

IX. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VANCOUVER CITY AND THE MAINLAND

1. In accordance with the resolution of the Vancouver City Council of June 10, 1917, the terms of which were accepted by the British Columbia Electric Railway Company, which resolution was embodied in the Order-in-Council appointing this Commission, and which is as follows:

"That the Honorable the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council of the Province of British Columbia be requested to appoint a commission for the purpose of thoroughly investigating, in all its phases, the question of transportation in the City of Vancouver and surrounding districts, said commission to be empowered to employ experts and take any other steps that will enable it to decide definitely as to the possibility of the street car service being maintained in competition with the jitneys. This resolution is made on the understanding that the British Columbia Electric Railway Company and the City Council will abide by the decision arrived at by the commission and on the understanding that the company will put its cars into operation forthwith. The same schedule and fares to prevail as prevailed at the time of the strike pending the report of the commission."

It is the decision of this Commission that an efficient street car service in the City of Vancouver and between the City of Vancouver and the City of New Westminster cannot be maintained under the present condition of competition with the jitneys or public automobile service. The grounds on which this decision has been reached are fully set forth in the body of this report.

2. As the result of the information obtained during the investigation into the economic conditions and operations of the British Columbia Electric Railway Company and subsidiary companies, the following recommendations are made in accordance with the terms of the Commission:

(a) Apart from the decision as to the jitney competition, it is recommended that until the financial returns of the street railway service materially improve, as may be determined by reference to any provincial public utilities commission which may be appointed, or by mutual agreement between the municipalities

affected and the street railway company, a city population area, as nearly as may be in accordance with the plan given on the map marked "Exhibit 133," be determined, within which fares and free transfers on the existing basis shall be maintained.

(b) That free transfers on the street cars to and from this city population area and the outlying districts of the street railway lines be discontinued, and that a conference be arranged between the official representatives of the municipalities affected and the management of the street railway company with a view to the adjustment of rates and service schedules on the lines beyond the city population area, as may be necessary to the maintenance of the best possible service unless the present and immediately prospective financial conditions.

(c) That, subject to the approval of the parties to the same conference, on certain specified lines, preferably those suggested in Exhibit 131, the operation of one-man cars be given a fair trial with a view to reducing unnecessary costs and maintaining a better service on these routes than might otherwise be possible.

(d) That the B. C. Electric Railway Company be authorized, in accordance with the plans proposed in Exhibit 147, to increase the speed limit and by skip stops to improve the service by special through cars between Vancouver and New Westminster.

3. It is recommended:

(a) That the rates for domestic light and power on Schedule L. A., which at present run from 11 cents to 5 cents per k.w.h. for a monthly consumption between 50 and 300 k.w.h. and subject to a 20 per cent. discount if paid within ten days, shall be reduced from January 1, 1918, to net rates of 8 cents to 4 cents, and proportionately for the intermediate rates of the schedule; that on the 1st of January, 1919, these rates shall be reduced to 7½ cents to 4 cents, and on January 1, 1920, to 7 cents to 4 cents, and the intermediate rates proportionately.

(b) That some proportionate reduction in rates shall take place in the schedule for domestic meters, applying to the districts adjoining Vancouver and which at present start with a 13-cent rate.

(c) That the meter rental of 15 cents under Schedule L. A. be discontinued and that a minimum charge of 30 cents per month be required from each consumer.

(d) That where the security deposit of \$3 is retained, interest shall be allowed on it at the rate of 6 per cent.; where the deposit is not retained a surcharge of 10 per cent. may be added to all accounts overdue for twenty days.

(e) That should the financial condition of the Company continue to improve during the next two years, a further reduc-