

## STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION OF VICTORIA

Confidential

ENGINEER &amp; MANAGER

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

To MANAGER: BALLARAT BRANCH

Date 7th October, 1959.

Subject -

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DEPARTMENT	
BALLARAT BRANCH	
REC'D 9 OCT 1959	
ACK'D REF'D TO	AND ATTENTION REPORT NOTING

TRAMWAYS:Similar  
letter  
sent:Ball.,  
N/W/R.

We forward for your information a copy of memorandum dated 21st September, 1959, from the Chairman to the Hon. the Minister for Electrical Undertakings, on the subject of the future of the Provincial Tramway Undertakings at Ballarat and Bendigo.

While we see no grounds for optimism that the present Government will initiate action along the lines suggested, a draft of the evidence which the Commission might present to a public inquiry (if the Geelong pattern should be followed) has been prepared by the Departmental Tramways Superintendent and will be discussed with you in the near future.

Encl:

The Government accepted the main proposals of the Transport Regulation Board, and the Commission presented to Parliament on the 5th September, 1955, a formal report within the requirements of its Acts submitting the Board's proposal that the tramway systems at Geelong should be abandoned; as a resolution opposing the abandonment was not carried within 24 sitting days of the Legislative Assembly, arrangements were then made, in conjunction with the Transport Regulation Board, for omnibus services to supplant the tramways in stages between 9th January and 25th March, 1956.

This change-over to omnibus services at Geelong was accomplished satisfactorily, and subsequent experience has clearly established the success of the new transport system. The present conditions at Ballarat and Bendigo are very similar to those at Geelong prior to the abandonment of the tramways. In each centre there is a need for a co-ordinated public transport service and the Commission is firmly of the opinion that a more efficient and economic overall service to the community could be provided by a well-organised omnibus service.

The Transport Regulation Board also is known to be impressed with the need for improved services in these two cities. The Commission, therefore, submits that the time is opportune to review the future of the street transport facilities at Ballarat and Bendigo, and suggests that this review might well follow the procedure adopted at Geelong. It is also of the opinion that both systems could be dealt with concurrently, but if this is not practicable and it is decided to examine one system at a time, the Commission, while having no marked preference for either centre, would incline to the first investigation being related to Bendigo.

COPY

For ENGINEER AND MANAGER, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DEPARTMENTE + M  
B + M, 11/12  
9/10/59 Gw

21st September, 1959.

Dear Mr. Minister,

In a letter dated 10th August, 1956, the Commission recommended that the Government should initiate enquiries to determine the future of the public street transport services at Ballarat and Bendigo, but the Government decided not to proceed at that time. In its report covering the financial year ending 30th June, 1957, the Commission again called attention to the unsatisfactory financial position of the tramway undertakings at Ballarat and Bendigo, and stressed that these undertakings had never been economically justified.

Financial results for the year ended 30th June, 1959, show that a loss of £151,755 was incurred on these undertakings, this amount again substantially exceeding the actual revenue received from the tramways. The absurd position has been reached where for every fare collected, averaging just under 4d., the Commission incurs a loss at the rate of 7½d. at Bendigo and about 5d. at Ballarat.

It will be recalled that in 1953 the Transport Regulation Board was directed by the Government to conduct a comprehensive enquiry into all matters relating to public passenger transport in Geelong Urban District and, after a full public hearing, the Board concluded that the tramways services should be scrapped in favour of a well organised omnibus service.

The Government accepted the main proposals of the Transport Regulation Board, and the Commission presented to Parliament on the 5th September, 1955, a formal report within the requirements of its Acts submitting the Board's proposal that the tramway systems at Geelong should be abandoned; as a resolution opposing the abandonment was not carried within 24 sitting days of the Legislative Assembly, arrangements were then made, in conjunction with the Transport Regulation Board, for omnibus services to supplant the tramways in stages between 3rd January and 23rd March, 1956.

This change-over to omnibus services at Geelong was accomplished satisfactorily, and subsequent experience has clearly established the success of the new transport system. The present conditions at Ballarat and Bendigo are very similar to those at Geelong prior to the abandonment of the tramways. In each centre there is a need for a co-ordinated public transport service and the Commission is firmly of the opinion that a more efficient and economic overall service to the community could be provided by a well-organised omnibus service.

The Transport Regulation Board also is known to be impressed with the need for improved services in these two cities. The Commission, therefore, submits that the time is opportune to review the future of the street transport facilities at Ballarat and Bendigo, and suggests that this review might well follow the procedure adopted at Geelong. It is also of the opinion that both systems could be dealt with concurrently, but if this is not practicable and it is decided to examine one system at a time, the Commission, while having no marked preference for either centre, would incline to the first investigation being related to Bendigo.

In this regard it is mentioned that at Bendigo there are bus services operating along some of the tram routes, and this unnecessary and wasteful duplication of facilities reacts against both operators, so that even the bus lines are struggling financially. The following statistics of tramway operation at Ballarat and Bendigo during the last financial year show that at Bendigo the total revenue is not sufficient to pay even the wages of traffic employees (motormen and conductors), without taking into account all the other charges associated with the operation of the services.

Year Ended 30th June, 1959	Ballarat	Bendigo	Total
No. of passengers carried	3,874,747	2,295,383	6,171,130
Total expenditure	£143,915	£108,898	£252,813
Wages of traffic employees (motormen, conductors)	£51,620	£40,939	£92,559
Revenue	£51,989	£39,059	£91,048
Loss	£81,926	£69,839	£151,765
Average expenditure per passenger	8.91d.	11.38d.	9.83d.
" revenue	3.64d.	4.08d.	3.93d.
" loss	5.07d.	7.30d.	5.90d.

Details of the revenue received and losses incurred in respect of the tramway services at Ballarat and Bendigo during the last 10 years are set out hereunder, and it will be noted that at Bendigo the annual losses have exceeded the revenue during the whole of this period.

Year Ending 30th June	Ballarat		Bendigo	
	Revenue £	Loss £	Revenue £	Loss £
1950	58,728	31,783	39,206	44,097
1951	58,807	45,050	40,463	47,739
1952	61,101	63,842	43,304	59,051
1953	64,272	71,080	42,789	69,939
1954	64,451	74,369	41,954	67,067
1955	63,877	72,677	40,623	68,318
1956	65,298	76,758	42,514	69,926
1957	65,245	80,297	42,609	87,832
1958	63,351	77,648	41,355	63,745
1959	61,989	81,926	39,059	69,839
Total 10 years	£627,119	£675,430	£413,966	£647,553

Assuming it is decided to discontinue the tramway systems at Ballarat and Bendigo, the Commission would agree, in principle, to arrangements for the transfer to omnibus services along the same lines as at Geelong. At that centre, although not obliged under its Acts to accept responsibility in the matter, it agreed to contribute towards the cost of restoring the roadways amounts spread over a period of eight years, payment in any one year not to exceed the annual loss on the operation of the trams. In accordance with this decision, the Commission agreed to pay the municipalities concerned at Geelong sums totalling £294,828 for road reconstruction.

A similar agreement no doubt could be negotiated with the municipalities at Ballarat and Bendigo. The actual amounts involved would have regard for present day estimates of the cost of reinstatement in the respective centres.

3.

As regards the future of the tramway employees, a number would be likely to take positions with the new transport services; however, as at Geelong, the Commission would be prepared to place in other positions those who desire to remain in its service. The Commission might not necessarily be able to guarantee to find all employment in their present locality; however, as many as practicable would be given work at the same location.

Yours faithfully,

W. H. Connolly  
CHAIRMAN

Hon. G. O. Reid, M.L.A.,  
Minister of Electrical Undertakings,  
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