possibly because Melbourne was constructing such a system at the time), it was found to be far too costly for Ballarat (limited loading and rocks too near the surface of the ground). The concession was finally granted to an Adelaide firm to instal a horse tram system, and The Ballarat Tramway Company Ltd. duly commenced construction from the City to Gardens (around Lake Wendouree in both directions), Lydiard Street North and MacArthur Street, Skipton Street (later extended to Sebastopol) and Drummond Street South. Construction was quite rapid - the first rail was laid on 18th. October, 1887, six miles of track were completed in as many weeks, and the official opening took place on 21st. December! The rolling stock were the best overseas design available, one being imported and the rest built locally. The trams were four-wheel double deck cars, consisting of a lower saloon (with end platforms) and an open top deck (with a back to back seat running longitudinally). During the next few years, it is believed that 13 such cars were built (including two slightly longer than the others), as well as one single deck (saloon) car for use on the Drummond Street South shuttle service. An interesting feature of operating conditions is that out-bound trams (from the city terminus at the east end of Sturt Street) ran along the north side of the wide central garden plantations, with in-bound cars using



the southern track; that is, the trams operated on the wrong side of the road as judged by today's traffic regulations. This was obviously of little concern 70 to 80 years ago, and enabled passengers to step directly ~~between~~ the rear platforms of the cars and the centre plantations. The service proved reasonably popular with the populations, but the Company does not appear to have ever been in a happy financial position. It asked the Council on several occasions for financial concessions and variations to the original agreement, and, at times, relations were rather strained.

The Town of East Ballarat was also interested in acquiring a tramway system, and negotiations were carried out with various parties. During 1888, a syndicate offered to instal battery trams, similar to those which it was then arranging to instal at Bendigo, but the project did not eventuate. A battery tram, operating on the Julien system, was ~~instal~~ demonstrated on the Drummond Street South line on 12th. October, 1888, and operated quite well. It was a typical double deck horse tram, suitable adapted, but no more was heard of the promoters' proposals to convert the horse trams. The Company eventually sold out to The Electric Supply Company of Victoria Ltd., who also purchased the small <sup>local</sup> electricity supply company. A new power house was built and work commenced to convert the horse tramways to electric power. The tracks were relaid, ~~and~~ new cars built, and arrangements concluded with the Town of East Ballarat to build two routes within their area. The official opening took place on 18th. August, 1905, and the new electric trams were soon running to Victoria Street and Mount Pleasant (in East Ballarat), Gardens (both ways around Lake Wendouree), Lydiard Street North and Skipton Street (via Drummond Street South). Due to difficulties in completing an agreement with the Sebastopol Council, electric trams did not reach that Municipality until 14th. April, 1913; a shuttle service of horse trams was maintained in the meantime. Twelve combination (centre saloon and open ends) tramcars, on four wheel trucks, were built initially, and immediately followed by six similar cars, and two "Summer" cars (open vehicles, with transverse seats with tip-over backs). Three more cars were built in 1913, being a semi-closed "Summer" car (sides partly panelled). Eight of the horse trams were retained as trailers to the electric trams, and <sup>five</sup> ~~all~~ sent to Bendigo (also operated by the same Company) for a like use. Trailer operation finally ceased in 1927. A small sub-depot at Sebastopol was destroyed by fire ~~on~~ early on Sunday morning, 10th. October, 1909, with the loss of five tramcars and thirteen horses. In 1913, the 18 combination type tramcars were modified to permit one-man operation on most routes. Windshields, to protect the motorman, were tried, and subsequently fitted to all of these cars (the three 1913 cars were built with them, and the two open "Summer" cars did not receive them).

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria was created by Act of Parliament



to be the main electricity supply authority for Victoria, and was vested with power to generate same or to purchase existing electricity supply companies. Negotiations were carried out with the Electric Supply Company of Victoria Ltd. during the late 1920's, and it was agreed that the S. E. C. should purchase the Company from 1st. July, 1931. However, to work in with the S. E. C's. overall plan, the Company's franchise was extended to 30th. June, 1934, with this additional period being under S. E. C. supervision. During the early 1930's, all the 25 existing tramcars were steadily scrapped and replaced. The replacement cars came from Melbourne (<sup>15</sup>~~22~~), Geelong (4), but originally ex-Melbourne, and Adelaide (3). They were four wheel combination cars, with the ex-Adelaide cars being slightly longer than the ex-Melbourne units. <sup>Eighteen</sup>~~Fourteen~~ of the ex-Melbourne and one ex-Adelaide cars were altered for one-man operation. The S. E. C. instituted a track and overhead rehabilitation programme during 1934/35, as part of the relief work from the depression, and the worn-out system was brought back to a good and serviceable condition. The Commission also endeavoured to make some route alterations at this period, but the ~~m~~ Councils would not agree. The only extension to be opened in recent years was northwards along Lydiard Street North, on 28th. August, 1938. The Commission also converted one of the 1913-built cars to a track cleaning unit, to replace an elderly car which had previously done this work, in 1934.

The post-war period saw changes in the rolling stock situation in Ballarat. Four maximum traction bogie cars were purchased from Melbourne in 1945 and 1947, and three more in 1951. When the S. E. C. closed its tramway system at Geelong in 1956, three ~~max~~ bogie cars were transferred to Ballarat, but, as one of the earlier bogie cars had been scrapped following a bad accident, in 1955, the total of bogie cars was nine. Five single truck cars were also scrapped between 1945 and 1956, thus reducing these cars to 17 in number. In 1960, the Commission decided to rationalise the numbers of each type of tramcar in each of its two remaining systems, and two single truck trams from Ballarat were sent to Bendigo and one bogie car received in return. This latter car has had an interesting history: it entered service in 1916 in Melbourne, for the Hawthorn Tramways Trust; it was taken over by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1919; in 1948, it was sold to the S. E. C. for use at Geelong, and was transferred to Bendigo in 1956; having now arrived in Ballarat, it has operated over the "metals" of five systems under three owners. While in Bendigo it was numbered 1 - and was the only bogie tramcar in Australia to carry this numeral. The present car roster at Ballarat consists of 10 bogie trams, 15 single trucks trams and one track cleaning car. The increase in the use of private motor cars during the 1950's caused not only a decline in passengers, but an increase in the number of accidents between motor cars and trams,



particularly at night. The S. E. C. has equipped its trams with tail lights, reflector tape, diagonal painted lines on bumpers and fascias, and brilliant canopy lighting over the years in an effort to make the trams more visible. This has been partly ~~more~~ successful, but casualties have been a steady problem, and have proved a constant drain on the resources of the depot staff. Ballarat has always kept its tramcars in good condition, and cars recently overhauled have entered service in an attractive interior colour scheme. There has been little alteration to the track layout over the years; most of the changes have been variations in the positions of passing loops during the 1934/35 reconstruction.

Although the S. E. C. has always felt that it should not have to operate tramways (being the electricity supply authority), it has done so since Parliament so provided in 1929. The system has been kept in a good and serviceable condition, although the steadily increasing annual deficit has always dictated that not too much money be spent. In February, 1962, the Commission notified that it would petition Parliament to abandon the whole system, but this did not come to fruition. The current position is that the S. E. C. continues to operate the Ballarat tramways, and ~~it~~ apparently will do so for an indefinite period. Track maintenance continues and rolling stock is steadily being "shopped" for periodical overhaul. It would appear that electric tramways will continue to serve Ballarat for some years yet. The 75th anniversary of the opening of the horse tramways took place in 1962, and the 60th anniversary of electric tramways takes place in 1965. Thus, Ballarat has had over 77 years of unbroken tramway service, including over seven years of ~~both~~ concurrent horse and electric tram operation. At present there are 13.84 miles of tramway route, comprising 2.33 miles of double track and 11.51 miles of single track.