

Official Launching of the Purrey Steam Tram 5th June, 1909

An Extract From "**The Morning Bulletin**",
Rockhampton, Monday, 7th June, 1909:

"The Rockhampton Tramways were officially opened on Saturday forenoon by the Premier, the Hon. W. Kidston, M.L.A.

A little after ten o'clock about 200 ladies and gentlemen, including a number of visitors, boarded the two cars and trailers in William Street. The first car was drawn up abreast of a decorative arch near the intersection of Bolsover Street, across which was stretched a silk ribbon bearing the words "Success to the Rockhampton Tramways".

Mr. Kidston, on his arrival, was greeted with cheers.

The Mayor (Alderman J. Edgar) after briefly apologising for some delay at starting, which had arisen through Mr. Kidston having to meet a deputation, called upon Mr. Kidston to declare the tramways open.

Mr. Kidston, who was again cheered on stepping on to the platform of the car, said that the Rockhampton Council had done him a great honour in asking him to be present to start the new tramways. It was difficult to speak from that position and as he understood there would be some speechmaking later at the School of Arts, he would content himself with removing the last obstruction out of the way of the trams and let them go on. (Cheers).

Mr. Kidston then reached forward and pulled down the ribbon. At the call of the Mayor, further cheers were given for the Premier. The cheering was renewed by the crowd of some 2000 people as the cars moved off along William Street. The run to the Botanic Gardens terminus occupied twelve minutes and was a pronounced success in every way. Despite the heavy loads, and the unfinished state of the track in places, each car, with its trailed attached, ran smoothly and evenly and without a hitch of any kind. The return journey was made in eight minutes.

Subsequently, the passengers were the guests of the Council at the School of Arts where luncheon was spread for about 200 people. The Mayor presided, having the Premier and Mrs. Kidston on either hand. Others who occupied seats at the principal table were the Minister for Mines (the Hon. J.G. Appel), The Hon. A. H. Parnell, M.L.C. and Mrs. Parnell, Mr. G. Fox, M.L.A., the Mayor of Brisbane (Alderman T. Wilson), the Mayor of

Maryborough (Alderman C. Raaba) and the Aldermen of Rockhampton.

After the toast of "The King", the Mayor said he had very much pleasure in proposing the toast of the Premier. He thought the thanks of the Council and ratepayers of Rockhampton were due to the Premier for his promptitude in granting a loan for the construction of tramways. (Hear, hear). If it had not been for the Premier coming to the rescue, there would have been no trams in Rockhampton. He was sure they were all pleased that the Premier, who was their senior representative, should have had the honour of sending the first car on its way. This would be a red-letter day in the history of Rockhampton. He thought the people of Rockhampton could congratulate themselves on the successful running of the cars.

He did not know whether the Premier had had any experience as an engineer, but from what they had seen that morning, Mr. Kidston seemed to be an adept at engineering either politically or with respect to motor cars. (Laughter and applause).

Mr. Kidston, who was received with applause, said it was very gratifying to one who was a member for Rockhampton to have his health proposed and received so heartily by the representatives of the people who had gathered that morning. As there were a great many other speakers to follow, and he understood that the very important business of a race meeting had to be started about noon, it would be highly improper for him to take up time by making two speeches, and as he had to propose the next toast, he would content himself with thanking them. Let him just say this with reference to what the Mayor had been good enough to say about

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