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INFORMATION

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ABOUT

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STREET TRAMWAYS.

As Railways have been one of the most powerful factors in producing the wonderful industrial progress of nations in modern times, so also have Street Tramways largely promoted the great increase in population and prosperity of cities which has been a marked feature in the history of the past half-century.

Introduced about fifty years ago in New York, they gradually spread through the cities of America, till now the larger cities have a complete network of lines, and hardly a place of ten thousand inhabitants is without them; and the system has been adopted in nearly all countries of the world.

Tramways are now laid in Great Britain, from London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Manchester, to nearly all places of any size; in all the principal cities of France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark in Europe; in the cities of Rio Janiero, Pernambuco, Bahia, Para, Monte Video, Valparaiso, Santiago, and Lima in South America; in Panama and Mexico; in Calcutta and Bombay in India; in Batavia in the East Indies; in Yokohama, Japan; in Adelaide and Sydney in Australia; and in Dunedin, Christchurch, and Wellington in New Zealand, thus having extended to climes and among peoples most diverse.

The admission of Tramways within the limits of the City of London has for a long while been steadily

opposed, on account of the immense traffic and the narrowness of most of the streets; but recent advices state that last year the concession was granted by Act of Parliament for the laying down of two lines, to be worked on the cable system.

It is evident that Tramways would not thus have been almost universally adopted unless they supplied a great public want.

The styles of rails and carriages used have, during this great extension, been often improved, till now the best forms represent apparently the utmost that can be desired for comfort and convenience.

The introduction of Tramways has been so long and so often discussed in Melbourne that it will be sufficient at present to give succinctly some few of the advantages which may be gained by their adoption here, and to note the objections that have been raised against them, with a few replies thereto.

**The following advantages may fairly be claimed
as given by Tramways :—**

They offer the best method of street communication yet developed.

Because—

They completely supply the requirements of local traffic, passing from house to house.

They are run at very low fares.

They permit of carriages being used which give the greatest possible comfort and convenience to the public, for they are roomy, being wider and higher than omnibuses; run smoothly on the rails, without jolting or noise; are well-ventilated and protected from draughts; are low, and thus easy of access and exit, even to old and infirm people, the steps being within a few inches of the pavement; cannot be overturned, and are fitted with strong brakes that stop them in a few feet, and then hold them firmly, and thus they are very safe for passengers.

The noise and dust of general traffic is largely decreased.

The most popular method of working Tramways is by small and light cars, running at very short intervals, and thus causing no delay for stoppages nor while waiting their approach.

Thus, as a means of cheap, comfortable, convenient, and safe transit, the Street Tramway Cars are unsurpassed by any vehicles used for the purpose.

They largely increase value of property.

Because—

They bring city and suburb near together, by giving regular, quick, and cheap communication.

They enable all classes of people to live at long distances from business premises, thus obtaining for every one the benefit of country or suburban homes, with their fresh air, garden surroundings, and quiet scenes.

They thus spread population over large surfaces, creating and extending the demand for houses and lands.

As evidence of this, it is a common practice in cities where Tramways are laid for large tracts of suburban land to be bought up, and Tramways laid thereto, resulting in quick settlement and large increase of value.

Since omnibuses have been running in Melbourne all suburban property has much increased in value. Tramways will still further raise the value.

They relieve municipalities, and through them the ratepayers, of large items of annual expense.

For—

The Tramway companies maintain in perfect order, under supervision, and to satisfaction of the municipal officers, the portion of each street occupied by Tramways, being 17 feet of the centre, and most used portion of the roadway.

This portion being kept in perfect order, and having also the smooth surface of the rails available for traffic, attracts the major portion of all traffic to itself. Thus the wear on other portions which remain for the municipalities to maintain is greatly decreased, and their expense much lessened.

The direct and indirect saving Tramways thus effect is very large, amounting, from figures furnished by the City Surveyor, to many thousands of pounds annually.

The Tramways are a very valuable property for the assessment of rates, thus again benefiting the ratepayers.

The following objections have been made to the scheme now proposed:—

That they will interfere with ordinary street traffic by their rails and carriages.

This will not be so, as the rails are laid flush with the surface of the street, and though they are made with a groove for the flange of the car-wheel, it is too narrow to receive the tire of the lightest vehicle.

The carriages will be no obstruction as now commonly used, for they run singly, are of small size (being but little larger than omnibuses), and are always in motion, except when, like other vehicles, they are taking up or letting down passengers. So far from obstructing traffic, they assist it.

Captain H. W. Tyler, Inspector to the Board of Trade, in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on Tramways, says of tramcars:—"I think they tend to clear crowded streets, and I have noticed that as they go along they rather make way for the faster traffic through crowded streets than obstruct it."

All vehicles have perfect liberty to cross over or use the Tramways, except for the moment when the tramcar is passing.

That they will take the control of the streets from the local authorities.

This is erroneous, for Tramways, in the first place, cannot be laid without the consent of the municipal

authorities and of the ratepayers, any twenty of whom will have the power of putting the matter to the test of a popular vote; and, in the second place, when laid they will be subject to the traffic arrangements of the police and other authorities.

All the laying down, alteration, and maintenance is to be done under the supervision and to the satisfaction of the municipal authorities.

That they will disfigure the streets, and injure other traffic by frightening horses.

These objections might hold if it was intended to use steam motors and large or unsightly tramcars.

But steam motors are *prohibited* by the Bill, and the motive power will be horses; or, possibly, the wire cable below the surface, working in a tube, and moved by stationary engines at the ends of the routes.

The cars will be small, neatly decorated, and no more unsightly than omnibuses.

That they will ruin suburban trade.

This objection was raised against the omnibuses on their introduction, but has not been sustained by experience.

Neither will Tramways ruin suburban trade, but rather, like the omnibuses, they will increase general traffic, and give greater facilities for the public to patronise suburban shops, both from the city, from other suburbs, and from the remoter portions to which Tramways will be extended. It has been amply demonstrated

that suburban business, by reason of the lower charges to which it is subjected for rent, &c., can hold its own, and Tramways will help rather than prevent this.

That the passage of the carriages will in narrow streets interfere with the ordinary receipt and delivery of goods along the footpath.

The narrowest street in which it is proposed to lay Tramways has a width of 47 ft. 3 in. between the kerbs.

The tramcars, even when both rails are occupied with cars passing each other, will occupy but 15 ft. 6 in. in the centre of the road, thus leaving a clear space of 16 ft. on either side, being more than abundant room for the standing of other vehicles to deliver goods.

In some of the cities in Great Britain, Tramways are laid in streets but 40 ft. wide, and cause no inconvenience.

That Tramways will destroy the cab traffic.

This was also predicted of the omnibuses, but has proved erroneous, for the cabs have annually increased in number and traffic (see report in the *Age* of May 16th, 1882, appended hereto).

Tramways, by their extra facilities for traffic, will again largely increase the riding habits of the people, and the cabs will further participate in this increase.

Tramways will not prevent cabs from using the streets, and running alongside the cars, and at lower fares if their owners so choose, nor from running up and down side streets, nearer to passengers' homes, &c. And inasmuch as the tramcars will be rigidly confined to their lines of rail, the cabs will have the entire outside and occasional traffic to themselves.

In London it has been found that both omnibuses and cabs have benefited by the introduction of Tramways.

That Tramways will be an opposition to Railways.

This will not be the case, for Tramways serve the public in a different way, and in a manner that railways can never do. They serve a local traffic, running from house to house, and at a low rate of speed. Railways, by travelling at a faster pace, will always take those who wish to save time in going from place to place at a distance apart; but "way traffic" can only be served by Tramways. For business people it cannot be supposed that a car travelling at seven miles an hour will be preferred to a railway carriage travelling at twenty miles.

Tramways will, instead, feed the railways, taking people to and from their stations, and, by their facilities, increase the riding habits of the public, and hence the general traffic, in which the railways will participate and benefit.

This is found in London, where the traffic of the Metropolitan Railway has largely increased since Tramways were introduced.

That Tramways should be laid and worked by the Government.

This would be to deprive the municipalities of the proper control of their streets, and of the right to levy rates on the undertaking; it would also put the Local Councils at immeasurable disadvantage in protecting the rights of the citizens. Unless by steam motors, which in a neighbouring colony have been prolific of accidents, no Government could carry on the work.

In only one instance in the history of Tramways—that of Sydney—has this been attempted, and the result has been, not a street Tramway in the proper sense of the words, but a street Steam Railway, without fences or protectors.

That Tramways should be laid and worked by the municipal authorities.

The opinion of the world is against this contention. This practice has been adopted in but a few instances among the many hundred cities wherein Tramways are now laid and worked.

It is thus almost universally recognised that the public is better served by Tramways laid and worked by companies under proper municipal supervision and control, as it is entirely to the interest of the companies to use the best appliances and most spirited management to obtain traffic. Also, to study true economy by keeping the road and stock in the best repair, and to extend the lines to new districts as soon as required.

The fares being fixed by law, and the powers to be given having to be exercised under municipal control, the public can suffer from no imposition or neglect.

That the concession of Tramways establishes a monopoly.

This is untrue, except that only the Company can use on the rails carriages fitted with flanged wheels.

There will be no monopoly of traffic, for cabs and omnibuses can still ply as usual.

There will be no monopoly of roadway, for all other vehicles can still use the whole width of the street, except the space occupied by the *tramcar when passing*, and that is no greater space or reservation than that possessed by *other vehicles at all times*.

There will be no monopoly of fares, for the maximum will be fixed by law, and other vehicles can run at lower rates if their owners choose.

There will be no monopoly of profits even, for it is provided that after giving a fair return upon the capital invested, the *Municipalities share directly in the surplus*.

There will be no monopoly for unlimited time of the rights given, for it is provided that the Tramways shall be compulsorily sold at a valuation without any compensation for goodwill to the Municipalities, if they so choose, after the fixed and reasonable term of twenty-one years.

In England the term varies from twenty-one to twenty-eight years, and in America from fifty years upwards.

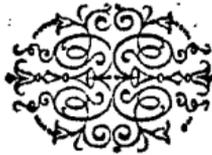
Thus, if they are badly worked, or found to be disadvantageous to the public in the hands of the Company, they can be taken away from them.

If Tramways are adopted in Melbourne under the proposed scheme, the Company will expend in per-

manent way and carriages—all of which will be made here—over £500,000. It will annually disburse many thousands in wages for drivers, grooms, road labourers, carriage builders, and blacksmiths, &c., and the incomes of the various Cities and Towns will be benefited by rates levied on the undertaking and by lessened road repairs to a very large amount.

MELBOURNE TRAMWAY AND OMNIBUS COMPANY LIMITED.

June 13, 1882.



OMNIBUS TRAFFIC IN MELBOURNE.

(FROM THE "AGE," MAY 16TH, 1882.)

THE chief objection urged against the introduction of Tramways into Melbourne by the persons most concerned, the cab-drivers, is that the presence of Tramways on the principal lines of passenger traffic in and around the city will have the effect of driving the hackney cabs off the streets, and forcing their owners to buy hansoms, if they desire to make a livelihood at their calling. This assertion is plausible; but we are happy to think there is very little probability of this being the effect of the new system.

When the Omnibus Company first started operations in Melbourne, the same cry was raised that cabs would have to go to the wall. Cabs were then, with perhaps one or two exceptions, running to the suburbs at sixpenny fares, which were increased to a shilling at an early hour at night. The distances they plied were also much less than at present. The 'buses were introduced, and threepenny fares were charged for distances much in excess of the cabs. The cabmen thought they would be rapidly ruined by such an innovation. Far from the dreaded 'bus traffic injuring the cab traffic, it seems to have increased the latter. Cabdrivers themselves will, no doubt, be surprised to learn that when the Omnibus Company began operations in 1869, with 18 'buses, there were only 964 hackney cabs licensed in Melbourne; and that at the present time, when the Company is running 169 'buses, the cabs of Melbourne number over 1300. Whether it is that the increased facilities of transit, and the low fares, have made the public a riding one, or have led to the increase of population in suburbs, since they have been made easily accessible from the city, or whether both causes have operated together, there is no doubt that facilities have, in this instance, made traffic. The following table will show at a glance the number of each class of vehicles at the end of each year since the Omnibus Company commenced operations:—

Year.	'Buses.	Cabs.	Year.	'Buses.	Cabs.
1860 ..	20	964	1876 ..	69	1309
1870 ..	34	1004	1877 ..	91	1306
1871 ..	44	1102	1878 ..	153	1345
1872 ..	44	1191	1879 ..	172	1281
1873 ..	63	1242	1880 ..	173	1330
1874 ..	65	1234	1881 ..	169	1456
1875 ..	67	1314	1882 ..	169	*1903

* To date.

It is curious, also, that from the introduction of the 'buses, from 1869 to 1882, the cabs running regularly between the city and Collingwood, in direct competition with 'buses, have increased from 80 to 130; on the Carlton line from 70 to 140; and on the Emerald Hill line from 50 to 80. The Hotham cabs are also ascertained to have doubled their number in the same period, though the exact figures cannot be procured.

In its prospectus the Omnibus Company stated that its object was to provide a safe, easy, and cheap means of transit to and from the various suburbs and along the lines of the principal streets of the city. It is asserted by the directory that the introduction of Tramways was in contemplation when that prospectus was drawn up, but that it was deemed best to defer the attempt until the public was better prepared than at that time for their introduction. Tramways are merely a development of 'bus traffic, which has been in turn an improvement upon the old-fashioned cab traffic. Its extension is limited by the necessity of having rails laid wherever it is introduced. The chief value of the rails is to make travelling smoother for passengers and lighter for horses than the ordinary wheel traffic. There is, consequently, no more probability of the cabs suffering any detriment from the presence of Trams in the streets than there was from the 'buses.



