

# Electric Railway Department

## Increases in Electric Railway Freight and Passenger Rates.

**British Columbia Electric Ry.** J. L. Retallack, Public Utilities Commissioner for British Columbia, gave a ruling, Aug. 6, as to the scope of evidence admissible under the Public Utilities Act in the 6c fare case. The matter came before him July 10, under the provisions of the act passed at the Legislature's last session, which authorized the B. C. Electric Ry. to charge a 6c fare on certain of its lines until such time as the Commissioner shall fix a rate. At the hearing July 10, W. G. Murrin, Assistant General Manager B. C. E. Ry., argued for the fullest scope, viz., the inclusion of evidence as to the whole of the company's investments and operations in the province, while E. G. McCrossen for the city argued for the limitation of the investigation to such of the company's investments as are necessary to its street railway service within Vancouver City, and of its operations and receipts therein.

The commissioner in his ruling stated that he had to deal with the subject matter of the mandatory enquiry under Sec. 11 (4) of the act, which was to determine the just and reasonable rate to be charged by the B. C. E. Ry. on any line of railway which enters or traverses any portion of the city; and with the application of the City of Vancouver for the determination of the just and reasonable car fare to be charged within the limits of the city, with consideration of the B. C. E. Ry. Co's receipts within such limits, but without consideration of any capital investment, operating or other costs of the company outside such limits, except such as directly affect the cost of street railway operations within such limits.

After reviewing the arguments submitted the commissioner ruled that evidence as to the company's investments, operating and administrative costs, fixed charges and receipts in the Victoria area, be excluded from the enquiry under the act. He also ruled that evidence as to the company's gas system in Vancouver be also excluded, and "for the reason of insufficient correlation that evidence of the company's investments in land or other property in the Vancouver area, for speculative or any other purposes, except directly for the purposes of its power, light and railway systems shall be excluded from the enquiry. The scope of the enquiry is further limited by the statute itself; and by the fact that certain lines are being operated under some new charters, and consequently beyond his jurisdiction. These are: The Burnaby Lake line east of Commercial Drive. The Kitsilano line from the north end of Granville St. bridge and from the Granville St. station. The siding south of False Creek from Granville St. to Main St. bridge. The Vancouver and Lulu Island.

Following a review of the remainder of the arguments, the commissioner said: "I therefore rule that in the enquiry under this act, evidence shall be accepted as to the B. C. E. Ry. Co's investments of capital, in the area contiguous to and inclusive of the delta of the Fraser River, the cities of Vancouver and New Westminster, the municipalities of Point

Grey, South Vancouver and Burnaby, the city and district of North Vancouver and the districts served by the New Westminster and Chilliwack line, and including its investments, present property values administrative costs, fixed charges and receipts, whether directly or through its subsidiary companies in its power and electric lighting systems in said district.

Upon the city's statement the commissioner pointed out that if its application were acted upon a decision would be necessary as to whether it would be just to secure such net return on the company's investment, either by continuing the present system of rates being more or less different rate for each governmental division of the district of Vancouver by establishing a basic rate, modified in relation to mileage, for the whole of said district, or by establishing the zone system throughout the district, viz., a fare figured in proportion to the density of population and mileage.

The commissioner concluded as follows: "I have not yet sufficient evidence, either, that the present system of rates is unfair and prejudicial to Vancouver, or as to the fairness and practicability of any other system, to justify me in giving a ruling now as to proportionate rates. Moreover, the other cities and municipalities which make up the district of Vancouver, are also interested in this issue. Therefore in order to obtain further evidence and to afford all parties likely to be affected an opportunity of being heard, I propose to give notice of and to hold a hearing to consider this particular issue, such hearing will not delay the general hearing under the act."

The commissioner then directed that for the convenience of all parties, the city's application and the enquiry under the act be consolidated.

The remainder of the sitting was occupied in fixing details of the procedure to be followed in carrying out the decision, and the commission adjourned to Aug. 19.

The following represented the different interests: British Columbia Electric Ry., W. G. Murrin and V. Laursen; City of Vancouver, E. G. McCrossen, E. F. Jones and Alderman McKae; Point Grey, G. G. McGeer; New Westminster, Burnaby and Surrey, W. G. McQuarrie, M. P.

**Hamilton Radial Electric Ry.**—A new schedule of fares was put in operation between Hamilton and Oakville, Ont., Aug. 18. The new rates from Hamilton are: To Burlington Beach, 30c single, 35c return; to Burlington, 25c single, 45c return; to Bronte, 35c single, 65c return; Oakville, 45c single, 85c return. The scale for individual workmen's tickets and for family tickets limited to six weeks is:

	Workmen's ticket 12 trips	Family ticket 26 trips
Kenilworth .....	\$ .90	\$2.60
Ghent's .....	.90	2.60
Canal .....	1.20	3.90
Burlington .....	1.50	4.55
Burlington .....	1.20	.....
Pine Cove .....	1.80	5.20
Bronte .....	2.40	7.80
Oakville .....	3.60	9.10

Under the former schedule, a single trip to Burlington Beach, or Burlington cost 15c and a return ticket 25c, these

being the figures fixed in the Burlington Village and Saltfleet Tp. franchise by-laws. In 1918 the Board of Railway Commissioners authorized the company to charge a return fare of 64c to Burlington, subject to the village's consent. This consent was refused and the company stopped operating the line. Subsequently an arrangement was made to reopen the line, and at a later date an amendment was made in the Dominion Railway Act giving the Board of Railway Commissioners power to revise rates notwithstanding any contract between a company and a municipality. An officer of the Dominion Power and Transmission Co., which owns the H.R.R., is reported to have said, Aug. 13, that the company did not wish to increase the rate to the extent authorized by the board at present, but if the line continues to lose money there will have to be a further increase.

**Lethbridge Municipal Ry.**—Fares on this railway were advanced on July 1 to 10c cash, or 4 tickets for 25c. For children the fare is 5c cash, or 6 tickets for 25c. Workmen's tickets were abolished. Following is a comparison of the old and new fares.

	New	Old
Cash fare.....	10	5c
Adults' tickets.....	4 for 25c	5 for 25c
Children's cash fare.....	5c	.....
Children's tickets.....	6 for 25c	10 for 25c
Workmen's tickets (limited).....	.....	6 for 25c

We are advised that the change is merely an experiment, and that if it is found ineffective in producing a reasonable increase in revenue other changes may be made.

**Moncton Tramways, Electricity and Gas Co.**—The New Brunswick Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities, has issued its final order on the Moncton Tramways, Electricity and Gas Co.'s application, dated Aug. 28, 1918, for an increase of fares on its electric railway, and increased rate for natural gas and electric current. At the hearing in Nov., 1918, an interim order was granted, to run for four months, abolishing special rates and allowing the company to charge a straight 5c fare on its electric railway. At the final hearing the commissioners decided that as the rate of 8 tickets for 25c for workmen and school children was specified in the company's act of incorporation, it was not within their jurisdiction to alter it.

The final order directs "that the company be authorized to discontinue selling any tickets for street railway fares at the rate of 6 for 25c, and in lieu thereof be authorized to charge 5c for each and every street railway fare or ticket. This variation of the tariff to be in force and effect from July 1. This order is not to interfere in any way with the tariff now in force under which the company sells 8 tickets for 25c to workmen and school children, and which is to remain in force until otherwise ordered."

**Montreal Tramways Co.**—The Montreal Tramways Commission is reported to be giving consideration to the question of a revision of fares to be charged by the Montreal Tramways Co. during the current year. The fares for the past year are said to have averaged 4.8c a