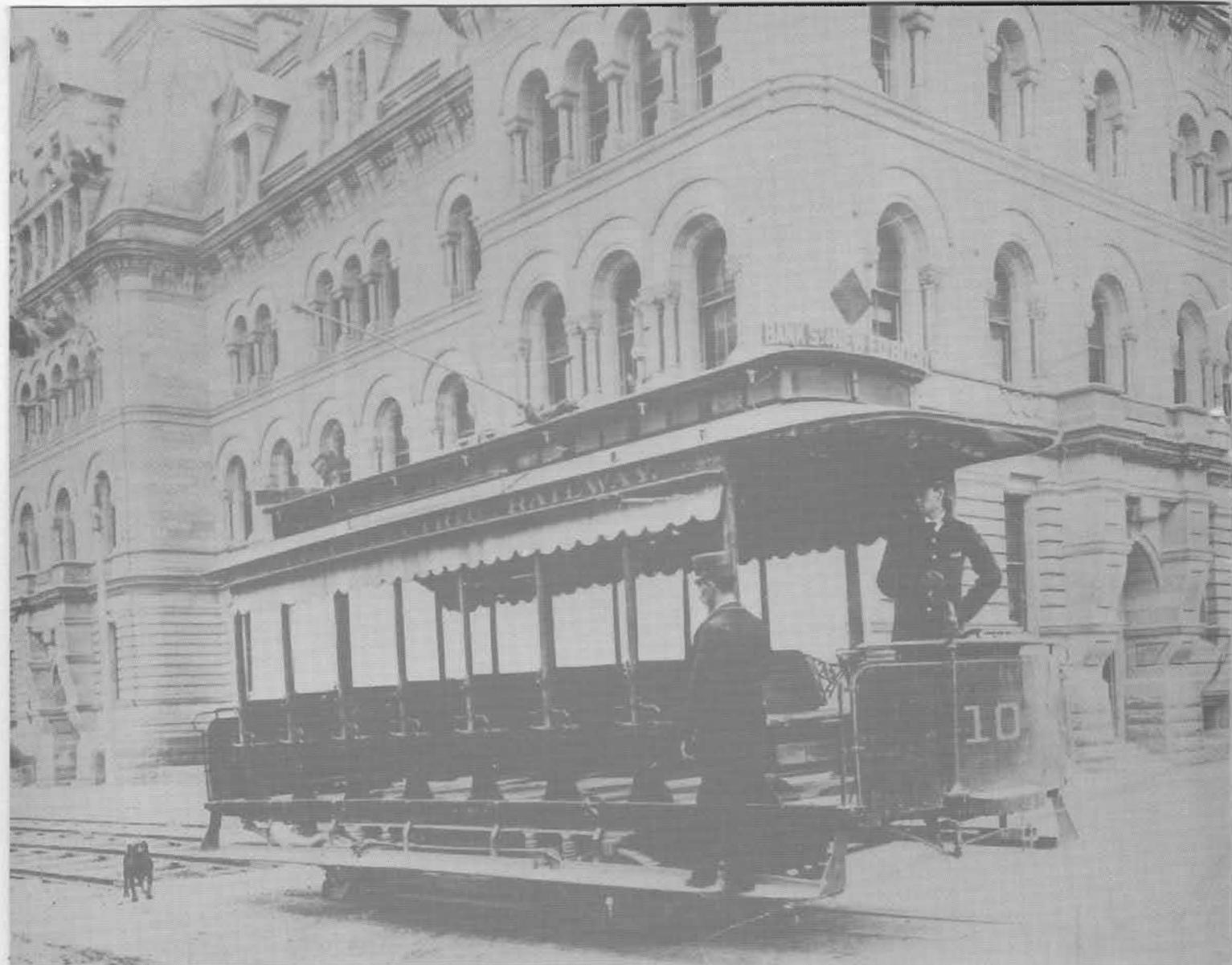


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cover

Early in 1892 Ottawa Electric Railway sweeper No. 2, just delivered from the builders, was photographed outside the car barns on Albert Street. Standing on the front platform of the sweeper we see, left to right, Messrs. Warren Y. Soper, Thomas F. Ahearn, P. St. George C.E. At the controller is Frank Ahearn, then five years old, who would be the last president of the Ottawa Electric Railway half a century later. Public Archives of Canada. PA-33907.

opposite

One of the first Ottawa electric cars was open car No. 10 built in 1891.

Public Archives of Canada. C-2460.

Seven street cars, some open some closed, jammed with people going to the Church of England Sunday School picnic at Ottawa Electric Park in July 1893.

Public Archives of Canada. PA-27305.

SEVEN HUNDRED DAYS THE STORY OF AHEARN & SOPER AND THE BEGINNING OF ELECTRIC TRACTION IN OTTAWA

By: Fred Angus.

1. Introduction - Ottawa Considers Electrification.

The nineties of the last century was the time when the electric street railway "took over" as the main means of public transportation in the cities of North America. In that decade most of the horse car lines were electrified, cable car systems (some only a few years old) were converted, and new systems were built, in addition to numerous extensions to existing electric systems. In Canada one of the pioneers of the electric railway movement was the Ottawa Electric Railway, begun in 1890, opened in 1891 and always a leader in the industry. This is the remarkable story of how this system came to be, how it weathered the storms, literally and figuratively, of the first year of its existence, and how it affected the development of transit in Canada, all within the short time of 700 days.

To appreciate fully the importance of the Ottawa Electric Railway to the history of the city transit in Canada it is necessary to consider the status of electric railway lines in 1890. The preceding five years had seen tremendous strides in electric railway development in the United States, usually in more temperate climates, and much of the technique of urban operation was still being developed. In Canada electric cars were running near Windsor Ontario (since 1886), St. Catharines (since 1887) and on the Summer-only exhibition line in Toronto (since 1885). In 1890 itself the lines in Vancouver and Victoria B.C. had opened as electric routes (never having run horse cars), and a short electric line was under construction in Winnipeg which would open in 1891.

No other city in Canada had electric street cars, and, except for the yet-unproven Winnipeg line, none of the cities that had electric service had the severe winters and heavy snowfall of Ottawa. Certainly the winters in St. Catharines, Windsor and southern British Columbia were far different from those in the Ottawa valley. This was the situation when the city council of Canada's capital decided to consider the possibility of introducing electric street cars into their city.

Ottawa in 1890 was a city of about 41,000

people, and had been the capital of the Dominion of Canada for 23 years not to mention its role as capital of the old province of Canada for nine years before that. No longer was it the old village of Bytown but was an important national capital whose importance was growing all the time. It was still the Ottawa of Sir John A. MacDonald, who was then in the last year of his life, but it was only ten years away from the Twentieth Century which a future Prime Minister would say "belonged to Canada". Clearly, in keeping with its growing importance, Ottawa needed an up-to-date street railway, and in 1890 that meant an electric street railway. True, Ottawa had a street railway, and in fact had had one for 20 years, but it was quite small and of course horse-operated. This was the Ottawa City Passenger Railway which had been incorporated in 1866 with a perpetual charter and opened in 1870. The leading spirit behind the O.C.P.R. was Thomas C. Keefer (1821 - 1915) one of the foremost engineers in nineteenth century Canada who had designed and built a number of public works in the Ottawa area and elsewhere. Although there were several shareholders in the company Mr. Keefer owned the majority of the stock. Initially the company owned six horse cars and a line that ran between New Edinburgh and the Chaudiere Falls via Sussex, Sparks, Wellington and Duke Streets. Cars ran at 20 minute intervals, and in later years 15 minute service was provided. One of these cars has, very fortunately, been preserved and may be seen at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. In winter, sleighs were used, and in spring and autumn omnibusses came into service. The latter were decidedly uncomfortable as they bumped over the rough unpaved streets, although a certain degree of comfort returned in the spring when the rails could again be used. Since no significant extensions had been made, except for a physically-disconnected section in Rockcliffe, there was no service at all to the areas of the city opened up between 1870 and 1890.

About 1888 the Ottawa City Council, hearing of the success of the pioneer electric lines in the United States, began to think of electric street cars for Ottawa. The big problem was, of course,

PLAN OF
OTTAWA
Carleton County
ONTARIO

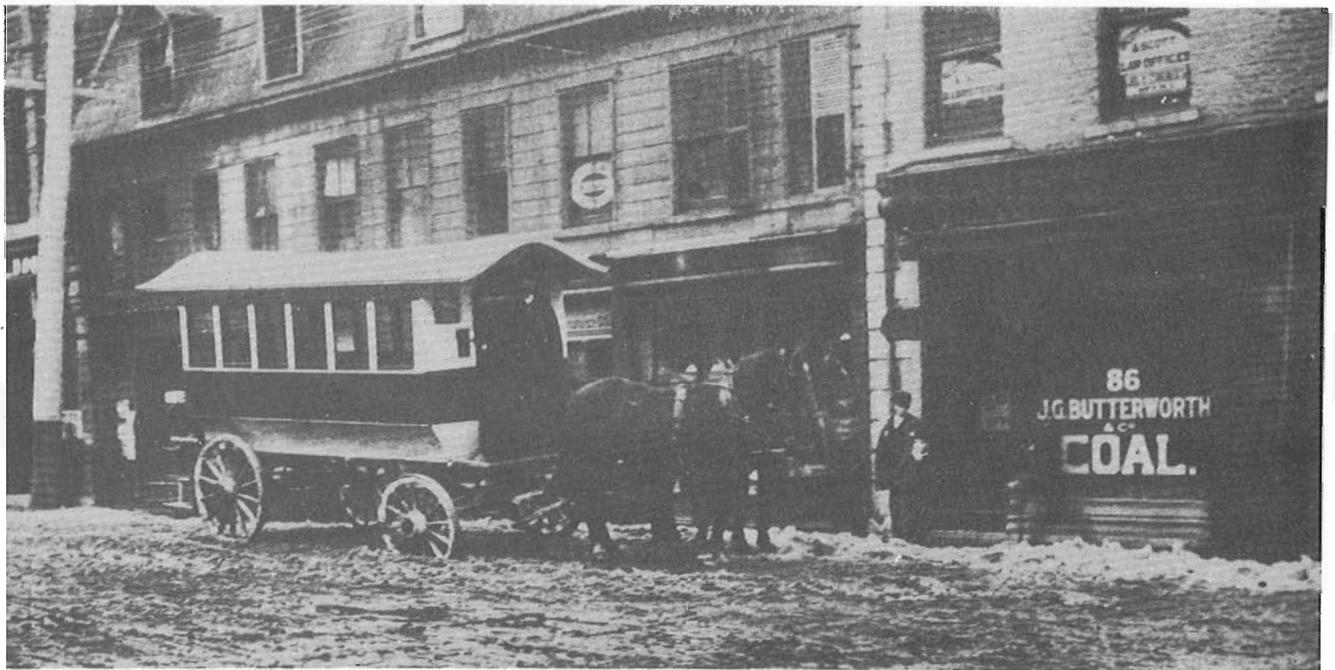


A MAP OF OTTAWA IN 1877 SHOWING THE HORSE CAR LINE AS WELL AS THE STREETS ON WHICH THE ELECTRIC CARS WOULD LATER RUN.



One of the original horse cars of the Ottawa City Passenger Railway built in 1870. This photo was taken many years later (note the absence of street car wheels), and this car has been preserved at the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa.

Public Archives of Canada. C-2458.



In the Spring and Autumn, omnibusses were used during the time the track was not passable. This ancient specimen, with sagging roof, was nearing the end of its career as it struggles through the mud of Sparks Street in 1890. The electric line would make all this a thing of the past.

Public Archives of Canada. C-17827.

winter operation as it was realized that year-round electric service was the ideal, although perhaps unattainable, goal. Such as electric line would not replace the old company (which, as we have seen, had a perpetual charter) but would be in addition to it, running on different streets. By 1890 the City Council was prepared to act and they placed an advertisement offering to give a franchise to anyone who would make a definite offer to build the line, and who would also put up \$5000 as a guarantee of good faith. This set the stage for the historic events of 1890 and 1891.

II. The Contract Is Awarded - 1890.

In the Spring of 1890 a few replies came as a result of the City's offer, but the only definite scheme came from a Toronto syndicate headed by W.H. Howland. Mr. Howland came to Ottawa on July 7 1890 and laid his proposal before Council. Briefly this was for a company of \$250,000 capital (only \$50,000 of which would be subscribed in Ottawa) which would build five lines in Ottawa and have them operating by the end of 1892. Mr. Howland had an Ottawa partner, Mr. J.A. Gemmill, and it was through the latter that further negotiations took place. It certainly looked as if the way would soon be clear for the new modern street railway system for the city of Ottawa.

At first things went well. The City Council, having first considered holding a referendum, decided, on July 15 1890, to give the franchise to Howland. A contentious clause, which would have meant forfeiture of the charter if all lines were not completed by the deadline, was dropped, and the syndicate agreed to pay the city \$400 for each mile of double track and \$300 for each mile of single track. Furthermore, they also agreed to leave the \$5000 deposit (which had not yet even been deposited!) with the City until the completion of the work. As the Summer went on it looked as if most of the discussion had boiled down to the type of rail to be used, the City wanting girder rail throughout, and the syndicate wanting less expensive "T" rail in some places.

Yet things were not really going well. Although the usual arguments were made pro and con for electric traction it soon turned out that the Howland syndicate was not all that well versed in electric railway matters. As an example, Mr. Gemmill, in listing Canadian cities that had electric cars, included Saint John N.B. which did not have them until 1893! Above all, the \$5000 deposit had not

been made despite almost daily assurances that the cheque would be delivered momentarily. Finally the city set a deadline of 3.00 P.M. on October 20 1890 for delivery of the cheque failing which the negotiations with the Howland syndicate would be broken off. On October 18 the syndicate promised again to deliver the cheque, and in fact deposited \$5000 in a bank account to the credit of Mr. Howland giving a receipt to the City. This was not, of course, acceptable and the deadline of 3.00 P.M. October 20 passed without the City receiving the cheque. This fact was announced in the evening papers that day and was to be considered at a Council meeting that night. The citizens of Ottawa were disappointed for it looked as if their hopes for electric street cars had been dashed.

At the Council meeting that night Mr. Gemmill tried to explain his reluctance to make the deposit and he did offer, under protest, a cheque for \$5000 if the City would not accept his previous receipt. But Mayor Erratt that any such deposit should be unconditional, and in any case the deadline had passed. Most important of all a letter had just been received that altered the whole situation. There then ensued some debate as to whether this letter should be read, after which this new, soon-to-be-historic letter was read to the City Council:

Ottawa, October 20, 1890.

The Mayor and Corporation of Ottawa,

Gentlemen,-

Understanding that the security offered by the Company with whom negotiations have been carried on for some months for the construction of an electric railway in this city is not satisfactory to your Corporation: and that the time stipulated for making such security satisfactory has expired, thereby terminating your negotiations with that Company: we now offer to undertake the immediate formation of a local company for the construction and operation of the railway in accordance with the terms of the agreement already prepared, and as security for the proper fulfillment of the contract we enclose herewith our accepted cheque in favour of your Corporation for the sum of \$5000.00.

Yours truly,

Ahearn & Soper

Enclosed with the letter was an accepted cheque, No. C955 on the Bank of Ottawa, for \$5000 made out to the Corporation of Ottawa! One can well imagine the effect of this bombshell on the City Council. A lengthy debate ensued as to the pros and cons of both offers and whether the City could legally back out of the Howland agreement since their \$5000 deposit had been received, albeit late and under protest. On the other hand the firm of Ahearn and Soper was a company of undoubted integrity with a reputation for getting things done, and furthermore was a local company, ensuring against "absentee landlordism" of the system. It also turned out that the Howland group had only produced their cheque after they got wind of the A&S offer. At length a vote was called, and by a vote of 12 to 10 it was resolved to terminate the negotiations with the Howland syndicate and furthermore to accept the offer of Ahearn and Soper. The cheque of A. & S. was thereupon handed to treasurer Kirby who next day deposited it in the City's account in the Quebec Bank. One alderman gave notice of intent to propose a motion of reconsideration, and so the matter was still undecided. But public opinion favoured Ahearn and Soper, and on October 30 the Howland syndicate withdrew, the reconsideration motion was dropped, and so the coast was clear.

"'ERE'S A GO!" proclaimed a newspaper headline on Tuesday October 21 1890 in announcing the surprising turn of events, for the fact that Ahearn and Soper were now involved suggested to many that the electric railway would be built after all. Although their bid on the street railway was a surprise to most people, the firm of Ahearn and Soper was already well known in Ottawa. It was a partnership of two corporate geniuses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Thomas Franklin Ahearn and Warren Young Soper. Mr. Ahearn was born in Ottawa on June 24 1855, while Mr. Soper had been born in Oldtown Maine on March 9 1854 but came to Ottawa in 1856 at the age of two. Both were good friends at school, both started their careers as office boys, and both in time became telegraph operators, working at the office of the old Montreal Telegraph Company. Although later going, temporarily, their separate ways, their interests were still allied. Mr. Soper later became manager of the Dominion Telegraph Company, and subsequently superintendent of that company's lines. In 1882 he was offered the position of superintendent of C.P.R. telegraphs in the Ottawa valley but declined, having made up his mind to go into the electrical business in partnership with his old friend Mr. Ahearn. So it was that in 1882 was formed the partnership of Ahearn and

The Evening Journal

WOODBURN & ROSS, Publishers.

38 ELGIN ST.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1890.

'ERE'S A GO!

Journal Oct 21
1890
Ahearn & Soper Supts Howland and Gemmill.

THE HOWLAND ELECTRIC RAILWAY
CONTRACT SQUASHED.

Fierce Debate Among the City
Fathers Last Night.

Local Men Step Into the Breach with
a Cheque for \$5,000, and Carry the
Day by a Vote of 12 to 10—Notice of
Re-consideration Given by Ald.
Borthwick.

When the city council met last evening, Mayor Erratt and twenty-two aldermen were present. The absentees were Hill and Richard. The street railway question was introduced by a letter from Mr. W. H. Howland's solicitors, Messrs. Gemmill and May. It renewed the tender of the Imperial Bank deposit receipt for \$5,000 as forfeit for Mr. Howland's due fulfilment of his contract with the city. It also enclosed a cheque for \$5,000, sent under protest, in case the council after consideration still refused to touch the deposit receipt. Mr. Howland claimed the deposit receipt was ample security. The cheque proved to be payable "ad protest deposit receipt," or something of that kind.

THE MAYOR WOULD NOT SIGN.

Mayor Erratt said that as the cheque was made payable subject to conditions, he had not felt justified in signing the contract, and, as he understood there was another letter to come up, he asked that the matter might stand over.

THE NIGGER IN THE FENCE.

Ald. Henderson rose to suggest that a letter from Messrs. Ahearn & Soper, which had been for some days in the hands of the city clerk, be read before a vote be taken.

Ald. Borthwick protested. He felt some members of the council had been dealing in a not perfectly straightforward manner. Ald. Henry thought Mr. Gemmill had been dismissed.

Ald. Gordon protested against Messrs. Ahearn & Soper's letter being read. The mayor ruled that the letter be read. Ald. Borthwick protested. The mayor again ruled it in order. Ald. Soper thought the letter should be read, though no direct motion should be made on it.

AHEARN AND SOPER'S OFFER.

The following letter was then read:
OTTAWA, October 20, 1890.

The Mayor and Corporation, Ottawa:

GENTLEMEN,—Understanding that the security offered by the company with whom negotiations have been carried on for some months for the construction of an electric railway in this city is not satisfactory to your corporation; and that the time stipulated for making such security satisfactory has expired, thereby terminating your negotiations with that company, we now offer to undertake the immediate formation of a local company for the construction and operation of the railway, in accordance with the terms of agreement already prepared, and, as security for the proper fulfilment of the contract, we enclose herewith an accepted cheque in favor of your corporation for the sum of \$5,000.

Yours truly,

(Signed) AHEARN & SOPER.

The offer was accompanied by a cheque for \$5,000 on the Ottawa bank.

ALD. HENDERSON SAYS TAKE IT.

Ald. Henderson, moved seconded by Ald. Heney, "that this council having considered the communications on the subject of the deposit of \$5,000 by Messrs. Howland & Gemmill in the matter of the proposed electric railway, together with the correspondence referred to herewith, instruct the city treasurer to return the deposit receipt and cheque and notify them that all further negotiations in the matter are hereby terminated.

"Also, that the offer of Messrs. Ahearn & Soper, accompanied by their marked cheque for \$5,000, be accepted and that the street railway committee be instructed to have a new contract prepared and executed forthwith on the same terms as those of the proposed agreement with Messrs. Howland and Gemmill."

ALD. CRANNELL TAKES OUT.

Ald. Crannell had been a rail road man from the beginning, but he thought the time had come when it was due to stop Mr. Howland. When the time came to complete the contract, Mr. Howland sent down a receipt which his representatives were ashamed of themselves and withdrew. Then he sent down a receipt which bankers, merchants and lawyers agreed was a good. Now came a cheque accompanied by a letter containing conditions which no business man could accept. He had three boys, and if either of them accepted such a document he should feel inclined to whip him.

ALD. HENDERSON'S MOTION CARRIES.

Ald. Henderson's motion was then put and carried on the following division:
1 Year—Ald. Butterworth, Campbell, Crannell, Farrell, Henderson, Heney, Hutchinson, Johnston, Lavordure, Raphael, Roger and Sartin.—12.

Nays—Ald. Askwith, Bayle, Biingham, Borthwick, Dunroper, Gordon, MacLean, Monk, Sook and Street.—10.
Ald. Borthwick gave notice of reconsideration and the council adjourned.

What is Said To-day.

Few actions of the city council for many years have created so much sensation as the vote of last evening, giving the contract for the construction of the electric street railway to Messrs. Ahearn & Soper.

WHAT MESSRS. AHEARN & SOPER SAY.

Messrs. Ahearn & Soper were seen by THE JOURNAL this morning. The reporter found them holding a regular levee of some of the principal men of the city, who were extending them their congratulations on their having secured the contract.

"'ERE'S A GO". The account of the stormy meeting of the Ottawa City Council on October 20 1890 as seen in the newspaper the next day. The handwritten date under the headline is by the original Warren Y. Soper. The excitement of the occasion must have reached even the newspaper compositor who got the printed day of the week spelled wrong!

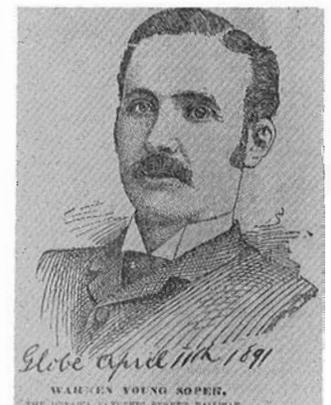
Collection of Warren Y. Soper.



A cheque that made history. This is the actual \$5000. cheque that Ahearn and Soper sent to the City of Ottawa on October 20 1890 to secure the contract to build the electric railway. Note the endorsement of Treasurer Kirby on the back, and the stamp showing it was deposited on October 21. The cheque, after being cancelled, was returned to Ahearn and Soper and has been preserved.

Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

Soper which was to last unbroken for 42 years until Mr. Soper's death in 1924. The first large contract awarded to the new firm came from Thomas Shaughnessy of the C.P.R. who gave them the contract to supply telegraph instruments for C.P. from the Atlantic to Pacific.. From then on Ahearn and Soper forged ahead and constructed and equipped some of the largest electrical works in Canada including long-distance telephone and telegraph lines. In 1887 they had organized the Chaudiere Electric Company which had purchased the Baldwin property and was increasing its capacity to supply dependable hydroelectric power. By 1890 the company was providing Ottawa with an excellent electric light service and was in a very good position to increase its capacity even more to power the electric street cars. For some weeks they had thought of tendering for the street railway but had been reluctant to do so until the Gemmill negotiations broke down. It is therefore little wonder that most Ottawa citizens were pleased that Ahearn and Soper would now have the chance to build the electric railway. At about



Thomas Franklin Ahearn and Warren Y. Soper as they appeared at the time of the building of the Ottawa Electric Railway.

From the Utica Globe, April 11 1891. Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

11:30 A.M. on Wednesday November 5 1890 the contract was signed between the City of Ottawa and the firm of Ahearn and Soper to build equip and operate an electric street railway in the City of Ottawa.

III. The Struggle For The Charter. 1890 - 1891.

Even before the formal resolution of November 5 Ahearn and Soper were making plans and initiating procedures for constructing the electric railway. As early as October 24, eighteen men were starting work on the excavations for the flume for the power house at the old Baldwin property at the Chaudiere Falls. The completed power station would cost \$12,500 and would supply 800 horsepower, enough to run the street cars. In mid-November formal application was made for a charter, and soon thereafter the rails and cars were ordered. The car design was described as being "a facsimile of the Broadway cars", and thirteen (10 motors and 3 trailers) were ordered from Patterson and Corbin of St. Catharines Ont. On December 13 Mr. Patterson of that firm was in Ottawa and stated that the cars would be ready long before they were required. They would be very luxuriously fitted up, the doors sashes mouldings and ceilings would be quarter-oak veneer, and the seats would be upholstered with Wilton carpet imported from England. By the end of the year a sample of the new girder rail was exhibited and was found to be even more suitable than the one originally planned. Also before the end of 1890 Messrs. Ahearn and Soper announced that they would run electric cars year-round and keep the street clear using 60 horsepower sweepers. This raised a few eyebrows of people who still believed that year-round street railway operation was impossible.

The next step was to secure the charter and obtain formal incorporation of the company without which no work could be done in the streets. It soon appeared that this would not be plain sailing for several reasons - two in particular. First and foremost was the fact that the Ottawa Street Railway (the horse car company) opposed granting the charter on the terms proposed. A major complaint was, according to a statement made by Mr. Keefer on December 31 1890.

"Because it crosses our tracks three times within a distance of 650 yards and that all these crossings are at the foot of heavy grades; that a speed of 10 miles per hour is permitted to the electric railway; that in two crossings of Sparks Street the houses obstruct all views of cars approaching; that the electric cars being heavier than horse cars and capable of

being hauled in trains will make these crossings very dangerous to us especially as they are to be made every 5 minutes on the average for 14 hours of the day".

The old company felt that it would be better for the new electric line to run on the tracks of the old on Sappers Bridge (now Confederation Square) between Rideau and Elgin Streets, and they offered the use of their tracks for this purpose. This would avoid diamond crossings at three intersections: Rideau - Sussex. Sparks - Elgin, and Sparks - O'Connor. The second major objection to the charter was that Officials in the Federal government did not want the street car tracks to run on Wellington Street in front of the Parliament Buildings; this could be avoided if the electric railway ran on Sparks Street, but the old company already ran there. Despite the seeming offer of cooperation between the companies it looked as if there would be a long fight.

For the first six weeks of 1891 the arguments went back and forth. At one point Sir Hector Langevin, the federal minister of public works, stated categorically that no track would be allowed on Wellington Street, but this plan still seemed to be necessary if Sparks Street could not be used. It was further pointed out that street railway matters were under city and provincial jurisdiction and that the federal government might not be able to interfere if the other governments gave approval. In the meantime the public was getting impatient as they wanted to see construction start. The following editorials are typical of the comments made:

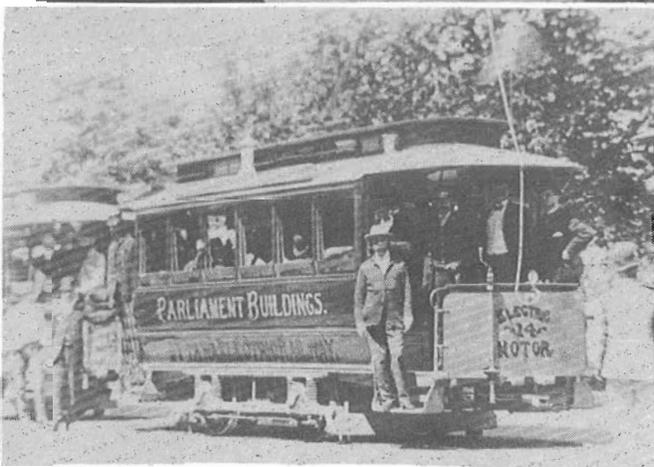
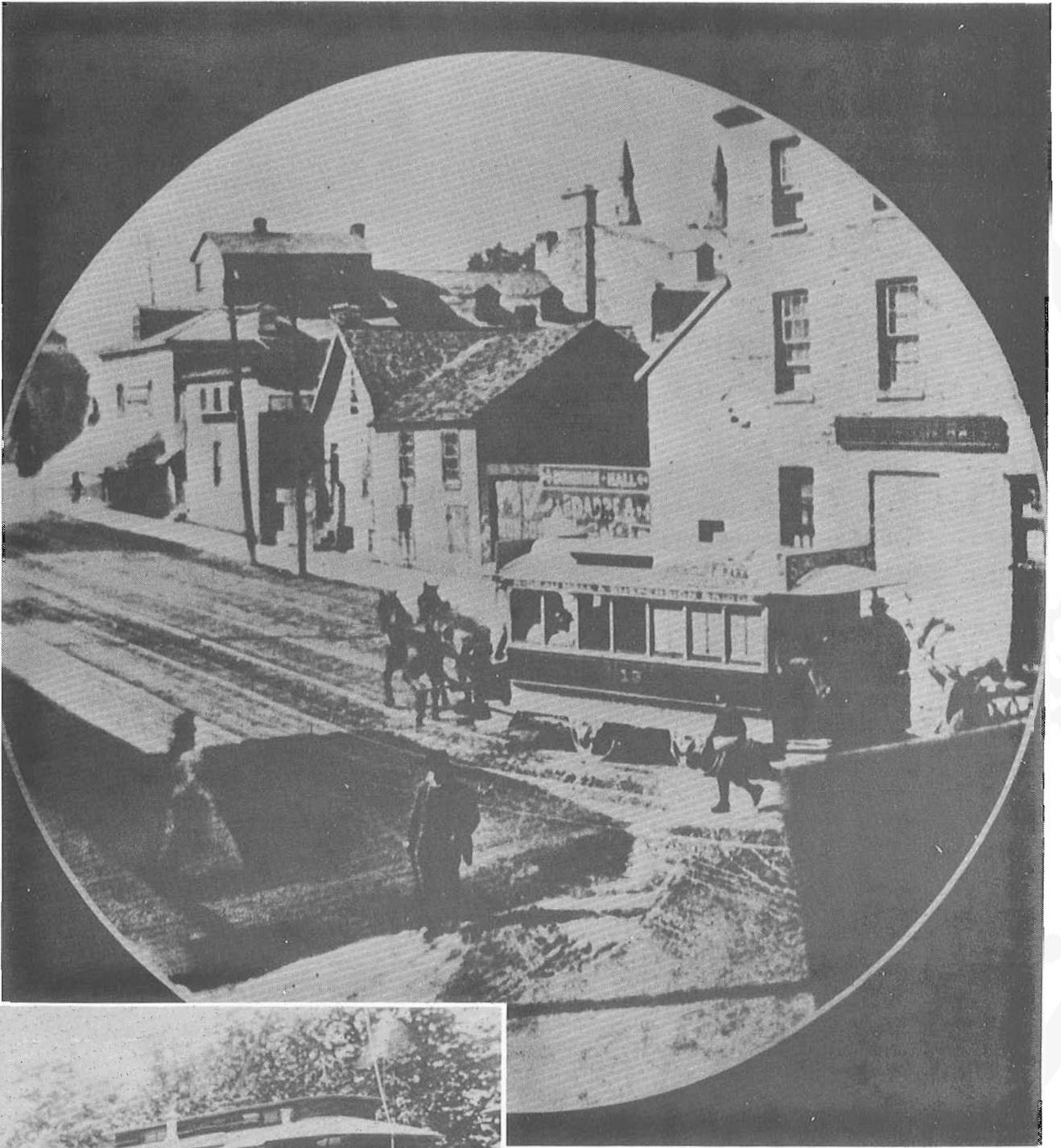
"It is to be hoped that the City will be able to come to some compromise with the Government regarding the laying of the electric railway tracks along a short portion of Wellington Street."

Evening Journal, January 24 1891.

"Snobbery at the capital. . . In other words a binding contract between the City and Ahearn & Soper is to be smashed, the railway deprived of its only route across the canal and the desire of the city for rapid transit thwarted, all because His Excellency's carriage must not jolt slightly while crossing level railway tracks twice each year on the opening and closing of Parliament."

Toronto Telegram, January 29 1891.

"Horse car street service has been in use for sixty years in the United States and represents a capital of fifty-eight million dollars. Electric railways have only been in existence for five years and already represent fifty million dollars. This may be taken



Before the electric railway. Car No. 13 of the Ottawa City Passenger Railway at the corner of Sparks and Bank Streets in 1890. The letter board reads "Rideau Hall and Suspension Bridge". This is what transit was like in Ottawa before Ahearn and Soper appeared on the scene.

Public Archives of Canada. C-1728.

as fair indication of the coming system of rapid transit in cities. Mr. Keefer ought to arrange to apply electricity to his hearses."

Evening Journal, January 30 1891.

The term "Hearses" was a local name applied to the Horse Cars due to their dark sombre colour and slow funeral pace.

Although some of the objection concerned the overhead trolley wire, many people thought this would be permanent, but would soon be superseded by battery power. Through the 1890's and even later it was believed that an improved high-efficiency storage battery would be developed which would provide self-contained power and dispense with the overhead wire. Such a belief was not unreasonable in those days of rapid technological change, but in fact this wonder battery was never developed and it remained for the internal combustion engine of a later era to give on-board power. However no one could realize this in 1891.

Of course a few negative comments came from the public, one of the most amusing was that the overhead trolley wire was dangerous and would "give rapid transit off the Earth". The usual doubts about winter operation were also brought forward.

While it was obvious that sooner or later the electric car would come it was an interesting trade-off on the part of the City that finally broke the deadlock. Back in 1889 the horse car company had built an extension in Rockcliffe but had not been allowed by the City to build the connection on city streets to its main line on Sussex Street. This "missing link" had been a sore point for some time, and now the City offered to let them build this link if they would grant the electric line running rights over its tracks on Sparks Street. The proposed charter was now changed to authorise the line on Wellington Street unless agreement could be made with the old company to use Sparks Street. In view of the "missing link" offer an agreement seemed likely, but this could not be done at once for a very good reason. If the electric line were to use Sparks Street it would have to lay all new tracks there for in the words of Ahearn and Soper: "the present ones are obsolete and unfit for modern car service". Certainly if electric cars had run on the old horse car rails, Sparks Street would have lived up to its name and become a Street of Sparks from the continuous sparking between the wheels and the old unbonded rails! Since the horse car company would not condone being shut down while the tracks were rebuilt it was obvious that the track on a short portion of Wellington Street

would have to be built, temporarily at least, despite the objection of the Federal ministers.

Final agreement was reached on February 9, the charter was prepared, dated February 13, and was received on February 25 1891. It incorporated Thomas Ahearn, Warren Soper, and three others as the Ottawa Electric Street Railway Company with a capital of \$500,000 divided into 5000 shares of \$100 each. The electric railway was now an assured fact and Messrs Ahearn and Soper started that they would push the work as rapidly as possible and have the principal portions of the line open early in the Summer.

IV. Building The Ottawa Electric Railway. 1891.

With the charter now secure, Ahearn and Soper got to work in real earnest. The stock books were opened on April 4, capital began to flow in, and the first ground was broken, on Rideau Street, on the morning of April 9 1891. Work now went on at a great rate to make up for lost time, and fast-and-furious news bulletins chronicled its progress:

April 10 1891. First cars are now being painted at the builder's works.

April 21 1891. Ten tons of spikes arrive.

April 22 1891. First annual meeting of company. J.W. McRae is president, J.E. Hutcheson is superintendent. About three quarters of the stock is sold.

April 27 1891. Seven car loads of girder rail arrive from Johnstown Pa.

April 28 1891. Tracklaying begins on Albert Street between Metcalfe and Bank. Men are being paid \$1.25 a day for nine hours of work.

April 30 1891. Animated discussion at City Hall as to who should pay for grading the streets on which tracks are being laid.

May 1 1891. Work on street railway being rushed. Tracklaying going on rapidly at Bank and Albert. 40 men at work.

May 4 1891. Bank Street almost completed. First cars expected soon from builders.

May 6 1891. Newly completed track on Bank Street being moved to center of street.

May 11 1891. All work stopped pending resolution of dispute with City over sewer construction. However work resumed in a few days.

May 22 1891. Diamond crossing at Sparks and Metcalfe installed where the electric line crosses the horse car line. The crossing was installed last night by a crew working under an arc light.

On Friday May 22 the first two electric cars arrived in the city from the works of Patterson and Corbin in St. Catharines. They were 22 feet long including the two platforms, were painted in two colors, dark salmon and lemon yellow, giving a bright and attractive appearance. On each side of the body on the salmon ground were the words "Parliament Buildings" in large silver lettering. On the lower board in dark red lettering were the words "Ottawa Electric Railway". On the roof were triangular signs bearing the route of the car, while on each dash were the words "Electric Motor" and the car number. Folding gates were on each platform to keep people from boarding on the wrong side of the car. The interior was finished in polished oak, the windows were of plate glass with oak shutters, while the seats were upholstered in Wilton carpet. A neat coal stove was in the centre of the car, and all cars were electrically lighted. The clerestory windows were of figured white glass while the transoms over the doors were of red glass.

During the next two weeks the story of the street railway was played out against the background of a sad event in Canadian history which was happening in Ottawa at the same time. Friday May 22 1891, the same day that the first cars arrived, turned out to be the last day in Parliament for Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, for on the following day he was taken ill, and soon suffered a series of strokes which eventually proved fatal. During his last illness it is said that the bells were taken off the horse cars so as not to disturb Sir John as he lay dying in his home "Earnscliffe" near the line on Sussex Street. Sir John died on the evening of June 6, and five days later was buried at Kingston.

Meanwhile the work on the electric railway went on:

May 27 1891. Sixty-seven men are now at work

May 28 1891. Cave-in on roadbed on Rideau Street, some rails bent. The supply of "T" rails arrived at Montreal from England aboard the Beaver line ship "Lake Winnipeg". Expected to be in Ottawa in a few days.

May 29 1891. Sir Hector Langevin and government officials terminate the 1885 agreement with City regarding upkeep of certain streets and park. This is in revenge for the City allowing track to be built on Wellington Street.

June 5 1891. Car sheds on Albert Street are nearing completion. Fittings are being put on the cars already there.

June 11 1891. First car ready to be put on the track. On that day the Evening Journal printed an interesting article describing to the public

how an electric street car works.

June 13 1891. The tracks and switches at the car barn are now all in place.

June 16 1891. Mr. A.H. Knott of the Westinghouse Company is busy with a gang of men stringing the trolley wire over the completed track.

June 17 1891. The track to the exhibition grounds was completed today.

June 20 1891. The trolley wire is going up at a rapid rate. The opening day of the first line will be some time next week.

It was only two-and-a-half months after the first sod was turned when, on June 24, the first trial run was made. Word of the impending test had gotten around and as the car appeared people shouted "It's coming, it's coming!" and hundreds ran from all directions while "dogs barked like mad and horses frantically tried to get away from their drivers" as the first electric car sped along Albert Street. The test was successful, but the newspapers pointed out that drivers should watch their horses carefully until they become accustomed to the new mode of transit, while young children should be kept away from the tracks. At 6:00 A.M. the next day four cars were run for an hour and Mr. Ahearn opened them to the public during which time hundreds of people tried them out and enjoyed the ride. It was announced that there would be four routes: Main Line, Bank Street Branch, New Edinburgh Branch, Elgin Street Branch. Work was soon completed, crews were trained, and all was in readiness for the long awaited official opening of the Ottawa Electric Railway on Monday, June 29 1891.

V. The Electric Railway In Operation. 1891.

The big moment for the Ottawa Electric Railway came at 2:00 P.M. on June 29 1891 when the invited guests and other spectators came to the new car barns on Albert Street to witness the opening of the first line. Four cars were ready, numbers 10, 11, 12, 13, and they were decorated for the occasion including a little flag flying from the trolley pole. The motormen and conductors were dressed in their "natty" blue silver-buttoned uniforms and everything was as spic and span as possible. Although everything was new and comparatively untried, everything went off well that day as Mayor Birkett declared the line open. It is said that Mr. Ahearn's five year old son Frank threw the switch in the power house to turn on the current and start the service. Then the four cars, carrying a total of 140 invited guests, started off

The President and Directors
of the
Ottawa Electric Street Railway Company
request the pleasure of your company
at the opening of the road,
on Monday 29th June, eighteen ninety one.
The Electric Cars
will start from the Car House, Albert St. at 2 P.M.

R.Y.S.P.

An engraved invitation sent to guests invited to the opening of the Ottawa Electric Railway on June 29 1891.
Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

and made the 12-minute trip to the Lansdowne Park exhibition grounds. There the carriage building had been converted to a restaurant room and the party partook of a banquet and listened to the speeches. Enroute, and at the grounds, stories were told of earlier "first things" in Canada including tales of the first locomotive more than fifty years before. To these heroes of the past could now be added the names of two local men, Messrs. Thomas F. Ahearn and Warren Y. Soper. During the festivities a street car made a special run downtown and back for the benefit of newspaper reporters, and finally the entire party returned downtown by 6:00 P.M. Contrary to what had been expected the horses were not at all frightened by the new cars. Following the return of the special party the line was opened to the general public and ran until 11:00 P.M. Hundreds of delighted passengers rode the cars, and many of these carried memories of that day for as long as long as they lived.

Once the cars were really running the company worked to iron out the minor "bugs" that were bound to crop up. It was soon found that most of the public fears were unfounded. The cars did not affect the telephones, horses were not unduly frightened, and breakdowns were rare. In fact it appeared that the electric cars were run very efficiently and in a business-like manner. Little things seemed to please the public such as the arrangement that American coins would be received at par, whereas they passed at a discount elsewhere. Early on the morning of July 5 the passengers returning on an excursion train arrived at the station in the pouring rain to find six nice warm street cars waiting for them even though it was 1:30 A.M. on a Sunday when the cars ordinarily did not run. Would that present-day transit companies were as considerate! Meanwhile work went ahead on the construction of the remaining routes and more cars were ordered from Patterson and Corbin. The Rideau Street

The Evening Journal

WOODBURN & ROSS, - Publishers,
38 ELGIN STREET.

TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 1891.

THE ELECTRIC OPENING

CELEBRATION LUNCHEON AT
LANDSDOWNE PARK.

Vigorous Speeches by Leading Men
Recognizing the Energy and Success with which Local Men have
Established the Road.

THE ELECTRIC TRAIN.

[By Oliver Wendell Holmes.]

They came of course as their masters call
The witches, the broomsticks, the cats and all.
He led the bags to a railway train
The horses were trying to drag in vain.
Now, then, says he, you've had your fun,
And here are the cars you've got to run,
The driver may just unitch his team,
We don't want horses, we don't want steam;
You may keep your old black cats to bug,
But the loaded trains you have got to lug.

Since then on many a car you'll see
A broomstick plain as plain can be,
On every car there's a witch astride—
The string you see to her leg is tied,
And she will do a mischief if she can,
But the string is held by a careful man,
And when ever she evil minded witch
Would cut some coper he gives a twitch.
As for the bag, you can't see her,
But hark! you can hear her black cats purr,
And now and then, as the train goes by,
You may catch a gleam of her wicked eye.

Often you looked on a rushing train,
But just what moved it was not so plain.
It couldn't be those wicks above
For they could neither pull nor shove;
Where was the motor that made it go
You couldn't guess, but now you know.
Remember my rhyme when you ride again
On the rattling rail by the broomstick train.

The starting of the first cars for the official opening of the electric railway yesterday, briefly noticed in yesterday's JOURNAL, took place from the Albert street shops in the presence of a great crowd of citizens and strangers, comprising men, women and children of every age and every walk of life; and as the cars in quick succession glided smoothly along Albert and Bank streets not only were the house doors and windows crowded, but the streets were lined by crowds of spectators who frequently cheered and waved their hats and handkerchiefs as the cars passed.

Ex-Ald MacLean as chairman of last year's street railway committee started the first car, Mayor Birkenst the second, Mr. J. W. McRae, president of the line, the third and Ald. Henderson the fourth. Mr. Soper taking charge of the running of this car afterwards on both trips.

Arrived at the Exhibition grounds, the contractors, Messrs Ahearn & Soper, led the way to the carriage house, that is the carriage and buggy house at exhibition times, where the guests found Mr. Walker and a staff of assistants had spread a cold collation on the board, which occupied completely one of the wings of the building.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE WORK DONE.
Mayor Birkenst, in reply, offered the congratulations of the city of Ottawa to the new company on the progress they had made, and on the completion of so much of their line, and wished them all prosperity.

Ald. Henderson had great pleasure in being present at one of the most interesting events which ever happened in the history of the city of Ottawa. Last year at this time, the man who would have hated that an electric road would be running in Ottawa at the present time would have been looked upon as a visionary, as a first class crank. Yet they were there that day to celebrate the opening of a completed line, and completed before the contract required it should be. Those who last year opposed the line, especially those who had opposed the present company, were astonished and delighted at the result. Much yet remained to be done, but the completion of the whole road would no doubt be made on time.

The toast of the Dominion government was next drunk. In proposing this toast Mr. McRae remarked that one member at least had objected to the road, but he hoped judgment would be suspended, and when the line was finished that they would raise no objection to its being what it was or where it was.

HON. JOHN CARLING'S REMARKS.

Hon. John Carling acknowledged the kind way in which the toast had been honored. It gave him much pleasure to be there and assist at the opening of this railway. He regretted that the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott, the premier, was not able to be present owing to the weight and pressure of his duties. Could he possibly have been present, he would have been glad to assist in opening the line. He himself had in 1858 voted to make Ottawa the seat of government. Then the population was about 6,000 now it had increased to 50,000. As a Canadian he was proud to see that Her Majesty's choice of a capital had been so wisely made, and completely justified. He prognosticated that the electric street railway was going to prove an important factor in the city of Ottawa, which possessed many natural advantages yet hardly used. The immense water power at the Chaudiere, hitherto confined to one industry, was being brought into service for other works, such as the production of light and power.

Hon. Senator Clewos also paid a high tribute to the genius and ability of the builders. He was glad to say they were Ottawa boys having been born in the city (applause) and had raised themselves up from being messenger boys in the telegraph office. The building of the road was just another evidence of what could be done and he joined heartily in the congratulations. Canada was moving rapidly ahead. They had built the longest railway in the world in the shortest time. He hoped the railway would be a financial success. One result of it would be to enhance the value of Lansdowne park and make it a source of revenue in the future though it had been a loss in the past.

Mr. Macintosh in a brief speech of congratulation promised his assistance in the future as far as possible.

THE BUILDERS.

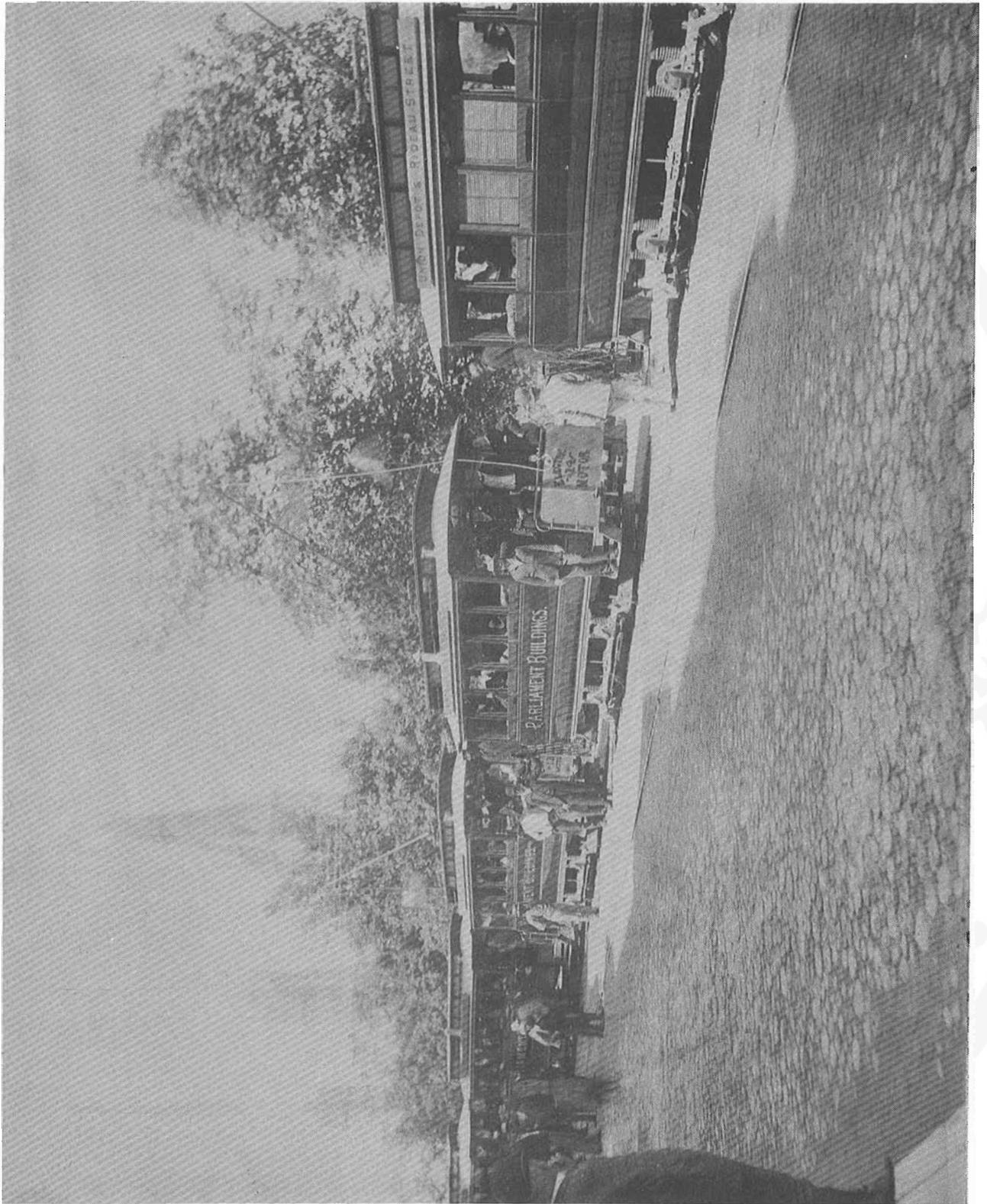
Sir James Grant in a masterly speech proposed the health of Ahearn & Soper. The growth of this city had been somewhat remarkable, and no city in Canada had a brighter future before it than Ottawa. There were orators who say the city is very much depressed, but let them look around and they would say that Ottawa had as good a degree of prosperity as any city anywhere.

Mr. Ahearn and Mr. Soper each briefly but happily responded.

The health of ex-Ald. MacLean, chairman of the Railway committee of the City council, was next proposed and responded to, followed by that of Ald. Durocher and the chairman. The large company were then conveyed back to the city and the cars began the regular running.

The account of the opening of the Ottawa Electric Railway as reported by the Evening Journal the day after the event. The poem about the "Broomstick Train" had been written by Oliver Wendell Holmes in honour of the opening of the first electric line in Boston in 1888. The reporter has quoted the last three verses of the poem.

Collection of Warren Y. Soper.



Only sixteen days after the system opened a special excursion of Senators and Members of Parliament was made to the Government Experimental Farm. This very clear photo was taken that day on Wellington Street near Bank and shows considerable detail of the original Patterson & Corbin cars which inaugurated the service. The M.P.'s did not seem upset that day about the line having been built on Wellington Street!

Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

branch was opened on July 11, followed by the Elgin street route on July 23 even though the track was not fully ballasted. For the latter, car No. 17 was placed in service the day after it was delivered from the builder. The St. Patrick Street branch opened on August 4 and at the same time it was announced that four vestibuled cars 24 feet long were being ordered. Tickets were now in use and sold in strips of six for 25c instead of 20 for \$1.00 as had been the case. So many people were riding the cars that the Evening Journal noted:

"The people in the cars running to the park last night were crowded like herrings in a barrel. Such a mass of packed herrings was never seen before in this city. They were clinging to the uprights and hanging on like flies to a jam pot on every little bit of foothold they could find."

Evening Journal, August 6 1891.

Some troubles did crop up of course as was to be expected of a new system. One car broke a trolley pole due to a loose span wire, but it was



One of the first O.E.R. tickets. The address, 341 Albert Street, of the office shows that this was before the move to Metcalfe Street on December 9 1891. The tickets were engraved and printed by the British American Bank Note Company.

Collection of Warren Y. Soper.



"They were clinging to the uprights and hanging on like flies to a jam pot on every little bit of foothold they could find". No less than 503 passengers were crowded on to this four-car train consisting of a motor car hauling three trailers en route to the Exhibition in September 1892. Quite a load for two motors on a single-track car, and a good advertisement for the Westinghouse equipment used!

Public Archives of Canada. C-20580.

soon returned to the barn without incident. An amusing episode which caused a delay was a fight between two large dogs on board one of the cars on July 9; this led the company to ban canines from the cars from then on. On July 22 two ladies narrowly escaped serious injury when their carriage was smashed by an electric car, and several other accidents happened, but fortunately with no loss of life or serious injury. On August 11 lightning disabled the generators at the power house and service was halted until the morning of the 13th.

On the positive side was the story of the elderly lady who had suffered from rheumatism for years, and when she rode the car was completely cured; by the electricity as she put it. Inevitably the new line made the horse car line look old fashioned and there was talk of converting the latter to electricity. Much discussion was had of storage batteries (favoured by Mr. Keefer) but all through the summer of 1891 nothing was done. The only other major discussion that Summer was whether cars would run on Sunday, but it was still too early for such a radical step in Victorian Ontario.

A few anecdotes survive from this first Summer. One of the best is of a passenger who several times got a free ride by proffering a \$50 bill (a very large sum in those days) which the conductor was unable to change. Finally the conductor changed the fifty by giving ten \$1 bills, \$20 in 25c pieces and \$20 in 10c pieces. No more \$50 bills were forthcoming after that! It makes one tremble to speculate on the present-day coin collector value of those 10c pieces and quarters. How many 1875 quarters, 1889 10c pieces or other goodies were among that lot? Another story was that when the western suburb of Hintonburg asked for street car service, the reply, saying it would be considered, was recorded on a phonograph by Mr. Soper and played at the first phonograph concert in Canada, October 19 1891.

Meanwhile new extensions were contemplated including double tracking on existing lines. By the time of the exhibition in September sixteen cars were in service including two new vestibuled cars. One of these, number 23, was used by the Governor General, Lord Stanley on his trip from Rideau Hall to the exhibition. There is no record that His Excellency was in any way displeased that tracks had been laid on Wellington Street! A sudden development on October 9 surprised Ottawa when the news came out that Mr. T.C. Keefer, the president of the horse car company, had sold his shares (amounting to about 65 percent of the total outstanding) in that company to unknown parties. For several days there was speculation until on

October 12 it was revealed that the purchasers were none other than Ahearn and Soper, who now had controlling interest. This ensured cooperation between the two companies, and although no attempt was made to amalgamate at that time, the way was now open for a unified transit system in Ottawa.

As winter approached the old doubts about snow came again. The electric railway had proved itself in summer, but how about winter? All eyes in the Canadian transit industry were on Ottawa, for other systems, particularly Montreal and Toronto, were contemplating the big switch and wanted to see how Ottawa fared. In fact president Jesse Joseph of the Montreal Street Railway flatly said that electric cars "wont do" in a statement made at an M.S.R. directors meeting in November 1891.

1891

SAYS THEY WON'T DO.
THE MONTREAL STREET RAILWAY PRESIDENT'S
OPINION OF ELECTRIC CARS.

MONTREAL, November 5.—At the annual meeting yesterday of the Montreal street railway company, the question of a change to electricity came up. President Jesse Joseph said he had thoroughly looked into it, and it would not do. He was sure electric cars could not be run in winter, so there would have to be a service of sleighs half the year.

To alter one of the horse cars into an electric car would cost \$2,500, while new cars equipped with electric apparatus would cost \$3,500 each.

Calculating a service of 85 cars in summer per day and 85 sleighs per day in winter, the running of such an electric service would cost per year no less than \$360,000 against \$208,000 per year as at present.

In addition to this an expenditure of \$750,000 would be required for construction purposes.

The great trouble, however, against such a system as the snow in the winter time, which the president thought was a well-nigh insurmountable difficulty. It is true that Ottawa has started such a system, but the president, from what information he had obtained about the service, thought that Ottawa would not be able to operate the road in the winter.

The meeting dropped the subject and adjourned.

"SAYS THEY WON'T DO". This classic article was clipped out of an Ottawa paper in November 1891 by Mr. Soper who marked some of the choice items in the margin. Within a few weeks all this would be proved wrong, and less than a year later Mr. Joseph was retired and Montreal, following the lead of Ottawa, would have electric cars in regular service.

Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

He eventually resigned when Montreal decided to "go electric" over his objections. More typical of the Montreal feeling was an account in the Montreal Witness by a visitor who had seen the Ottawa cars:

"The electric cars there are delightful to travel on after the old jog-trot hitch-forward and jolt-backward of our street railway here."

Montreal Witness, December 15 1891.

Meanwhile Ottawa ordered two large double-ended snow plows, as well as a large sweeper, the latter to be built by Lewis and Fowler of Brooklyn N.Y. The sweeper arrived at the C.P.R. yard at Ottawa on November 8 and attracted much attention. The regular cars were now fitted with vestibules for winter use, but which could be removed in the spring. So the Ottawa Electric Railway was battering down for the Winter of 1891 - 92, its biggest test.



Ottawa Electric Railway street car No. 17 on a snowy street in 1892. This is one of the earliest electric cars, it was built with open platforms but had vestibules added for winter use. After 1891 all closed cars were built with permanent vestibules. This photo is also rare in that it is the only one seen of an Ottawa passenger street car with a number containing the digit "7". At some early date, for reasons now unclear, the company stopped using any numbers that contained seven.

Public Archives of Canada. PA-33927.

VI. The First Winter - The Battle Is Won - 1891-1892

The first winter of the Ottawa Electric Railway got off to a bad start with three serious accidents. At 12:30 on the afternoon of December 10 the fears of Mr. Keefer were borne out when horse car No. 10, going west on Sparks Street crossing Metcalfe, was hit broadside by electric car No. 16. There was a terrible crash as the side of the horse car was stove in while the vestibule of the electric car was demolished. The two lady passengers on the horse car were severely shaken but soon recovered. Two days later another electric car on Albert Street hit the Metcalfe stage. The passengers were shaken up and the horses thrown to the ground; one horse broke his leg and had to be killed. So far no person had been killed, although one elderly man had died a day or two after being hit, but for reasons probably not caused by the accident. This record was spoiled on December 18 when Mr. Ira Morgan, a prominent citizen, trying unwisely to board a moving street car from the front at the corner of Sparks and Metcalfe, was knocked down and had his chest crushed by the car step. Although conscious when taken to hospital, he died at 3:15 the next morning.

Despite these tragedies progress was made. On November 9 came news that the company's offices were being moved from Albert Street car barns to larger quarters on Metcalfe Street. Then on December 12 came another new beginning. Mr. W.W. Wylie, who had a carriage shop at the corner of Slater and Kent Streets, was given an order to build six open cars and one closed car for the electric railway. Mr. Wylie had car building experience, having worked in that capacity for the Liverpool Tramway Car Co. in England. This started the car building industry in Ottawa, the shop was later purchased by Ahearn and Soper, and, in 1895, became the celebrated Ottawa Car Company which built most of Ottawa's street cars as well as many for other Canadian cities.

On December 15 1891 the long-awaited first big snow storm came to Ottawa. The horse railway soon put sleighs on the line, while the electric system brought out the new sweeper as well as gangs of men with shovels. It was a lot of work but the cars kept running and did much to convince the unbelievers. But the snow of December 1891 was like nothing compared to that which fell in January 1892. It was as if nature was throwing all it had at Ottawa to test the electric railway. Day in day out the snow fell and the winds

blew, and day in day out cars kept running as the sweeper cleared the tracks. After the big storm on January 6 the Evening Journal said "The electric railway company did nobly last night. People will be wanting the tracks on every street in winter at this rate." On January 14 car No. 23 became the first street car in Canada to be fitted with electric heaters, much to the comfort of the passengers. Still the snow came down but the railway managers said: "The cars will run if the snow comes 4 feet deep; nothing will stop them. We expect a stormy February but the cars will run!". Everyone knew that this Winter was the big test that would make or break electric traction in Canada.

Ottawa Electric Railway Co.

SCHOOL TICKET

Good for TWENTY rides for Children under Fourteen years of age while attending school.

NOT TRANSFERABLE

SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS ENDORSED HEREON WHICH THE PURCHASER HEREBY ACCEPTS

Eleanor Soper Purchaser

10906

H. Hutcherson
June 1907 Superintendent

CAUTION.—The sale or loan of this ticket by any person after its issue is punishable by law and will cancel the ticket which will at once be taken up by the conductor.

PUNCH CUTS:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



"Yes jump on but blame yourself if you have a rough time." So said superintendant Hutcherson to the reporter for the Daily Citizen who was given a ride on the sweeper during a big storm on January 3 1892 and who boarded the car at 1:00 A.M. that Sunday morning (yes, the sweeper did run on Sunday). The reporter's description is so

Inte Ottawa
OTTAWA AWAY AHEAD.
 A citizen back from a visit to Ottawa says that the electric cars in use there are charming. He really does not see how the aldermen—if any of them have ever seen or used an electric car—can discuss for one moment the question whether electric cars should or should not be allowed here. He found the electric cars there delightful to travel on after the old jog-trot, hitch-forward and jolt-back-waid of our street railway here.

Yells Dec 17 91
Electric Cars at Ottawa.
 The snow storm, which prevailed at Ottawa, as at Montreal, the last two days, did not interfere with the working of the electric street railway. The following telegram was received in this city yesterday evening by Mr. Mainwaring:
 OTTAWA, December 18.
 Big storm yesterday, but electric cars running regularly.
 AHEARN & SOPER.



The Ottawa Daily Citizen
 SIX PAGES.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1891.

STRUGGLE WITH THE STORM.

The Electric System Pulls Through With Success.

The first heavy snowstorm this season visited Ottawa yesterday. It commenced early in the morning, and turning to sleet later, on continued until late last night. Sleighting was good during the day, and wheeled vehicles were generally relegated to winter quarters. The horse passenger company took out their runner cars shortly before noon, while the Electric Company successfully combatted the snow and ran their cars on good time all day. This was not done without considerable trouble and the expense of additional labour, and the company received the commendations of all citizens for their energy and earned success. Yesterday's experience goes far to show that they will likely carry out their determination to run the electric system all winter.

Even the railways felt the severity of the storm, and nearly all the trains arrived in the city yesterday about an hour late.

The snow clearing contractors commenced operations yesterday. It would scarcely be fair, perhaps, to comment upon the character of all the work done on the very first day of the service. Contractor Stanley, though, had the New Edinburgh sidewalks in good condition.

The electric snow brush seems to do the business completely. A very good scheme was the running of a heavy roller over the snow thrown up on either side of the track, which left the street quite hard.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31 1891.

The watch night services in Dominion Church to-night begin at 10.30, and will be conducted by the pastor, Rev. Dr. Ryckman, assisted by Rev. Mr. Pike, the evangelist. Electric cars will run until 1 o'clock New Year's morning.

THE ELECTRIC CARS.
 The electric cars had their second tussle with the snow this morning. From 8 o'clock till 9, when the sweeper was run out, it was stick here and stick there, but a little muscle and with brooms on the rails in front soon set them going again. The snowpiles occurred in places where the snow was drifted and out of the current.
 After 9 o'clock the sweeper got to work on the main line and then the snow flew in clouds on either side, the tracks were cleared and the cars bowled along as usual. About half past nine the Elgin st. cars had to stop at Arks st.

The Welcome Snow.

An old-fashioned snowfall came last night to delight the hearts of everyone. The flakes fell thickly and softly all night and were still coming down in the morning. The joy street surfaces were covered at daylight with a deep layer of snow. The sweepers of the electric railway and the snow plows of the city contractors were out betimes, and tracks and sidewalks were cleared in fine style, large gangs of men being thus employed in all parts of the city.

This was the first really business-like fall of the present winter, and gave an idea of what sort of a state of things would be experienced in an average snowy winter between the electric track sweepers and the sidewalks' snowplows. The snow thrown off the tracks and sidewalks lay in big high parallel ridges along the sidewalk curbs, leaving good walking and wide sleighing roads each side of the tracks. The work was efficiently and quickly done. Bank street particularly was in splendid condition for both sleighing and walking long before the average breakfast hour. The electric roads and sidewalks being thus rapidly and effectively cleared, the next thing was to cart the snow away, and this job is now being handled in a style that indicates the practical solution of the snow question in Ottawa. The work has been systematized and is being carried out in a practical manner with no nonsense about it.

Export
 with ordinary horse cars would point out that a few days' snow would stop traffic on the electric railway, or if the rails were cleared the remainder of the road would be impassable. Ottawa is now trying the new system, and before committing themselves cities similarly situated would do well to await the result of the test.

Photographing the Sweeper.

This morning Mr. Soper, Mr. Hutcheson, and a number of friends of the Electric Railway company, with Mr. A. G. Pittaway, photographer, assembled on Wellington st., in front of the Langevin block, to witness the interesting process of photographing the powerful and triumphant sweeper fresh from her memorable and victorious tussle with the first typical snowfall of the present winter. Hearty congratulations were showered on Mr. Soper and the energetic superintendent, Mr. Hutcheson, to whose indefatigable exertions the company owe so much, on the splendid results of the night's operations. Rideau street lay stretched before the party, a magnificent picture, level as a board its entire width clear of snow from curbstone to curbstone. Those who had just come over Bank street said it was if possible even more perfectly cleared and levelled than Rideau street and in perfect condition for sleighing never in such condition in the winter before. It was amusing in that thoroughfare to see pedestrians following the sweeper. The sweeper looked as fresh as a daisy after her work, with scarcely a trace on her of the fight. The men on her say they could have coped with a good deal more snow than was met with. The secret is to get out early and keep on pegging away. Every time the snow falls fresh experience is gathered and the next job comes easier.

The Electric Street Railway company battled with the storm till a late hour last night and succeeded in keeping up a good service all day. The storm was an exceptional one for Ottawa, the general snow-falls being very heavy, but not of the nature of sleet as occurred yesterday. The snow-sweeper did excellent work, and a large gang of men found employment in various parts of the line.

The Free Press.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

Fine oil—St Jacobs
Organ for sale—141 Sparks
Watch lost—Leave at this office
Success—R J Davila
Furniture—Metropolitan Mfg Co
Horses wanted—W E Wilsey
Monday 11th—C Ross & Co
Great opening—R M McMorran

OTTAWA, THURSDAY JAN. 7 1892.

The Difficulty Overcome.

When the snow storm started last night the electric sweeper was put in operation and through the night kept at its work leaving the track clear and ready for traffic. Although the storm was a heavy one, some eight inches of snow falling, not a single trip of the car had been lost. This morning the plough cleaned the surplus snow to a level and dozens of special snow sleighs have removed it to the dumping grounds placing the streets in excellent condition. There is good evidence to prove that the officials of the line have solved the problem of running cars during the winter in Ottawa.

The Mail Jan 19/92

The experiment in Ottawa with electric street cars is, according to all accounts, an unqualified success. It was feared that the presence of snow in a large quantity would render the system unworkable, but it has been demonstrated that with energetic management the elements can be overcome. In Toronto much less difficulty would be experienced in keeping the tracks clear, for, compared with that of the capital, our climate is almost tropical. Those who have a knowledge of the advantages of electric cars as to speed and comfort will have watched the experiment in Ottawa with interest and be pleased with its success so far.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, JAN. 7, 1892.

THE Electric Railway company did nobly last night. People will be wanting the tracks on every street in winter, at this rate.

The Electric Doing Well.

The heavy fall of snow yesterday and last night did not interfere with the running of the electric cars. Last night the sweeper ran most of the night, keeping the roadbed clear while the rollers perambulated the different streets, beating flat the snow on each side of the track. Men worked until late into the night shovelling back the snow from the rails. This morning the company's carts were busily engaged carting off all accumulations. The city snow-ploughs went at their work about twelve o'clock with the result that all the principal streets were clear at eight o'clock this morning.

Old Probs says we will have lower temperature and high northwest winds.

THE EVENING JOURNAL.

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, JAN. 21, 1892.

They Follow Ottawa.

The Kingston News says: An electric street railway will be built in the city this year. This is now beyond doubt. The old route will be experimented upon first, and if the receipts are heavy it will be a good indication that the people mean to encourage enterprise, and tracks will be laid on other streets. The coaches will be run in winter as well as in summer, and it will take a great quantity of snow to blockade them. They will be made as comfortable in severe weather as Pullman cars. Yesterday Mr. Rutherford, of the Thomson-Houston Electric Light company, Toronto, was in the city figuring on the cost of the plant. He left last evening and will finish his work at another visit.

They Run in Ridges There.

A gentleman who returned to-day from Hamilton and Toronto says that in those places they have about as much snow as in Ottawa, and that the street car service is still continued on wheels. But they are making a sorry attempt at it compared with Ottawa. There is no effort by either the city or the company to clean the railway streets, and only enough snow is scooped out around the rails to allow the cars to run, the result being that there are with double tracks 4 big ridges on the streets. Toronto people are greatly interested in Ottawa's electric railway.

The Free Press

OTTAWA, FRIDAY JAN. 19 1892

The second electric snow-sweeper is complete, and will be used during the next snowstorm. It is a facsimile of the first with the exception of the rail cleaner, which in the new machine is a stiff broom in place of a steel plough.

THE EVENING JOURNAL.

OTTAWA, MONDAY, JAN. 25, 1892.

ALTHOUGH the electric railway is receiving considerable attention from snowstorms now, it does not seem much the worse.

Nothing Will Stop Them.

"The cars will run if the snow comes 4 feet deep; they are going to run all winter. Nothing will stop them." So said Mr. J. W. McRae, the president of the electric road, while talking to a JOURNAL man this morning on the removal of the snow.

Talking about the cost of the cleaning, Mr. McRae said the company had so far paid out about \$2,000 for labor alone, "and though it is expensive," he added, "I tell you it does me good to walk around and see so many men at work, who otherwise would be idle."

Mr. McRae said that he expected a stormy February, but he added, "the cars will run."

THE OTTAWA ELECTRIC CARS.

THEY ARE A SUCCESS.

(Special to the Witness.) 1892.

OTTAWA, Jan. 27.—The electric cars are running on schedule time without a break. Sunday's snowfall made no difference, for Monday morning found them running as usual. The snow is removed from the tracks by electric rotary rattan brushes, attached to a special car. Then a horse-power plough shoves the snow to one side of the street, from which it is completely removed in large box sleighs and dumped into the canal. The company makes the entire street their care and the streets on which the road runs are in better condition for public use than any of the other streets. There is an electric snow-plough, which, however, it has not yet been found necessary to run over the tracks. The snow has not detained the cars this winter for a single minute, so completely is the problem solved, due chiefly to the wisdom of the company in caring for the entire street and not simply for their own tracks. The road and its operation is a complete success.

No account of an event can be as clear as the day-to-day news items as they appeared at the time. Here we see a number of news articles, collected by Mr. Soper in the 1890's, describing some of the events of the struggle of the Ottawa Electric Railway to keep running through the snows of the winter of 1891 - 1892. Some of the items are from newspapers of other cities as they watched to see what would happen. Even by the end of January it was evident that the battle would be won, and city transit in Canada would be changed forever.

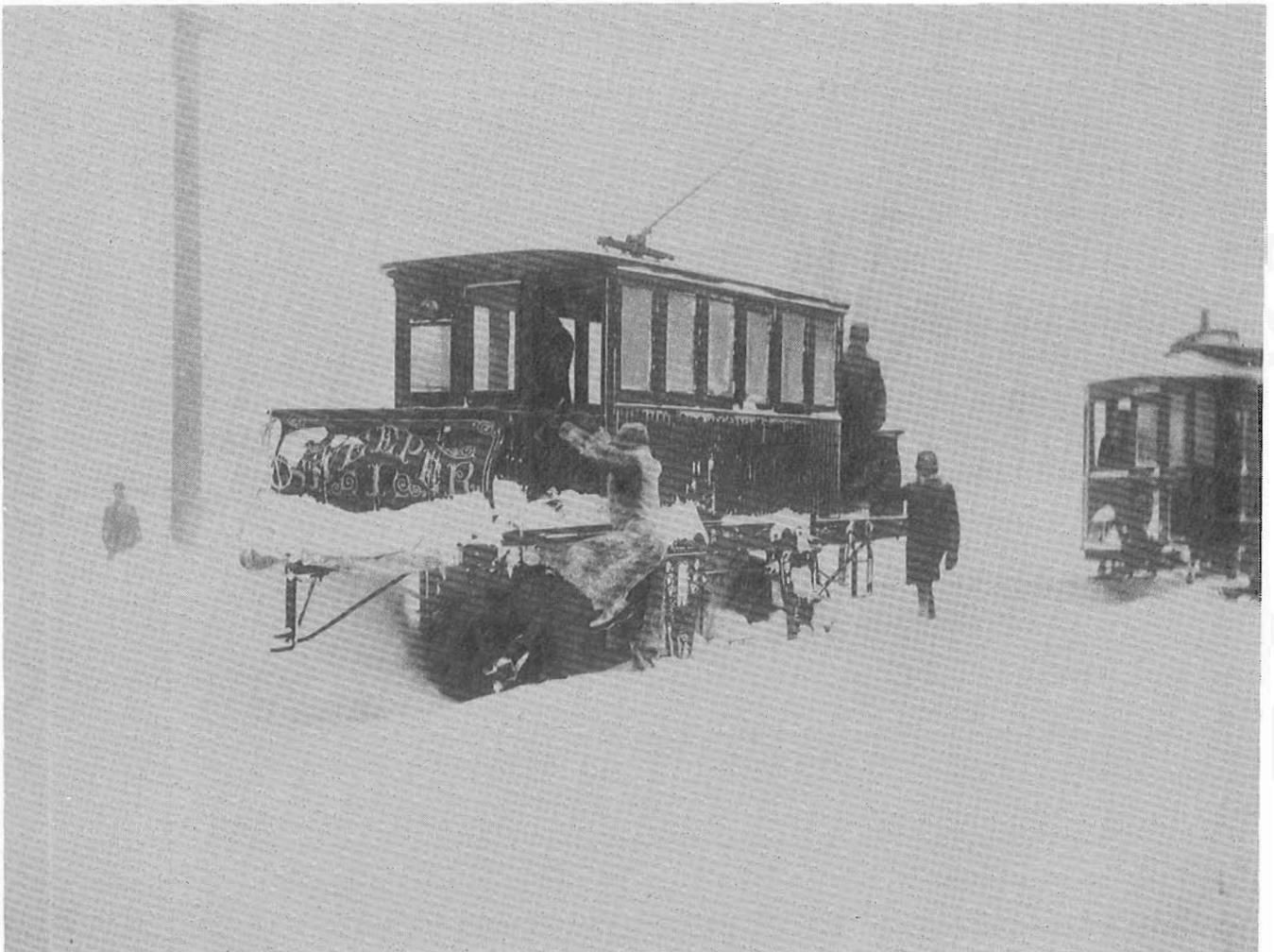
Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

vivid that it is a classic well worth quoting word for word:

"The genial Superintendent in his big fur coat covered with snow and ice from head to foot looked like a belated Santa Claus driving an electric reindeer. The snow was falling thick and fast and as the sweeper turned on to Wellington Street the east wind seemed to howl as it swept up from the bridges. Even at that hour great drifts of snow had formed across the intersections of streets and threateningly blocked the way, but as the superintendent turned on the current, notch after notch, the immense rotary brooms spun around with a deep whirring

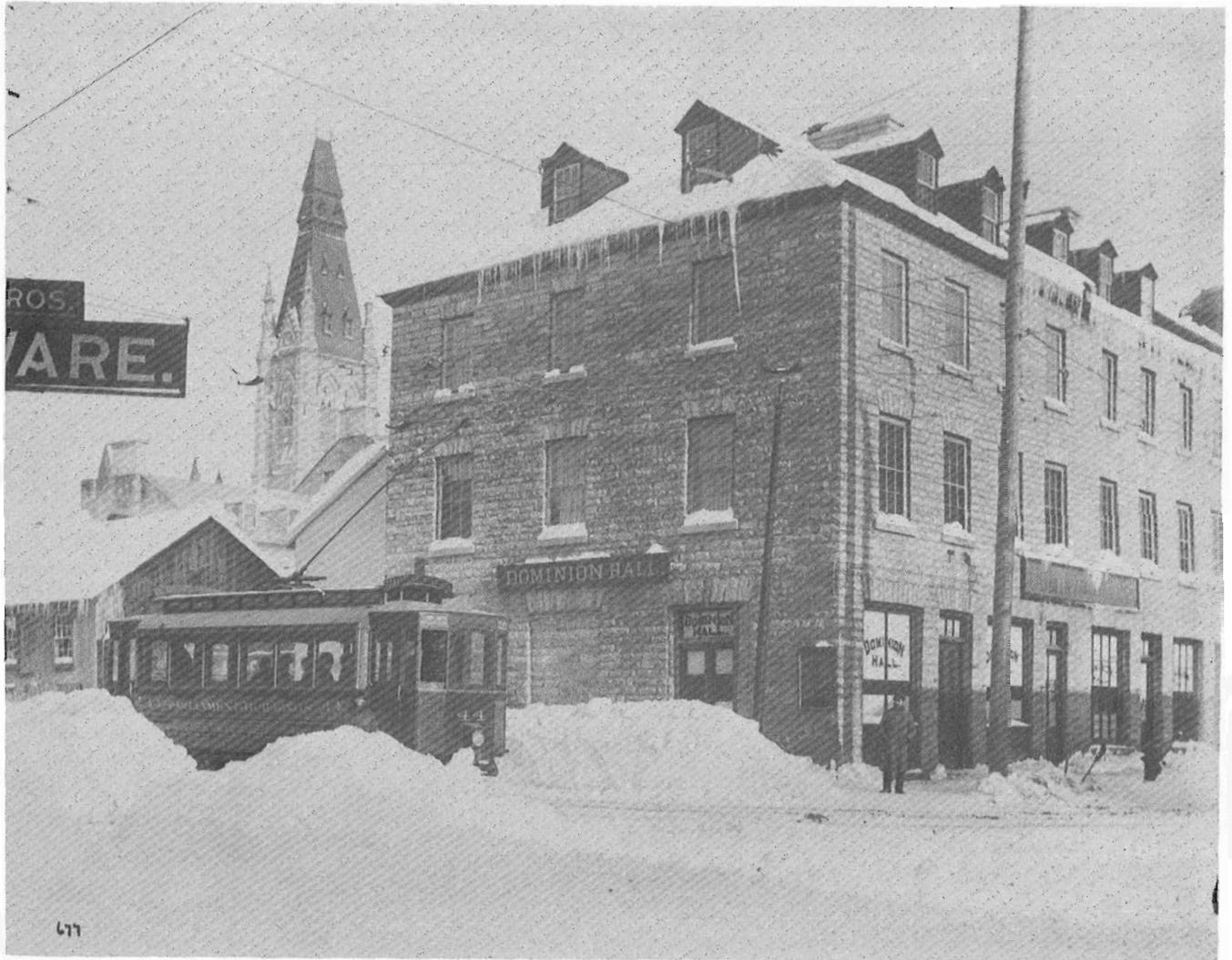
noise, and the sweeper leaped out upon the track seemingly concious of its power. Through the drifts it sped, the snow flying from the brooms in great white clouds and filling eyes and ears of the solitary passenger, who by this time had begun to realize where the "rough" part of the trip came in. With gongs ringing, brushes whizzing and snow everywhere, on across Dufferin Bridge the sweeper rushed - in front a blind unbroken waste of snow - behind a cleanly swept track, with its polished rail tops glistening under the electric lights, and so on without interruption until the top of Rideau Street was reached."

Daily Citizen, January 4 1892.



"Yes jump on, but blame yourself if you have a rough time." This vivid action photo of sweeper No. 1 was taken in January 1892 and shows the conditions faced as the company successfully kept the street cars running that first winter. One can feel how the newspaper reporter felt as he wrote about the ride on the sweeper only a few days before this photo was taken. Note the vestibuled passenger car following the sweeper. Action shots like this were very difficult to take with the camera equipment of the 1890's.

Public Archives of Canada, PA-8420.



The corner of Bank and Sparks Streets in the late 1890's. Contrast this view with the horse car scene at the same corner only seven years before.

Public Archives of Canada. PA-8843.

On January 14 the sweeper paused briefly in its work to allow Mr. Soper, superintendant Hutcherson and a number of friends to board it while it was photographed fresh from its memorable struggle with another storm. The sweeper looked "fresh as a daisy after her work with scarcely a trace on her of the fight." The secret was "to get out early and keep pegging away." This photo has survived and still shows the drama of the occasion in those days before action photography. The work of the sweeper was made easier when the second one, similar to the first, was placed in service on January 29.

The memorable Winter of 1891 - 92 kept on, but the street railway coped with it. Gradually it appeared that they would be successful and keep their promise to run the electric cars all winter. So too, the other systems, led by Montreal and Toronto, watched the struggle at Ottawa and made

the decision to adopt electric traction. As the Spring of 1892 came and the snow melted it was clear to all that the battle was won and that Ahearn and Soper were right. Electric cars were indeed successful in the Canadian winter, and the future of traction in Canada had a clear track ahead. Only seven hundred days had passed since the Ottawa City Council had decided to try the merits of an electric railway, but so much happened in those seven hundred days.

VII. Epilogue - 1893-1983.

The Ottawa Electric Railway went on to bigger things in the years ahead. In 1893 they consolidated with, and electrified, the horse-drawn street railway, and obtained a new thirty-year franchise. This consolidation allowed the eventual abandonment of the controversial track on Wellington

The Evening Journal

WOODBURN & ROSS, - Publishers,

36 ELGIN STREET.

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1891.

THE FIRST CAR READY.

THE ELECTRIC ROAD NEARLY COMPLETED.

Before the End of the Month the Bank Street Branch Will be Ready For Operation—How the Motors Set the Wheels Going.

The first of the new electric cars is practically ready to be put on the track and more are being proceeded with rapidly. The arrangements for opening the road are quickly approaching completion. Mr. Hibbard is near the end of his work on Bank street. The line in that section is now finished, so far as his construction goes, namely, cut to the exhibition grounds, whilst on Albert street west of Bank he has another large gang digging holes for the sleepers.

THE OVERHEAD WIRE.

Mr. Knott is here and is slinging the overhead wire, which is a flanged hard drawn double copper wire, of about a quarter of an inch in thickness. This wire is passed in the centre of the roadway, and serves to transmit the current to the car motor. This is done by means of the trolley. The trolley arm ends in a wheel which runs along the under side of the copper wire, and receiving the current from the overhead wire transmits it to the arm, whence it passes down a wire which travels down the side of the car under the woodwork to the cut-off box, situated under the seat of the car, between the motors, and so through the motors to the wheel and thence to the ground.

HOW THE POWER IS USED.

But how does this transmission of the current from the overhead wire to the ground cause the wheels to move? The motor contains a cylinder filled with coiled wire and the passage of the electric current through this, excites the iron of the cylinder and frame until it becomes one powerful magnet, the magnetism being concentrated in a split copper ring, made in many parts not wholly joined together.

The circumference of this ring attracts a number of wire magnets slightly projecting from the motor wheel. As each of these wire magnets is firmly bound into its place in the wheel, its effort to reach the point of attraction, which is without the radius of its revolution, carries it so violently towards the point of attraction that it overshoots its mark, thus starting the revolution of the motor wheel and at the same time bringing the next magnet within the influence of the centre attraction. So the motor wheel being started the revolutions must continue as long as the excitement or magnetism exists. The motor wheel connects with a shaft armed with a cog wheel, which fits into a cog on the axle of the car wheels, thus transmitting the motion and driving the car.

THE SPEED.

The rate of motion is regulated by what is known as the comptroller, one of which is situated at each end of every car. When the handle is over the centre point on the top of the comptroller the power is shut off. As the driver turns it to the left the machinery in the interior gives a loud click for about every half inch it is turned. Each click emitted signifies an increase of speed, and by turning the handle in this direction the car is propelled. In order to drive the car backwards it reverse the engine, as it were, the handle is turned to the right. Each car is supplied with two motors, so that should one break down from any cause, all the driver has to do is to go to the cutting off box, under the seat of the car, and switch off the useless and connect the good motor with the current. Each motor is of 20 horse power. Each car weighs about 6 tons.

LUXURY ON WHEELS.

The cars are most luxurious in the interior. They are lofty and airy, the side windows being supplemented by ventilators in the roof. At night each car is lit up by five incandescent lights. The woodwork is of light oak, polished, with mirrored ends. The seats are upholstered in English Wilton carpets of heather mixture with maroon, black and gold stripes. The outside of the car is equally tasteful. The body is a rich orange with the words "Parliament Buildings" in gold, the ends and under portions of the cars being light primrose.

INGRESS AND EGRESS.

At each end there are patent gates which are closed at the end that the driver is stationed, at when the car is in progress, thus cutting off "the man at the wheel" from all communication and forcing everybody to enter or leave the car at the rear end.

At the fitting shops and offices on Albert street, men are busy getting the cars mounted and fixing poolies, etc., ready for operations.

It is probable that the opening day will be between June 20 and June 30, the first cars to run being on Bank street.

THE OTTAWA EVENING JOURNAL, MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 1904 Children's Great Outing at Britannia

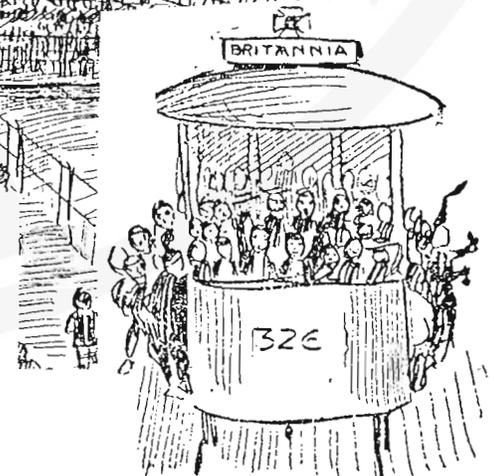
CHILDREN IN CHORUS.—"Ain't Mister Ahearn and Soper Real Nice."



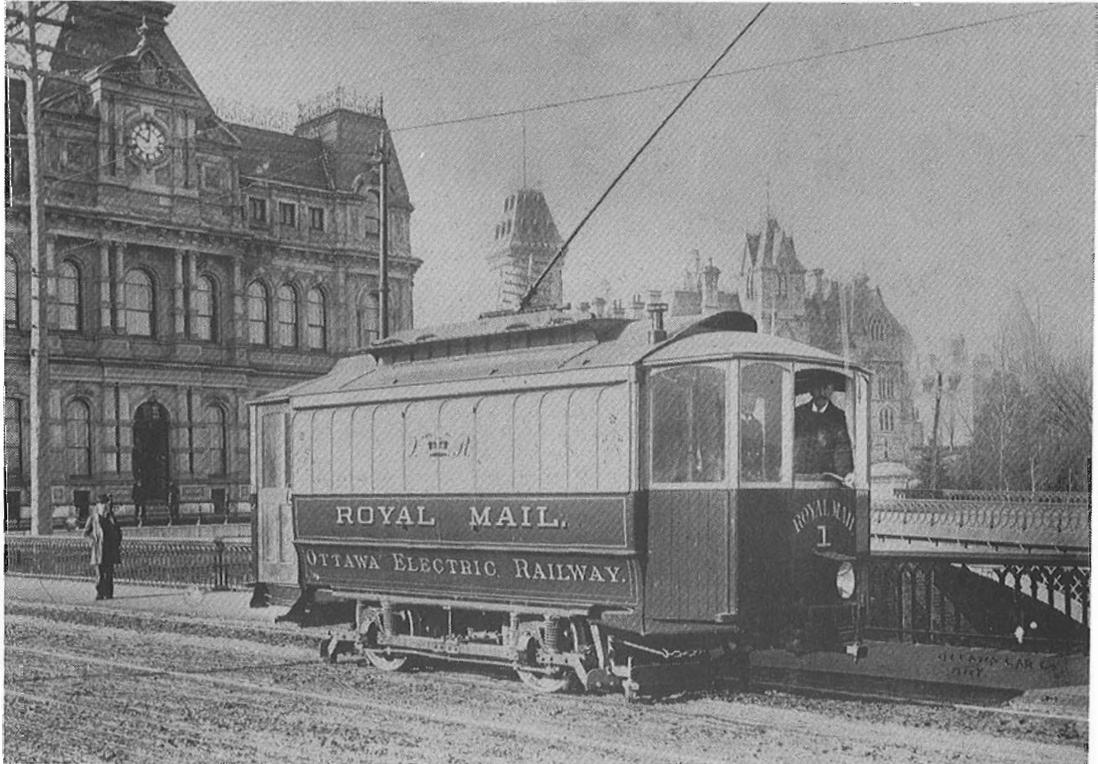
TWO GREAT NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT THE O.E.Ry.

The writer of 1891, in explaining the unfamiliar new technology, used such terms as "Comptroller" "Trolley" and "Poolies" (i.e. trolley wheels).

In 1904 a special children's outing saw 7600 happy youngsters given a wonderful day at the park at Britannia.



A REAR VIEW.



In 1894 the Ottawa Electric Railway secured the contract to carry the mail, and this car was built that year. A later Ottawa mail car (1906) has been saved at the Canadian Railway Museum. Public Archives of Canada. C-18684.



During the time the O.E.Ry. had the mail contract it had the words "Royal Mail" on all its cars, not just those that carried the mail. This was an attempt to give the street cars right-of-way over other vehicles. This rare view shows one of the cars so lettered on Rideau Street. Public Archives of Canada. PA-45642.

Street. In 1894 they secured the contract to carry the mail and built special cars for this purpose. For a time all the street cars in Ottawa were lettered "Royal Mail" to give them the right-of-way over other vehicles. Later came the double truck cars, and in 1900 the long suburban line to Britannia Bay. Then came steel cars of increasingly modern design as the system expanded. All these cars were built by the Ottawa Car Company, reorganized as the Ottawa Car Manufacturing Company in 1913, which had a reputation second-to-none in Canada. Ottawa-built cars were found in most Canadian cities, hundreds of them, built between the 1890's and 1914 in Montreal alone. It is significant that there are no less than 12 Ott-

awa-built cars at the Canadian Railway Museum. The larger cars built between 1910 and 1917 replaced the pioneer cars of 1891 and 1892, and sadly none of these has survived, the oldest existing Ottawa electric car dating from about 1896.



A busy summer on Sparks Street at the corner of Bank about 1897. The horse cars were long gone now, and the O.E. was expanding rapidly as it headed towards the Twentieth Century.

Public Archives of Canada. PA-8763.

Ottawa Electric Railway Company
RETURNING
From Britannia-on-the-Bay
GOOD FOR TRANSPORTATION TO 3 P.M.
FOR ONE CHILD—ADULT 14 YEARS.
OTTAWA FREE PRESS CHILDREN'S EXCURSION
Monday, August 5th, 1904.

OTTAWA FREE PRESS CHILDREN'S EXCURSION ON
Ice-Cream Trip
To be presented at the Refreshment
Parlour, Britannia-on-the-Bay
GOOD 3 P.M., MONDAY, AUGUST 15TH,
1904. PRESENTLY A CHILD
NOT OVER 14 YEARS.

Ottawa Electric Railway Company
GOING
To Britannia-on-the-Bay
GOOD FOR TRANSPORTATION TO 3 P.M.
FOR ONE CHILD—ADULT 14 YEARS.
OTTAWA FREE PRESS CHILDREN'S EXCURSION
Monday, August 5th, 1904.



By 1898 the car numbers were up into the 200's. This busy scene was taken on Rideau Street in that year.

Public Archives of Canada. C-1109.

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING

HE WRITES THE JOURNAL AN-
NOUNCING THE FACT

He Will Arrive the Day Before Xmas and
Will go Through the City on Top of
an Electric Car

Editor Journal,—Usually, as you know, I make my visits to the homes of good little children after dark on Christmas Eve, but two years ago I ventured to appear in the daytime, and enjoyed myself so much that I have decided to visit Ottawa again this year. I shall travel with my reindeer (and oranges) over the mountains and frozen rivers, and go through the streets of Ottawa the afternoon and evening before Christmas.

I am bringing four little brownies with me this time, and am arranging to have them accompany me through Ottawa on top of an electric car.

I will write you again from time to time. Give my love to the little boys and girls of Ottawa and tell them to look out for us.

SANTA CLAUS.

St. Nicholas Hall,
North Pole, Dec. 1st, 1898.



On Christmas 1898, Mr. Warren Soper played the part of Santa Claus and rode on the roof of the "Santa Claus Special" street car as it ran through downtown Ottawa. A car like this (perhaps this very car) is preserved at the Canadian Railway Museum.

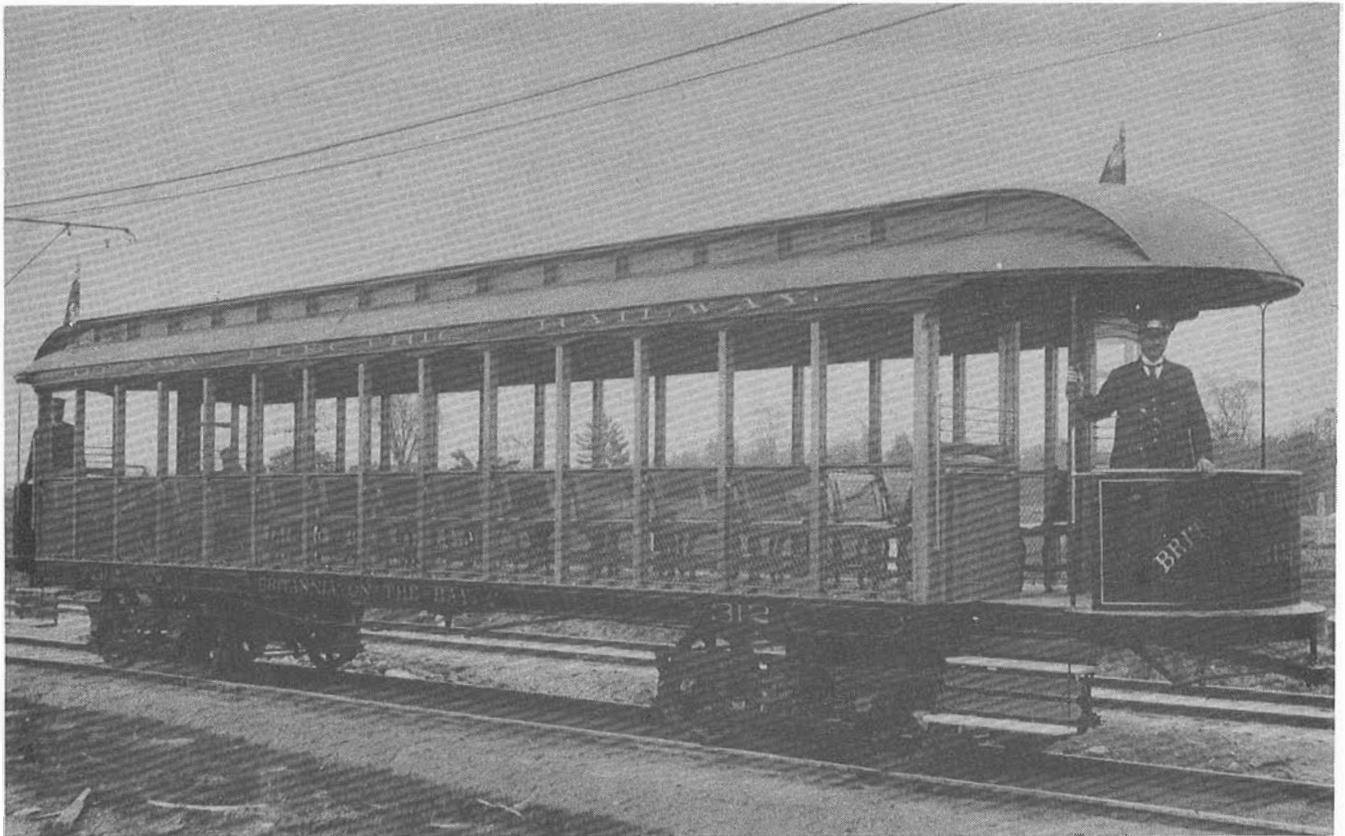
C.R.H.A. Collection.

Superintendent Hutcheson of the O.E.R. later came to Montreal and had a long career with the Montreal Street Railway and its successor the Montreal Tramways Co. He became Vice President and General Manager of the latter company before he retired in 1935. In 1923 the thirty-year franchise of the Ottawa Electric Railway, granted in 1893, expired and was renewed for a further 25 years - until 1948. Messrs. Ahearn and Soper continued to direct the organization until May 13 1924 when Warren Y. Soper died, at the age of 70, at his residence "Lorando" at Rockcliffe. On the day of his funeral, May 16 1924, all street car operation in Ottawa was stopped for two minutes from 3:30 to 3:32 P.M. Mr. Ahearn lived another 14 years and died on June 28 1938, just four days after his 83rd birthday. The firm of Ahearn and Soper carried on and in fact continues to exist to the present day. Sadly, there are no longer any relations of the founders in the company, the last having sold out some years ago. The firm still

handles electrical equipment, now dealing in such late-20th century devices as computer terminals.

The Ottawa Electric Railway continued as a private company for yet another ten years, its last president being the same Frank Ahearn who as a five-year-old had thrown the first switch in 1891. The Ottawa Car Manufacturing Co., later renamed Ottawa Car and Aircraft Co., built its last cars in 1947, appropriately enough four cars (numbers 1000 to 1003) for the Ottawa Electric Railway. In 1948 the City of Ottawa took over the Ottawa Electric Railway and operated it as the Ottawa Transportation Commission. Street car service continued through most of the 1950's until the last Ottawa street car ran in a sad ceremonial parade on May 2 1959. By that time almost 68 years had passed since the line was opened in 1891, but some people were still there who could remember that day.

Today it is almost a quarter century since the last street car ran in Ottawa. More and more these days



The last development of the Ottawa Electric Railway in the nineteenth century was the long suburban line to Britannia Bay opened in July 1900. These big double-track open trailers were built especially for this service. The Britannia line ran until 1959 and is still fondly remembered by many residents of the capital.

Public Archives of Canada. C-2461.

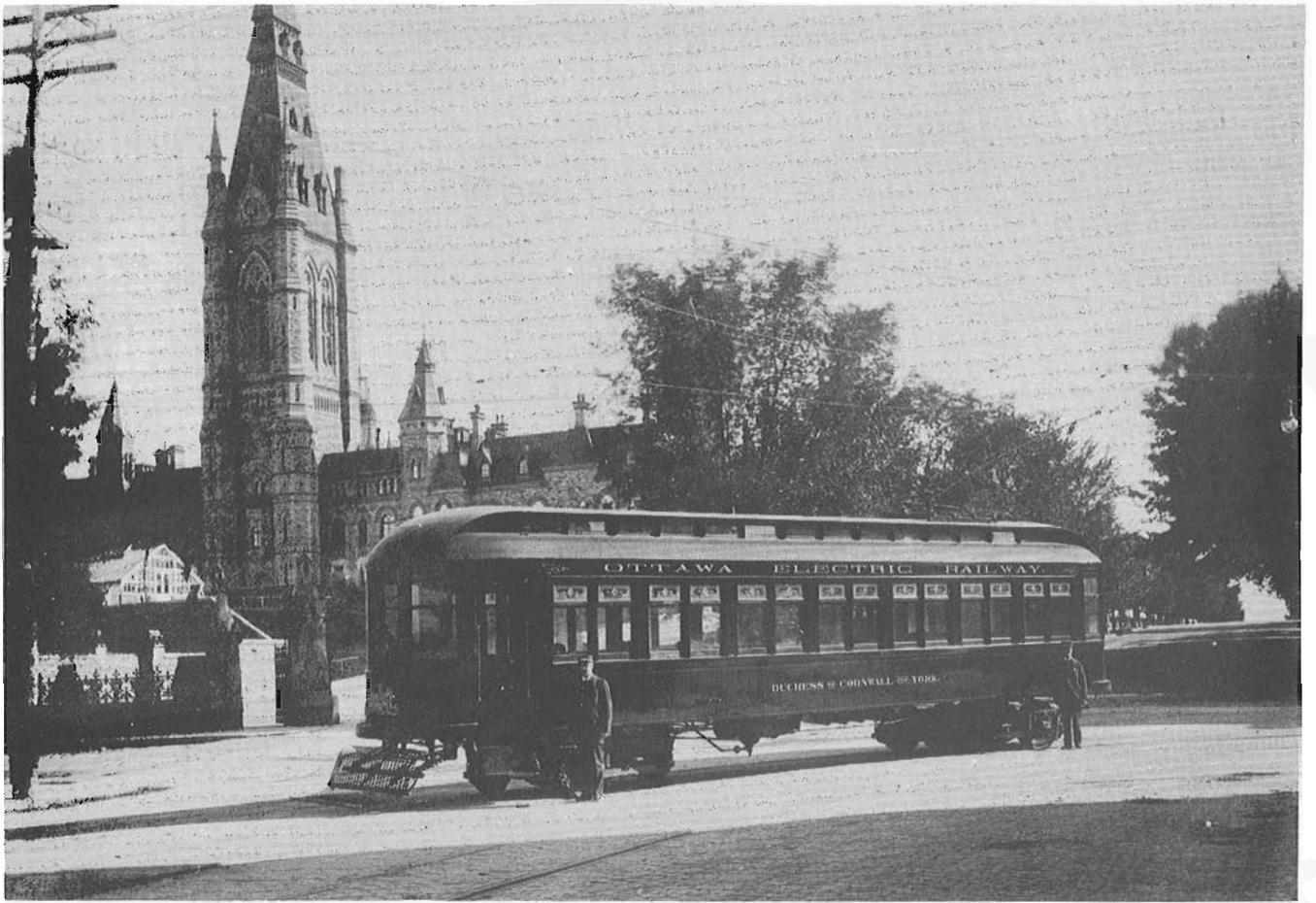
it is realized that electric traction, in one form or another, is the most efficient form of urban mass transportation. Already several Canadian cities have re-adopted this method, either as subway rapid-transit or as light rail operation, the latter being, in reality, modern street car lines. Toronto never fully abandoned street cars, and its new units are great examples of the re-born technology. Perhaps electric traction may yet return to Ottawa in time for its centennial in 1990. All in all the science of electric transit is in better shape than it has been for at least twenty-five years.

Electric transit in Canada today is the direct descendent of the pioneer efforts of almost a century

ago. And few of these efforts were as important, or bore as much fruit, as those done in Ottawa by two of the real fathers of Canadian electric traction - Thomas Franklin Ahearn and Warren Young Soper.

Note: The author would like to acknowledge the great help given by Mr. Warren Y. Soper, grandson of the original Warren Y. Soper, who made available priceless scrapbooks and documents collected by his grandfather between 1890 and 1924. Without these, this article could not have been written.





When Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary) visited Canada in 1901 the Ottawa Electric Railway had this special car built for the occasion. One view shows it on Sappers Bridge while the other depicts it turning west on to Wellington Street from Bank. Note that the track on Wellington in front of the Parliament buildings had already been abandoned.

Public Archives of Canada C26378 and C26390.



Another winter scene as a later single-track car runs along a cross street in Ottawa.
Public Archives of Canada. PA-44940.

WHY HAVE ALL THE SEVENS GONE?

One of the unusual things about the Ottawa Electric Railway was the numbering system used for their passenger street cars. It is best described as a "nonary" system, for it used nine numerals instead of the usual ten; there was no number containing the digit "7" in any position. An example of four "consecutive" numbers would be 666, 668, 669, 680 and so forth, skipping any number containing a 7.

Why this was so is still somewhat of a mystery. One story puts it down to superstition, another says that, many years ago, car 77 was involved in a serious accident and part of the settlement with the family of the victims was that sevens never again be used. While this may be so, no one I have spoken to has anything definite or concrete.

One thing that is sure is that in the early days seven was used, since there is a good photo of car 17 taken in 1892. However no other photos, even those in the late 1890's or early 1900's, show a car with a 7, so whatever caused the seven to be banished happened at an early date.

Your editor would be very grateful to anyone who could shed some light on this mystery, either by telling some definite reason for this strange occurrence, or by finding a photo of an Ottawa passenger street car containing a "7" (work cars sometimes did use 7's). Any reasonable-sounding answers will be printed, and if anyone can come up with the whole story the editor will gladly give a year's free subscription to Canadian Rail to whoever sends it in first.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year To All.



Although a reader and a well-wisher of the O.E.R. Bulletin, I have not made as much use of its columns as perhaps I should to speak a word now and then to the O. E. R. employees. It gives me great pleasure to again extend to you and yours my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I think I should add a word or two more to my message this year. Some of us have been together for a long time in this business, and it is natural for me to view with regret any chance that our relations may be altered. I cannot forecast the future, but I can honestly say that, whatever may be ahead of us, I shall always appreciate the loyal service and willing co-operation of the men who have helped to make this system one of which I could speak with pride wherever I have gone.—*T. Ahearn, President.*



I wish to again join with Mr. Ahearn in our annual message of good cheer to the employees of the O. E. R. We have seen the road rise and prosper through many eventful years. There were some who were very doubtful of its success at the start, as there are others now who look upon any new development as fraught with peril. This gives me occasion to say that I regard the efficiency of our staff as one of the mainstays in whatever success our railway has attained. While careful management is a necessary requirement, it cannot avail for good service without the hearty backing of the men who meet the public on the cars and take care of the various departments of our business. I recognize at its full value the part the employees have played in the growth of this company, and wish them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.—*Warren Y. Soper, Vice-President.*

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of
The Ottawa Electric Railway Co.

held on the 10th inst. the following resolution was passed expressing
the deep sympathy of the Board at the death of their respected colleague

Mr. Warren Y. Soper

RESOLVED:-

That the Board of Directors of this Company desires to express to the relatives of the late Mr. Warren Y. Soper its most heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement and to record the high esteem and appreciation in which he was held. His ability, his high ideals, his deep interest in the affairs of the company and the sincerity and cordiality with which he co-operated with his fellow directors and officers made him a colleague whose loss is deeply mourned.

The creditable part played by Mr. Soper in the pioneering of the electric railway in Canada and in solving the difficulties offered by the snow problem is now nationally recognized, and the great success attendant upon the operations of this Company is entirely due to Mr. Soper's efforts in co-operation with his life long partner Mr. D. Ahearn.

Ottawa, June 11th. 1924.

J. Ahearn
[Signature]

F. D. Burpee
G. P. Murphy
G. L. Smith
Secretary-Treasurer

Thomas Dethman
J. V. Ahearn

The achievements of Ahearn and Soper were not forgotten as witnessed by this elegant tribute by the directors of the Ottawa Electric Railway on the death of Mr. Soper in 1924. It was now more than a third of a century since the pioneer days of 1890.

Collection of Warren Y. Soper.

Saluons une ère nouvelle



Vous êtes invités à accueillir l'ALRT, le nouveau mode de transport à la fine pointe du progrès. Après l'avoir essayé, rendez-vous au parc Thornton où, gratuitement, vous pourrez faire de fabuleux tours de montagnes, assister à des spectacles de jazz, de chansonniers, de danse folklorique. Des divertissements pour tous, répartis dans quatre secteurs comprenant un merveilleux terrain de jeux pour les enfants. Assistez aux cérémonies d'ouverture le lundi 27 juin à 9h30. Participez au tirage d'une excursion en "Boatrain" dans le détroit de Howe. Consultez l'horaire des activités ci-dessous et venez saluer l'ère nouvelle!

Horaire des activités au parc Thornton

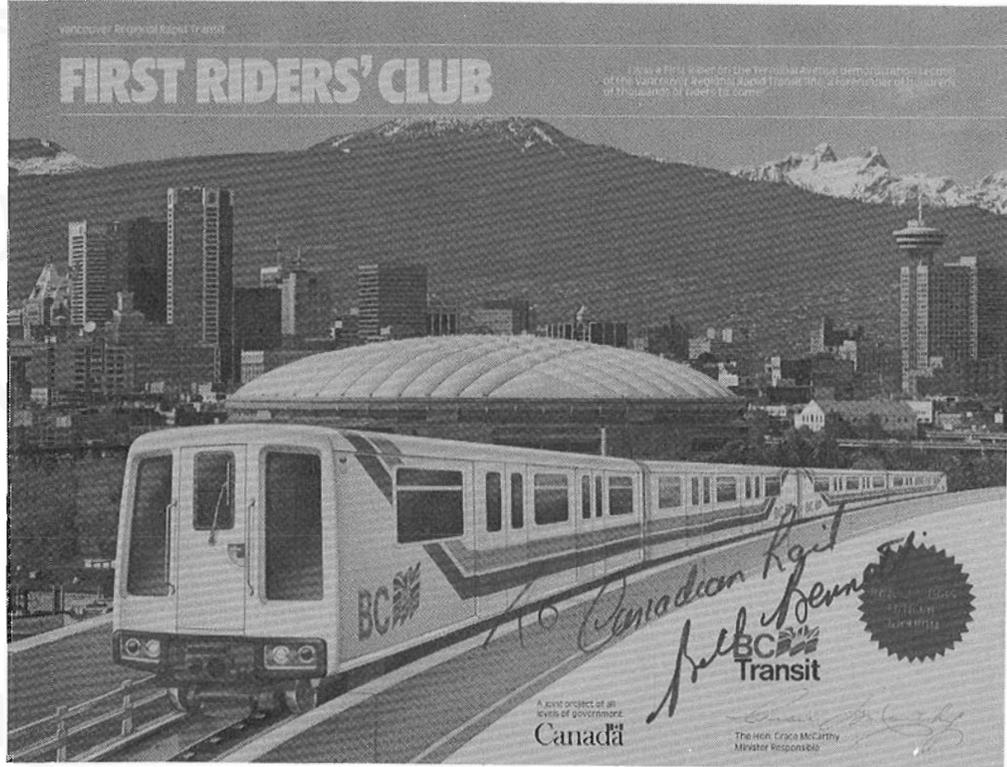
Secteur principal			Terrain de jeux			
Lundi, 27 juin	Mardi, 28 juin	Mercredi, 29 juin	Lundi, 27 juin	Mardi, 28 juin	Mercredi, 29 juin	
9h30 Cérémonies d'ouverture	*	*	*	*	*	9h30
12h30 McGee Stage Band	Vancouver Symphony Brass	Vancouver Symphony Brass	Monteurs	Monteurs	Monteurs	12h00
13h30			O Sweet Clown Mine Co.			13h30
14h00				Quatre à coeurs	Quatre à coeurs	14h00
14h30	Tirage	Tirage				14h30
15h00	Victoria (chansonniers)	O Sweet Clown Mine Co.				15h00
15h30			Monteurs			15h30
16h00						16h00
16h30	Victoria (chansonniers)	Karen Sills (percutants/musiciens)	Monteurs			16h30
17h00						17h00
17h30	Tirage	Tirage		O Sweet Clown Mine Co.	Monteurs	17h30
18h00	The Consortium (l'équipe à cappella)					18h00
18h30	Danse folklorique	Roy Reynolds (guit)				18h30
19h00	Chansonniers	Latino Harmon (guit)				19h00
19h30	Danse de ventre			M...rs		19h30
20h00	Jazz African	Grand tirage				20h00

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Heures d'ouverture: 27 juin - 9h30 à 20h
28-29 juin - 12h à 20h

Situé au Parc Thornton, au carrefour des rues Terminal et Main, adjacent au nouveau ALRT Prebri'd Guideway.



On June 27 to 24 1983 the first part of Vancouver's new A.L.R.T. system was opened. This "First Rider's" certificate was specially autographed for Canadian Rail by Bill Bennett the Premier of British Columbia. The opening of this State-of-the-Art transit system makes an interesting comparison to the inauguration of the Ottawa Electric Railway 92 years before, to the day. Each was a bold step using new technology, and today's development shows that the spirit that motivated Ahearn and Soper so long ago is still alive in Canada today.

C.R.H.A. communications



CRHA COMMUNICATIONS is published by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association. Contributions of items about CRHA Divisions, members, etc. including photographs, newspaper articles are solicited and should be sent to: Bruce Ballantyne 266 McElroy Drive, Kanata, Ontario Canada, K2L 1Y4. Telephone 613-836-5601.

All membership enquiries including change of address notice should be sent to Jim Patterson, Membership Services at Box 282, St. Eustache, P.Q. Canada, J7R 4K2. Telephone 514-473-7766.

Mail for the Canadian Railway Museum and the Board of Directors of the CRHA should be sent to P.O. Box 148, St. Constant P.Q. Canada J0L 1X0 Telephone 514-632-2410.

The addresses of all CRHA Divisions appears on page three of this magazine.

IMPORTANT NOTE

With this issue we close the books on the 1983 version of 'Canadian Rail'. We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind comments regarding the new format and as promised we are on time with our delivery. Our main problem at this time is the fact that with all the figures in it looks like Canadian Rail will be coming in with a deficit of approximately \$2000.00. Our closing membership is some 1325 down about 100 members from 1982. We actually lost about 300 members and obtained 200 new ones during the year.

If Canadian Rail is to continue in its present format it is IMPERATIVE that we obtain an absolute minimum of 1550 members in 1984. To this end we ask each and every Division to promote the CRHA and Canadian Rail at each available opportunity. We have already sent each Division membership material and more is available for specific events, excursions, hobby shows, etc. just drop us a line. We are placing ads in both Trains and Railfan magazines and doing our part here to boost membership whenever possible.

You will notice the indicator which will appear on the inside back cover of Canadian Rail throughout the year to let us all know how we are doing in our attempt to achieve our goal of 1550 members.

So please do your part, if you have any ideas to help us promote the CHRA please let us know, we can't over state the importance of this matter.

GENERAL DIVISION NEWS

You will all hopefully received by now the promotional package containing among other items a roll of 35mm slide film. As mentioned the object is to expose the film on your projects, displays, directors, members, etc. for incorporation into a master slide show to be made available to all Divisions for presentation this winter. Please shoot and return the slides as soon as possible to give us time to do our thing before winter.

NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

St. Lawrence Valley Division

October 1 saw the operation of a special steam hauled excursion from Ottawa to Maniwaki Que. using National Museum of Science & Technology's 1201 and train. This excursion was the first CRHA steam charter in many years and was sold out at least two weeks before departure. The warm temperatures coupled with a fine sunny day saw over 350 members and friends enjoy the spectacular fall scenery on a line that may have seen its last passenger train as it is thought that CP will apply for abandonment of the Maniwaki Sub. in the near future. Special thanks to Bob Cox, the safety committee, Bill Williams in Ottawa and Mr. John Corby of the National Museum for making the day possible.

The regular meeting notice of the Division has been posted and November through May meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month at Vanier College, 5160 Decarie Blvd. Montreal.

Easy to get to via the Snowdon Metro Station or by car. Everyone welcome and bring a friend.

Pacific Coast Division

Some of the meeting programs for the first half of 1983 included a slide show which included shots of The Canadian Railway Museum at Delson presented by Fred Angus. John Collins presented a movie of CP travel between Revelstoke and the Connaught Tunnel as well as of the Sicamous Sub. The June meeting was an evening of commercial movies: "The Pathfinders" (Canada 1932), "Terror on a train" (Britain 1952) and so on.

Some of the activities of the Division include the restoration of CPR 4-4-0 No. 374 which has been moved to a building on Granville Island. This building is being used for the restoration and is being altered to allow the public to view the work. The restoration has received media coverage which has resulted in a number of donations.

PCD members participated in a NRHS excursion to Penticton and the Division's outing to BC Rail's Squamish Works, which include a visit to the Britannia Mining Museum on the way back.

Thanks in part to the Division's efforts in lobbying government officials, the Drake Street roundhouse, turntable, machine shop and pattern shop have been saved from destruction. Further lobbying will be required to ensure there is some permanent rail presentation at the facilities. Congratulations to the Division for all the effort and good luck on further action concerning the roundhouse.

Calgary & Southwestern Division

The Division is considering getting into the restoration business. At Barlow Trail, N.E. Calgary are 3 early - 1940 vintage, outside frame boxcars in restorable condition. The restoration project would serve two purposes: 1) preserve some earlier examples of freight rolling stock 2) provide storage facilities for the Division's growing archival material and small artifacts.

The Division will likely (or has by the time you read this) assist the Alberta Pioneer Railway Association in work on old car 54 (see previous "communications") as well as assist in the project of digging out the old boiler of CPR No. 314 near Field B.C.

The Bytown Railway Society

The Society's old Central Vermont steam crane was back in action this past summer and members and visitors to the National Museum of Science and Technology where it is stored, enjoyed watching an old crane at "work". It is hoped it can be

steamed up again before winter comes.

Steam locomotive 1201 began operations August 3 to Wakefield Quebec after a month's delay in completion of an overhaul. The Society is again participating in the Sunday trips.

Earl Roberts, society president, reports that work continues on CP Official Car No. 27. She now has a coat of CP maroon and some varnish. The lettering will likely be on by the time you read this. As well, the Society has been donated a CP wood caboose for use on the Thurso Railway on future excursions.

From our "Saudi Correspondent"

Walter Bedbrook has developed an English Saudi "railfan" magazine entitled the "Sandpaper". There are some interesting articles from newspaper clippings and from Walter's own experiences and observations. One includes a list of Saudi locomotives some of which were Canadian built!

Walter says he put it together "mostly for the fun of it, but in a way too to be able to reach more of all those in CRHA, and others who have regularly written to me." The first issue must have been a "success" for Walter came out with a second edition.

However, it may be short lived for rumour has it that he will be returning to Canada for good by the end of the year. We will lose our first "foreign correspondent".

SWITCH LIST

83-12 John D. Godfrey, 6650 - 3rd Avenue, Montreal Que. H1Y 2X7 is looking for a slide of a commuter train stopped at one of the stations along the former Canadian National commuter run to Montreal-North. He is also looking for a timetable dated between 1964 and 1968 for the same run. In addition to this John would also like to obtain a slide of a commuter train at the Cartierville depot and a CN Montreal - Vaudreuil commuter timetable from the 1950's. He is willing to pay the going rate for having duplicate slides made and will pay a reasonable price for the timetables.

83-13 Peter Miller, 1309 Victoria Ave., St. Lambert Que. J4R 1R4 has a pocket watch for sale. The watch was presented to John G. Melville, Head Engineer for the original Victoria Bridge. The watch was, made in 1857 and has a gold case with a stainless steel interior.

83-14 Ronald Rumer, 543 East Geneva Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19120, is looking for recordings (tape or record) of Canadian Pacific Railway steam locomotive in regular service in the Rockies.



The business car

THE CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION approved an improved, provisional passenger-train service between Edmonton and Calgary for one year.

VIA proposed service to CN's downtown Edmonton station, and discussed with CP the use of their track between South Edmonton and the CN interchange at 104th Avenue. CP insisted that the track must be upgraded to main-line standards (an estimated cost of \$750,000); the intermodal operations be located elsewhere (an estimated cost of \$15,000,000, excluding land costs); and adequate interchange track capacity be provided north of Jasper Avenue.

CP has also sought to lower maximum speeds from 90 to 75 mph from South Edmonton to Calgary. This would have increased travel time by 20-30 minutes. VIA feels that since LRC equipment is being considered for future service in this area, any competitive advantage of these high speed trains would be negated by the proposed reduction in maximum speed.

VIA recognized the need for some local service on this route but believes that its first priority is to serve the inter-city travel market and most of the communities between Edmonton and Calgary are simply not large enough to be significant generators of rail traffic. As well, VIA feels that the cost—not only financial, but in schedule time—cannot be justified. To quote: "In order to compete successfully in the inter-city market, VIA must create the perception of a non-stop express service. Stopping at local points will not enforce this perception."

VIA has also recommended that the \$4 minimum

fare remain in effect and the Friday restriction on 7-day and 1-day excursion fares be lifted during the provisional period.

CTC did not feel that for a provisional service, and with VIA and CP far apart on the matter, rail service should be provided through to downtown Edmonton.

VIA has been directed to maintain all current stops, add no new ones, but change Wetaskiwin, Innisfail, Olds and Didsbury to flag stops.

It will be interesting to watch this service. Two bus companies currently provide downtown-to-downtown express service, quicker and more frequent than trains. VIA's provisional service will not be much different from the existing one, except that it will have on-board food service and use modernized RDCs. It remains to be seen if this will be enough to increase ridership. The true attraction would have been a connection to downtown Edmonton.

S. Transport 200 News

— CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY and Canadian Pacific Limited have announced an agreement with Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) for the acquisition of certain of its Canadian assets. The acquisition would be made by Canadian National and Canadian Pacific in partnership.

The assets involved include Conrail's leases of the Canada Southern Railway line and the Detroit River Tunnel, about 72 per cent of the shares of The Canada Southern Railway Company, and all the shares of the Detroit River Tunnel Company. S. CP RAIL NEWS

"TRAVELLING THE ROOT RIVER FROM Lac Seul to Lac St-Joseph (north west of Thunder Bay, Ontario), we came upon the remains of an ancient log-and-rock dam which the river had long since breached. In its day, the dam's reservoir had submerged a bad set of rapids called Flower Falls, which are now exposed and around which we had to portage. A shack leaning at a precarious angle still houses the old steam engine which hauled boats and barges around the dam on small flat railway cars. The tracks are still there. A number of these "marine railways" were built in northern Ontario to connect some of the larger lakes for mining operations. With the building of the CNR line, however, they were soon abandoned."

SOURCE

Canadian Geographic Magazine June/July 1983
 Artilec "Calgary To Quebec by Canoe" by Stanley Burfield Page 57

THE AMHERST AND AREA INDUSTRIAL

Commission in Nova Scotia has raised its voice in support of the proposal that railway lines in the Maritime Provinces be electrified. It is an idea which is growing in popularity and one which certainly has the support of a number of considerations.

Poor railway service, as much as any other factor, has contributed to the loss of traffic through the ports of Halifax and Saint John. It is a situation which will not be corrected until such times as faster, and less expensive, service is available over the route.

As well, passenger use of the line has been discouraged by schedules which are unnecessarily slow. The blame may be put upon poor roadbeds and part of the trouble there is attributable to the locomotives currently in use.

Given electrification and an upgraded roadbed, rail service between Montreal and Halifax could experience a great transformation. On such branch lines as that to Sydney, it could be a factor contributing to a new and more prosperous day for the industries of that part of the province.

Electricity, in the long run, would be more reliable and less expensive. To be sure, there would be a large expense for initial installation, but that is not a discouraging consideration when it is weighed beside the need for employment which is so serious a need in this part of the country these days.

High speed trains racing over rails made in Sydney and drawing energy from overhead lines strung on supports fabricated in the steel plants of this province are a practical possibility. Clean and non-polluting, they would not intrude on the atmosphere.

The proposal is good and reasonable. It is pleasing to note that vocal representations in favour of it are growing in volume.

S. Editorial, Halifax Chronical Herald, SRS News

VIA RAIL IS CONSIDERING REOPENING QUEBEC

City's Palais station, closed (and believed to be without any rail access??) years ago. Target date is 1984, when Quebec city will have celebrations marking the 350 Anniversary of the voyage of Jacques Cartier. The plan is part of VIA Rail's \$20 million plan to cut travel time between Montreal and Quebec City from the current 3½ hours on an LRC train which leaves travellers in beautiful downtown Ste. Foy.

S. The Marker

THE FEDERAL COURT OF APPEAL HAS RULED

that "in perpetuity" has not yet expired, and means exactly what it says. The ruling pertained to a 1982 contract by which the Canadian Government underwrote the \$915,000 in bonds for the construction, by both Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, of a relatively obscure 14 km line, jointly operated, from Rosedale to East Coulee, in the Drumheller area of Alberta. Lawyers representing the two railways presented the interesting definition of "in perpetuity" as being "as long as the two railways wanted to run the line"! The judges disagreed, in a case brought against the railways' abandonment of the line, although Chief Justice Arthur Thurlow produced a dissenting judgement almost as curious as the contention of the railways. He saw nothing in the agreement (a 1928 Act of Parliament) which gives the public a right to service by either company — "operating" the line in perpetuity differs from serving clients according to the dissenting judgement. The 2-1 majority judgement overturned a 1981 CTC ruling allowing abandonment of the branch line, but did indicate that Parliament, as a party to the original contract, can, if it sees fit, amend the original terms of the contract. Since "in perpetuity" and similar phrases are abundant in older agreements, it will be interesting to see if this goes to the one remaining higher court (Supreme Court of Canada) for appeal since this could be a most interesting precedent if the ruling stands.

S. The Marker

THE ROBERTS BANK SUPER COAL PORT IS

currently undergoing an expansion which will quadruple its size to 198 acres (80 hectares) and increase its capacity to handle export coal.

Expansion is expected to be completed this year on the man-made bulk-handling port facility which is

divided into four sites. When completed, coal handling capacity on sites 1 and 2 will be increased to 33 million tons (30 million metric tons) while capacity on the remaining sites will be increased to 27 million tons (25 million metric tons).

Dredging has been underway since early 1981 with the dredged material serving as reclaimed land for three new ship berths. Only one berth exists at present.

Dredging operations only take place in the fall and winter months to minimize the impact on marine environment.

The improvements will cost about \$150 million and will include new loading/unloading equipment for both storage and transfer of the commodity to awaiting vessels.

The four-mile-long (6.4-kilometre-long) causeway connecting the island with the mainland is also being widened to allow for more trackage and roads.

The work is being carried out within the guidelines set by Environment Canada. In addition, experimentation with a new dust control system is underway.

S. CP Rail News

CN RAIL HAS INTRODUCED A COMPUTER-based traffic control system more advanced than anything currently in use on the North American railroad scene.

Already in operation in some parts of Canada, the new system has demonstrated its value in increasing average train speed while reducing fuel consumption by automatically selecting optimum "meet" points for trains on a single-track system. In fact, when operational, it will handle nearly all routine dispatch decisions, leaving traffic control personnel free to deal with problem areas.

The system, the most technologically advanced of its kind, was developed "in-house" by a working group from the Engineering and Transportation Departments. Its design permits quick and inexpensive modifications.

S. CN Movin

CP RAIL SAID IT PLANS TO SPEND MORE than \$2.2 million this year to upgrade and build new facilities at the Angus Shops in east Montreal, the railway's largest maintenance centre.

Of this \$425,000 will be spent modernizing the locomotive-repair shop to reduce the time a locomotive spends there by 20 percent.

About \$1 million will be spent to build a waste-treatment plant to process effluent water from the Angus Shops.

This includes construction of a new building and purchase of such equipment as an oil separator.

About \$800,000 will be spent starting construction of a proposed \$5-million paint shop.

The project is part of CP Rail's 1983 \$25.5-million capital works program in Quebec. Across Canada, the railway will spend \$315 million in capital works projects, besides \$722 million of regular track maintenance and repair programs.

Mtl. Gazette.

CP RAIL HAS INTRODUCED TWO NEW HIGH-speed specialized freight trains on its Montreal-Toronto corridor to complete for piggy-back trailer and container traffic between southern Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. The trains operate five days a week. Shippers can bring trailers or containers to CP Rail's Toronto terminal in the evening and have them delivered in Montreal at the consignee's door early the next morning.

Mtl. Gazette.

THE PROPOSED PURCHASE OF CANADA Southern Railway Co. of Philadelphia by Canadian National Railways and Canadian Pacific Ltd., both of Montreal, is unlikely to win support from minority shareholders until details of the company's true value, and the future of its tangled legal affairs, are spelled out.

The two Canadian railways announced Monday that agreement had been struck with Consolidated Rail Corp. of Philadelphia for the joint purchase of the railway tunnel between Windsor and Detroit, a bridge at Niagara Falls and a 72 per cent controlling interest in Canada Southern, which owns 360 kilometres of track in Southern Ontario.

Under the terms of the agreement — only sketchy details of which have been released — the minority shareholders will be offered about \$200 a share for their stock.

"That appears to be a fantastic offer — but I will not recommend it unless we get more information," said Albert Segal, spokesman for a group that controls 68 percent of the shares outstanding.

One reason for the caution is the size of Canada Southern's treasury. Mr. Segal said that when all sums owing to the railway are included, it could be worth \$180 a share. If that were the case, the CP Ltd.-CN offer might appear less attractive.

Mr. Segal said his group, which blocked the proposed sale of Canada Southern assets to the two national railways last September, was also worried about the future of a lawsuit, now in progress against the trustees of the defunct Penn Central Transportation Co. of Philadelphia. Canada Southern is trying to recover assets valued at more than \$69-million which, it alleges, disappeared while the Canadian line was controlled by Penn Central.

Created by the U.S. Congress in 1976 to rationalize the operations of seven faltering U.S. railways, Conrail also assumed the legacy of Canada Southern.

But transfer of title of this land and other Canadian rail assets was never recognized by the Canadian Transport Commission, which continued to view Penn Central as the legal owner, and, to further confuse matters, Michigan Central Railroad Co. of Philadelphia as holder of a lease on the line. The CTC position ruled out abandonment of Canada Southern, and left Conrail with a choice of continuing to operate the railway or finding a buyer.

Mr. Segal said he believed the future of Canada Southern under its proposed new owners would be abandonment. The plum was the Detroit River tunnel, which he said would likely be deepened to accommodate tri-level railway cars operating over existing CP Ltd. and CN track.

The transfer must be approved by the U.S. Inter-state Commerce Commission, the CTC and CP Ltd. shareholders.

S. Globe & Mail

A CONSUMER LOBBY GROUP IS WARNING

Via Rail may shift the eastern terminal of its transcontinental train to Toronto from Montreal.

Via Rail, the federal passenger rail agency, confirmed yesterday that negotiations are under way with the two national railways to have the coaches of the Canadian serviced in Toronto.

But Via representative Emery Leblanc denied that the federal agency is preparing to drop Montreal as eastern terminal for transcontinental service.

The 30-year-old stainless steel cars are serviced in Montreal by Canadian Pacific Ltd.

In Toronto, they would probably be serviced by Canadian National.

Leblanc said the move would save money and passengers from Montreal would get the same service.

S. The Gazette

IF YOU NOTICE ANY NEWS ITEMS THAT MAY

be of interest to our readers please clip them and mail along with a black and white crisp photo if available to The Business Car c/o Peter Murphy, 75 Sevigny Ave., Dorval, P.Q. H9S 3V8. Please indicate the source of the item so it may be correctly credited.

ERRATA

Unfortunately several errors occurred in the May - June 1983 issue of Canadian Rail. Following are the corrections of these errors.

Page 89: The photo of the train carrying Grand Trunk (not G.T.P.) officials was taken at Strathcona, across the river from Edmonton. The train is C.P.R. hauled by C.P. engine 658.

Page 90: This photo was also Grand Trunk officials at the C.P.R. station at Strathcona in 1904.

Page 93 (top): The station and train were Canadian Northern (not G.T.P.), the date was November 24 1905 (not November 4) and the occasion was the driving of the last spike, in Edmonton, of the C. No. Ry. The locomotive was Canadian Northern No. 103.

Page 93 (lower right): The locomotive is G.T.P. 45 (not G.T.R.).

Pages 96, 101, 106: In each case "Hinks" should read "Hincks".

Our thanks to Messrs Ray Corley, Harry Wethey, J.S. Nicolson and Max Martyn for pointing out these errors.

The following errors occurred in the article "Coal and Railroads" in the September-October issue of Canadian Rail:

Page 163, Col. 1, Line 9: "Strettler" should read "Stettler".

Page 163, Col. 1, Lines 14 and 15: "The first carload containing approx. 4068 tons, was sent by the C.N.R. in 1912." should read "The first carloads containing approx. 4068 tons, were sent by the C.N.R. in 1912. This would require a train of 135 cars, each with a weight capacity of 30 tons, large even by today's standards in some instances."

Page 163, Col. 1, Line 39: "miles" should read "mines".

The editor regrets any misunderstanding this may have caused.

BACK COVER

Around the turn of the century Ottawa street car 226 headed through Rockcliffe Park en route to downtown Ottawa. By now the street cars were such a part of Canada's capital that it was difficult to imagine what it would be like without them.

Public Archives of Canada, PA-8797.

Canadian Rail

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