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REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE ON FARES AND SECTIONS.

appointed at

AUSTRALASIAN TRAMWAYS CONFERENCE

1929.

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REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE ON FARES AND SECTIONS.

The Sub-Committee was appointed at the Tramway Conference in November, 1929, to report on the subject of Fares and Sections.

A questionnaire was prepared and forwarded to the 14 members of the Conference. Replies were received from all except Bendigo, but, as the Bendigo tramways are controlled and operated by the same company as the Ballarat tramways, it is possible that, for the purpose of this report, the Ballarat replies can be taken as covering the general practice in Bendigo. North Sydney and Newcastle undertakings, although under the control of the N.S.W. Government tramways have been treated as separate authorities.

It was not until late in March of this year that the last of the replies came to hand, and the work of classifying and comparing the results was delayed longer than was expected. However, each member has been supplied with a copy of the replies, and we now submit our comments and suggestions.

1. SECTIONS.

There is no uniformity in respect to the length of the fare sections. The shortest section is just over $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in Geelong, and the longest 4 miles in Ballarat, whilst on the basis of the average length of sections, the shortest is .5 miles in Launceston and the longest 1.99 miles in Sydney. In the centre of the Cities, the same divergence in practice is to be noted. Christchurch and Launceston have the shortest city section of .37 miles, and the longest 2.13 miles is to be found in Melbourne. Launceston has the shortest average City section of .45 miles, and Melbourne the longest - 1.75 miles (electric system).

Whilst there is a great difference in the length of the sections, the weighted average fare per mile for the whole of the undertakings also shows a want of uniformity. There is, however, not the same divergence as there is between the longest and shortest sections. The lowest weighted average fare per mile is .67d. in Fremantle, and the highest 2.0ld. in Kalgoorlie.

The foregoing figures indicate clearly that there is no general agreement in regard to the length of the sections. The traffic and local conditions entirely govern the most suitable arrangements, and the Sub-Committee is of opinion that no definite recommendation can be made to the Conference in respect to a uniform practice of fixing the longest, the shortest or the average length of sections.

2. OVERLAPPING SECTIONS:

Overlapping sections are in general use. Eleven authorities have such sections; six have not. The Sub-Committee, however, is of opinion that overlapping sections are generally undesirable. Although they may be necessary to meet special traffic conditions, their use tends to decrease the efficiency of Conductors and adds to the difficulties of checking over-riding, especially in busy districts. They are also confusing to passengers.

3. FARES:

The sectional fare system is universal in Australia, and, generally speaking, the charge is 2d. for the first section and 1d. for each additional section. There are, of course, exceptions. In Kalgoorlie, 3d. is charged for the first section, and 3d. for each additional section. Ten authorities, however, charge 2d. for the first section and five charge 1d., whilst Christchurch has a 1d. and 2d. arrangement. In Sydney, North Sydney and Newcastle, the charge for the first section is 2d. with an additional 2d. for the second section and then 1d. for each additional section up to four. In Brisbane, 2d. is charged for either one or two sections, plus 1d. for

each succeeding section, with a maximum of 3d. for 4 miles or 4d. beyond 4 miles to or from the City. The maximum fare charged is 10d. in Adelaide for nine sections.

4. CHILDREN'S FARES:

Generally speaking, children's fares are half the adult fare, but some authorities eliminate the halfpenny, whilst others make two or more sections available for 1d. In Brisbane 1d. is charged for any distance to or from the City. There is no uniform practice in respect to the age limit, which, in twelve cases, is under 12 years of age, in three under 14, and in two, under 15 years. On the other hand, two authorities make a charge for children over 1 year old, eight over 3 years and seven over 5 years of age. It would seem that some uniformity could be agreed upon in this matter, and the Sub-Committee recommends the Conference to consider the desirability of a common standard.

5. SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY RATES:

Ten tramway authorities charge ordinary weekday fares on Sundays and holidays, whilst seven increase their charges. All undertakings have to pay higher rates of wages to their staffs on Sundays and holidays, and a convenient way of meeting such increased operating expenses has been found in a surcharge on the weekday fares. The Sub-Committee has not had an opportunity of investigating the trend of the Sunday and holiday revenue in all tramway services, but the experience of members of the Sub-Committee goes to show that the returns are on the decline, due to the motor car and the extensive use of commercial vehicles for picnic parties on Sundays and holidays, and the Sub-Committee suggests some concerted action is necessary to restrict the use of commercial motor vehicles for the conveyance of passengers.

6. WORKMEN'S CONCESSION TICKETS:

Five of the tramway authorities do not issue workmen's tickets whilst twelve do. Seven make use of daily single tickets,

four daily returns, and three issue weekly tickets. The times at which such tickets are issued vary from 7 to 9.30 a.m., whilst the limit for the return journey varies from 5 p.m. to the last car at night. In most cases, the morning journeys do not coincide with the peak, but in the evening, such traffic is superimposed thereon, and this directly affects the cost of rendering service and should be taken into account in the fares.

When workmen's tickets were first conceived, the wages paid to workers were much below what they are today, and the concession has, in a manner, outlived the necessity for it. The Sub-Committee is of the opinion that such concessions are not now warranted. They are an unfair discrimination against other users of the service, especially those working in offices who usually commence work after the hours fixed for the morning journey by workmen's tickets.

7. SCHOLARS' CONCESSION TICKETS:

Sixteen authorities issue special scholars' concession tickets or certificates, and one does not. The tickets are restricted to weekdays, whilst the age limit varies between 14 and 21 years. The after-school journey must, in one case, be started before 4.30 p.m. The other extreme is found in Geelong where the last car may be used. The tickets are sold in blocks, cards and books, and, in Brisbane, each scholar carries a permit, the production of which authorises a conductor to issue a penny ticket when travelling to or from school and up to the age of 16 years; if the journey extends on both sides of the City, the charge is 2d. It will be seen from an analysis of the table submitted with this report that the cost per section varies between .46d. and 1.5d. There is no uniformity.

In the morning, this traffic is, in most cases, at the peak. In the afternoon or evening, the movement is usually at off-peak times. It is questionable whether the fares meet the cost of rendering the service, but, whilst it may be impracticable owing to local conditions to charge uniform fares and arrange for fixed hours, it would seem that some uniformity might be possible in respect to the age of scholars. If the concession is limited to the junior schools, then 14 years could be the age limit, but, if technical, secondary and public schools are included, then 16 or 18 would appear to be the most suitable.

8. SWIMMING TICKETS:

Nine tramway authorities do not give concession fares to those attending swimming and life-saving classes. Eight do, however. The low fares charged by some authorities do not yield returns commensurate with the service rendered, and the Subcommittee suggests that such concessions should be modified or discontinued. One way to meet the case would be to charge the children's fares and extend the age limit in special circumstances. This would, whilst eliminating some of the non-paying service, reduce the complexity of the ticket system which, on street tramways, should be as simple as it can possibly be made to facilitate the work of the staff and thus allow the conductors to attend to the wants of passengers in respect to boarding and alighting, etc.

9. BLIND RETURNED SOLDIERS' AND OTHER BLIND PASSES:

Passes are made available to Blind Returned Soldiers free of charge by fourteen tramway undertakings, and nine of this number also allow attendants to travel free of charge. Three authorities, however, do not apparently make any concession.

Nine undertakings allow other blind persons to travel free, and, in only one case, that of Perth, is an attendant allowed to travel free also. Five authorities do not

make any concession, whilst in the case of Sydney, North Sydney and Newcastle, blind persons are permitted to make a single journey for 1d.

It is suggested that some uniform practice in respect to blind passes might be adopted, and, as this matter is one largely of policy, the subject is recommended for discussion at the Conference.

Free transportation is granted to disabled/soldiers^{returned} by sixteen of those who replied to the questionnaire.

Conductors are generally sympathetic to this class of passenger, and, in many cases, will not take the tickets from them. Especially is this so when the traffic is heavy and they are kept busy with the collection of fares.

10. POLICE OFFICERS:

Police officers in uniform are allowed to travel free of charge by every tramway authority in Australia and New Zealand, and this practice has generally been found to be of great assistance to the tramway staffs.

The practice in respect to plain-clothes policemen differs. Some authorities permit them to travel free whilst others receive from the Government or the Department concerned an annual allowance for the privilege, or a lower fare is charged for each journey. In two cases, however, concessions are not granted.

11. CIVIL SERVANTS AND MUNICIPAL BODIES:

Members of legislative bodies, Councillors and Municipal Officers are provided with free transport by some authorities.

The Sub-Committee is, however, very strongly of the opinion that free travelling facilities on tramways should be discouraged. On the railways, each passenger is required to pass a barrier and his authority for travel can be efficiently checked. On the tramways, passengers are boarding and alighting

along the route. The conductors have to collect fares and attend to other duties, and there is room for forgetfulness and irregularities. It is, therefore, desirable that there should be a proper transaction between the conductor and the passengers, which can be seen by every-body. This facilitates the work of Ticket Checkers, Private Staff and others whose duty is to see that the revenue is safe-guarded. Free travelling by the use of badges and passes is subject to a great deal of abuse. It encourages slackness on the part of conductors as well as the checking staff. It also re-acts on the ordinary passenger who pays his fare and then witnesses others travelling, as it were, on the "nod". Free travelling, undoubtedly, lowers the morale of a service.

12. CONCESSIONS TO CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS:

There is no uniformity. In some Cities, there are no concessions - for example, Adelaide, Brisbane, Fremantle, Geelong, Kalgoorlie, Newcastle, Perth, Nth. Sydney and Sydney. In other Cities, free passes, special rates or yearly tickets at a fixed charge are the rule. It is, of course, not practicable to say how far uniformity should apply in such cases, as local conditions must have a bearing on the length of the route, the number of the routes, etc., over which the concessions apply, but we are of the opinion generally that the transport authority should be paid its ordinary fares for the service rendered.

13. DEFENCE FORCE, BOY SCOUTS, ETC.:

Five undertakings, namely, Dunedin, Fremantle, Newcastle, Sydney and North Sydney, make concessions to the Defence Force.

Concessions for Boy Scouts are not favoured by nine members of the Conference, whilst others carry them at special rates. It is thought that, in ^{such} cases, the concession should be limited to the children's rate of fare.

14. STATE MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS:

Tramway passes, free of charge, are made available by six undertakings to members of Parliament. In Adelaide, payment is made to the Trust by the Government for the concession. In Melbourne, however, the passes are free by Act of Parliament. In Perth, apart from the free passes to members of Parliament, concession tickets are made available to Officials. Members of the Sub-Committee are of the opinion that free tramway passes are an unreasonable charge against the undertaking, and there is less warrant for such free passes than there is in the case of Mayors and Municipal Councillors. The municipal authorities are directly interested in the tramways and the roadways upon which they are laid, and they represent the people who have to support them, whereas members of Parliament represent the State and all its activities.

15. EMPLOYEES' PASSES:

The issue of free passes for tramway employees is recognized by all undertakings, and, in most cases, applies not only to those in uniform but to the official and clerical staff when travelling to and from work as well as at other times. Some authorities provide their employees with metal badges, whilst others have a system of tickets which are handed to the conductor every time a journey is made.

The free travelling concession is an extremely valuable one and has a salary equivalent which, it is considered, has, in some cases, not been fully taken into account by wage tribunals and others. Where tickets are used by employees, the concession has been much abused. The conductors, at busy periods, are not inclined to collect the tickets but accept the display of the book of tickets or a ticket as an equivalent to the payment of the fare. This saves time to the conductor, but, unfortunately, it creates a lax sense of duty. With decreasing revenues and

advancing costs, the Sub-Committee is of the opinion that free travelling concessions should be reviewed, and recommends the subject for discussion by the Conference. There is no difficulty in providing for and checking free transport of men in uniform, but the other staff cannot be suitably checked, and the Committee suggests that one way of dealing with this subject is to discontinue free travelling. Apart from the revenue to be derived from this source, it is felt that a fare would improve the discipline of the service and prevent laxity in the fare system. Some Awards of the Court, however, provide that the existing privileges are to be retained.

16. PERIODICAL OR PRE-PAID TICKETS:

Six undertakings, Ballarat, Fremantle, Geelong, Kalgoorlie, Launceston and Perth do not issue periodical or pre-paid tickets. For the convenience of passengers, Melbourne, Newcastle, Sydney and North Sydney make available pre-paid tickets, but these tickets do not represent any concession on the ordinary fare. In Brisbane, the only pre-payment is the issue of short-journey city concession tickets at 12 for one shilling and the sale of tourist tickets for one shilling each, available only on the day of issue.

17. SPECIAL CHARGES:

Eleven authorities report that no system of special tickets is available at off-peak times. Two authorities, however, issue special tickets. Hobart charges double fares after 11.15 p.m. and treble fares after 11.30 p.m. Launceston adds 50% to fares after 6.30 p.m. and Sydney and North Sydney charge 1d. on each fare between midnight and 4.30 a.m.

Four undertakings have special tourist tickets to encourage travel over their system. In America, several of the tramway authorities are endeavouring to stimulate off-peak travel by low fare tickets. It is, however, doubtful whether this will increase the

revenue. Low fares certainly encourage passenger movement, but, except in special cases, the increase in traffic results in reduced revenue.

18. PASSENGERS' LUGGAGE, ETC.

There is no uniform practice in respect to luggage. In Sydney, the convenience of passengers is the deciding factor, and no charge is made for passenger luggage. In Adelaide and Ballarat, two dimensions are given to govern the size of the packages or luggage which may be charged for, whilst three authorities, namely, Geelong, Hobart and Melbourne give a third dimension. In New Zealand, practically all passengers' luggage is charged for and the authorities derive considerable revenue therefrom.

The Committee suggests that some uniformity would be advantageous. There may be difficulties in the way of the general adoption of the New Zealand practice, but the matter of uniform regulations in respect to the outside dimensions of parcels, etc., is worth consideration.

19. TRANSFERS:

Transfer tickets are not in general use. Only five authorities, Ballarat, Fremantle, Geelong, Launceston and Melbourne, of the 17 who replied to the questionnaire, provide them. In Fremantle, Geelong and Launceston, they have a very limited application, in reality being no more than through concession fares. In Fremantle, they are available from the terminus of one route to the terminus of any other route, and in Geelong from suburban termini to the wharf or railway station or between three suburban termini at a common junction midway to centre of City. Launceston issues transfers on special days only to cover journeys from the termini to the Show Grounds or Racecourse. Melbourne

is the only authority that has a number in use. There are 41 transfer points. 26 of these were legacies from the old cable system when a flat fare obtained, and 15 apply to the electric systems and were mainly introduced to preserve the same fares to passengers after re-routing certain services.

With the sectional fare system, the passenger is charged in accordance with the service rendered. He pays a lower initial fare and lower average fare than usually obtains on the flat fare system. There is, therefore, not the same need for transfers as may be the case with a high flat fare system as practised in America. Further, to be equitable to all passengers, transfers should provide for every combination of passenger journeys. To do this satisfactorily adds to the complication of the ticket system, and, if conductors were required to punch the day, time, destination, etc., in order to prevent abuse and loss, then, especially at peak periods, their work would be increased at a time when the speedy collection of fares is of paramount importance.

20. GENERAL:

According to the figures published by the American Electric Railway Association in the A.E.R.A. for July 1929, the average fare in America for cities of over 25,000 population is 8.3514 cents, approximately 4-1/8d., whilst the average fare per passenger in Australia and New Zealand is 2.7d. The lowest average fare per passenger is 1.59d. in Dunedin, and the highest 3.31d. in Kalgoorlie. American conditions, however, are not quite comparable with those in Australia and New Zealand. In America, the flat fare system - a uniform charge whether a passenger travels a short distance or the entire length of the route, - is almost universal.

In Australia, the sectional fare system of charging notwithstanding the great diversity recorded in these replies, is more equitable, as each passenger pays the fare commensurate with

the service rendered, whilst, in the flat fare system, the long distance passenger receives the advantage and the short distance passenger pays a higher rate per mile.

On the other hand, the flat fare system tends to facilitate the passenger movement, speeds up the fare collection and reduces the transaction between the conductor and the passenger to a simple operation, and, at the same time, increases the efficiency of the checking system.

A flat fare would also facilitate the general use of one-man cars in Australia, and such cars as a means of increasing the service, improving the facilities and lowering the costs should be kept in mind by tramway operators.

The problem is to render the best service at the lowest possible fare and arrange the fares and sections to encourage the greatest passenger movement on our respective lines. The climate, topographical conditions, temperament and customs of the people are all factors which affect the use made of the trams, and local conditions will, therefore, continue to influence the practice of all.

In presenting this report and classified answers to the questionnaire, the Sub-Committee hopes that it will stimulate discussion.

A.D.MURDOCH (CHAIRMAN) (Vic)
G.R.STEER (Brisbane, Qld.)
W.G.T.GOODMAN (Adelaide, S.A.)
W. TAYLOR (Perth, W.A.)
E.J.DORAN (Sydney, N.S.W.)
S. HANCOX (Hobart, Tas.)

21st JULY, 1930.