

The object of a company in offering parks and park amusements as an inducement to the public to patronize its lines is, or should be, to induce people to use the cars during the parts of the day and evening when they would otherwise be running nearly empty, or at least with very light loads. And the question naturally arises, does it pay a company to invest money in park property? Are the returns sufficient to justify the expenditure? This question can best be answered by stating the fact that only a very few years ago it was a rare thing to find a street railway company owning and operating a park of its own. Now it is a rare thing to find a company operating street cars, which has not some attractions in the way of parks and park amusements to offer the public.

Should a company own and control its own parks, or should it depend on the attractions offered in public parks to secure a sufficient patronage for its line? These are questions on which there is liable to be a great variety of opinion. But so much depends on the local conditions that it would be a difficult matter to lay down a rule that would fit all cases. In some of the large United States cities such as New York, Chicago and Boston, the public parks are sufficiently attractive to induce people to patronize them, not only by thousands, but by tens of thousands. In cases of this kind the railway companies have all they can do to attend to the ordinary traffic, without making any special effort to attract extra patronage to their lines. The conditions on this side of the line are entirely different, there being few, if any railway companies, which are not in a position to do a largely increased business during certain hours of the day when the ordinary traffic is light.

In the selection of land to be used as a pleasure resort, it is desirable that a location be secured having as many natural attractions as possible, as a landscape view in its natural state is more admired and more generally appreciated than when artificial means are used to make it attractive. Although not indispensable, it is very desirable that lands to be used as a pleasure resort and place of amusement should be situated on the edge of a lake or stream, as it adds greatly to the natural attractiveness of the place, besides permitting park frequenters to indulge in the pleasure of boating. A park without water loses one of its best drawing cards as a place of amusement, as invariably one of the first questions asked by parties arranging for picnic excursions is, "What about boats; how many boats have you?" This question has been considered of such importance in Chicago, that in some of the parks away from the lake lagoons have been constructed at great expense to enable the people to enjoy the pleasures of boating.

In selecting land for park purposes, great care should be taken as to the location, as on the distance of the haul depends largely whether the park can be operated at a profit or at a loss. A distinction must be made too between parks on city lines and parks on suburban or interurban lines. Parks on city lines should be at such a distance as will permit of carrying people each way for a five cent fare. If more than the regular fare is asked, the people naturally hesitate, and he who hesitates is lost—at least his nickel is lost to the company. On interurban lines the conditions are different, and parks may be placed at any distance from the terminus, provided that the park can be made sufficiently attractive and the patrons of the road made to believe that the company is giving them good value for their money. It is, however, generally conceded that the lower the fare the greater will be the patronage secured, always supposing that we have the centres of population to draw from. In fixing a tariff of fares to be charged there is a liability on the part of some railway com-

panies to fix the rates so low that they are below the actual cost of operating. This is a matter that should be very carefully considered by every street railway company, as it is often an easy matter when quoting a rate to make it so low that instead of deriving a profit, they are operating their cars at an actual loss.

Should amusements be provided in parks to induce the public to patronize them? The answer to this question will depend largely on the local conditions. If the park is on a city line or in close proximity to a city, the answer of the majority of street car managers would be in the affirmative. On interurban lines having parks 20 or 25 miles from a city there is liable to be a diversity of opinion as to how best to make them a source of revenue to the company. But the experience of companies which have tried it would go to prove that parks on interurban lines can be used to best advantage by utilizing them as picnic grounds. Encourage picnics of every description, church, Sunday school, club, society and picnics of all sorts and conditions. There should be a profit in carrying them to and from the parks; there should also be a profit derived from the park privileges, such as the renting of boats and the selling of refreshments, such as ice cream and peanuts—especially peanuts, and the small boy should be encouraged by every lawful means to consume them in large quantities.

The question may be asked here, should the company lease the park privileges, or should it keep them under its own control? There will no doubt be a diversity of opinion on this question. Some managers say and with some show of reason, that the company should operate and control the park privileges, thereby retaining any profits that may result from them. This reasoning looks fairly well on the surface. The municipal ownership advocate uses the same argument when he claims that the city should own and control its own street car lines, thereby securing to the city any profits that might be derived from it. The reply to this argument is, that the successful operation of park privileges is a business in itself and requires a man having experience and a practical knowledge of how to carry it on successfully. In regard to the leasing of park privileges it is generally conceded that a street railway company has plenty to do in attending to the operating of its cars, without going into the refreshment business.

What kind of amusements should be provided to induce the general public to patronize a park? The answer to this question will depend almost entirely on the locality. In some towns the company finds that more profit is derived from putting on the stage a fairly high-class opera. Of course it must be understood that in order to do this successfully, a suitable building must be provided, and an admission fee charged in proportion to the accommodation provided. In large city parks the varieties and kinds of amusements that may be secured are almost unlimited, and may range in value from the price of a few coddies up to \$50,000 or \$100,000. In parks on interurban lines it will scarcely pay a company to expend too much money in securing park amusements, as it is almost impossible to obtain a sufficient attendance to justify the expenditure that would be required. Parks on interurban car lines can be made much more profitable by simply using them as picnic grounds. By judicious advertising, giving a satisfactory service and by making things generally pleasant, a large amount of this kind of traffic should be secured and should prove to be a source of revenue to the company.

In reference to the handling of park traffic, it will be generally admitted that the ordinary traffic to parks should be handled by the regular cars, the object of securing parks

and supplying amusement being to induce the public to patronize the cars already in operation. If extra cars are required to handle the traffic it means an increase of operating expenses, thereby lessening the profits. The problem of attending to the park traffic on suburban lines is not so easily solved. On account of the long distance of the haul and perhaps of the scarcity of the rolling stock, it is sometimes a difficult matter to know just how to solve the problem. Picnic parties on suburban lines should be sent on special car, and each passenger should (especially on the homeward trip) be supplied with a seat. This is sometimes not so easily accomplished, as a park crowd very often all wish to come home at the same time, and they sometimes feel inclined to grumble at the street car company because they cannot work a miracle and have cars waiting for the people at all times. In sending out special cars on suburban lines they should be sent as double headers or run in sections on the same time as the regular cars; this method of despatching cars being safer on a single track as it gives greater security in the operation of the cars and lessens the risk of accidents.

In order to have a neat and attractive looking park it is necessary that sufficient labor be expended on it to have it clean and tidy at all times. Have the grass properly cut, have plenty of seats. It has been suggested that cushions be provided instead of seats, but I would scarcely go so far as to recommend that.

In regard to the closing of the parks in the fall the mistake is made by some companies of keeping their parks open too late in the season, the weather at that time of the year being often wet and disagreeable.

It may safely be said in conclusion that the majority of street railway companies have found the owning and controlling of parks to be a profitable investment.

Commutation Tickets.

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In discussing the question of commutation tickets, it is of course necessary to deal largely with the class of users. In dealing with this question I purpose giving my personal views on the subject. These views may not be in practice on the roads I represent; they may not be orthodox, and may have faults. But as I said, they are my own personal views. As I understand these discussions, the idea is that we present personal views instead of following well-defined rules, rules which have been adopted by each road from some other, rules which have been in use so long that each new line adopts them regardless of adaptability. Of course there are certain definite rules from which it would be detrimental for any management to depart. These rules mostly refer to the rate per passenger mile at which a passenger can be carried. My personal view can be summed up in a few words: I do not like commuters. You understand this is not a personal dislike. The best personal friends one can have are among commuters. The dislike is the dislike the manager of a road might feel towards a certain class of patrons. The company gives to this class an especially cheap rate—sometimes so low that if all traffic were carried at that rate, expenses could not be paid. In return for this, the company receives the continual patronage of the commuters; also their continual abuse, as to car service, general equipment, management, and, in fact, everything that can be thought of by the travelling public, and what they don't think of and growl about, is not worth mentioning. I believe a good, wholesome criticism is one of the best things in the world to make a management sit up, but