Transit company outlook bright

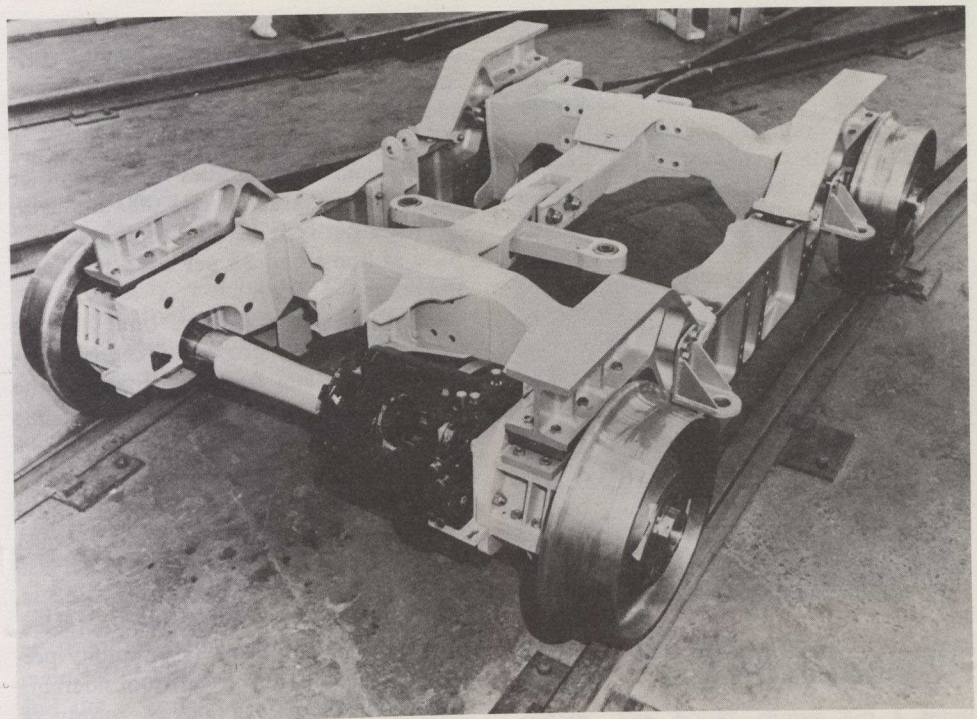
In just one year, the Urban Transport Development Corporation of Toronto has gone from famine to feast and is working on $900 million in transit projects in Canada and the United States, reports the *Canadian Press.*

The corporation, owned by the Ontario government, recently won a $650-million contract to install a transit system in Vancouver capable of moving up to 25,000 passengers an hour.

It is waiting for final approval to install a $130-million demonstration downtown transit system in Los Angeles and has bids on a similar $100-million project in Detroit and one in Miami. The corporation is also proceeding with an Ontario-backed transit system in Hamilton.

When Urban Transport was developed in 1973 to examine the future of light rapid transit systems in Ontario municipalities, the challenge was to build a system which would cost half that of a conventional subway.

This advanced light rapid transit system developed by the Urban Transportation Development Corporation Limited, has been selected for use on a 22.4-kilometre route between downtown Vancouver and New Westminster. Work on the first phase of the project is scheduled to begin immediately.



The company's intermediate capacity transit system incorporates linear induction motors and trucks with steerable axles. Steerable axle trucks reduce noise and wheel/rail wear.

The result is computer train controls, lightweight aluminum cars which travel on elevated pre-stressed concrete guideways and an advanced linear induction motor system.

The reaction between the motors on each car and a 30-centimetre plate in the centre of the track creates a magnetic field which pulls the car along. It permits operation on steep grades where steel wheels on steel rails would slip.

"The big breakthrough is that we have developed the technology and it works," said company president Kirk Foley. "Now we have to put it in place. But we don't fabricate anything, we are primarily a research and development organization. So we have to subcontract work out to suppliers. And this will be done either on a low-bid tender basis or through pre-qualified selection of those companies we think are capable of doing the job," he said.

Construction of the elevated tracks, stations and sidings will account for about half the system's costs and construction will be done by local contractors in the municipalities involved.

Will assemble

Final assembly of the vehicles will be done by Urban Transport through its subsidiary, Metro Canada Services Limited, which will be a prime contractor on all projects.

A test track about two kilometres long was built in Kingston, Ontario, where two prototype cars have been undergoing operating trials for almost two years under all weather conditions.

After observation of these tests last May, the United States department of transport certified the system for operation in the United States. This enabled the corporation to bid on the three demonstration transit projects which the U.S. Urban Mass Transit Administration has agreed to finance.

Although Urban Transport has bid on all three – Los Angeles, Detroit and Miami – it can only qualify for one under the present U.S. financing rules.

"However, Detroit has now asked for a waiver for the UTDC system, which would enable us to also qualify there, should we be successful in Los Angeles," said Mr. Foley.

Interest in the system is also strong in Britain and Japan. In Britain, the corporation has signed a five-year licensing agreement with Metro-Cammel Limited which gives it access to the technology.

Sumitomo of Japan has been granted marketing rights for the sale and installation of its intermediate capacity system in Japan.