

Union To Press For New Site For Tram Sheds

Claiming it would provide a better and later tram service in Ballarat, particularly for residents of Sebastopol and Ballarat East, tramwaymen, through their union, are to make an approach to the State Electricity Commission, to have the tram shed removed from the present site in Wendouree parade to a site nearer the city.

The move, which is understood to have the support of leading residents of Sebastopol and Ballarat East, is, if put into effect, expected to result in better tram services on all lines.

At a recent provincial conference of the Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association in Ballarat, local delegates put their case to the State secretary, Mr C. O'Shea, and the general secretary, Mr R. Broadby, who will present the case to the Electricity Commission.

Mileage Wasted.

The secretary of the Ballarat branch of the Union, Mr G. Hall, said yesterday that with the sheds on their present site in Wendouree parade there was considerable waste of mileage during which time trams were not "in service."

Mr Hall said he considered that from a financial point of view any expenditure involved in the transfer of the shed to a site nearer the city would be compensated in the saving of waste mileage, calculated at 1/6 to 1/10 per mile.

In an analysis of tram services in Ballarat yesterday it was pointed out that last trams commence their runs at 11.15 p.m. for Sebastopol, 11.9 p.m. for Lydiard street north, 11.8 p.m. for Mount Pleasant, and 11.19 p.m. for Victoria street.

These times applied to week days only, as on Sundays the last trips commenced an hour earlier.

The last tram from Mount Pleasant leaves the city at 11.50 p.m. to Drummond street. Mr Hall said that if the sheds were nearer the city, this tram could do another trip and still come in at the same time.

It was also pointed out that in the early morning the first tram to reach the city was at 7 o'clock. Two trams, however, commenced their first runs much earlier, but ran from the depot virtually empty to Sebastopol, thereby wasting considerable mileage.

Intermediate trams also wasted mileage, it was said, in that for their initial runs from the depot shortly before noon, they ran into

the city behind a tram from the Gardens.

It was wasted mileage because the Gardens tram picked up most of the passengers, while the other trams merely followed.

Not First Request

The question of a new site was put to the Electricity Commission on a former occasion, but the matter is understood to have been dropped.

Sites which were suggested yesterday as being more suitable in view of providing the better services planned by the union were between the Post Office and Pleasant street, the Haymarket site, and the Alfred Hall site, or opposite this site.

In a comment on these suggestions, Mr Hall said that any arguments against placing the tramsheds in the city area were countered by the fact that the sheds at the present time were in a residential area.

He also pointed to Geelong and Bendigo, where the tram sheds were in the heart of the city, and "in service" as soon as they came out to begin their runs.

In Melbourne, said Mr Hall, the sheds were also on the main routes in the hearts of the suburbs. He singled out the Essendon tram sheds as an example.

He added that the present site occupied by the sheds was in a growing residential area, on land which could be more suitably employed for housing.

Money from the sale of this land could also be used to compensate for the expenditure involved in a transfer, he said.

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Building Difficulties Tram Depot

Referring to a suggestion that the Ballarat tramway depot, if moved to some other site than that it at present occupies, would help in minimising wasted mileage and provide a more comprehensive service, the manager of the Ballarat branch of the State Electricity Commission, Mr T. A. L. Farr, said yesterday that the Commission was alive to the situation.

The commission, he said, had made plans long before the war, to build administrative and other offices on the site in Sturt street, where the running staff occupies part of a building, but this had been held up by the war and lack of a permit.

Mr Farr pointed out that with the acute shortage of materials, such a building would be practically an impossibility, even if the commission did have official sanction.

The meagre flow of building material would not permit of small alterations being done. Any sugges-

tion of a big-scale building was completely out of the question.

Problem of Site

As for another site for a tramway depot, Mr Farr said he could not envisage the City Council giving up the Haymarket land, while that suggested in the vicinity of the Alfred Hall was quite unsuitable for the purpose.

"The construction of such a huge building, particularly with steel forming a major part, is right out of the question at present," said Mr Farr.

"If we had plans for it, there is little chance of us getting approval when the housing shortage is so acute," he added.