

# THE WINNIPEG ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY

## A SHORT SKETCH

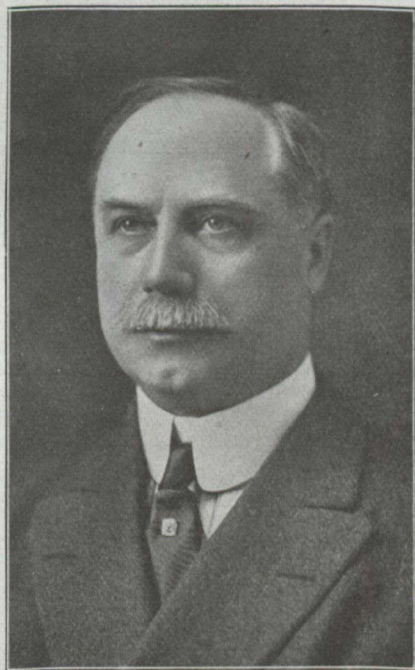
(From "The Railway News of Western Canada.")

**I**T must be admitted that one of the principal factors in the development of the city of Winnipeg has been the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company.

In the year 1881, A. W. Austin incorporated the Winnipeg Street Railway Company, and the first horse-drawn car

was operated on Main Street on October 24th of the next year. The first electric street car to be run in the city was run from Main Street to River Park, in July, 1891. It was operated by Mr. Austin's company, which owned River Park. Work had been commenced on this line in 1890. Two years later the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Company obtained its charter and made an agreement with the city of Winnipeg.

The first work done by this latter was the construction of a line on Selkirk Avenue to the Exhibition grounds, and that line was formally opened on September 5th, 1892. In this same year, the Company which operated the horse-car line, brought suit against the



**MR. F. MORTON MORSE,**  
Secretary and Treasurer  
of the Winnipeg Electric Railway.

Winnipeg Electric and also the city of Winnipeg, claiming that it had exclusive rights, but the Privy Council finally decided the matter in March, 1894, holding that the horse car franchise was not an exclusive franchise.

In the meantime, before the decision was handed down the electric company had built electric street car lines on Main Street, paralleling the horse car lines. These latter were in the centre of the street, and the electric lines on either side. Thus is explained why the present car tracks on Main Street are so far apart.

In 1894 both the systems were being operated and the horse cars and the electric cars were, of course, in active competition. A rate war was inevitable, and on February 4th, 1894, the electric company were selling 50 tickets for a dollar and 12 tickets for a quarter. After the Privy Council had given its decision, however, the Winnipeg Street Railway Company was bought out by the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Company, and the horse cars ceased their operation.

The rates for fares were then restored to the present basis. To show the growth of the Company, in 1900 there were 16 miles of track, and 36 single-truck cars operating on this trackage. At present there are 110 miles of track in the cities of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, and 60 miles of suburban, making a total of 170 miles, operated by the Winnipeg Electric and subsidiary companies.

At the present time, approximately 350 street cars are in service in the city, in addition to the suburban passenger and freight cars, operated on the Winnipeg, Selkirk and Lake Winnipeg Railway Company, which is a subsidiary of the Winnipeg Electric.

With the exception of last year, when an active, but not lasting, competition was started by numerous "jitneys," the number of passengers carried by the electric road has grown by veritable leaps and bounds, with the increase in the city's population. In 1900 the number of passengers carried was 3,002,053; in 1905, it was 13,081,249; in 1910, it was 31,369,421; four years later, it was 58,489,987, and last year the number carried was 48,566,959.

The station at the gas works, also owned by the Winnipeg Electric Company, supplied the first power to run the electric cars in the city. When the present Company bought out the Austin system, the latter had a small steam generating plant on the Assiniboia River from which the Company took its power. This plant was enlarged from time to time. The generator that was used when the Company took this over is now utilized to run the machinery in the repair shop. The present capacity of the Assiniboine plant is 8,000 horsepower.

In 1902, the Winnipeg General Power Company was formed with the object of developing waterpower on the Winnipeg River, and the present plant at Lac du Bonnet was started. This plant was completed about 1906, with a capacity of 30,000 horsepower. At that time it was thought that the plant would be sufficient to supply power to the city for many years. However, within three years after its completion, the demand for electric power was so great that the Company had to build an auxiliary plant at Mill Street, with a capacity of 12,000 horsepower, which has been further increased by the installation of a storage battery. There is yet new power to be developed at Great Bonnet Falls, of 150,000 horsepower.

The Company has not hesitated to spend money in order to keep its equipment up-to-date.

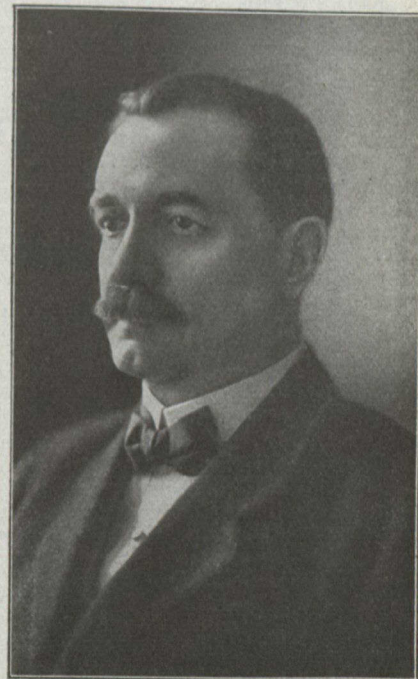
No sketch of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company would be complete without referring to the men who have done so much to make it a success.

F. Morton Morse has been with the Company, since its inception, during the lean years and the fat, in the capacity of secretary and treasurer. He has, therefore, had the pleasure of seeing the Company grow from a small, struggling concern to a large influential one with assets which now exceed \$25,000,000.

In August, 1900, Wilford Phillips, a native of Prince Edward County, Ontario, who is the present general manager of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company, entered the service, and under his able management the Company has made rapid headway.

For many years the late Sir William Whyte was vice-president of the Company, and took great interest in it. He was succeeded by A. M. Nanton, who is now vice-president. Sir William Mackenzie is the president, and the other directors are as follows: Sir D. D. Mann, D. B. Hanna, G. V. Hastings, Hugh Sutherland, R. J. Mackenzie and J. D. McArthur.

At the annual meeting of the shareholders, held on December 31, 1915, the net earnings from the operations of the combined properties amounted to \$1,331,737.28, in comparison with \$1,769,114.51 for the year of 1914. Quarterly dividends were declared at an average rate of 9½ per cent. per annum, amounting to \$855,999. The decrease in earnings was attributed by President Mackenzie, to the general depression following the first winter of war, coupled with the advent of the "jitneys" in the spring.



**MR. WILFORD PHILLIPS,**  
General Manager of the Winnipeg  
Electric Railway.