

AMENDMENTS of the MELBOURNE & METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS ACT  
1918 (No.2995), suggested by the MELBOURNE AND  
METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS BOARD.

1. "Fire and Public Risk Insurance Funds."

"That the Board be authorised to establish funds to be called the 'Fire and Public Risk Insurance Funds' for the purpose of providing moneys to meet losses incurred through the loss or damage to any property of the Board directly or indirectly caused by fire and to meet claims for compensation arising from accidents to the public during the operation of its tramway undertaking."

Whilst the Board is authorised to establish a Renewal Reserve Fund, a Maintenance Reserve Fund, a Guarantee Fund for the purpose of indemnifying the Board against losses incurred through the acts or defaults of its officers, servants or employees, and a Superannuation Fund to provide annuities to officers, servants, etc., no power is given to set aside monies for building up a Fire and Public Risk Insurance Fund.

The Board possesses a very large number of properties, widely dispersed, many of them comparatively small in value. The Board is therefore in a position to carry a great deal of its own fire insurance risk, and by establishing its own Insurance Fund can save a considerable sum in premiums by gradually reducing the amounts of its insurance policies as it builds up its own fund.

It is also desirable to annually place a percentage of its gross revenue to the credit of a Public Risk Fund, to meet claims arising from injuries to passengers or to members of the public through street collisions due to the negligence of the Board's servants. Insurance premiums on Public Risk Policies in some of the undertakings taken over by the Board rise as high as 33% of the sum insured.

2. "That the Board be empowered to pay Gratuities in connection with accidents to its employees or the public caused by the operation of the Board's tramway undertaking."

Cases are continually arising in connection with accidents to employees or the public in the course of the operation of its undertaking where it is desirable that the Board should be in a position to grant a gratuity, particularly in cases where no legal claim could be sustained against the Board but where the person injured, or his or her dependents, may be in necessitous circumstances and in need of help by reason of the misfortune that has come upon them in consequence of such accident.

3. "That the Board be authorised to contribute such sums as it shall from time to time think fit to any Mutual Benefit or Sick or Accident Fund formed for the benefit of its employees."

During the existence of the Melbourne Tramway & Omnibus Company a Mutual Benefit Fund had been established by the employees of the Company, to which the Company contributed pound for pound of the amount subscribed by its members who were employees of the Company. A similar practice was observed by the late Tramway Board. The present Board is not legally authorised to make such a contribution although it is eminently desirable that it should be so authorised. Legislative sanction is sought to enable the Board to continue such a contribution.



4. " THAT the Board be empowered to grant doantions to such Hospitals, Ambulance and Charitable Institutions as it may deem fit."

As persons suffering serious accidents arising from Tramway operations are generally taken to one or other of the public hospitals, and as these hospitals are put to considerable expense annually in the treatment of cases so brought to them,, for which they get no return, and as it was the practice of some, at any rate, of the Municipal Tramway Trusts to make annual contributions to one or other of such hospitals, the Board thinks that it would be expedient to confer similar power upon it ~~also~~ to also pass an annual donation or donations to hospitals as the circumstances of the case may require.

5. "THAT the Board be empowered to expend or contribute moneys in support of any 'Welfare Movement' for the benefit of its employees."

In many modern industrial undertakings it has become the practice to establish a Welfare Movement for the benefit of employees. Welfare work is designed to promote the well-being of the workers, not only in securing by co-operation the best possible conditions of work for both employer and employee, but also to help all efforts in and outside factory, workshop or business in placing industrial relationships on a basis of goodwill and understanding, and the provision of aids to material and social well-being. These might include the provision of dining rooms, baths, establishment of stores for the sale of goods at cost price, encouragement of social life, mental culture and physical fitness by means of rest and recreation rooms, libraries, etc.

6. "THAT the Board, subject to full investigation and report to the Minister, be authorised to construct the following tramways:-
- (a) Tramway between Melbourne and East Brunswick,
  - (b) Tramway between Melbourne and West Brunswick and Coburg.
  - (c) Tramway along Church Street connecting Clifton Hill and Prahran
  - (d) Tramway along Bell Street Coburg connecting the existing electric tramway to Preston with the existing tramway to Coburg.
  - (e) Tramway in East Northcote and Heidelberg Districts"

The consideration which the Board has already given to the formulation of a general scheme for the development of tramways for the service of the Metropolis leads it to the conclusion that the preparation of such general scheme, and its investigation by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways under the provisions of Section 34 of the Board's Act, will be a long and arduous proceeding. If a commencement is to be made at an early period with tramway lines the construction of which is immediately required, some more speedy and elastic procedure must be provided beyond the provisions at present contained in the Act. Otherwise the authorisation of the construction of any particular line of tramway must be postponed till the investigation of all lines included in the proposals for a general scheme has been completed by the Standing Committee on Railways. This would inevitably delay the construction of any new lines for a lengthy period. The five lines mentioned in this clause appear to be lines the construction of which is a pressing necessity.



7. "THAT the word "ten" in the last line of Subsection (e) of Section 37 be deleted and the word "twenty" be inserted, so that the subsection will read :

(e) The Board is hereby authorised (subject to the approval of the Governor in Council in each case) to construct any tramway for the extension of or for connecting portions of or for the more effective operation of its tramway undertakings if the total estimated cost of such tramway (including equipment) does not exceed twenty thousand pounds."

On account of the very considerable rise in wages and cost of materials since the passing of the Act, the provision of £10,000 to cover the construction of any tramway for the extension of or for connecting portions, or for the more effective operation, of the Board's Tramway undertaking if approved of by the Governor-in-Council, is insufficient to meet the altered conditions so as to give the Board the benefit of the provisions of Section 37 1 (e). In the Board's opinion this sum should be increased to £20,000, otherwise the benefit of the provision would be almost entirely lost.

8. "THAT where a street or road forms part of the boundary of the Board's area the whole width of such street shall be deemed to be within the Board's area."

In many cases the boundaries of the Tramway Board's area is defined by roads, some of which may become tramway routes in the future. Where any part of the Board's area is bounded by a road, the middle of such road becomes the boundary line in law. It is desirable that the whole width of such road should be deemed to be within the Board's area so as to permit of the construction of a line of double track along such road. There is at least one instance where a road forming part of the Board's boundary has already been suggested as a tramway route.

9. "Attendance fees for Members other than Chairman" Sec.15 (3)"

"THAT the fees to members of the Board other than the Chairman be fixed at £300 per annum."

The late Tramway Board whose members (other than the Chairman) were remunerated at the rate of £250 per annum had the control and management of the Cable system only. The Board was not empowered to make any extensions of the system. Apart from the negotiation with and settlement of the claims of the late Melbourne Tramway & Omnibus Company in relation to the purchase of the assets of the Company acquired by the Board, the Board's functions were confined to operating a going concern.

The functions of the present Board are infinitely wider. It has, in addition to the Cable system, to control and manage five other systems already constructed and in operation, and a sixth still in process of construction. The Capital value of all the systems combined amounts to a sum of £3,750,000, whilst the gross annual revenue amounts to approximately £1,500,000.

The co-ordination of these systems with their diverse methods of management is alone a heavy task. Still greater, however, will be the work and responsibility involved in the preparation of the general scheme for the future tramway development of the Metro-polis and the unification of the various systems by the gradual conversion of the Cable system to electric traction. Such ultimate conversion is inseparable from any efficient and economic scheme of tramway development.