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IF THE JITNEYS GO, WHAT THEN?

THAT question must arise in the minds of members of the public who, without wishing to be inconsiderate towards Vancouver City Council's authority, the British Columbia Electric Railway Company, or owners of autos for hire, are concerned primarily about convenience and rapidity in civic and suburban transportation.

Though it may be true, as a learned Scottish judge once said, that "a corporation has neither a body to kick nor a soul to damn," citizens who put any value on their city's credit will approve of bona fide investors in its utilities or improvements receiving fair and reasonable treatment. As to whether such treatment should involve support of a monopoly, even if the transportation and lighting and heating systems belonged to the city itself, may be a debatable question. Certainly if any city council inaugurates or tolerates conditions which ensure exclusive rights to public service to a corporation, or to themselves, it will be equally their duty to see that the city is given increasingly efficient and economic service.

The arguments pro and con, so far as the British Columbia Electric Railway Company and the jitney owners are concerned, are familiar to all. Perhaps, as in the case of any writing or comment on a political question, the parties involved will suggest that any criticism, however independent, is inspired for or against them. But there is such a thing as considering a cause or a principle before a party. The main question here is public service and modern needs in transportation, and—as so many men out west are ready to say, when it suits themselves and helps to relieve them of the impact of a moral obligation—"it's a business proposition."

Should the present city councillors of Vancouver (and then Victoria?) in their wisdom so exercise the powers just conferred upon them as to eliminate the jitney traffic, they had better at the same time have under review progress and improvements in the present transportation system.

Some considerable time ago this magazine ventured to suggest that double-decked cars might be considered, and that a fair number of open cars should be provided in the summer season. If the former suggestion is too onerous an undertaking, or for other reasons held impracticable here, the provision of more open cars (than the one or two since provided?) for ordinary fares and routes is an improvement which any enterprising company should seek to carry out—even in times of financial stress.