

Elevated Railways

That additional transportation facilities are rapidly becoming absolutely necessary for Montreal, is very evident to those who see the crowds of people waiting for the cars at the "rush" hours. The Montreal Street Railway, though a monopoly, deserves credit for the way in which it is attempting to handle the increasing number of passengers, which are of course most evident at certain corners and at certain times. Montrealers may be reasonably proud of their street car service, as compared with other cities with a similar population.

But unfortunately an attempt has been made by the Company to meet the difficulty of transportation by the adoption of a method which has proved to be absolutely unsatisfactory wherever it has been tried, both to the city at large, and the property owners. This is the elevated railway system.

It is comforting to the Englishman to know that New York, after running down the "old fashioned ideas" of England in having underground railways, instead of the American up-to-date plan of overhead ones, for so many years, has at last adopted the very ideas which were so long despised. And there is probably not a New Yorker left who still vaunts the horrible overhead railways. No sane city should adopt such a system to-day, when the horrible examples can still be seen as warnings of what not to do.

In the first place, an elevated railway means hideous streets, and this in the light of the "City Beautiful" should prevent its adoption. It means a tremendous decline in property, and as this touches the pockets, the argument is a strong one. The climate in Montreal, where the snowfall is over 12 feet in the winter, and where the early snow lasts until spring, would apparently be an insuperable objection.

Greater Montreal needs better transportation for its growing crowds which now number about half a million, but what it does need is not an elevated railway, but an underground one, running the whole length of the Island, and built with a view to future and very immediate developments.

The Montreal Street Railway Company is making a great mistake in adopting the Terminal Railway Charter, which was obtained when this subject was not so well understood, and when opposition to anything which infringed upon the rights of the city, and which threatened to spoil its streets in any way, was not so well organized.

Active Work of the U. C. M.

The last few weeks have been busy ones for the U. C. M., as attempts have been made to override the rights of municipalities both at Ottawa and Quebec. This proves that "eternal vigilance" is still "the price of liberty" and that it is only because every Bill as presented is scrutinized by the U. C. M. that the municipalities are not tyrannized by companies seeking monopolistic privileges.

At Ottawa, there were several Bills which had to be looked after, and of which due notice was sent to the municipalities whose rights would have been invaded, while the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Lighthall, K. C., attended personally.

The principal one was that of the Canadian & Liverpool Co., which under the guise of constructing a general Railway which would run across the whole Province of Quebec, was really a scheme for grabbing all the water powers in the Province. This was fought by all the cities and towns led by Montreal and Quebec

city, and they were assisted by the Provincial Rights supporters of the Province of Ontario. The Bill was altered after considerable discussion in the House.

Another was the Bill of the Montreal Terminal Co., which had an old charter for an electric railway, which is now owned by the Montreal Street Railway Company. What was now demanded was a totally new elevated railway line, across the city of Montreal from one end to the other. The charter was a very complicated one, founded on the remains of half a dozen previous bills, and one effect would have been to have granted not only an extension of time for the original elevated but added powers of building a very extensive second and entirely new line. The interests of the Montreal Members had been awakened by the U. C. M., and with the assistance of Messrs. Rivet, Ames, Doherty, Bristol and others, and a very strong delegation of Aldermen from Montreal, the obnoxious demands were withdrawn and a mere extension of time given. The previous powers were moreover guarded by very serious obligations of payment to the City and proprietors in case of use.

At Quebec, the Canadian Light, Heat and Power has been lobbying with a view of striking out the clause making obligatory the consent of the municipalities in which it has the right to operate. The water power which will be utilized is at the Beauharnois Canal, about thirty miles from Montreal. In 1905, this Company got a Charter and the municipalities at that time succeeded in imposing upon its operations municipal consent, but with a proviso allowing the Company the right of passage. Friends of its rival, the Montreal Light, Heat and Power monopoly, however, struck out the right of passage.

The Company now demands not merely the right of passage, but that municipal consent be entirely struck out. The delegates of the City of Montreal agreed to this in the hope of competition. The other municipalities are willing to grant right of passage by a single line of the necessary wires, but desire that municipal consent should be preserved for the local franchise. The Company refuse this, having a very strong lobby. The entire principle of municipal autonomy is at stake. The Hon. Secretary of the U. C. M. and representatives of Westmount, St. Louis, Rosemount, Maisonneuve, and other municipalities all attended before the Private Bills Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Hot arguments went on for two days, but the lobby was shameless and overrode all protests. Such strong protests have however come from outside that it is now felt that the clause subjecting the Company to municipal consent may be accepted.

Railway Crossings

The legislation introduced by Hon. Geo. P. Graham to facilitate the abolishment of level crossings is certainly a step towards securing the desired end, whether or not it may be thought advisable for the country to pay partly for the change. The Bill provides that the Federal Government may contribute not more than 20 per cent. towards the cost of changing any one crossing, the maximum amount to be contributed being \$5,000; and the total amount so given not to exceed \$200,000 for the next five years.

In other countries, the Railways have generally been asked for the whole amount, but it is probably advisable, under the circumstances existing in Canada, for the people who will, at large, benefit from the change, to contribute part of the cost.