

PYRMONT'S DOOM - 1911

Evening News, 25 July 1911

ITS PASSING AS A RESIDENTIAL QUARTER.
HUNDREDS OF HOUSES TO GO.
GROUND FOR RAILWAY, WHARVES AND FACTORIES.
BIG SLUMP IN SCHOOL ATTENDANCES.

Pyrmont, as a residential portion of the metropolis is doomed, and the general prediction is that within much less than another decade the houses will be few and far between. Over the past five or six years many dwellings have been demolished to make room for stores and other buildings which denote busy times.

People who have lived there the best part of half a century now shake their heads and say, 'It won't be long before we have to get out of the smoke and grime.' Almost every week notice is given to tenants that the house has been sold, and that their new landlord wants the ground to erect a wool store or factory on it.

People who have to move cannot find suitable places, while others delay moving until the very last moment. Quite recently the occupants of a number of houses in Mount-street ... steadfastly refused to budge, with the result that a gang of workmen was ordered to demolish the premises by taking down the doors and windows. This action made the refractory tenants somewhat indignant, but after much wrangling they vacated their draughty dwellings.

Some families combine and rent dwellings. Empty houses are to be found in batches but they are not 'to let' and as fast as the people go out of them iron or wood shutters are nailed over the windows and the doors fastened until the house breakers commence work.

FORTY HOUSES IN ONE FELL SWOOP.

The extensive schemes to be carried out by the Harbor Trust and the Railway Department will be responsible for further big inroads. The work by the Trust will cut away the eastern half of Mill-street from one end to the other, extending round to the Pyrmont Municipal Baths. Several big businesses will have to be shifted, besides close on 40 houses. Notices have been served on the people. Half are already empty.

Among the businesses to be removed is Grant's engineering, boiler-making, and iron-shipbuilding works. The shop and yard adjoin the Pyrmont point. The business has been established for more than 30 years.

'Won't you open up elsewhere?' asked the reporter.

'No,' was the reply.

Other businesses to go are the depots of the Maitland Brewery and the Maitland Coal Company. The first occupies the big brick building at the corner of Mill and Bayview Streets and use it chiefly as a bottling department. The coal depot butts on to M'Creadie's old wharf.

Perhaps the oldest resident to be disturbed is Mrs. Cleave, of Mill-lane. Mrs. Cleave said it is just 46 years since her husband finished building and took her, together with the rest of the family, into the cottage she still occupies. "Just four years short of half a century may seem a long time for a person to stay in the one house", reiterated Mrs. Cleave, yet I am quite content to spend the rest of my days in it. The cottage was given to me by my husband. My family all

grew up here, so you see there is good reason why I am fondly attached to the old home. There is Sam— my eldest son, pointing to a small shop in which Sam could be observed pegging away at a pair of boots he was repairing.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT'S SCHEME.

The big open cut for running the goods trains through Pymont and Leichhardt, will wipe out hundreds of dwellings. Whole blocks of homes and businesses, running the full length of John-street, are to be swept away. Most of the business people have already put their claims in and everybody is talking about resumptions, and asking one another where they will move to.

CSR

It is freely rumoured that CSR is negotiating for the big blocks of property bounded by Bowman, Harris and Harvey streets, and running right back to the terrace of houses in Jones-street. People state that the surveyors have been very busy during the past few weeks. If CSR take over this property, and when the railway is cut through, the portion of Pymont north of John-street will only support a few dozen dwellings instead of the hundreds that are now there.

EFFECT ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCES.

Such big inroads on the living area of the district cannot fail to affect school attendance. There are two big public schools, Pymont and Ultimo. It is no secret that a new school will have to be built centrally, or one of the old ones made do for the whole district. During the past couple of years enrolments and attendances have shown a rapid falling-off and both schools are still going down fast. Ultimo decided to do without a headmistress and the boys' and girls' classes are now taken together. At Pymont the enrolments show a falling off of fully 30 per cent in two years. When the present resumption schemes are carried into effect it will probably make the carrying on of both schools impossible.