

BALLARAT TRAMWAY MUSEUM

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Association No: A0031819K

Mrs B. Ware
237 Loftus Avenue
LOFTUS NSW 2232

Dear Mrs Ware

I refer to your recent request to the Museum for information concerning your grandfather Mr H.W. Collett. The request has been referred to me as the Museum's historian.

I note that you have already viewed the Electric Supply Company records on microfiche. You state that Mr Collett was Tramway Superintendent at Ballarat from 1910 to 1922.

I have located some references to Mr Collett, and I have summarised them below.

1912 Arbitration hearings

Between April and October 1912 the Commonwealth Arbitration Court took evidence regarding the Electric Supply Company's tramway operations at Ballarat and Bendigo. During October 1912 "Horace Wesley Hemming Collett, Traffic Superintendent, Ballarat Tramways" gave evidence. I have enclosed photocopies from the "Ballarat Courier" which report the proceedings.

Mr Collett was interviewed extensively on the operations of the Ballarat tramways. If you wish to read a full transcript of his evidence you can find it along with all the other evidence from the 1912 hearings in a bulky typewritten book held in the Melbourne University Archives. It is stored in Box 118 of Arbitration material in the Tramways Union collection. Phone the Melbourne University Archives on (03) 8344-6848 if you wish to view it.

The 1922 strike

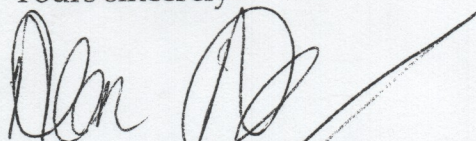
During April 1922 there was a tramway strike in Ballarat over the issue of one-man operation, which was aggravated by the Electric Supply Company's

use of plain clothes "spotters" instead of uniformed inspectors. I have enclosed a photocopy from the "Bendigo Advertiser" in which it is stated that the Company's General Manager called the officials, namely the Traffic Superintendent and inspectors, before him over this matter.

In reading Ballarat newspapers of the time I cannot find any other references to the Traffic Superintendent, or to Mr Collett by name. I assume that Mr Collett's departure from the Company's employment during 1922 was related to this industrial dispute, but unfortunately I can give no further information.

I wish you well with your research. If you have any further queries please write to me care of the Museum's postal address.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Alan Bradley', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

Alan Bradley
For the Secretary
May 3, 2001

Facsimile Transmission Cover Sheet



To: **MFB-ATTENTION Waren Doubleday**
9665-4244

From: **Alan Bradley**

Tel 1300 366 979
Fax(03) 9652 3513

Date: 4 May 2001

Message:

2 Page(s)
(including this one)

Newspaper article sent to Mrs Ware (attach to letter & other article).

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TRAMWAY TROUBLE.**BENDIGO UNAFFECTED.****EMPLOYEES ASSIST FINAN-
CIALLY.**

Bendigo division of the No. 1 Victorian branch of the Australian Tramway Employees' Association, at a special meeting in the Trades Hall yesterday morning, decided, on the advice of visiting delegates from Melbourne, not to strike in sympathy with the Ballarat traffic employees of the Electric Supply Co. of Victoria in regard to one-man-one-car system. The members resolved to assist the Ballarat members financially.

The meeting was attended by Messrs. J. Abfalter, secretary of the No. 2 branch of the Tramway Employees' Association, and R. Cooke, vice-president of the No. 1 branch, and subsequently Mr. Abfalter made a statement. "There was," he said, "a full attendance of members. The visiting officials had extreme difficulty in preventing members of the Bendigo division from taking drastic action in sympathy with the members of the Ballarat division, members stating that they were affected by the same principles in a lesser degree. Only the good counsel of the representatives of the division and the officers of the Australian executive prevailed upon the men. The officials of the organisation considered that the members at Ballarat could be better served by the Bendigo men remaining at their posts and financially assisting their comrades in Ballarat. A motion had been proposed and seconded, and while it was under discussion, the influence of the visiting officers was responsible for the withdrawal of the motion."

New Conditions Sought.

Mr. Abfalter added that the existing log of wages and conditions would expire on May 1, and consideration had been given to the new log, which was adopted. Questioned as to the chief demands Mr. Abfalter said that the Association was seeking a working week of 44 hours in lieu of 48; 21 days' annual leave on full pay instead of eight; and a minimum unskilled wage of £5/16/6. The Association had based its claims on the findings of the Piddington Commission. An acquisition to the Association was the joining up of 5000 Government tramway employees in New South Wales, who desired their grievances settled by the Conciliation and Arbitration Court of Australia.

Association's Views.

Asked to outline the views of the Association in regard to the dispute which has arisen at Ballarat between the traffic employees and the Electric Supply Co., Mr. Abfalter said the one-man-one-car system had been in operation approximately seven years. "The decision arrived at in regard to the system came about as a result of a board of reference meeting in which the registrar of the Arbitration and Conciliation Court of Australia visited Ballarat and gave his decision. In the opinion of members of the association the registrar did something which was unconstitutional, in so far as a board of reference had no power to make any variation in the rate of wage or hours of work or any deviation from

the terms of the agreement in operation at the time of such decision. The men in Ballarat and also in Bendigo have loyally abided by such alteration made by the registrar until recently, when the Electric Supply Co. at Ballarat was responsible for calling its official staff before the management with regard to the operation of the fare box system, otherwise known as the one-man-one-car system. We understand that the manager informed the officials of the company—the

traffic superintendent and traffic inspectors—that it came to their knowledge through other sources than that of the uniformed staff, that the motormen operating the one-man-one-car were not carrying the company's regulations into effect; that is, they were receiving their fares from the passengers and placing the fares into the fare box, which was, in their opinion, a strict violation of the company's regulation. We are informed that their principal traffic officer was called before Mr. Pringle, the manager, who questioned him as to whether he was a member of the Officers' Association, and stated that the company had recently been served by the Officers' Association with the log of wages and working conditions. Mr. Pringle, it is stated to us, was advised by the principal traffic officer that he should not be a member of the claimant organisation, and was asked to consider the question of withdrawing from that organisation. In that particular log there are claims for ticket examiners. The amounts claimed in the log were considerably above the rates then paid to the existing ticket examiners. The company, through its manager, decided that two of its ticket examiners should be discharged from the company's service under the presence or otherwise that they were not carrying out the company's regulations, or, in other words, that they had not reported or that they did not observe that motormen in charge of the one-man-one-car were disobeying the company's regulations by receiving fares from the travelling public and placing the fares in the fare box. The motormen resent the recent notice issued in regard to the mode of collection of fares, and that it came under the notice of Mr. Pringle that several passengers were in the habit of tendering their fares to the motormen. In fact, Mr. Pringle stated to members of our executive that 80 per cent. of the motormen employed at Ballarat were in the habit of handling the fares of the passengers. Although this has been the practice for the past seven or eight years, it was only last Thursday week that the management decided to take action in connection with this matter. The motormen immediately took exception to the latest instructions, that is that in future all passengers must place their fare in the fare box. In the event of any infirm, blind, intoxicated, or any other person unable to place such fare in the box, instructions to the motormen are that they must call a passenger to place the fare in the box, or to get a witness that such fare has been placed in the box by the motorman. This may possibly entail 15 or 20 reports daily by motormen employed on the fare box system. The absurdity in connection with this matter is that under the company's regulations motormen are obliged to collect from scholars a concession ticket which they have to place in their pockets. They have also to collect from scholars a concession transfer tickets, the fare of which has also to be deposited in the motormen's pockets. Now the company has decided, after discharging the uniformed inspectors, that in their stead, they would adopt the "espionage" system. They would engage a

private staff that could watch the movements of the motormen, and in the event of them receiving a fare or fares from passengers and not placing same in the fare box, they would be dealt with upon a report from such special officer or officers."

SITUATION IN BALLARAT.**CARS TO RUN ON ANZAC DAY.**

BALLARAT, Sunday.

The general situation regarding the tramway strike is unchanged, and it is expected that the struggle will be a protracted one. Acting upon the suggestion of Mrs. W. D. Thompson, a member of the firm of Lucas and Co., whose employes established the Avenue of Honor, the Mayor (Cr. Elsworth)

yesterday arranged a conference between Mr. P. J. Pringle, manager of the Electric Supply Co., and the tram men. As a result of this it was agreed that the trams should be run to the Avenue of Honor on Tuesday in connection with the Anzac Day observances. The company will give the takings to the Ballarat Hospital appeal, and the men will give their services gratuitously.