THE 1922 PLAN —— D. MENZIES

Transport history is an interesting subject, sometimes it requires research not only of the time under consideration, but often both prior to and after the main events in order that a complete picture is obtained of what might appear at first a jigsaw puzzle.

In the last article along these lines, "Acts and Antics" (Running Journal December, 1972), the story of the acts, the private operators, and their effect on the finances of the Tramways Board were dealt with. These two factors unfortunately affect this part of the Tramways history.

Under the Melbourne Metropolitan Tramways Act of 1918, Section 34, the Board was required to prepare a general scheme for the development of tramways for the service of the Metropolis and to prepare special schemes for the construction of all future tramways.

The cable system was already under the death sentence by the Royal Commission appointed in November, 1910. This reported in favour of the conversion of the cable system to an electric one using overhead trolley wires for current collection.

To state such a thing is easy enough but to implement it is another. Many "experts" were keen to air their views and the press of the period gave them ample space to do this.

Alderman Sir David Hennesey was such an expert. His main concern was "City Disfigurement" caused by the proposed overhead wires for the trams. He was a member of one of the earlier trusts and while stating that he did not want to embarrass the Tramways Board he certainly caused the Board's Chairman, Mr. Cameron, plenty of work in defending the proposal. Sir David was very interested in the conduit system of current collection and had travelled widely to back up his claims especially dealing with the systems in operation in London and Paris. The Melbourne City Council were also at the start opposed to the trolley wires and Sir David had obtained a lot of information from Paris to assist the noble gentry in their deliverations.

On the other side of the argument was the City Engineer, Mr. Morton, and of course the Tramways Board. Mr. Cameron in one special speech made a series of sarcastic comments on the then existing landscape of Swanston Street, including the verandahs of the shops. One "Electnicus" in a letter to the Editor of the Argus 23rd October, 1922, came out with strong support for the overhead system of current collection using overhead span wires. Not only was the argument over conduit V overhead collection but also span wires as opposed to centre poles to support them. He stated "Keep the overhead as far away from Mother Earth as possible", - very apt! Mr. Cameron stated that conduit track

would cost up to £20,000 per mile to construct, no mean sum, and then set off to see systems abroad for himself.

The overhead wires won the fight as we all know on 13th November 1922, the City Council voted in favour of overhead wires for current collection.

On 10th September 1922 the Tramways Board issued a 14 page booklet "The Interim Report" for the development of Tramways in the City and suburbs. It deals with the reasons for the proposed conversion and modernisation of the tramway system. It takes other means of transportation such as the conduit, surface contact, battery, petrol and petrol electric trams, trolley buses, motor buses and the reasons for their rejection.

The motor bus had its part to play but could not replace the electric tram in City transport. Later of course the Board used motor buses in 1925. The trolley bus was stated to be unsuitable for dense service, they still needed unsightly overhead wires and needed a good road surface to run on. So the electric tram it was to be.

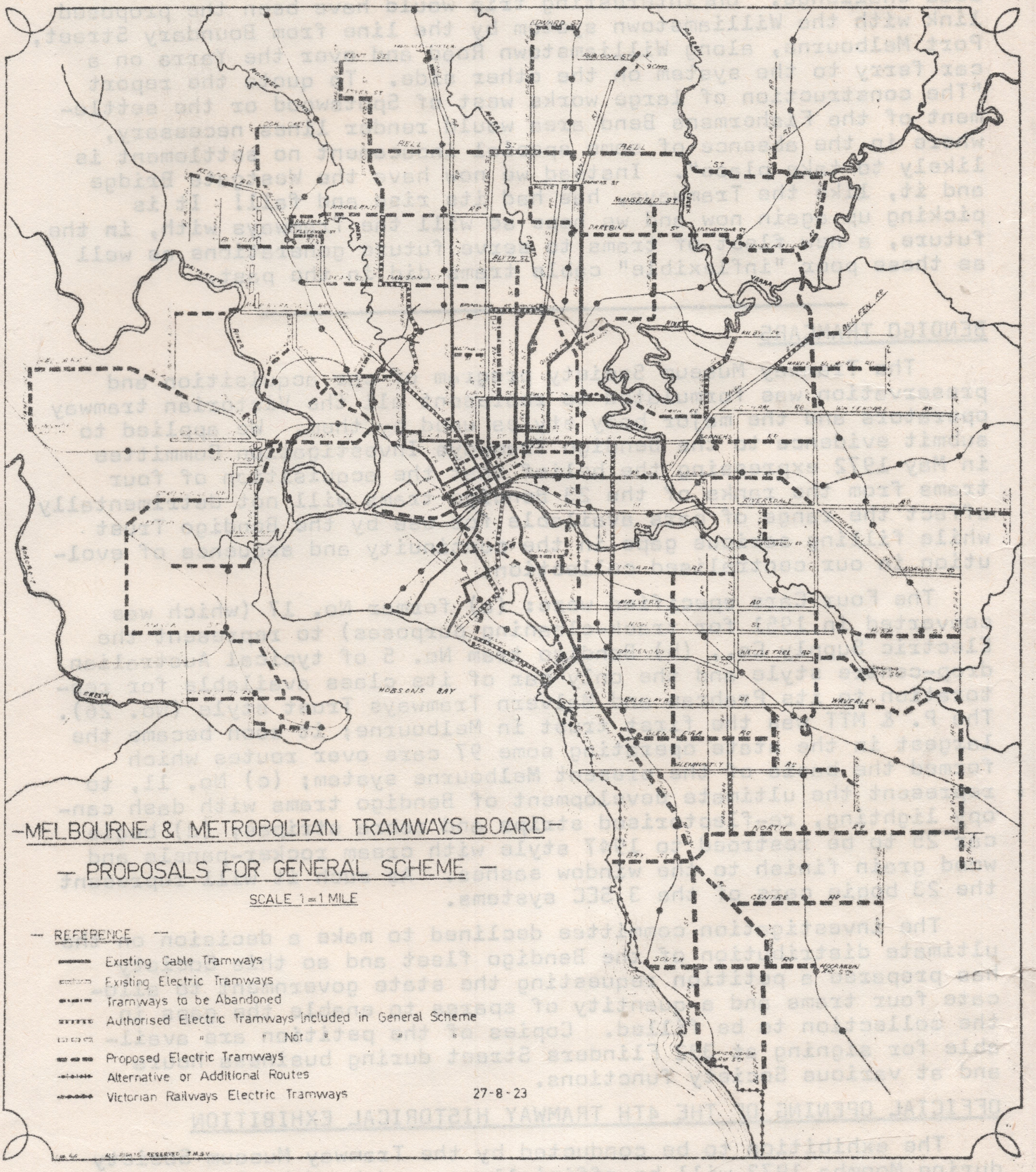
The proposals were submitted to the Minister of Public Works on 30th November, 1922 and was passed on by him to the Parliamentary Railway Standing Committee for consideration and report. Sir David Hennessy had given evidence earlier to the same committee on the overhead wire issue.

On December 2nd, 1922 the complete report was released to the press. There were to have been 226 miles of tramway by 1940. At the time of the report there were 125 route miles of cable and electric tramway. The existing electric services had to be linked up and co-ordinated. The conversion of the doomed cable system was to be an integral part of the whole project.

The cable tram was said to be inflexible, an interesting statement as how many of us have heard the same statement made against the electric tram and the trolley bus. The cable tram was said to be particularly unsuitable for handling special services, whereas by electrification the Board would be able to deal satisfactorily with crowds from football matches, racecourse meetings, and other events involving lots of people. Any combination of cable and electric systems were ruled out.

A map containing the proposed extensions is included to show the extent that the system was to be extended.

To simply state that the cable tram must go is easy but to carry that out was another matter involving considerable traffic and engineering works. This was without taking account of opinions voiced in the press by experts and lobbying by vested interests for their respective causes. Of course like all great plans it was not completed although the plans were well received by the press of the time. The press urged that the money being filched by the State Government under section 88 for the Infectious Diseases hospital be given to the Tramways to carry out this work. The lack of finance caused by this and the competing private operators were blamed by the Board in later years for the failure to carry out the plans.



-MELBOURNE & METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS BOARD
- PROPOSALS FOR GENERAL SCHEME -
SCALE 1=1 MILE
- REFERENCE -
Existing Cable Tramways
Existing Electric Tramways
Tramways to be Abandoned
Authorised Electric Tramways included in General Scheme
" Not " "
Proposed Electric Tramways
Alternative or Additional Routes
Victorian Railways Electric Tramways
27-8-23
HOBSONS BAY
MANSFIELD ST.

So we must sadly reflect that we do not have 266 miles of track to ride on but to at least be thankful that 123 survive; better than nothing. Tours over that mileage would have been a real challenge. One interesting trip would have been the proposed link with the Williamstown system by the line from Boundary Street, Port Melbourne, along Williamstown Road and over the Yarra on a car ferry to the system on the other side. To quote the report "The construction of large works west of Spotswood or the settlement of the Fishermens Bend area would render lines necessary, where in the absence of some special inducement no settlement is likely to take place". Instead we now have the Westgate Bridge and it, like the Tramways, has had its rise and fall! It is picking up again now and we hope so will the Tramways with, in the future, a new fleet of trams to serve future generations as well as those poor "inflexible" cable trams did in the past.

BENDIGO TRAMCARS

The Tramway Museum Society program of car acquisition and preservation was formulated to represent all the Victorian tramway operators and the major body styles used by them. We applied to submit evidence to the Bendigo Tramways Investigation Committee in May 1972 expressing the belief that the acquisition of four trams from the ranks of the 23 Bendigo trams will not detrimentally affect the range of cars available for use by the Bendigo Trust while filling serious gaps in the continuity and sequence of evolution in our centralised collection.

The Four Cars specified were: (a) former No. 17 (which was converted in 1951 for track-cleaning purposes) to represent the Electric Supply Co., (b) Bendigo tram No. 5 of typical Australian drop-centre style and the only car of its class available for restoration to its Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust style (No. 26). The P. & MTT was the first trust in Melbourne; it soon became the largest in the state operating some 97 cars over routes which formed the basis of the present Melbourne system; (c) No. 11, to represent the ultimate development of Bendigo trams with dash canopy lighting, re-flectorised strips and zebra stripes; (d) bogie car 25 to be restroed to 1947 style with cream rocker-panels and wood grain finish to the window sashes. As such it will represent the 23 bogie cars of the 3 SEC systems.

The investigation committee declined to make a decision on the ultimate distribution of the Bendigo fleet and so this Society has prepared a petition requesting the state government to allocate four trams and a quantity of spares to enable the gaps in the collection to be filled. Copies of the petition are available for signing at 332 Flinders Street during business hours and at various Society functions.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 4TH TRAMWAY HISTORICAL EXHIBITION

The exhibition to be conducted by the Tramway Museum Society during Moomba 1973 will be officially opened by W.L. Floyd, O.B.E., M.P. at 8 p.m. on Monday, 5th March. The display hall is located in Stanhope Street, Malvern. In keeping with the practice of previous years, this night will be a members night to which all members and friends are invited to attend.

FROM OUR RECORDS.

Further to the map dated 1923 that appeared in our February issue (Vol. 10, No.1) and which showed proposed electric tramways as at that date, the following is a list of the complete proposals for new routes and extensions as at 1929. Many of these routes were between suburbs or would have at that time "run through districts sparsely populated" and were clearly uneconomic.

One wonders why so many councils were interested; perhaps it was because the MMTB was committed to providing 17 ft. of roadway ("the best roads in the suburban districts are those on which tramways run"), to provide lighting for the streets traversed by tramways (cost $18,000 annually in 1929), to pay rates on its tram tracks ($30,000 a year)....and no doubt land speculators would have benefited.

The present route mileage is 123, the proposals listed total 162 miles!

REQUESTED TRAMWAY EXTENSIONS

	Approx. Length in Chains
North Road to Sandringham, by Hawthorn Rd, Union St. Point Nepean Rd, Bay St., Hampton St., South Rd. to Railway Line.	276
Bay St. from Hampton St. to Port Phillip Bay	108½
Point Nepean Rd. to Bay St.	36
From Dendy St. to St. Kilda St. at Park St.	108½
North Rd. - Ormond R.S. to the Bay	321½
Centre Rd. - Bentleigh R.S. to Hampton St.	133
South Rd. - Moorabbin R.S. to Brighton Beach	217
South Rd. - Hampton St. to Sandringham R.S.	124
South Rd, Bluff Rd., and Royal Avenue	149
Bentleigh R.S. to Boundary Rd.	100
Footscray - Summerhill Rd. to Sunshine	282
East Brunswick - Nicholson St. Cable Terminus to Albion St.	100
Brunswick - Nicholson St. to Holmes Rd.	123
Brunswick Rd. East and Nicholson St. Intersection to Essendon, Footscray, and Back Beach, Williamstown.	910

REQUESTED TRAMWAY EXTENSIONS (Contd.)

	Approx. Length in Chains.
Brunswick and Coburg - Queen Street, from Flinders St. Corner, to Sussex St. at corner of Gaffney Rd.	663
Caulfield-From the River Yarra at Heyington to North Rd. and so down to the Beach	463
Continuation of Brighton Rd. Line along Point Nepean Rd. and North Rd. to Ormond R.S.	304½
Glenhuntly Rd.-Extension to Oakleigh	220½
Gleneira Rd-From Beach to Byron St. to Caulfield R.S.	278
Koornang Rd.-From North Rd. by Lower Malvern Rd. to Burke Rd.	293
Camberwell-From Gleneira R.S. to Boundary Rd.	162
Boundary Rd. from High St. to Norwood Rd.	81
Preston-Regent St. to Edwardes' Park.	86
Extension to Reservoir R.S. along Bell St. from Plenty Rd. Preston to Nicholson St. Coburg.	174
Footscray-Barkly St. to Braybrook Boundary,	50
From Intersection of Napier and Nicholson Sts. to Maribyrnong River, Dudley St. and Docks Rd. to Intersection of Flinders and Spencer Sts.	319
Gleneira Rd. Tramway League-From Murrumbeena by Gleneira Rd. to the Beach.	400
Hawthorn-Burwood Rd. and Camberwell Rd.	150
Heidelberg-Station St. from Heidelberg Rd. to Edwin St.	78
Livingstone St. from Darebin Creek to Waterdale Rd.	52
Heidelberg Rd. from Queen's Parade to Railway opposite Rocke St.	278
Upper Heidelberg Rd. from Rocke St. to corner Plenty Rd. and Bell St.	256
Waterdale Rd. from Upper Heidelberg Rd. to Bell St.	94
Kew-Along Willsmere Rd., Princess St., Church St., to Burwood Rd. East of Hawthorn Bridge.	133
Extension of High St. Line from Strathalbyn St. to Burke Rd.	59
Barker's Rd.-High St. to Burke Rd.	157
Studley Park and Johnston St. Bridge Rds. from High St. to Johnston St. Bridge.	118

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REQUESTED TRAMWAY EXTENSIONS (Contd.)

	Approx. Length in Chains
Coburg-Baker's Rd. to Cemetery Gates.	78
Malvern-Electrification and Extension of Tramway along Toorak Rd. from Burke Rd. to Chapel St., Church St. and Swan St. and on to Victoria Pde.	467½
Tooronga Rd. from Wattletree Rd. to Dandenong Rd.	55
Burke Rd. from Malvern Rd. to Waverley Rd.	119
Extension of Waverley Rd. Line from Darling Rd. to Malvern Rd.	37
Extension of Wattletree Rd. Line to Malvern Rd. and by Belgrave Rd. to Dandenong Rd.	150
Further Extension from Belgrave Rd. to Warrigal Rd.	106
Nunawading-From Boundary Rd. to Elgar Rd. and then on to Box Hill R.S.	203
Northcote-From High St. to U.K. Hotel, Clifton Hill.	301
Oakleigh-Darling Rd. Line to be extended via Waverley Rd. to Box Hill Rd. Oakleigh.	266
Extension of Glenhuntly Rd. line to Warrigal Rd.	220½
Point Nepean Rd.-Ormond R.S. to Warrigal Rd. and on to Dandenong Rd.	205
Extension from Burwood Rd. Terminus to Beach Rd. Mentone.	795
Prahran-Intersection High St. and St. Kilda Rd. to St. Kilda, by Lorne St. Albert Park.	87½
Preston-From Nicholson St. Coburg, to Plenty Rd. Preston, via Bell St.	124
Werribee-From the intersection of Geelong and Williamstown Rds. to Altona Beach	500
Intersection of Blackshaw Rd. and the proposed main Brunswick-Williamstown Line, along Blackshaw Rd. to connect with the Altona-Geelong Rd. Line.	193
Intersection of Somerville-Williamstown Rds. along Yarra or Somerville Rd. to Geelong Rd.	60
Williamstown-Intersection of Melbourne and Station Rds. to Morris St. at the Railway.	100
Nunawading-Along Whitehorse Rd. from Union Rd. to Middlesborough Rd.	175
Burwood Rd. Terminus to Station St.	107
Northern Municipalities-Essendon to Heidelberg.	740
Approximate Total Length	162 miles