

MELBOURNE CABLE AND ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS.

First Substitution by Diesel Buses.

By H. H. BELL, J.P., Chairman, Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board.

STREET transport system in the metropolitan area known as Melbourne, capital of Victoria, now covers 163.789 miles of route, of which 119.517 miles are served by double-track electric tramways, 28.049 by diesel buses, and 11.046 miles by cable trams. In addition, there are 5.117 miles of single electric track. Although now vested in the Tramways Board, the system was originally the creation of groups of municipalities. Twelve municipalities, headed by Melbourne, brought the cable system into being in a tour abroad the Board resolved to proceed with the conversion of all the cable lines to electric traction. Mr. Cameron retired at the end of 1935, and I was appointed to the chair. Of the seven members appointed in 1918, I am the only one now on the Board. Conversion proceeded orderly and systematically until 1930, when the financial depression struck Australia and caused operations to be suspended. The North Melbourne, Brunswick, and South Melbourne routes were converted in 1935-37, while the West Mel-



Car designed for tourist service, with one- or two-man operation. Weighing 16½ tons, it has four 40-h.p. motors and an overall length of 45 ft. 6 in.

1885, the necessary capital being raised in London on the security of the rates. Construction of the various lines had practically just been completed, and other municipalities were beginning to discuss plans for transport in their areas, when the bursting of the land boom and the failure of numerous banks in the early 'nineties nullified all developmental ideas. Not until 1906 was a forward move made, and then it was a private company which commenced an electric light and tramway undertaking in the Flemington and Essendon districts.

bourne and Port Melbourne routes were abandoned in favour of buses, the traffic on these lines not warranting the large capital expenditure necessary for conversion to electric traction. Last year, at the request of the Board, I made a tour of the Continent, Great Britain, Canada and the United States, and on my return in October last my colleagues adopted my recommendation that we should try a large bus experiment in the city proper. Towards the end of the year, consequently, diesel buses will take the place of the cable trams in Bourke Street, the



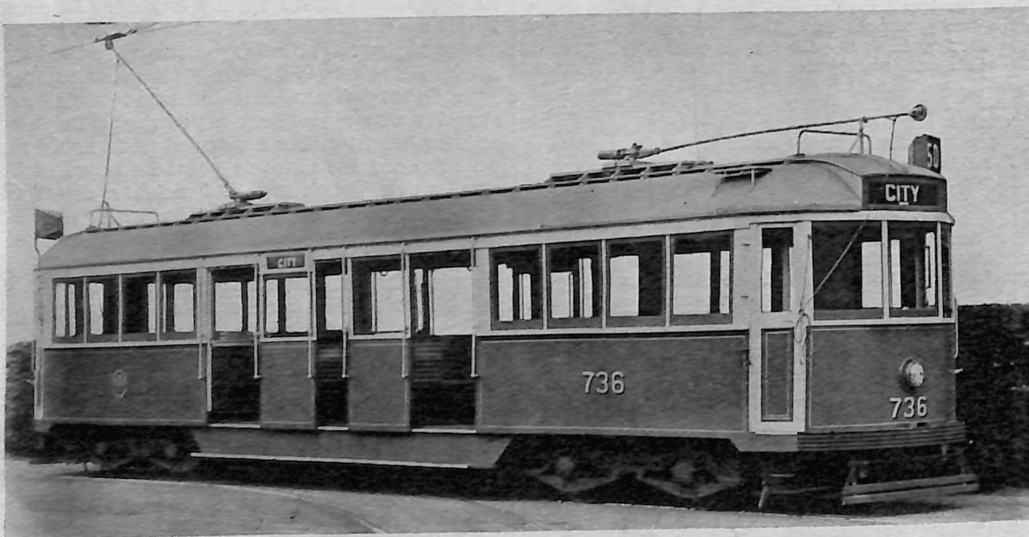
Leyland Cub buses in the service of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board, Australia, during cable tramway electrification. Leyland diesel units are now being acquired for tramway replacement.

Years of agitation preceded the commencement of operations by the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust in 1910, and then followed the Hawthorn Tramways Trust (in which I was one of the original members), the Melbourne, Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust, the Fitzroy, Northcote and Preston Tramways Trust, and the Footscray Tramways Trust. The war greatly delayed the construction of the latter two Trusts, and neither ever functioned independently, being taken over by the Tramways Board when it was constituted in 1918. The cable

route to Northcote being served by double-deckers and that to Nicholson Street by single-deckers. Before that occurs, however, the cable line from Lonsdale Street, City, to the suburb of Collingwood will be abandoned, single-deck diesel buses taking the place of the cable trams.

A Progressive Body.

Taking office on January 1, 1936, the present Board, which was reappointed towards the end of December for another period of three years, has shown itself a highly progressive body, and



Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board has 130 of these cars in service: 8 ft. wide, they are 46 ft. 6 in. long, and weigh 15½ tons.

lines had been leased for a period of years to the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company, and when, in accordance with the agreement, the Company handed over the property to the Trust in July, 1916, the management passed to the Temporary Tramways Board pending the passing of the necessary legislation creating the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board.

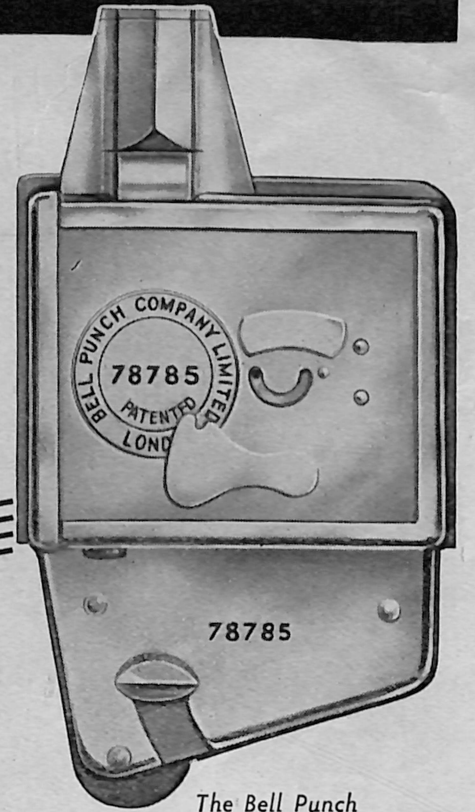
Electrification and Diesel Buses.

Mr. Alex. Cameron, who had been chairman of the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust, was appointed chairman, and after his return from

in the year which has just commenced it will again demonstrate that it is alive to the transport needs of the people. Next month we hope to have our latest tram on the streets, and to have 30 in operation before the year ends. This tram, 46 ft. long, 8 ft. wide, with seats for 48 passengers, will incorporate several of the ideas I gained while abroad, and has been designed specially for Melbourne conditions so as to give the maximum comfort in the directions of lighting, ventilation and seating. The Melbourne climate is capricious. In the summer the tem-

(Continued on page 44.)

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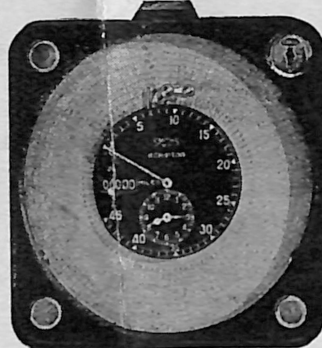


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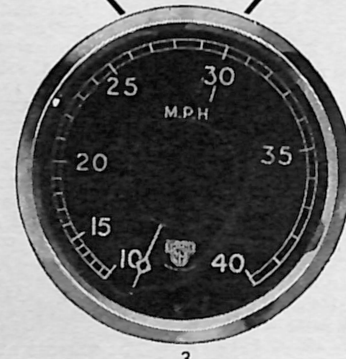
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2.

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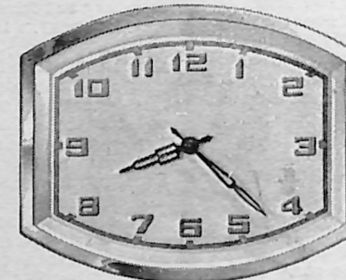
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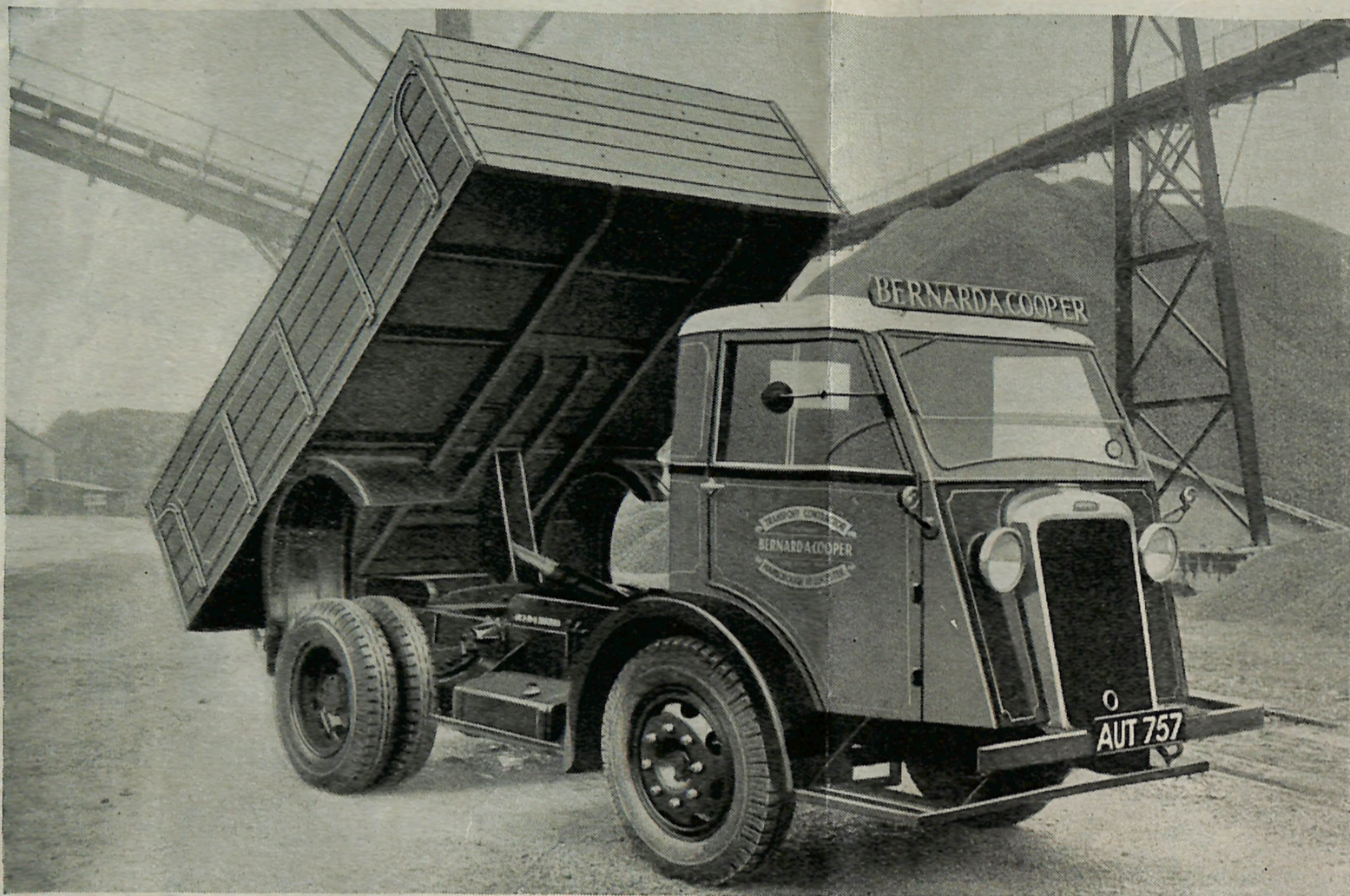
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COMPANY MEETING.

THOMAS TILLING, LIMITED.

A SATISFACTORY YEAR.

The FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Thomas Tilling, Limited, was held on February 16 at Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W. Mr. JOHN F. HEATON (chairman and managing director) presided. The SECRETARY (Mr. J. H. Thomas) having read the notice convening the meeting and the report of the auditors.

The CHAIRMAN said:—"Ladies and gentleman, We are fortunate on this occasion, following as it does upon a period of anxiety and unsatisfactory conditions in the country generally, to be able to present to you accounts which disclose a further advance. The total net profits for the year, after making provision for depreciation, debenture stock interest and other charges, are £512,195. It is perhaps desirable that I should again remind you that in accordance with our established practice the figures for the year under review include only such income on investments as has been received during the year. It therefore follows that the income in respect of the year 1938 on the holding of ordinary shares in the National Omnibus and Transport Co., Limited, as well as the final dividend of 5 per cent., free of tax, on our shares in Tilling and British Automobile Traction, Limited, which together amount to £263,164 gross, are not included. They are receivable in the early months of the present year, and will consequently form part of the company's income for 1939.

You will observe from the balance sheet that there has been a moderate increase in the investments in subsidiary companies. This represents additional shares taken up in the "National," "United Counties" and "Westcliff" companies, all of which were issued for the purpose of financing further developments. There were certain changes, too, in the freehold and leasehold properties. The late head office premises at Westminster as well as a small freehold in Peckham were disposed of, in both cases at a figure in excess of book values, but, on the other hand, there was something more than a counter-balancing expenditure on new garages and other properties.

Co-ordination in Bristol.

In my speech last year I referred to the scheme of co-ordination entered into with the Bristol Corporation. The first year of operations under this scheme has been completed and the benefits to

the public are already apparent. On the financial side also the results are satisfactory, the estimate of net revenue having been exceeded. The two parties are working in close collaboration, and I am hopeful that the partnership will continue to run smoothly and to the advantage of both the corporation and the Bristol company. If we had had regard at Bristol to the company's immediate financial interests only, it would have been difficult to justify a sale to the corporation of one-half of the most important section of the business, but wider issues were involved. The transaction may, however, now be reviewed with some degree of gratification, particularly for the reason that there has been substantial development in the remaining sections of the undertaking as well as considerable reorganisation, with the pleasing result that the profits of the Bristol company for the year just concluded are in advance of those for the period preceding the sale.

Scheme at Brighton.

The scheme at Brighton, to which reference was also made last year, received the necessary Parliamentary sanction and will come into operation on April 1 next. It is for a period of 21 years and will continue thereafter unless determined on proper notice being given by either side. At Brighton the corporation trams are to be scrapped and a service of trolley vehicles and omnibuses substituted. The company will also operate both types of vehicle. There will be complete co-ordination of traffic and pooling of receipts, but, as I have already informed you, there is to be no change in the ownership nor in the control of the capital assets. The negotiations were conducted in a very amicable manner and, if I may say so, with a commendable spirit of compromise on details which augurs well for the partnership.

Through our associated company, the North Western Road Car Co., Limited, we are now engaged in active negotiations with our friends the Stockport Corporation upon a plan which in some of its essential principles is similar to that at Brighton. The corporation operate services in the borough, and the company in a larger radius outside, but there is a definite community of interests in the districts to be served. If these negotiations be successfully concluded, I have no doubt at all that the results will be received with satisfaction by the travelling public in the area.

The various schemes of co-ordination with municipalities, and there are now many of them in operation, have been carried through without much general publicity, although they are transactions of considerable importance and of decided benefit to the public. In this connection I must pay tribute to the Road Traffic Act of 1930, without which some of them at least would not have been effected. There is now, I believe, only one municipality in the country where the purely local traffic is under dual control.

Record Traffics.

May I now say a word in regard to the omnibus services provided by the companies in our particular group. They are being steadily improved and developed, and although last year the state of employment in the country was less satisfactory, we carried a record number of passengers, the figure being approximately one thousand five hundred millions. I might add that the omnibus services generally throughout the country have no counterpart in any other part of the world, and here again I must pay tribute to the Road Traffic Act and to those called upon to administer it.

One further figure which I am sure will interest you. The group of companies with which we are associated paid last year by way of special taxation—i.e., excluding income tax and local rates, a sum in excess of £2,600,000. This, too, is a record. Indeed, there has been in recent years a general and substantial increase in expenses, notably in wages and taxation; it is, however, gratifying to be able to report that it has not been found necessary to adjust the fares. This is due to two reasons in particular. Firstly, owing to the better facilities offered, we are now carrying a larger number of passengers and, secondly, through improvements in operations in various directions we have been able to maintain, in spite of higher expenses, the total working costs at a reasonable level.

Partnership with Railways.

You will no doubt be interested to hear something about our relations with the main line railway companies who are our partners in most of the areas in which we operate. It is now over nine years since we came together, so that there has been time enough to enable us to judge. We have been working throughout this period in friendly collaboration, and any differences that may have arisen through the other and more important interests of the railways have been satisfactorily settled, in some cases with the assistance of the traffic commissioners. May I say that we on our side are gratified with the way in which the partnership has worked, and, so far as the railway companies are concerned, I venture to hope that they have no reason to regret their entry through our particular channel into road passenger transport.

I now beg to move: That the directors' report and accounts as presented to the meeting be adopted; that the dividends paid during the year be confirmed; that on March 14 next there shall be paid on the ordinary shares a final dividend of 1s. per share, less tax, for the year 1938 (making 2s. per share, or 10 per cent.); and that the sum of £100,000 be allocated to general reserve fund, leaving £178,095 19s. 2d. to be carried forward.

Mr. WALTER WOLSEY seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

perature may rise to 100 deg. or more one hour, and be down to 68 deg. two hours later. It was with that fact in mind that it was decided to use sliding doors, fitted with safety glass, at each of the four entrances, which can be closed in running during inclement weather, opened when fine, or closed on one side and open on the other. The doors will be operated by compressed air and will be controlled by the driver from his platform. A light colour scheme has been chosen for the interior finish and ceilings.

Hitherto the Melbourne trams have not been fitted with ceilings, the underside of the roof and the roof sticks being visible. On this tram the ceilings will be made of a special material which will run the full length of the car and which will be finished in ivory colour. As in all the cars built the last three years at the Board's workshops at Preston, the seats will be arranged transversely, and four pairs of those in each saloon will be of the reversible type. These seats will be upholstered in leather of specially selected colour over rubber cushions, while the sides of the saloons will be lined with leather-cloth to match.

Australian P.C.C. Cars.

I gave special attention while in England to lighting, with the result that special lamp fittings have been designed to shade the two rows of lamps placed above the seats and yet give an even distribution of light with complete absence of glare. With regard to ventilation, small hopper type ventilator windows have been selected, and these have been placed above the main windows so that ample ventilation may be obtained even in wet weather when the main windows have to be closed. The car body is of steel-frame construction, while the bogie trucks have been designed by the Board's engineers to give smooth and comfortable riding. The control gear, also the product of the Board's technical staff, is of the remote type, and is being manufactured in our own workshops. We expect fast and smooth acceleration.

When in the United States I was impressed greatly with what is known as the P.C.C. tram. During the last two years MODERN TRANSPORT has contained several favourable references to this tram, so that it is not necessary for me now to dwell on its outstanding qualities of silence, speed, comfort and economy. As the result of several meetings I had in New York with Mr. Charles Gordon, of the Research Corporation, the Board has decided to enter into an agreement with the Corporation under which we shall secure the sole manufacturing rights for Australasia. In turn, the Corporation will obtain the rights to any improvements we suggest or put into force. While the Corporation is to supply us with full specifications and drawings, we have decided to have a model of this tram, adapted for Australian conditions, manufactured for us in the U.S.A. As soon as possible after its arrival in this country we shall commence manufacture. I shall be completely surprised and disappointed if this tram is not as great a success as it has been in America.

Diesel Bus Development.

On the bus side of our undertaking we mean to develop the tourist traffic. To this end a special bus, manufactured for us by Leyland Motors, Limited, which was, incidentally, the successful tenderer for the 45 double-deck and 25 single-deck buses we shall require for Bourke Street, is now on its way to us. All the bodies will be manufactured locally, some in our own workshops and the remainder by outside firms. All the bus routes now in operation have been commenced by the present Board. The latest, which commenced on December 22 last, provides a straight cross-city route of six miles between Johnston Street, Collingwood, and Point Ormond, St. Kilda, and gives the residents of the former suburb for the first time direct communication to the sea beaches.

Tramway extensions in the suburbs of Essendon, Brighton, Kew and Camberwell have been made during the last three years. The last, almost a mile in length, to the junction of the Doncaster and Balwyn Roads, was undertaken under an agreement with the Camberwell Council by which the Council guarantee for five years the losses, if any, resulting from operation.

Maximum Fare Sixpence.

In order to stimulate building in the outer suburbs, the Board has made the maximum fare on any direct route to the city 6d. As several of our routes are between 8 and 10 miles from the centre of the city, that fare, looking to the higher scale of wages payable in Victoria as compared with Great Britain, is a transport bargain, and explains why a southern residential district such as East Brighton has expanded remarkably since we extended the route to Point Nepean Road, an area which previously had neither direct rail, bus nor tram communication with the city. Another popular and, incidentally, profitable move by the Board was the running of Sunday morning trams, while the institution of the all-night service has been a boon to many people whose employment necessitates working on until the small hours of the morning. In order to make it easy for the residents of the industrial suburbs to reach the beaches with their families at a cost within their means, the Board has made a family ticket at 2s. 6d. available. For that sum, two adults and three children, or one adult and four children, are carried to and from the beaches or Wattle Park, a reserve of 140 acres of bush preserved in its natural state, but embellished by the Board with a nine-hole golf course and tennis courts, swings, slides, roundabouts, shelters and picnic sites, with water laid on.

All these things have been done notwithstanding the fact that the Board's revenue is subject to an annual drain of more than £100,000 for such extraordinary objects as the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and the Infectious Diseases Hospital. Up to last year there was also an annual contribution of £22,000 to the Licensing Fund. In the last session of the Victorian Parliament, however, a small Act abolishing this payment was passed. Since the Board was formed in 1918 the revenue, as the result of these exactions, has been depleted to the extent of £2,000,000—a handicap which, so far as I am aware, has no counterpart in any other transport system throughout the world.

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