

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Railway Lines in St. Kilda.—Railway, Companies, Their Proposals—Melbourne to St. Kilda Railway—Street Crossings at Emerald Hill—Work Leads to Fights and Police Court and Supreme Court Cases—St. Kilda Council Objects to Grey Street Tunnel—Passage of Railway Bill Opposed—Council Successful—Brighton Railway, Agitation for Railway Stations by St. Kilda Residents—Fitzroy Street Encroached Upon for Railway Station—Council Protest and Fight—Fitzroy, Street Compromise—Two Chains in Width—Line Opened May 13, 1857—The Loop Line to Windsor—Description of Line—Proposals for Railway to Elwood—The Commissioner of Railways Scheme Around Esplanade—Councillor O'Donnell Denounces Scheme as "Outrageous"—Scheme Abandoned—The Electric Street Railway to Brighton—Council Moves for New Railway Station at St. Kilda.

THE St. Kilda-Melbourne railway line was built by the Melbourne & Hobson's Bay Railway Company, as a branch line of the Sandridge (Port Melbourne) railway. At one time, two railway companies proposed to intersect St. Kilda with railways. The St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company, by a direct line from the St. Kilda terminus of the Melbourne & Hobson's Bay Railway Company to Brighton, passing through St. Kilda, partly by a tunnel, under Grey Street. The Melbourne & Suburban Railway Company, proposed to lay a line, via Prahran, through the eastern part of St. Kilda.

An advertisement appeared in the Government Gazette, August 3, 1853, regarding one of these railways. The advertisement was signed by Trenchard & Brookfield, solicitors, and parliamentary agents. They gave notice of their intention to apply to the Legislative Council, for an Act to incorporate a joint stock company to be called, "The Melbourne, St. Kilda, and Brighton Railway Company."

During the latter part of 1856, and the first four months of the year 1857, the Melbourne to St. Kilda railway line was in the process of construction. The line was not a popular one with the Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne) council, nor was it favored by the residents of the Albert Park division of Emerald Hill. Several disputes arose over the construction of

level crossings, which were the main works that the ratepayers objected to. The temper of the ratepayers was echoed in, the Emerald Hill Council, and the Council's employees took their attitudes from the spirit of the Council. On one occasion, it was only the intervention of the police that prevented what would have perhaps been a serious fight between the men of the Company, and the employees of the Council. Court cases arising out of assaults between the navvies, and the council employees, were heard in the Emerald Hill police court. Litigation also, was started between the Emerald Hill Council, and the Directors of the Company. Lawyers were seeing ahead the prospect of large bills of costs ; barristers were receiving generous fees for considered opinions, and also for retainers. In time the Council, and the Company, remembered the fable of the oyster, the lawyer and the shell, and they saw if they continued to bark at each other along the costly, and labyrinthic paths, leading to the law courts, the only persons who would enjoy the oyster would be the legal gentlemen. Therefore they held a meeting, in a friendly spirit of compromise, and then, and there, at that meeting for peaceful solutions, it was decided that both parties should stop what was termed by them "the childish nonsense of fighting at law about trivial details." After that satisfactory reconciliation the construction of the railway line moved along under more peaceful conditions. The lawyers sighed, they had to be content to draw up their bills of cost for the work already done.

One of several letters, to the Melbourne newspapers, was written by the newspapers' ancient friend, "Old Subscriber." We reproduce it as an echo of the year 1856, when St. Kilda residents "talked railways." He wrote the letter to The Argus in November of that year asking "whether the railway was not got up by the Hobson's Bay Railway for their advantage or for the benefit of the St. Kilda residents? If the latter, as far as I am able to judge," he wrote, "from where the terminus is to be, namely on the swamp, on the north side of Fitz Roy Street, about halfway between the Junction, and the Bathing ship, it is likely to be entirely a failure, as regards the majority of the inhabitants of St. Kilda. If the line is to be carried further, taking Grey Street as the route, and continued, about a mile, it should at once be clearly defined."

"Subscriber" further said, that he wanted to know what the Company intended to do so that he would know, whether or not, to avoid the trouble, and expense of building in Grey Street. He was afraid he would suffer the loss of the houses, he contemplated building, by having them taken away from him by the Railway Company, and that he would not be able to obtain sufficient money for the injury so done to him, under the terms of compulsory arbitration. At the same time, he was anxious for the convenience of a railway, as the residents wanted to see the end of the omnibus service to Melbourne. They were tired of waiting on the roads for the omnibus to come along, and "getting wet through, or scorched in the broiling sun" while they waited.

The St. Kilda & Brighton Railway Company was assessed in Brighton at the annual value of 136; in the district of Prahran at the annual value of £491; in the district of St. Kilda, at the annual value of 12,427 which was reduced, on appeal, to £2,200. In the half yearly report of the Company, issued in August, 1859, the directors, addressing the shareholders, say "with regard to this last, and excessive assessment, your directors can only express their extreme regret, that this municipal body of St. Kilda should have imposed so heavy a tax upon an undertaking of this nature, which, as the best road that can be made, is calculated materially to increase the value of property in the district, and thereby promote the best interests of the municipality." One of the shareholders regarded the clause as offensive to the St. Kilda Council, and he sought to have the offending sentence expunged, but he was unsuccessful. Charles Hobson Ebdon, was the chairman of the directors, and the Company's charter was contained in "An Act intituled the St. Kilda, and Brighton Railway Company's Extension of Powers Bill."

The St. Kilda Council deemed the St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company's scheme, with its proposed tunnel under Grey Street, as "detrimental to the interests of the town. The Council was supported by the opinion of the inhabitants generally, the Council's chairman opposed the passing of the bill for making that line, in the House of Assembly, and at the close of the half year" (we are quoting from a council report, dated 1857) "negotiations were in progress, for uniting the lines

of both companies by a loop line, from the Hobson's Bay railway, through Windsor, and continuing by a united line from Chapel Street, through the Eastern part of St. Kilda to Brighton. Such a line, the Council had all along in view, as the best for St. Kilda, and, at the time this report is prepared, the object is likely to be accomplished."

Originally it appears to have been the intention, when the loop line was decided upon, to run from Chapel Street Railway Station (now Windsor Railway Station) direct to Bay Street, Brighton, without any intermediate railway stations ; a decision that suggests the directors of the railway company did not consider, that the density of population would give a profit on intermediate stations. The residents viewed the railway from the point of its public utility, more than as a joint stock company's venture created to pay dividends. The residents declared that railway stations were required, and they took steps to try to obtain them. In September, 1859, a meeting of district residents was held, in the Elsternwick Hotel, Brighton Road, for the advertised "purpose of securing railway stations at Carlisle Street, and Glen Huntly Road, from the St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company. The librarian of the Melbourne Public Library, Augustus H. Tulk, was in the chair. A number of locally distinguished men were present at the meeting, among them being George Rolfe, R. Wash, F. J. Sargood, William Peterson, T. Hart, E. Agg, W. K. Thompson, J. Houstin M.L.A. and others. The meeting passed a resolution that, forwarded on to the Company's directors, had the desired effect. The resolution was the cause of the Balaclava Railway Station, and the Elsternwick Railway Station, being placed where they are. The resolution read, "That this meeting is of opinion that permanent stations at the Glen Huntly Road, and Carlisle Street, are positively wanted to meet the requirements of the neighbourhood."

In March, 1858, the St. Kilda Council stated, in its half yearly report, that as reported at the close of the former half year, the Council has the satisfaction of stating, that the opposition made by it to the Railway bills, before Parliament, was entirely successful, and that Acts for the construction of the railway line to St. Kilda passed the Legislature, in accordance with the Council's views, the effect of which will be, that the line to Brighton will pass from the present station through East St.

Kilda, by way of Windsor, the suburban line from Melbourne through Prahran, joining the St. Kilda Railway, near Chapel Street. In the language of the "Enabling Act" the St. Kilda railway terminus was to have been "at or near Norton's Store," which store was opposite the corner of Barkly and Grey Streets. The property holders along Grey Street supported the Council, and protested strongly against a tunnel being driven through the hill. The railway stopped at Fitzroy Street. The Company extended its line to a point more than half way across Fitzroy Street, encroaching on a street that was intended to be a road of three chains in width. This trespass on Fitzroy Street, brought strong objections from the residents. The St. Kilda Council joined forces with its ratepayers, and a public meeting of protest was held. The Council, and the burgesses were engaged, for a long time, in endeavouring to adjust the question with the railway company. The company argued that its works were within the limits of its grant, though its engineers had narrowed Fitzroy Street to a little more than one chain wide.

After many argumentative negotiations, wherein the Government was disposed to support the views of the Councillors, it was considered advisable, by a public meeting of the inhabitants to compromise, and to consent to the street being limited to two chains in width. The Council, after some hesitation and discussion, finally concurred in that view. The railway authorities then partly withdrew from their trespass. As a sop to injured public feeling the Government agreed to lay down an ornamental plantation within the park fence at Fitzroy Street.

On May 14, 1857, the Melbourne Morning Herald published the following paragraph:—

"The Melbourne and St. Kilda railway line was opened yesterday to the public, and the trains were well patronised throughout the day. The time-table was not very accurately observed, but every allowance must be made for beginnings, and no doubt when the line comes into regular working order, in a few days, the necessary punctuality will be enforced. We regret to learn that an accident to one of the railway men, which it is hoped will not prove serious, occurred during the morning at the St. Kilda terminus." At a later date the paper says :—

"The St. Kilda Railway is one of our greatest luxuries, and the most useful of our institutions. All the world— that is Melbourne—lives out of town, and as St. Kilda is on the Bay, and the Bay and the scenery around it are very pretty, Melbourne transports a very large portion of itself to that locality, by means of a three-mile railway and a ten minutes ride. Every passenger of course has a grievance, and ninepence a day is equally of course too much to pay for riding backwards and forwards, as often as you like, during sixteen hours. The ordinary day trains are crowded, and at holiday times the passengers are numbered by thousands, and tens of thousands. The station is a neat brick edifice, containing refreshment, and waiting rooms for ladies, and the indispensable accompaniment of a large bar, and a pretty barmaid."

What more could the residents of St. Kilda ask for, or desire? When the line was opened the directors held a banquet in the room where the, booking office is now, and made such complimentary speeches as they deemed suitable to the occasion.

John Wakefield, of Salisbury Street, Caulfield, was aged 94 years on March 25, 1930. It was he who, as a booking clerk for the Melbourne & Hobson's Bay Railway, issued the first railway ticket at the St. Kilda Railway Station, Fitzroy Street, when the railway was opened on May 14, 1857. Eventually he advanced from the position of a ticket clerk to the one of secretary of the Railway Company.

A newspaper complained, in February 22, 1859, that some of the rails on the St. Kilda Railway had cracked, that the railway carriage oscillated, that the rails were loose, and that the pigeon box, at the St. Kilda Railway station, where passengers obtained their tickets was rushed, and that "the unprotected female, the historical character, can scarcely be served at all."

On March 9, 1859, a meeting of the shareholders of the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company, was held in the offices of the company, in Flinders Street, Melbourne, when a motion was put, and carried, to authorise the payment of £5,000 to the Brighton and St. Kilda Railway Company, upon the completion of the loop line to St. Kilda. On April 27, a new line of rails was laid down on the St. Kilda railway. We are told that "these rails are much heavier than the old ones,

the weight being 80 lb. They have been furnished by the Government, with the understanding, that when those ordered by the Company arrive, an equivalent shall be returned. Captain Pasley has inspected the line, and reported favourably thereon to the Government. A second line of rails, of the same weight, will be laid when they arrive from England." In May, the inhabitants of St. Kilda, who were in the habit of travelling on the Hobson's Bay Railway, were preparing a petition to the directors of that line. The petition requested that the rate for monthly tickets might be lowered, from thirty shillings, to twenty shillings. The petition, by May 18, was signed by 300 travellers. The Herald newspaper, stated that, "If the course set forth, in this memorial, be adopted by the directors, it will probably, in the long run, tend to their advantage, as it will induce more persons to reside at St. Kilda." The directors refused to lower the price of the railway tickets, on the ground that if they did so, the railway would not pay the costs of its upkeep, and running expenses.

The St. Kilda & Brighton Railway Company was authorised to construct a loop line running between the St. Kilda railway terminus, in Fitzroy Street, and the Windsor Railway station. Starting from the St. Kilda Railway station the first portion of the loop line to Windsor, consisted of an embankment, fifteen feet in height, and it extended in a north easterly direction, for a distance of between 600, and 700 feet in length. To avoid, as far as possible, the complete severance of the Albert Park lands, the railway line was, from the termination of the embankment, carried across the lower end of the Albert Park lagoon, by a wooden viaduct, between 600 and 700 feet in length. This viaduct was supported by blue gum posts, thirty feet in length. They were driven into the swampy ground, to a depth of fifteen feet. At each end of the viaduct was a carriage way, spanned by a strong arch, with two side arches, of ten feet in span, over the footways in the park. The viaduct was terminated by bluestone abutments, which acted as supports to the earth work. The remainder of the railroad to the St. Kilda Road consisted of an earth embankment. These embankments were built up with the earth that was excavated from the hill of St. Kilda at the spot which is now the Windsor railway cutting, between the Windsor Railway Station and the Dandenong Road.

The St. Kilda railway loop line to Windsor, was projected across the St. Kilda Road by an underway bridge, the abutments, and the wing walls, being built of bluestone. The intervening piers, supporting the bridge, were formed of double rows of blue gum poles, from which an arch, with a forty two feet spring, stretched across the centre of St. Kilda Road, at a height of fifteen feet from the crown of the road, to the under surface of the arch. Two side arches between the piers, and the stone abutments, provided for footways of twenty feet in width. From this bridge, the line continued, by an embankment, which gradually decreased to a level crossing at Union Street, Windsor. The embankment, at Punt Road, was again extended by means of a bridge across Punt Road, the bridge being similar to the one that spanned St. Kilda Road. The railway loop line curved into the Windsor Railway Station, then called the Chapel Street Railway Station, through, what are now, the railway yards and wood sidings. After leaving Chapel Street station, the train entered the cutting, as trains do today going to Brighton, and on the submerged line of rails, crossed the line of Dandenong Road, spanned by a bridge, and the railway track on its way, through Alma Park to North Brighton. The railway cutting was approximately a mile in length. Its greatest depth was thirty two feet. The substance of the cutting was stiff clay, and ferruginous sandstone. For years after the loop line was demolished, a portion of the railway embankment was standing in the park, alongside the St. Kilda Road. The embankment was much scored in its sides, by runs of water in rainy seasons, and we recall the red cliff-like appearance the embankment had, its color due to iron sandstone disintegrations. Some of the earth that formed a portion of the embankment was disposed of as filling for the south end of the Albert Park lagoon's swampy marsh that extended south west towards Fitzroy Street. The disused railway embankments on the St. Kilda Road were regarded by many travellers as offensive to their sense of beauty. They clamored for the removal of the embankments, which were later carted away.

At the half yearly meeting held on August 9, 1859, of the St. Kilda & Brighton Railway Company, the Chairman, the Hon. C. H. Ebdon, M.L.A. stated that the financial statement exhibited as principal items, shares and calls in full 161,772 ; Hobson's Bay Company's Instalment £5,000, other creditors £21,084.9.10.

The total debtor account was £88,010.3.4. On the debtor side appeared the following: Land and compensation, £28,087.11.3 ; arbitration and law charges, £1,181.1.6 ; preliminary expenses, 1706.7.8; advertising etc., £340.7.9; incidental expenses, £675 10.2; Engineering and survey, £2,001.16.6; contractor 152,275; other charges, £2,100 14/-; old materials, £26; interest, £611 16.6; petty cash, £3.18. Total £88,010.3.4.

The first train travelled over the St. Kilda to Windsor loop line railway on Saturday December 3, 1859. This special train was run the entire length of the line. The passengers, in the pioneer train, consisted of the chairman, and directors of the railway company, some of the principal shareholders, and a few selected individuals, interested in the undertaking. At 12 o'clock the train, which comprised an engine, and two carriages, containing about 40 persons, left the terminus of the Hobson's Bay Railway Company, in Flinders Street. After a short delay, at the St. Kilda station, the train entered upon the new loop line. The distance from Flinders Street, four and three quarters of a mile, was traversed in about twelve minutes, the speed of the train being occasionally slackened, to enable the passengers to examine work done, along the line of the railway. The arrival of the train, at Bay Street, Brighton, was loudly cheered by the men employed on the line, who, having been, in honor of the occasion, indulged with an adequate supply of beer, were as demonstrative as navvies usually are, on such favored occasions. Two three horse omnibuses conveyed the railway guest party from the Bay Street railway station, to the Brighton Hotel where a sumptuous feast was waiting for them. There they ate, and made complimentary speeches. At the dinner were prominent St. Kilda residents, who were large share holders in the company. Among those present were, the Hon. T. T. aBeckett, M.L.C. who lived in Alma Street, East, Messrs. D. S. Campbell, Jackson Street, W. Brooks, Argyle Street East, J Badcock, Brice F. Bunny, Inkermann Street E., Alex Stephenson, High Street, and—O'Neil, and the secretary of the Company, W. R. Johnson, and the Engineer, of the line, Charles Swyer, who lived in Dalgety Street, Joseph Randell of Clyde Street, the contractor, and J. F. Higgins, Maryville Street, the contractor for the Melbourne and Suburban Railway. When the members of the party returned to Bay Street, they were greeted with loud hurrahs from the assembled navvies. The

well fed guests were flattered by such disinterested expressions of good will, on the part of the thirsty men, who had been engaged in the labors of constructing the St. Kilda loop line railway to Brighton. The passengers in acknowledgment hastily improvised a foot race for the navvies. The race was run off in heats, and the prize was a purse of money. The sober train, with its well satisfied passengers, reached Melbourne at five o'clock. Later the Government engineer inspected the line of railway, and passed it as safe to use. Ten days after the time the first train carried the celebration party, from St. Kilda to Brighton, the railway, St. Kilda to Brighton, was open for general traffic. No trains travelled past St. Kilda to Windsor after seven o'clock at night. The St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company, from the date of the opening of its railway, 1859, until 1862, when the Company was bought out by the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company found the "loop line" railway was an unprofitable "link". It was therefore abandoned by its new owners. The last journey made by a train along the loop line was on September 20, 1862. The loop line venture had cost £70,000.

In February, 1864, the St. Kilda Council sued the St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company for its municipal rates, so deplorable a pass had that Company reached. No opposition was made to a court order in favor of the Council, with 5/- costs. And yet the railway prospectus of the first proposals said among the reasons why the proposition to build a railway was likely to be profitable was because "By the industry and wealth of the colonists, Melbourne has become one of the most extraordinary cities of the world. By railway connection the towns, and villages, will make gigantic strides towards the attainment of a secure position."

Enterprise in building houses was the outcome of the railway coming to St. Kilda. Easy communication with Melbourne opened up a new phase of life in St. Kilda. The close family conservation of the one time "little village," was invaded by other interests. "Strangers" came into the community that had once enjoyed a sort of genteel isolation from Melbourne, and their coming meant that the old scheme of village life was to pass away for ever.

The land where the St. Kilda Bowling Club, and the Park State School are situated originally sloped down west towards

the beach. It was low lying, more or less swampy, and under water in winter. When the Melbourne to St. Kilda railway was built, the railway embankment cut the direct drainage to the west off, and the water had to find an outlet along the base of the embankment, beneath an embankment bridge, still in use, a short distance from the railway station. The land upon which the station stands is made-up land, and was held on the west, in its position by a supporting wall. Past the railway station on the north west side of Fitzroy Street the land levels continued to fall, and the whole of that land was formerly more or less a swamp, extending to the West Beach.

Where the Balaclava Railway Station now stands, was a portion of the Blenheim Park Estate, consisting of 178 allotments of land, that were offered for auction sale on October 6, 1857. The estate had, for its boundaries, Balaclava, Chapel, and Nightingale (Government) Streets, and it fronted two Government reserves. One was the market reserve, upon which is now erected the City Hall, and the other reserve, adjoined the market reserve, and it was the church reserve, whereon now is the Holy Trinity Church Balaclava, and the Methodist Churches. Fifty-four of the allotments faced Marlborough Street, and fifty four Rosamond Street, these street place names being contemporary with the time of the sale. The auctioneers were Symons and Perry. They sold the land in a tent, and they provided a champagne luncheon, served in the tent at noon. The estate was described, as one remove in title from the Crown, and as "the most valuable unsold large portion of land, in the municipality of St. Kilda."

On June 26, 1899, a petition was presented to the St. Kilda Council, from a body of St. Kilda ratepayers, which had been formed calling themselves the Elwood Railway League. The object of the League was to secure the extension of the St. Kilda railway line, through Elwood, South to Brighton, to encourage settlement in a portion of the St. Kilda, and Brighton municipalities, then only sparsely populated. The Government had just completed the reclamation of the more or less swamp land, bounded by Barkly Street, Mitford Street, Dickens Street, and Glen Huntly Road. The first meeting of the Elwood Railway League was held in the Village Belle Hotel on June 19, 1899. The Hon. Thomas Loader was in the chair, a man of some prominence in the commercial world of Melbourne as chairman

of the now defunct City of Melbourne Bank, and of some trading companies. He lived in South St. Kilda from the very early days of its settlement. We have seen a trade description of him as an ironmonger, St. Kilda, and this may imply that he was an early ironmonger of St. Kilda. In an old lease, we have perused, he was called "a cow keeper." After settling in St. Kilda, he went into partnership with another early resident Sydney James. James knew James Mason's tailor's shop in High Street, Walsall, the same James Mason who made his fortune in Victoria and who, in after years subscribed £1,000 towards the municipal city hall organ. James was a son of the owner and Master of a large foundry, the James Foundry of Walsall. Sydney James did not follow the calling of an iron founder, but learnt instead the trade of saddlers' ironmongery, for which Walsall was famous before the days of motor cars. He, and Loader, started as wholesale saddlery ironmongers in Elizabeth Street, at the heyday of the times of Cobb & Co's coaches, and of the importation of American buggies, and of a thousand articles for the diggings. Loader and James, among other things made money out of importing discarded silk ribbons, and silk selvages from Coventry, England, the town of the silk industry. The silk remnants were sent out crushed into light barrels, and they were sold freely throughout Victoria for crackers for whips ; drivers of bullock teams specially, favoring the silk crack that snapped with a report like a pistol shot. A strange way whereby to make money out of a waste product, but that it was done shows the possibilities of the profitable trading days of the gold fields. James knew George Watson, the St. Kilda resident of coach and racing fame, and he had ridden to the hounds in Ireland under Watson's mastership. When James settled in St. Kilda he bought land at Elwood, and he also renewed his acquaintance with Watson, who was then the master of the Melbourne Hunt Club. James hunted with the Melbourne hounds under Watson's leadership.

Sydney James was one of the foundation members of the first masonic lodge in St. Kilda, the Lodge St. Kilda No. 917, E.C., later No. 634 E.C. The first Worshipful Master was Isaac —; Foundation Members, Edmond Thomas Bradshaw, Town Clerk of St. Kilda, Francis John Bligh, merchant, of the firm Bligh & Harbottle, Barkly Street, Edward Sydes, Sydney James, Martin A. Krohn, all merchants, Henry Carroll,

Clerk of Petty. Sessions. (There were two Carrolls on the St. Kilda Ratepayers' Roll for 1859, Darby and Patrick, but no Henry.) Reginald Scaife, insurance broker. The first initiate was Robert Brunnett June 14, 1854. Two of the members were William Kenny, initiated July 5, 1860, Edward Duckett, ironmonger, initiated, 1862. In the year, 1854, the lodge met at the Royal Hotel, Esplanade St. Kilda and in 1862 at Pitts Hotel, Robe Street, St. Kilda. The lodge lapsed on June 5, 1882, and was erased from the register June 5, 1889.

In the year 1900 the late Sydney James told us that he had followed the hounds through paddocks bordering on the south side of Wellington Street onward to Malvern. It was with the greatest difficulty, having been away from St. Kilda, for many years, that he could recognise places he once knew. When gold was found in New Zealand, James left St. Kilda, and went to Dunedin, with a shipment of Irish salted butter for sale to the diggers. He did not return to Melbourne till about forty years had passed. For many years, he was the secretary of the Dunedin Jockey Club. When he died, his son succeeded to the position. James's partner Thomas Loader remained in Melbourne, entered politics, and became the Minister of Railways in 1861, which he may have deemed a qualification for being the Chairman of the Elwood Railway League in 1899. His son was a well known resident of South St. Kilda, and a solicitor by profession. In such movements (1899) as the removal of the Elwood abattoirs, Frank C. Loader, solicitor, was in evidence. His father's last public appearance we think, in St. Kilda, after his many years association with it, was at this meeting of the Elwood Railway League.

The Hon. Thomas Loader, by which title he was invariably addressed, in opening the meeting at the Village Belle Hotel, said that within his memory, he had seen high festivals held on the vacant lands, opposite the Village Belle Hotel, on every New Year holiday. The greatest event was the roasting of a bullock. The roasting of that particular bullock is a story that no early St. Kilda resident ever omitted to tell, though such ancients of the village green must be very hard to find to-day. The longevity of the story is great. Later we tell of the occasion of the incident. The ox was roasted in a paddock alongside the Village Belle Hotel. The carcass was spitted on specially made griddles. The roasting was far from a success, and the resulting roast

created among the spectators more laughter than appetite. A few strips of beef were cut off the carcase, but the meat was not only underdone, but it was raw beneath the burnt outside. The bullock, slaughtered to make a Royal holiday, served its purpose, and also drew a large crowd to the Village Belle Hotel.

At the Elwood Railway League meeting, one of the speakers, who followed the Hon. Thomas Loader, said he was the oldest resident of Elwood, by name John Broadbent. He settled in Elwood in the years of the fifties, on the strength of a promise that the St. Kilda Railway would go through Elwood. He had waited forty years for the railway line, but he did not expect to live to see the line constructed.

Victor Lemme, an ex-schoolmaster from the Geelong Grammar School, and afterwards an estate agent in St. Kilda, and Melbourne, was the driving force of the Elwood Railway League. The League's alluring proposals found great financial support from those most nearly interested in increased prospective values of their properties. A powerful accession in strength to the League was when the Railway Commissioner, John Mathieson, supported the League's proposals. In Mathieson's opinion the best way to carry out the railway extension was to make the railway a part of the line, which would junction with that to Brighton, at a point between Balaclava, and Elsternwick. Originally the idea was to take the line through St. Kilda, by a tunnel under Grey Street, but that proposal Mathieson said could be improved upon. New station buildings might be erected upon the city side of the Esplanade, and the line from thence extended round the Esplanade, and on to the point of junction, with the Brighton line. It was proposed to abolish the existing St. Kilda Station, and have one in the vicinity of Loch Street in its place. There was to be a station at Elwood, and another at the Bluff. The Railway Standing Committee, in 1883, had recommended an extension of the St. Kilda Railway, running along Grey Street, for a short distance in a tunnel then the line was to divert slightly towards the Esplanade, crossing the cable tramway line before its terminus, passing on through Elwood to the Red Bluff, and thence forward, to connect with Brighton railway near the Middle Brighton Station. This line would have been about five miles in length (the other proposed line was two and a half miles) and like the Railway Commissioners' project, would have, with the

Brighton line, constituted a circular railway, so that trains could run out from Flinders Street, on one line, and return to their starting point by the other.

The League's proposals, in the abstract, were taken up with considerable interest, though public opinion was divided as to the best route. Many letters were published in the newspapers on the subject. Among the letters that appeared was one from M.M. Ward Cole of "St. Ninians," Brighton, who stated the line as "originally intended was to be through St. Kilda, viz., Grey Street, but the people in St. Kilda, I have heard my father (the late Captain George Ward Cole) say, would not allow it, as they thought that Brighton would have everything as there was a strong political party living there then." Captain Cole, R.N., must have known what he was talking about when he gave his son that information for he was an M.L.C. and had been resident in the Colony since July, 1840. The well known Coles wharf in Flinders Street West (where H. C. E. Childers, St. Kilda's first church organist, acted as tally clerk) was constructed and owned by Captain Cole. He also built, in 1851, "the City of Melbourne" screw steamship, the first screw steamer that was seen in Australia.

Not without some alarm, did the St. Kilda Council watch the actions of the League members. They advocated a railway line, plotted so that it would destroy the beauty of the Esplanade, and of the sea front. The Council itself favored the original proposition, made when the railway to St. Kilda was first constructed, and that was by tunnel, under Grey Street, thence on to Elwood, and Brighton. We have the evidence of the Enabling Act, that after passing under Grey Street, the first station of the railway was to be "at or near the site of Norton's store." The store was a well known shop of St. Kilda, called "Melbourne House." The place belonged to William Norton and Co. When Stubbs & Son, auctioneers, sold by auction in 1861, Norton's store, they said 'the spot was the very nucleus of the trade at St. Kilda, and that the Railway Company had in its report recommended Norton's store as the best situation for the terminus of the railway.' Norton's store, by the way, was that of a grocery, provision and wine and spirit warehouse, opposite the old police court. There was also connected with the property an ironmonger's shop. Had the terminus of the St. Kilda Railway been made in High Street the history of that street as an

avenue of trade would have been one of more profitable ventures than it is. The expense of a tunnel, and the opposition of property holders, were the two factors that eventually halted the St. Kilda Railway in Fitzroy Street.

To return to the subject of the Elwood Railway League. The St. Kilda Council Chamber was crowded with interested property owners, when the Elwood Railway League, and its supporters, presented a petition to the mayor requesting him to call a public meeting, for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear on the Government, to have the proposed railway constructed. The Council had no uncertain views on the subject, and the councillors had no time for what Councillor Edward O'Donnell described as Mr. Mathieson's "outrageous scheme." Any attempt, said the councillor, to carry the railway, "on stilts," around the Esplanade, would be opposed by the Council, with "tooth and nail." The proper route was from the St. Kilda station, under Grey Street, on to Elwood. At the Council meeting held on July 10, 1899, Councillor O'Donnell moved "with regard to the proposed extension of the St. Kilda Railway, from Fitzroy Street to Elwood, this Council opposes any railway being extended along the beach, on the ground that such railway would take in the beach frontages, and also damage the Esplanade, upon which the Council, for years past, has spent large sums of money, so as to render the beach one of the most attractive spots in the southern hemisphere." Councillor Connibere seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mathieson replied to the Council's criticisms, stating he had no idea whatever of carrying the line "on stilts" around the Esplanade. His scheme was to keep to the low level, the line to take a curve beachwards, several hundred yards on the city side of the present St. Kilda station site, to pierce the rise intervening between that point, and the Beach, and to proceed along the Esplanade on the low level. He added that a great portion of the proposed extension would pass through Government land, and going a short distance beyond the Bluff, to sweep back on to the Brighton Line, joining it near Elsternwick.

A vast amount of work was done by the Elwood Railway League, many speakers spoke many words during the agitation, numerous meetings were held, sheafs of pamphlets were printed, but such efforts proved to have made for nought. Electric power was becoming a recognised factor in railway service, and an

electric tramway, or railway along Grey Street, appeared to experts to be the right way to deal with the problem of railway connection, from the St. Kilda Railway Station to Brighton.

On November 30, 1904, an Act, was passed by Parliament called the St. Kilda and Brighton Electric Street Railway Act, which provided that the line was to commence at, or near, the cable tramway terminus, Acland Street, St. Kilda, and to terminate at, or near, the intersection of St. Kilda Street, and Grosvenor Street, in the municipality of Brighton. On further consideration, Parliament passed, on September 26, 1905, the St. Kilda and Brighton Street Electric Street Railway Extension Act. This extension completed the line from the St. Kilda Railway Station, in Fitzroy Street to Grosvenor Street, Brighton. The line's total length is a little more than three and a half miles, and it passes through Grey, Barkly, and Mitford Streets, thence along Ormond Road to St. Kilda Street, and along that road to Grosvenor Street, Brighton. The cost of construction of the first line exclusive of rolling stock, was under the Act 1904, not to exceed £19,500, and that of the extension line, under Act 1905, was £8,000. Guarantees were required from the St. Kilda, and the Brighton Councils, St. Kilda's guarantee against loss was a maximum £600 per annum, and Brighton's guarantee was £300, the period being for 20 years. The first spike in the first rail was driven by the Hon. Thomas Bent, Premier and Minister of Railways, and the second spike by the Mayor of St. Kilda, Councillor Henry B. Gibbs, and the third spike by the Mayor of Brighton, on Thursday, October 19, 1905.

The St. Kilda Railway Station building has not altered a great deal since it was first built. In old photographs it is quite easy to recognise that the building, as it exists to-day, is practically the same building as when the Melbourne to St. Kilda railway was first opened. The platform has been lengthened, and a few structural alterations have been made, but such innovations have not changed the main lines of the old building. Naturally, after the passage of years, the railway station buildings are quite out of harmony with the palatial buildings in Fitzroy Street. St. Kilda City is overdue for a modern railway station that shall be worthy of the city it serves. That St. Kilda has not a worthy railway station in Fitzroy Street is not for want of asking for it. Councillor Thomas Unsworth, who is one of the representatives of the West. Ward, in which the railway

station is situated, has been persistent in his demand for a modern railway station. In July, 1923, he was still agitating, still pressing the question of the remodelling, and the rebuilding of the St. Kilda Railway Station. In the Council he referred to the mixture of materials used in the existing buildings, some parts of which had stood for 50 years. He condemned the Railway Commissioners for making shift with patchwork repairs. Of course all the councillors then agreed with their colleague. The councillors decided to speak with the Railway Commissioners. The result of doing so was, in Councillor Unsworth's words, "distinctly disappointing." The councillors had been favored with a long dissertation on railway management, which they went not to hear. The remodelling of St. Kilda Railway Station, they were informed, was connected with constructional work that was contemplated. The station would not lack attention to repairs when it was necessary. Other councillors did not express themselves as entirely in accord with Councillor Unsworth's views. They confessed that they listened, with interest, to the "exposition" of what the management of a railway system meant, and that they had learnt that the primary producers had the first claim for consideration in railway development. The Council had submitted a good case to the Chief Commissioner, but he, Mr. H. Clapp, on the other hand, had rebutted it with a stronger case wherein the Council was asked to consider the question from its national aspect, instead of an altogether parochial standpoint. In the course of the discussion it was stated that the volume of traffic, passing through the St. Kilda railway station, was second only to that flowing through the Flinders Street railway station. The old historical building, the first St. Kilda railway station still stands, still more or less serves its purpose, in this year of 1931.