

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION OF VICTORIA

COPY

for

*BALLARAT TRAMWAYS DEPT.*

MANAGER, BALLARAT BRANCH

ENGINEER & MANAGER, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

23rd February, 1952

TRAMWAYS OPERATIONS:

I must first apologise for this belated response to your letter (AVM/RMV) dated 23rd November, 1951, which results solely from the fact that I decided to handle the requisite inquiry personally in order to thoroughly familiarise myself with the variations, intricacies and ramifications of the provincial tramways fare structure.

With no prior knowledge of this subject, the task proved to be peculiarly difficult and complex, and it is only after intensive and extensive research that I am able to submit the desired traffic statistics, and feel competent to comment thereon.

As you well know, since ownership and operation of the tramway system in Ballarat passed to the Commission on 1st July, 1934, there have been two fare increases - the first being effective from Thursday, 15th September, 1949, and the second from Sunday, 1st July, 1951.

The 1949 revision principally raised adult fares by 1d. per section, and substantially reduced the concession on weekly tickets and scholars' tickets, but left the fare structure intact; hence the travelling public's reaction to the increases can be positively determined.

With the 1951 revision, however, the abolition of transfers and weekly tickets, the introduction of an extra section on the Sebastopol route and the two Gardens routes, the introduction from 1st August, 1951, of a second City Section (3d. fare), and alterations to intermediate section points on all six routes, have so changed the fare structure that a wholly satisfactory detailed "before and after" comparison cannot be compiled.

In an endeavour to pinpoint the decline in patronage following each fare increase, traffic results over a four-months period - October to January inclusive - for this financial year and the four preceding fiscal years, have been analysed and segregated into the four days (Award Public Holidays, Sundays, Saturdays, and Normal Week Days) on which different traffic conditions obtain.

These results are tabulated on Appendices A, B, C and D, from which it will be observed that :-

1. The 1949 fare revision diminished over-all passengers by some 13%, but effected an improvement of nearly 20% in revenue. Passengers by weekly tickets decreased by over 30% - vide Table below - while Sunday travellers dropped by 25%, part of which, however, is attributed to more petrol being available for week-end pleasure motoring.



WEEKLY TICKETS:

	One Section	Two Sections	Three Sections	Total
	<u>Number of Passengers</u>			
Average for 1947/48 and 1948/49	55,884	265,260	27,936	349,080
Average for 1949/50 and 1950/51	42,414	173,724	25,290	241,428
Comparison	- 24.1%	- 34.6%	- 9.5%	- 30.8%
	<u>Revenue</u>			
Average for 1947/48 and 1948/49	233	1,658	233	£2,124
Average for 1949/50 and 1950/51	353	1,810	316	2,479
Comparison	+ 51.8%	+ 9.16%	+ 35.8%	+ 16.7%

The passengers and revenue quoted for Saturdays in the 1947/8/9 and 1949/50/51 averaged years, include an allocation of one-sixth of the weekly tickets (value and trips) issued.

2. The 1951 fare revision reduced total passengers by over 13% also, and revenue declined by 1.33%.

The unfavourable public reaction to the 1d. surcharge on Sundays and holidays is a clear indication that a point of maximum revenue has been reached, and any further increase in fares would only result in more people transferring their patronage to the alternative forms of transport available, such as motor bus, hire car, taxi, private motor car, motor cycle, and self-propulsion (bicycle and walking).

3. The whole journey on the Sebastopol route is the sole trip that can be readily identified through the two fare increases, the only physical alteration thereto being a transfer of the section starting point from Rubicon Street to Grey Street, thereby shortening the last section by 0.45 mile (25.71%) from 1.75 miles to 1.3 miles.

Particulars of traffic on this trip for the October-January period, and the five years under review, are given in Statement No. 2 of Appendix E.

It will be seen therefrom that the first fare revision had practically no effect on adult patronage - the decline in weekly ticket holders being more than compensated for by increases in daily checks and transfers. The second fare increase, however, has produced an unexpected drop of 41% in passengers and 15.7% in revenue.

It is evident that most of the Sebastopol residents who previously travelled regularly to and from the City by tram on weekly tickets at a cost of 3/-, consider a weekly cost by tram of from 5/- to 8/- excessive, and in consequence have arranged to travel by cheaper transport.



4. It is not possible to gauge with certainty the effect on traffic of re-located intermediate section points, but from Statement No. 4 in Appendix C, and the passenger table below, the phenomenon of the second fare revision has been the really amazing decline in "one section" adult passengers. From observation, the explanation appears to be that such a passenger, who used the "No Charge" transfer and over-travel facilities in the City Zone, and travelled each day for 4d. (weekly ticket) or 6d. (daily transfer), is naturally not willing to pay the 10d. now involved daily in two 3d. and two 2d. fares. Instead, many of them now walk downhill into the City and use the tram on the homeward uphill journey.

Similarly, the one-section traveller who returns home for the mid-day meal, and hitherto purchased two weekly tickets for 4/-, now pays 6d. daily for the two "out" rides, and walks the two "in" journeys.

Further, single section travellers not affected by the re-location of the first section point, have apparently also acquired the "walk one way" habit.

#### PASSENGERS:

Class and Journey	Averages for Years 1947/48 and 1948/49.		Averages for Years 1949/50 and 1950/51.		Year 1951/52 (Adjusted)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Adults - Four Sections					40,088	2.8
Adults - Three Sections	65,775	3.5	67,727	4.1	171,461	12.1
Adults - Four and Three Sections	"	"	"	"	211,549	14.9
Adults - Two Sections	1,178,971	62.6	836,618	51.1	632,960	44.5
Adults - Three and Two Sections	1,244,746	66.1	904,345	55.2	804,421	56.6
Adults - Four, Three & Two Sections	"	"	"	"	844,509	59.4
Adults - One Section	296,010	15.7	434,928	26.6	232,310	16.4
Adults - Four, Three, Two and One Sections	1,540,756	82.8	1,338,274	81.8	1,076,819	75.8
Adults & Children - City Section(s)	31,652	1.7	224,774	13.7	( 75,378	5.3
Children - Four, Three, Two & One Sections	195,710	10.4			(206,145	14.5
Scholars	72,292	3.8	72,908	4.5	62,392	4.4
Tourists	44,110	2.3				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1,884,520</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,636,956</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,420,734</b>	<b>100</b>

5. Other regular one and two-section travellers have transferred to motor buses, which travel to the City by more direct routes, and put down and pick up passengers much closer to their places of employment than is the tramway City terminal.



6. The apparent increase in the City Section adult passengers is purely statistical, because previously each person concerned would be in the "one passenger plus transfer or over-travel" category.

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Statement No. 1 shows that the revised rosters now operative have cut mileage by over 14%, and thereby enabled "passengers per car mile" to be maintained at roundly eight (8), with an over-all increase of 3.7d. (15%) in "revenue per car mile".

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To adequately operate the previous roster, eighty-eight (88) motormen and conductors were needed, whereas the new roster requires a net traffic crew of seventy-four (74).

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As advised in our memo. (WRC:WM) dated 17th August, 1951, and headed "Staff - Tramways Traffic Section", the saving on the clerical side resulting from the simplified fare structure is four man-days per week.

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#### CONCLUSIONS:

As stated earlier, it is obvious that a substantial increase in tramway revenue above £60,000 per annum is not practicable because of the several alternative modes of travel available, and the relatively short distances involved.

If the Commission wants to prove that the provincial city tramway systems are outmoded and no longer necessary, it could very easily do so by progressively increasing fares, ostensibly to recoup losses, until eventually the number of passengers carried would become so meagre that no justification whatsoever would remain for the tramway service to be continued.

If, on the other hand, the Commission feels itself obligated to offer the best possible service to the travelling public in Ballarat, then I would suggest that -

- (a) the 1d. surcharge on Sundays and holidays be discontinued.
- (b) weekly tickets be <sup>re</sup>introduced for one, two, three and four section travel, limited to ten trips and a concession of 20%.
- (c) the intermediate section point on the Mt. Pleasant route revert to the intersection of Barkly and Grant Streets.
- (d) the intermediate section point on the Lydiard Street North route revert to the intersection of Lydiard and Brougham Streets.



- (e) consideration be given by the Departmental Tramways Supt. to re-location of the intermediate section point on the Victoria Street route, and the second section point on the Gardens via Drummond Street North route.

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A fairly substantial reduction in expenditure could be effected by more extensive use of one-man operation. At some periods during the day, the loading on all routes is so light that two-man operation is definitely not warranted.

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An early official announcement or intimation concerning the probable future of provincial city tramways would be extremely welcome in Ballarat, because the circulation of unfounded rumours in recent weeks has had a very adverse effect on the morale of tramway personnel.

*Amz*

Enclos. (4)