

Reduction of Fares on British Columbia Electric Railway.

The B. C. Electric Ry. announced, May 3, that on and after May 11 it would offer a special non transfer ticket, good only within the city limits of Vancouver and Victoria, at the rate of 8 for 25 cts. The issue of all types of tickets previously used by the company is being continued at the old rate to cover travel where transfers are demanded. These rates are straight 5 ct. fare, (a strip of 5 tickets for 25 cts. being provided for the accommodation of passengers); workingmen's tickets at 10 for 40 cts., consisting of 5 white tickets, which can only be used before 8 a. m. and 5 green tickets which are good at any time, and the usual arrangement of school children's tickets at 10 for 25 cts. The new 8-for-25 cts. tickets are not good on any interurban car.

In connection with the introduction of its new special ticket the company decided to make it popular with the general public. As tickets were printed on cardboard of tango colour, the name tango ticket was chosen and an extensive publicity programme was carried on by the company during the week May 3-10 to bring this name before the public as well as impress upon them the benefits which would accrue to the travelling public from the standpoint of economy and the good to the city as a whole as a result of using tango tickets. Half page advertisements were taken throughout the week in all daily papers in Vancouver and Victoria as well as considerable space in weekly publications circulating throughout the cities. Extensive use was also made of news articles, written from a local standpoint, as to the advantages which the public would derive from the use of the tango ticket. One very striking illustration used in both advertisements and news articles pointed out that 32 rides at 5 cts. fare meant an expenditure of \$1.60, while 32 rides on tango tickets cost only \$1, the result being the saving to the individual of 60 cts. on an investment of \$1.

The company also inaugurated a word competition, prizes being offered both in Victoria and Vancouver, of \$50, the first prize \$20, and eight other prizes ranging down to \$2, for the largest lists of words which could be formed from the letters in the words tango ticket. Throughout the entire week every car in Vancouver and Victoria carried a striking fender sign noting the sale of tango tickets on May 10. Eight sheet posters were also displayed on billboards along the tram lines. As a result of the publicity methods adopted the words tango ticket became during the week the general talk of the public both in Vancouver and Victoria.

The company made May 10 known as tango ticket day in both cities where the new tickets are accepted. The conductors of each car wore white satin badges on which was printed in tango color "Ask me for tango tickets, 8 for 25 cts." Tango pennants, 12 by 16 ins. in size, on which was printed "Use Tango Tickets," were also floated from the trolley pole of each city car. One of the daily newspapers recognized the day as tango ticket day and offered to the readers of its Sunday issue prizes in a guessing contest as to the number of tango tickets which would be sold by the company on the first day of sale.

At a meeting of the Vancouver City Council, May 10, a protest against the new car tickets issued by the B. C. E. Ry. was made by the Auto Public Service Corporation. Alderman McLeath proposed to move a resolution that the Solicitor be instructed to notify the B. C. E. Ry. that in issuing tickets without transfers it is violating the terms and conditions of the agreement between the

city and the company. It is contended that secs. 11 and 12 of the agreement entitle every passenger to a transfer to a connecting car when a fare is paid. Objection was taken to the consideration of the resolution, and notice was therefore given that it would be brought forward at the next meeting.

In announcing the issue of the special tickets Geo. Kidd, General Manager, gave an interview to the local press. He stated that the serious decrease in the company's receipts made it necessary to choose between two alternatives, one was to reduce expenses by cutting down the service and the other was to endeavor to increase travel by lowering the fares. "It must be apparent to every citizen in Vancouver and Victoria," said Mr. Kidd, "that the service as present given cannot possibly be maintained with the present patronage. To cut down the service would have meant that a portion of our plant would be lying idle and a large number of men would have to be laid off, thereby adding to the number of unemployed in the city."

Mr. Kidd said it was impossible for anyone to predict with anything approaching accuracy the effect of an alteration in fares. Actual experience alone could give precise information, and it would depend largely on the increased use which the public would make of the cars to prove whether it was economically possible for the company to sell 8 tickets for 25 cts. If it can be done the B. C. Electric will do it.

"In adopting these low fares," he continued, "the company has not been influenced by the policy of other street railways in Canada or the United States, as shown by their attitude in dealing with the jitney problem. Many street railways in the United States, fortunately for them, are receiving assistance in solving their jitney problems by the strong action of the municipalities and state legislatures, in enacting special regulations to meet the dangerous conditions arising out of a new form of ill regulated and irresponsible competition. The B. C. E. R. Co. has taken no part in fostering an antagonism to the jitney, believing that the common sense of the citizens and the authorities will sooner or later result in adequate regulations being enforced. The public who ride in our street cars are protected by the most stringent regulations under the Tramway Inspection Act, and also by the terms of franchise granted to it in mutual good faith by the various municipalities, franchises which have always been liberally interpreted by the company. To give effect merely to these clauses in the Tramways Inspection Act alone, clauses devised for the protection and safety of the public, over \$300,000 have been spent by us in the last three years, a sum more than equal to the value of all the jitneys that are competing unfairly against us. To give, for example, a few of the Government regulations we are compelled to conform to—and, mind, I am not complaining about them—the type and design of the cars we use is controlled, their brakes and motors are all periodically rigidly inspected, their carrying capacity is limited, passengers are prohibited from riding upon the steps or fenders, gates must be provided to protect passengers against their own carelessness, all cars must have proper warning signals, and the movement of cars passing each other and following each other is regulated; automatic fenders must be provided, sign boards must be visible day and night, designating the exact route cars are to take, and in addition to these requirements our franchises call among many other heavy responsibilities, for a well-timed and

regulated service throughout the day over all routes, paying or non-paying, whether the traffic is light or heavy. Now contrast the exacting obligations we have to meet with the conditions prevailing upon our public thoroughfares today with the jitney service in its present unregulated condition, so that our streets are becoming a menace to every citizen, no matter whether he is a pedestrian, a patron of the jitney or of the car service. All the company asks is that it shall not be subject to unfair competition; we do not fear jitney competition; we have carried the public in Vancouver almost from the foundation of the city, through the many years of its wonderful progress, a progress in which the company has played a conspicuous part, and our business is to continue in bad times as well as in flourishing times, to satisfy the public in all its reasonable demands, and by acting fairly to it, we propose to continue as the transportation company throughout our territory."

"The unfair jitney competition," said Mr. Kidd, "the absence of even the most reasonable regulation of that extraordinary traffic, has certainly affected the credit of the company in the London money market, and until conditions improve any further expenditure on its tramway system will be altogether out of the question. In England the investing public is hard hit by the present war, and nothing would contribute more to maintain their confidence in British Columbia enterprises than strong and speedy action by the authorities resulting in regulations being passed placing the jitneys on the same competitive footing as the street car company. The successful future of the B. C. Electric Ry. and the cities of Vancouver, Victoria and the surrounding municipalities is so interwoven that the authorities and the company should co-operate for their mutual advantage and the benefit of the province. The company has a record to which it can point with pride as to its part in the development of British Columbia, and our desire is to still further that progress along sound economic lines."

"To come back again to the ticket question," Mr. Kidd added, "I have intimated that the reduction of fares is an experiment which we hope will be a success if our patrons give us their loyal support—this they have done for so many years, and if they will continue to do so, and also use their influence to prevent our competitors having unfair advantages—then Vancouver will be able to boast, and that boast will not be an idle one, that here we have the cheapest, safest, cleanest and quickest service in North America. The matter now rests with the public, who must be the final arbiters."

Toronto-Hamilton Highway.—The Hamilton, Ont., Board of Trade and representatives of various municipalities passed a resolution, April 29, asking for the building of a traffic bridge across the bay at the Hamilton end of the new Toronto-Hamilton highway. It is proposed that a double track line for electric railway traffic be laid on the bridge. The matter is to be discussed with the Commission which is building the highway.

Toronto Civic Railway Car Barn.—A temporary car barn has been erected by the Toronto Civic Ry. on its Bloor St. line between Dorval and Indian Roads, to accommodate the single truck cars now operating on that line. It is a frame structure, with a pit track, to accommodate two cars, and is 85 ft. by 21 ft. It is heated, and while small, will meet the present requirements of this short line.