

Epsom Road Crossing Being Abolished

Big Construction Work in Progress

FOR many years the level crossing at Epsom Road, on the Show Grounds and Flemington Racecourse line, has been a source of complaint, inasmuch as the heavy road traffic on race, show, and special days, had to be completely suspended to permit of the uninterrupted running of the electric train services. The position was made more acute when a double track tramway was taken across, and in order to ensure the safe working of the fast and frequent electric trains, elaborate safeguards were necessary, including a signal-box and special manning of the gates. As occasion required the tram services also were terminated on each side of the crossing.

Epsom Road is a busy thoroughfare, carrying a good deal of live stock traffic, to and from the Newmarket Sale Yards and the Abattoirs, in addition to the ordinary traffic of a main road, and it was decided some two years ago to call a conference of the bodies concerned, so that some practical steps for its abolition could be taken. It was finally agreed that the level crossing should be abolished, that a bridge over the tram tracks should be substituted, and that the interested parties should contribute on an agreed percentage basis to the cost, the actual construction work to be carried out by the Railway Department. When everything had been practically settled, the question was raised by the Melbourne City Council as to whether the road should not be constructed 10 feet wider than the existing one, so that provision could be made for a double track tramway and width enough between it and the kerb for two streams of vehicular traffic on either side. This was also agreed to, the plans were altered to suit, and the actual construction work was finally commenced in October, 1924.

Temporary Rail Supports

The first procedure was to place temporary rail supports under the tracks, in order that headings could be driven through for the two brick abutments. The one at the Melbourne end was pushed on with, and on its completion sufficient excavation was taken out to permit of a single line tramway track being taken through, thus enabling the Department to abolish the level crossing of tramway over railway lines in time for the Newmarket race meeting. The other abutment was then proceeded with, and a temporary bridge, built from obsolete girders released from other bridges, was constructed, allowing the whole of the material for approaches, etc., to be removed without further interruption. Work is at the present time in progress on forming the roadways and placing tramway track in its permanent position, which works are being carried out by the bodies concerned.

A contract has been let for the fabrication of the steel girders and columns, which are of a very massive character. The design of the bridge is a long central span, with supporting columns on the kerb line, so that the whole roadway space is clear, and two small spans at each end over the footpath. There will be three girders to each span, and in consequence of the bridge being on a heavy skew, the main span girders are 77ft. 6in. long.

The total weight of steelwork will be 130 tons, and the heaviest girder will weigh 28 tons. Over a quarter of a million bricks have been used in the abutments, together with about 1,000 bags of cement. The total amount of material excavated is 20,000 cubic yards, of which 3,000 cubic yards has been in rock, necessitating the liberal use of explosives. Extensive alterations to electrification structures, wiring, signalling, etc., have been made, and a new signal-box has been built. Further alterations are in progress to the frontage of the Royal Agricultural Society, and to the Victoria Racing Club's fences, entrances, and driveways.

Councils Are Contributing

Delivery of the permanent girders is promised early in August, and it is anticipated that the bridge and associated works will be completed and in use before the next Show Week.

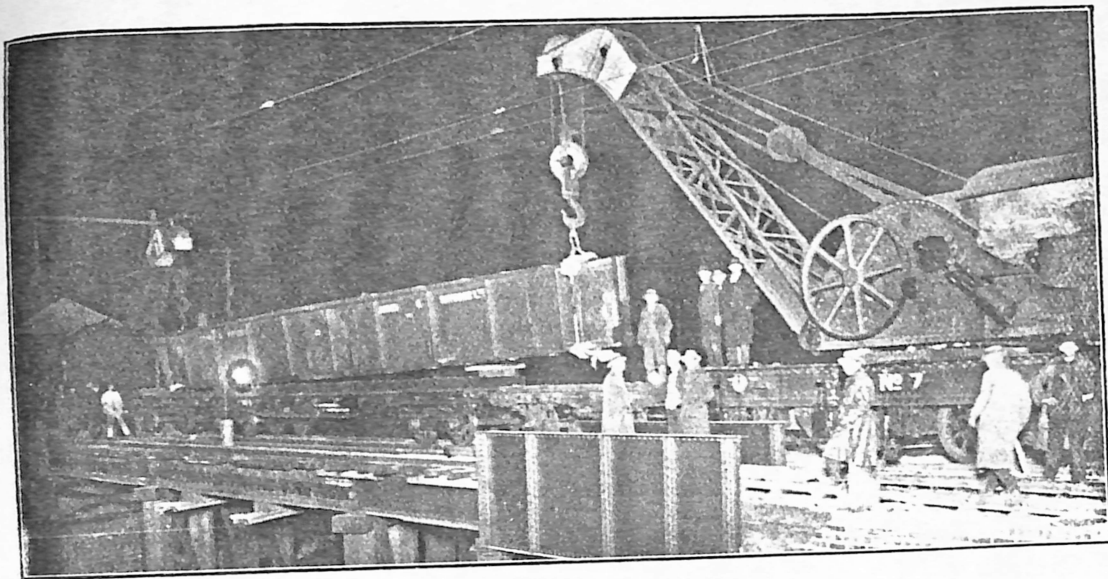
The contributing bodies to the cost of constructing the new subway are the Railway Department, Melbourne City Council, Essendon City Council, Royal Agricultural Society, Tramway Board, and the Victoria Racing Club, the Department's contribution being 25 per cent. of the total.

When completed, a further step will have been taken in the abolition, wherever practicable, of level crossings, and it is anticipated that the bridge will be a great public convenience and will meet requirements for many years to come.

Have you any idea of the work entailed in preparing a train for a journey? The interesting story will be told in the August issue of the Victorian Railways Magazine.

Other features will include articles on how a youth may enter the service of the Railways Department, and the prospects for advancement; another railwayman will tell why his job is important, and interesting facts will also be given on the system of distinguishing lights on the front of trains.

Lifting 28-ton Girders—An All-Night Job!



The largest and heaviest girders ever lifted by the Victorian Railways Department in the construction of a bridge were handled by the Way and Works Branch for the construction of the new bridge at Epsom Road, Flemington. It was an all-night job.

THE final operation of dismantling the temporary bridge at Epsom Road, on the Show Grounds and Flemington Racecourse line, and placing the permanent superstructure in position was carried out on Sunday, August 16.

Two locomotive 30-ton wrecking cranes were used to place the girders in position. The main girders, of which there are three—two weighing 18 tons and the other 28 tons—were delivered by rail at the site at 1 a.m. on Sunday morning. The length of the girders is about 77ft., and for size and weight they constitute a record in this class of work done

by the Railways Department to date. It was not until 10 a.m. that the lifting and placing of the girders was completed, and work was then commenced on dismantling the temporary bridge and its trestle supports. This had been completed by midday.

Special efforts were made by the Department to have the work completed in time for the Royal Agricultural Show. If the temporary bridge had been left in for that occasion it would have meant that the speed of trains passing that point would have been reduced to 10 miles an hour. This would have considerably interfered with efficient train running.

