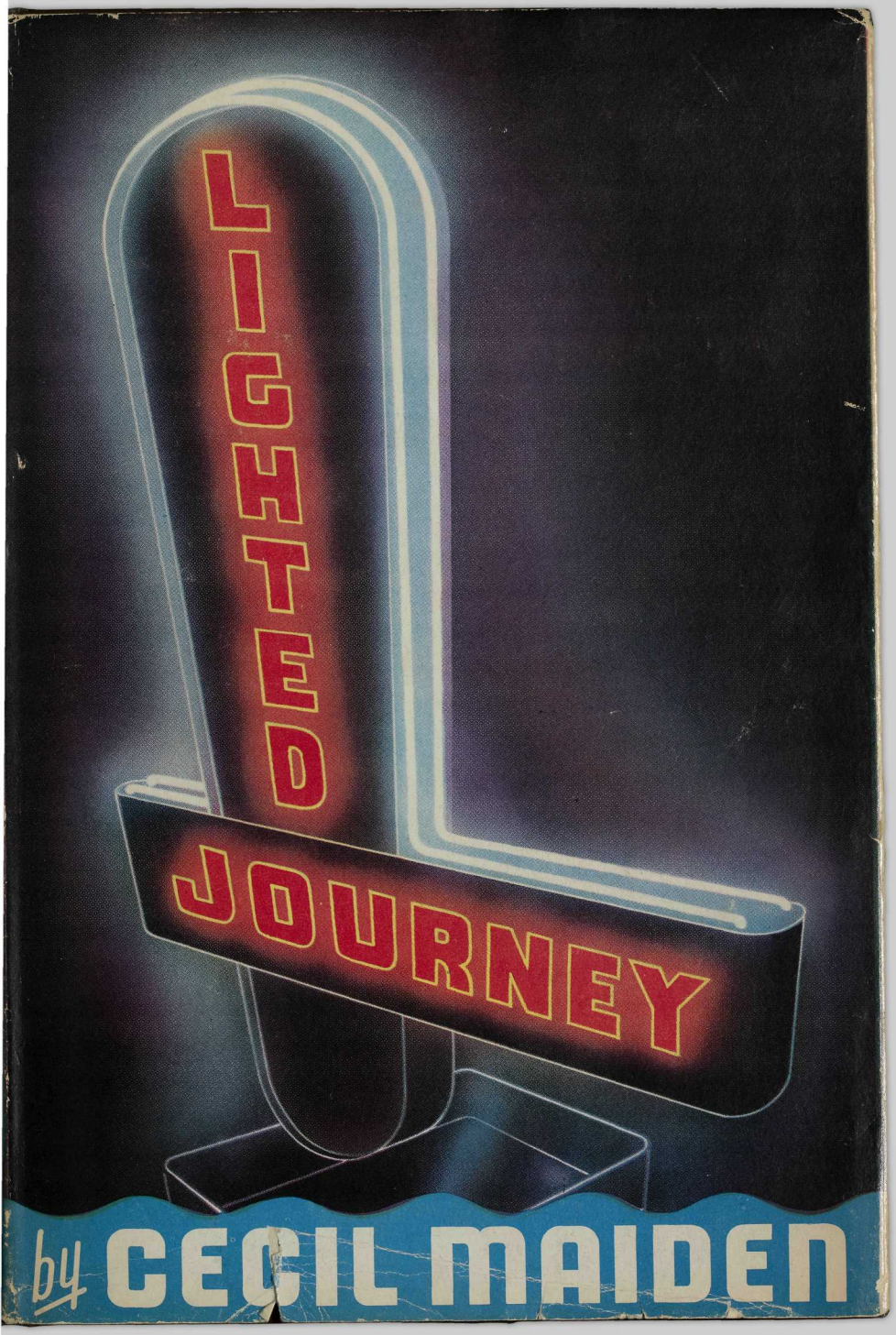
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JOURNEY
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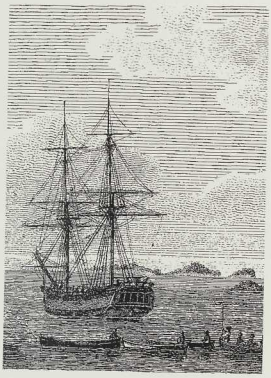

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The bastion, southwest corner of Fort Victoria, built in 1843. The site formerly occupied by this portion of the Fort is now the corner of Wharf and Broughton Streets.

LIGHTED JOURNEY

The Story of the B. C. Electric

by

Cecil Maiden

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Mr. Willard Ireland, Provincial Archivist, and to Miss Madge Wolfenden, also of the British Columbia Provincial Archives, for their tireless help in supplying data on the period and events covered by this book

It is not possible to separate the man from the idea. In the history of civilization, every human enterprise, from the making of a brick to the building of a nation, exists first as an idea in the mind of its originators. This is the story of a great enterprise. It is, of necessity therefore, a story of great people. Their names are not always famous, but the record of their achievement is indelible. To understand that achievement it is necessary to learn not only something of their successes but also of their failures; not only of their steadfastness but also of their wavering . . . their strengths and frailties, enthusiasms and despairs, their solemnities and their frivolities, and thus at length to grasp something of the fervour with which they dedicated their labours to the common good.

To these men and women, and to the children who inherit their manner of service, this work—the story of a lighted journey—is now dedicated.

June 1, 1947. —C. M.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE before me as I write a yellowed copy of the *British Colonist* for Thursday morning, December 12th, 1861. It was read and talked of, laughed over and gossiped about, by bewhiskered men and crinolined women on their way through the first snows of winter (it had started snowing three days previously) in and out of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Victoria in the Colony of Vancouver Island. It was spread out on the mahogany tables of elegant new houses in that elegant new capital city. It was also opened by brown and blistered hands straight from the gold-digging in the Cariboo—and by white hands itching to go there.

From it I quote two extracts, immediately following each other. The first deals with a fiery young stoker by the name of James McAllister, of H.M.S. Topaze, then at anchor in the harbour of Esquimalt.

> "Prisoner (hitching up his trousers and spitting on the floor): Vell, yer honor, as I was acomin' along the 'Squimalt road yesterday, a little tight, I perceived two clootch-vimmen a'standin' outside of a 'ouse, and they was a-laughing at me. So I haxes myself—is 'eathens to be allowed to laugh at Christians in this blessed country? Of a certainty not, says I, and so I makes a rush for the 'eathens, and they runned into the house for pertection and shut the door arter 'em, but I kicked it in, and I couped one of 'em, yer honor, with my right 'and and I wumbled another on 'em with my left, and just then a b . . . y hold bloak steps up and sez he, 'Jack, what

are ye a'doin'?' so I wumbled him too, blast his eyes!"

For this spirited assault on the two squaws the sailor was removed to prison for one day, "evoking, as he left the room, the choicest imprecations on the heads of the judge, officers and spectators, and promising to 'square the ring with 'em' on some future occasion."

Immediately following this item is another:

> "Gas: The whole of the Gas Company's apparatus did not arrive in the *Prince of the Seas.* The *Pruth* and the *Salamander* each have portions aboard. The *Pruth* is fully due, having sailed from London on the 19th of last June."

Those were the boisterous days, the wild, outspoken, restless days of the early 'sixties! They were the days of the windjammers, rolling up from 'Frisco, and some from around the Horn—like the *Prince of the Seas,* and the *Pruth* and the *Salamander.*

And watching for those ships in Victoria, doubtless with much impatience, as well as some anxiety, was a group of energetic young men who had been waiting not merely the six months these vessels had been on the way from England, but two full years for the event.

The Gas Company's "apparatus" so tersely referred to, was the most tangible evidence yet of a dream which began in October, 1859.

On the nineteenth of that month these young men—most of them were in their twenties—petitioned the Legislative Assembly of the Colony for the right to incorporate themselves into a gas company to supply Victoria with gas. The names given in the petition are John T. Little, Michael Lane Calvert, George A. Reynolds, Donald Fraser "and others." But the moving spirit was John Little, who not only saw the possibilities in the new use of gas for lighting, but also had quite a sincere desire to improve the city in which he had made his home by bringing some very necessary light into its streets after nightfall.

Gaslight was badly needed. The size of the Chain Gang that moved daily about the city's labours was proof a-plenty that dark streets could breed dark deeds.

The hunger for gold was the kind of hunger that stirred fierce emotions, and these were Gold Rush days. Beer was plentiful. Whiskey knew no time limit. Champagne—and good Clicquot at that—was there for the asking, and the asking was persistent. Victoria, proud of her place as Capital, and as supply centre for the Cariboo, for the trek North to Alaska and South to California, was yet a little nervous of the "men with the dust." They spent freely in her shops but their fingers were also distressingly near a good many triggers. And lusty young Jack Tars, cooped up in the wooden wall of England all the way from home to Esquimalt, were too often spoiling for a fight.

Darkness gave them opportunity—and they took it. The Indians suffered. The Chinese—the "Celestials" as they were called then—suffered too. The white people suffered most of all, but since everybody indulged in free language and had few inhibitions worth mentioning, there was no brooding on the situation, and the darkness of the streets had long been accepted as a natural evil.

Under such circumstances, one would have thought the petition of John Little and his friends would have received a heartfelt welcome. But it seemed that the dream of a Public Utility Company was destined even then to be born in storm and struggle.

I quote an Editorial in the *British Colonist* of October 26, 1859 : "By all means incorporate them," says the *Colonist,* "and give them the right to dig up the streets and lay down the pipes, and sue and be sued, but never give an exclusive privilege for one moment. Down with monopoly ! If this were allowed the next dodge would be a water monopoly and a steamboat monopoly !"

John Little had asked for the privilege of supplying gas for a period of fourteen years without competition in order to consolidate himself. In that desire he was supported by a sudden voice from across the water.

The *New Westminster Times* replied: "All men with one grain of common sense *were* aware that every company that has been established in England has had the monopoly granted to them for a certain number of years as the only means of inducing capitalists to risk their money."

To which the *Colonist* added a last word: "In the infancy of gas light it was an experiment, and it was deemed necessary to grant exclusive privileges. But nothing is better understood now than making gas, and those who engage in it, engage in it like any other business, and consequently it requires no protection."

"Nothing," you will note, was "better understood now than making gas"—and it was not all of the illuminating variety. A fair picture of the period with which those young men had to contend is furnished by another of the *Colonist's* editorials on the subject of free speech.

It seems that on April 1st, 1860 — April Fools' Day — a Proclamation signed by the Governor, James Douglas (later Sir James) was hung up at the lower gate of Fort Victoria, whose object was, according to the *Colonist,* to "suppress the British Colonist." So the *Colonist* sounded her battle stations and put in a thundering broadside.

"Many supposed," says that fighting journal, "that some wag had concocted it to make fools of the townsfolk. Before night, however, it became known that Governor James Douglas was the real author, and instead of mirth he aimed at terror. An intense feeling of indignation was aroused at this perfidious act. Curses were loud and deep. Men scarcely knew whether 'the flag that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze' still waved over their heads as the emblem of liberty, or whether the Griffin of the Russians had been planted in their midst, to reduce the liberty-loving Russians to serfdom!"

The editors of those days were not the only people who were determined to be heard. The wordy warfare on behalf of and against the exclusive rights asked for by John Little and his proposed Gas Company, spread itself throughout the citizenry. A well-signed petition *against* the Company was

presented to the House of Assembly. Another petition was promptly presented *for* the Company's incorporation. Unfortunately, however, some of the petitioners were so carried away by their convictions that they signed *both* petitions, thus reducing the weight of each of them. All of which, says the record of the official proceedings, "amused the spectators exceedingly."

Three months elapsed. Stimulated by renewed promises of support by the merchants of Victoria, the promoters reduced the requested privilege period to five years, and also agreed to charge £1.10.0 (sterling instead of £2.10.0 per 1000 cubic feet as before proposed. The amendment was presented to the Legislature on October 18th, 1860, and was passed on to the Committee Stage.

Eleven days later, on October 29th, the Committee met —and promptly referred the whole thing back to John Little and his group of men for still further amendment. The Company was incorporated on November 29th, 1860, and finally, on December 19th of the same year, the Victoria Gas Company Act was passed, the fiercely contended privilege period being at last granted. The Directors' names as first published were Little, Southgate, Main, Calvert, Burnaby and Grancini. But only two of the original names are included in that list.

Among the newcomers was a man who was to become one of the most substantial figures in those mid-Victorian days of the young Colony—J. J. Southgate, described by the electors of Nanaimo, who later returned him as their representative to the House of Assembly, as a "gentleman who is independent, unpretending, upright and firm," adding that "it is not the gratification of any empty ambition that he seeks, but a desire to benefit the Colony at large."

With its Charter at last in its hands, the young men of the Victoria Gas Company set to work to prepare the Capital City for a supply of gas. But as public opposition—what was left of it—finally melted into approval, fresh obstacles appeared on the path of these pioneers of gas.

Delivery of equipment would take longer than had been promised. On closer inspection the laying of mains would

necessitate more men and more material than had been bargained for. Other considerations made it only too obvious that the company would have to have more time to get Victoria ready for the gas it was to produce and deliver.

With some trepidation the Company therefore asked for an extension of its time limit on this constructional work, and on December 9th, 1861, the Gas Company Extension Bill was passed. The Company won another six months' breathing space in which, according to the Act, to "establish Gas Works and buildings, and lay not less than 5000 feet of Mains of an adequate diameter, and supply therefrom gas of good quality, at the house, shop, establishment or the residence of the person requiring the same."

The Directors rolled up their sleeves. There would be no more delays and no more opportunity for accusations of tardiness. The Company bought a parcel of land on Rock Bay, 350 feet long by 140 feet wide, and on it began the erection of a two-storey building for the offices, meter and governor, with chimneys, retort and purifying houses adjoining. The plant was to consist of horizontal retort settings (six settings of three retorts, direct fired) a small gas holder of 25,000 cubic feet capacity, and nearly six miles of mains. Small coal-craft, direct from the new mines at Nanaimo, could tie up at a jetty on the Company's premises at the foot of Store Street.

The bulk of the plant was ordered from James Milne & Sons, Edinburgh, and made its long way round the Horn in three sailing vessels—the *Prince of the Seas,* the *Pruth* and the *Salamander,* all of which took from five to six months to make the journey. (The *Pruth* suffered a mutiny, ran short of fresh water and not only had to put into Callao for storm repairs but suffered several other mishaps en route!)

Some time before mid-January, 1862, the original "prime mover" of the enterprise, John T. Little, withdrew from the harvesting of his labours, and so did his friend Michael Calvert, for we find that on January 13th of that year the Directors were reshuffled, with J. J. Southgate emerging as

Chairman, and the new Directors being listed as Robert Burnaby, E. Grancini, F. W. Wood, Alfred Waddington and Donald Fraser.

The last name appears also in the original petition of 1859. Donald Fraser was an American Citizen, and at the earlier period there had been some acid comment on the proposed company being largely financed on his American capital. Mr. Fraser appears to have been both a diplomat and a determined man, for he withdrew, waited over two years, then finally regained his place in the Gas Company's affairs. The Company's Secretary was A. F. Main (one of the original Directors). J. J. Cochrane was appointed Engineer, and the Management of the Gasworks was placed in the hands of a man called Murphy.

Two months after the publication of the new list of Directors a quaintly-worded piece of news appeared in the *Daily Colonist* (as it was now known) on March 13th, 1862, as follows:

> "GAS : Workmen have commenced to lay the main pipes for bringing gas into the town (just as if there was not plenty here already !) Yesterday and today about 500 feet have been laid, and Mr. Cochrane expects to reach Johnson Street by Saturday night."

By the end of September the big day itself arrived, and the dream which had begun with that 1859 Petition became a workable fact. An Editorial for September 29th, 1862, reads:

"GAS AT LAST ! Yesterday afternoon at 3 o'clock, Mr. Murphy, manager of the Gas Works, filled three of the Retorts and commenced the Generation of Gas. We were present last evening, in company with Directors Southgate and Grancini, at the drawing of the retorts (three in number) and take much pleasure in stating that everything connected with the works operated to a charm. Mr. Murphy expects to light gas, for the first time in this City, at eight o'clock tonight, in front of Caroll's liquor store in Yates Street; and several stores will be lighted tomorrow evening."

Within four days the *Colonist* could report: "Several stores and saloons are now lighted with gas. Considerable air is in the pipes and prevents the gas from burning with as bright and steady a flame as desirable, but in a few days this difficulty, like all the other mountains of trouble which have from time to time beset the operation of the Company, will be overcome."

Victoria, now an incorporated City, was fast growing. Fresh gold strikes had filled the place with a steady stream of eager people, most of them by sea from San Francisco, who bought their supplies in the city and then dispersed for the Cariboo. Wives and dependents of these gold seekers often enough remained behind in Victoria to await the return of their menfolk, and the city grew and prospered. Fresh enterprise surged with the new tide of humanity past old Fort Victoria and along the ever more-crowded streets of the capital.

On January 27th, 1863, the Gas Company offered to sell to the City Authorities lamp posts and lamps at the price of $35 each at the works. They engaged to erect them at such places as might be decided upon (provided they were not more than 50 feet from the Main) and lay on service pipes for lighting at $17.50 for each lamp-post. Moreover they would light and extinguish the lamps and keep them clean for $40 per month (if the number did not exceed 50). Price of gas was to be $6.25 per thousand feet.

In March, 1863, the City Council of Victoria, its eyes on the growing revenues of its growing community, approved the levying of a tax of one per cent on the gross returns of the Company. The Company petitioned the Legislature against it, but the Governor declined the petition.

Cold-shouldered by the Governor, the Company was now having trouble with cold weather too. It placed upon its bills (presented and collected on the Tuesday of each week) the following warning:

"In cold weather the Meter and Service Pipe should be protected by suitable covering from the action of the

frost, and thus the inconvenience of the light going out from that cause will be prevented. The Inspector is instructed to substitute alcohol for water in the Meters, when furnished with the article by and at the expense of the consumer. The ordinary kind of whisky will answer the purpose."

Not content with choosing the outside of a liquor store as the first spot to be illumined by gas in the Colony, the Company now advocated the use of whisky to offset freezing!

On September 23rd, 1863, the Gas Company declared a dividend of 6 per cent for the six months ending 30th June, 1863. By the 30th of the following June the Cash Balance in the Bank of British North America was $9,817.70. A dividend of 15 per cent was declared.

The Gas Company was now established—one of the first Public Utility Companies in the far West of North America. And service to the public was becoming ever more and more important. The persistence shown by these men who brought gas to Victoria was being reflected all over the new world. Immigration was gathering momentum. New explorations were opening up new territory. New capital was laying the foundation of new commerce. Above the 49th Parallel a Nation was being forged.

Two of the important links in that new-forged chain were brought together on the 19th of November, 1866—when the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia became one Colony, taking the name "British Columbia" for the combined territory.

Men were pouring into the Pacific West across the Rockies (though no railway yet spanned their formidable ways), still more were coming from California, from Panama, round the Horn, from Australia and from the Orient. A thousand business opportunities were sprouting in the precious dust brought from the Cariboo.

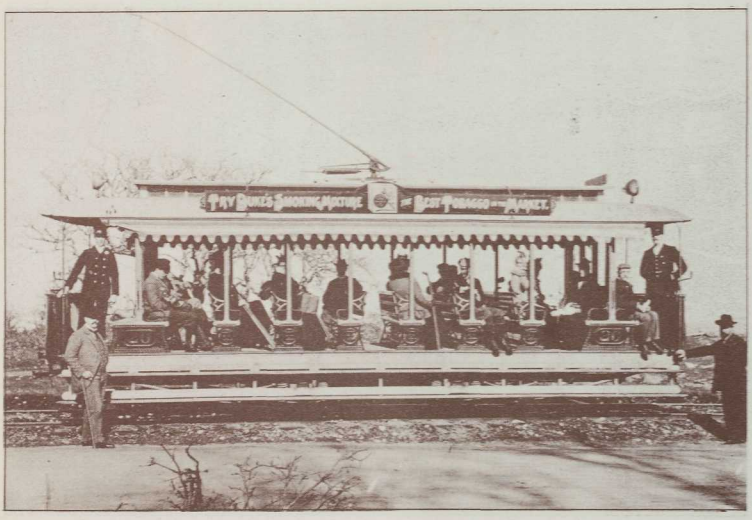
In search of that dust came men from all over the known world. They married and begat children. They brought with

them a tremendous enthusiasm, energy and purpose. They also brought with them greed and a great restlessness.

But by and large the worthiness in them was uppermost, and together they lit a fire which welded forever together the wide miles of a wide new world.

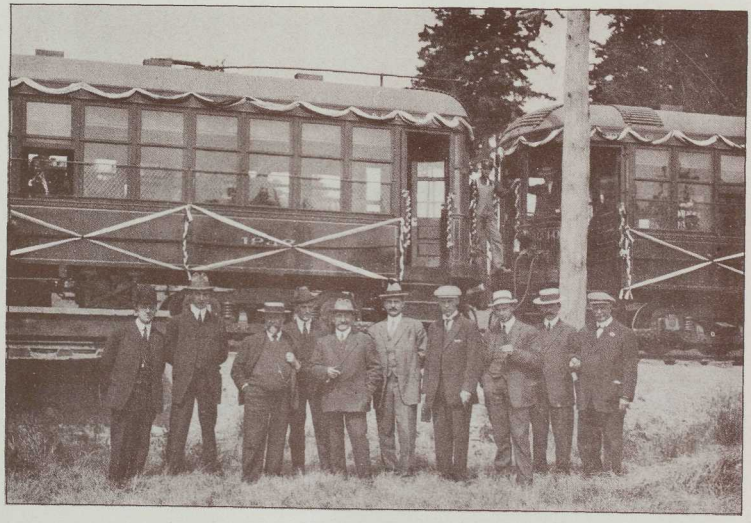
In 1871—on the 20th of July—the Colony of British Columbia became part of the Dominion of Canada, thus stretching from ocean to ocean the thin line of the pioneers, and widening into a new and greater dimension the cradle of the Canadian people.

All that was left of the Consolidated Railway Company's steam plant in Victoria after the disastrous fire, which completely destroyed the plant.



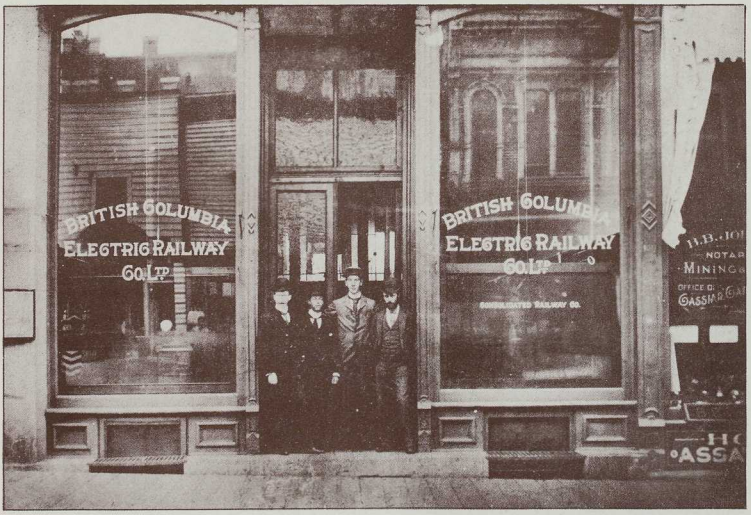
An early open-side car in Victoria. The late A. T. Goward seated in front, and the late Sir Frank S. Barnard standing at the rear.

1896 — The Victoria Office on Yates Street.



Opening of the interurban line from Victoria to Deep Cove, June 1913.

Laying the first street car tracks on Heatley Avenue, Vancouver, about 1889.



B.C. Electric's first Vancouver office, 163 Cordova Street, in the summer of 1897.

1892—Car No. 13 of the Westminster and Vancouver Tramway Co., Ltd., leaving Hastings and Carrall Streets.

May Day procession in New Westminster, 1896.

CHAPTER II.

AS dusk began to fall on the evening of May 15th, 1879, there grew and swelled along Victoria's busy waterfront an unwonted stir of excitement. The day had been a pleasant one, and the night was already one of those clear nights of the Pacific Springtime which betokened the warmth of an approaching Summer.

Close on twelve hundred men, women and children in their holiday clothes—the children having for the most part been especially permitted to remain out of bed for the evening—were embarking on four gaily-decorated little steamers at the water's edge . . . the *Cariboo Fly,* the *Isabel,* the *Maude* and the *Woodside.* To go aboard a steamer at all was a great wonder, but to go aboard one at night, and on such a mission, was to be a part of History.

The four crowded steamers paddled their excited way over the water to Esquimalt, where, at a respectful distance from Her Majesty's Ship *Triumph,* they arranged themselves in an expectant semicircle.

The band of H.M.S. *Triumph* struck up the International Waltz by Gungl, and then came the moment for which the breathless crowd had made the journey.

"The darkness, which," we are told, "had reigned supreme over Esquimalt Harbor was suddenly dispelled, and the harbor became as bright as day."

By command of Rear Admiral Horsey, Officer in Charge of the Esquimalt Naval Station, the men aboard the *Triumph* had turned on an electric light!

Our friend the *Colonist* reported next day that "the powerful rays were directed on the *Cariboo Fly,* which lay about 300 yards distant. Her decks were crowded with passengers, who were seen from the decks of the ironclad. A circumstance still more remarkable was that the colors of the ladies' shawls and dresses were as clearly distinguishable as in daylight. The steamer tooted an acknowledgment through her brass-lined throat, and the excursionists cheered lustily."

Such was the historic occasion on which the people of Vancouver Island first saw the miracle of electric light, and among those same spectators was a young man whose name was to become famous as the man to bring that new light into the daily lives of his fellow pioneers of the Far West . . . Robert Burns McMicking.

Robert McMicking came from old Covenanter stock in the Robbie Burns country, his family having long lived near the town of Ayr in Scotland. When still little more than a youth he had joined the adventurous Overlanders of '62, and had followed the Gold Rush up the Fraser Valley . . . but instead of mining, had taken a job as a Telegraphic Engineer, the work nearest his heart and one giving him the chance to study the electrical science he was already finding so fascinating.

Not that there was no room in his young heart for any warmer allegiance! He first met his wife, the beautiful Margaret McMicking, in a stagecoach on the way from Yale to New Westminster . . . and found that she, too, was of the stuff of pioneers, having rounded the Horn in a windjammer in 1862, bound for California.

He managed to get himself a job as Agent for the Western Union Telegraph Company at Victoria, and thus followed his love to the city in which her parents had made their home, arriving in the capital on the last day of April, 1870.

They were determined young people, Robert McMicking and his Margaret. While she busied herself on her new home (even finding time to write and publish a cook book, and design its cover) he plunged deeply into his all-absorbing

study of electricity. And there was much to satisfy his craving for knowledge.

He was living, and he knew it, in the dawn of an Electrical Age. He was living in the same scientific world, and had been born during the lifetime of Michael Faraday . . . that great figure of the early days of electricity who discovered the principle of electro-magnetic induction; who built the world's first dynamo, the forerunner of the modern electric generator, and gave the world a new perspective on the field of energy.

Little by little the inventions and discoveries in this new world of electricity (wondered at by the more ignorant of the masses of mankind, and thundered at, even from some enlightened pulpits, now and then, as the work of the devil) brought electricity nearer and nearer to its practical usefulness to the world at large.

Electric light itself only became an accomplished fact, as a commercial possibility, with the carbon arc-lamps of 1876 to 1878, but the first real step forward towards widespread usefulness came with the development of the incandescent lamp, by Swan in England, and Edison in America, in 1879.

Just a year before that, Robert McMicking had built Victoria's first telephone line, and two years later had installed in the city the first electric fire-alarm system in the Province. But it was to the field of lighting that he now turned his most ardent attention.

Despite the development, during the previous twenty years, of the use of gas for street-lighting purposes in Victoria, there had arisen by 1883 an urgent need for brighter and more reliable illumination, at least in certain areas of the City. McMicking was not only aware of the City's needs in that respect, but was determined, despite the novelty of the whole system of electric lighting, to do something about it.

Though busy on his other duties, he worked long and late on a plan, with no precedents to guide him, for public

electric lighting, and in the early summer of 1883 submitted this plan to the Victoria City Council.

On June 27th (notwithstanding the efforts of a surprise competitor, R. Nuttall, to obtain similar rights) the City signed that Agreement. Under its terms McMicking was to "erect and support and maintain at three several points in the said City an Electric Light with an illuminating power equal in the aggregate to Fifty Thousand Candles." But the City was taking no chances. This enterprising pioneer of electric lighting was to pay the entire cost of the installation of his system out of his own pocket and all expenses for eight years—in return for which McMicking was to receive $6,000 for each of eight successive years, if the plan proved satisfactory.

The McMicking project called for the erection of three 150 foot masts, each carrying four or five double arc lamps—and these three clusters were expected to give ample light to the whole of the most thickly settled portion of the City. Since the light-power was to be tested by "reading newspaper type at a distance from the masts to be agreed on," one visualizes copies of the *Colonist* being carried boldly round the imposing erections in an ever-widening radius.

A month after the Agreement was signed, it was officially confirmed in a City By-Law, and by December of 1883 the lighting system was not only installed but ready for service.

The Power Plant was on Yates Street, near Quadra, and its two Brush Dynamos were driven by a 25 h.p. steam engine. Three of the tall masts, which could be seen—with varying degrees of appreciation from all over the capital, were erected at the chosen points; one at the corner of Yates and Government Streets, one at Blanchard and Burdett, and one at Blanchard and Chatham.

Reviewing the situation about a month after the lights had been in operation, Victoria's Mayor Redfern reported that they were "working very satisfactorily" . . . but it was not long before McMicking came face to face with some

of the troubles that had dogged the earlier path of his pioneer counterpart in gas lighting, John T. Little.

The electric light was not very reliable. There were complaints. There were accusations against the equipment, the power-house, the quality of the light, the whole idea. So by 1885, the City of Victoria, thinking it knew better than the originators of the system, used a clause in the McMicking Agreement that enabled them to take over the entire enterprise, and in September of that year succeeded in getting a By-Law passed providing $16,000 to improve the plant. It was not enough. A further $6,000 was spent in rebuilding the power-house and buying new equipment.

The visible evidence of this civic will to improve must have been quite impressive. Two new Sperry dynamos were installed, supplying power to no less than forty new 2000 candle-power lamps. Nineteen of them were flung up into the City's skyline like a challenge to fate, on five more of the skyscraper masts—and just for good measure twenty individual lamp-posts were also erected, to the wonder of the citizens and the undistinguished delight of all the dogs in Victoria.

But it didn't work. With a sigh of resignation the Mayor passed on his headache to posterity with the words: "This light will become the light of the future, but in a small community like ours we should not be trying experiments. Let older cities do so, and when perfect, we can adopt it."

Robert Burns McMicking, however was not the sort of man to cry "Enough!" in the face of these trials. Helped and stimulated by the patience of his beloved Margaret, he plodded on to understand more, to experiment more, to succeed more. And with an unshakable faith in electric lighting he gathered together a few friends who, like himself, were determined on success. Between them they formed the Victoria Electric Illuminating Company Limited, which was incorporated May 19th, 1866.

The shareholders names are given as W. P. Sayward, David Spencer and Thomas Shotbolt, and the Directors listed were R. P. Rithet, Joshua Davies, Louis Redon, William Heathorn and W. J. Taylor.

This group of men built the first public incandescent lighting system not merely in the West, but in Canada. They were therefore part of Canada's history—yet who knows their record of success? What sort of men were these who were so willing to pin their faith, and their money, to this untried invention in an unawakened land?

W. P. Sayward was a man called upon to meet and overcome the keenest disappointments and the deepest personal tragedies. Chief among them was the death of his wife Ann, after an all-too-short period of married happiness, and on the threshold of his greatest fulfilment. David Spencer —best remembered in British Columbian circles as the Founder of the great retail firm that bears his name—was the son of a Glamorgan farmer, carrying that sturdy Welsh open-air upbringing into all his wide enterprises . . . marrying a girl who herself came around the Horn in another of those '62 windjammers, and who thought nothing of walking eight miles every Sunday to and from that Methodist Church in Victoria where he first met her.

I like to think, too, of another feminine figure who had a place in that group of electrical pioneers, for her life is typical of the spirit which animated all of them, men and women alike. I refer to the wife of Thomas Shotbolt. She, too, first set eyes on the new Colony from the deck of a sailing ship—the "Sierra Nevada," when she was just a pantalooned little girl of nine named Lavinia Parmenter. Thomas himself was little more than a boy when they first met—he a Lincolnshire lad and she a Dorset girl. They married in the May of '74, and, according to the *Colonist,* "in the evening of the marriage the Tiger Engine Company, with torches, proceeded to the residence of the bride's father and serenaded the happy pair, who, in the fullness of their joy did not forget the printer" of this mid-Victorian equivalent of a Social Par.

Another name in that first roster of the Victoria Electric Illuminating Company is that of R. P. Rithet—a pioneer who had felt the pull of the West in the 'sixties and arrived in Victoria when he was twenty years old, to follow the gold seekers into the Cariboo.

Three years of ups and downs passed over him in the placer country, but he did well up there, and came back with his precious nuggets to build a home and found a family. Gradually but very surely he became one of the most esteemed young men of affairs in the Pacific Northwest. He had a broad vision of his Country's future, and a broad idea of his own part in it—so that he became as well known in San Francisco and Honolulu as he was in his own Victoria.

In Victoria he became Consul General for Hawaii—when the islands had a Queen. And he made a contribution to the city—the Rithet Docks—without which Victoria could never have become a deep-sea port. Known to be "lucky in business" he was also lucky in love—winning the lovely Elizabeth Munro, daughter of a pioneer Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Alexander Munro. Unlike the rest of the wives in this group, Elizabeth came driving West over the American Plains in a prairie schooner.

They built a home together—"Hollybank"—which became quite a centre of Victorian elegance and gaiety, but though it glittered with dinner parties and fancy dress balls, it resounded all the same with the laughter of children, for the Rithets were very real people, and "R.P" took time, even when Mayor of the City in 1885, not only to plan his family's happiness but to tend his garden. One of the gifts he bought his popular wife was—quite appropriately—one of the first electric cars, which, with its novel means of propulsion and its white spokes, became one of the sights of Victoria.

It was to men like Shotbolt and Spencer, Sayward and Rithet that British Columbia now looked for leadership in the field of electricity. The discovery of practicable incandescent lighting was only five years back, but it was on the basis of that discovery that the new Company now moved forward to full operation.

They installed in their new power house an Edison dynamo, driven by a 50-horsepower steam engine. This dynamo had a "capacity of 400 lights"—those lights being 16-candle-power variety.

All was ready for a preliminary trial of the first system of domestic house-lighting by the end of January, 1887. A test was made on January 28th, and another on the 29th. Next morning the *Daily Colonist* reported, somewhat naively, that "the electric light is a brilliant illuminator, and is simply brought on and off by the turning of a key." Of the many wonders of the new incandescent era the *Colonist* added: "In bedroom touch buttons are placed at the bedside so that a person is not under the necessity of getting out of bed to blow out the light."

Domestic electric lighting had come to stay. It now remained for the Victoria Electric Illuminating Company to take a larger step . . . a step which took two years of preparation before its successful fruition. In 1889 the Company introduced a series of arc lamps—for the lighting of large offices, stores and public buildings. A new Ball dynamo was installed to supply power for these new lamps, and they were, figuratively as well as literally, a brilliant success. By the time the extra power was turned on (October 16th, 1889) twenty-five 2000 candle-power lights were ready for the purpose, and the number grew very rapidly as the success of the new arc lighting became an established fact.

The Victoria Electric Illuminating Company Limited, however, was not the only one whose work was helping to write the history of the far West.

Over on the mainland there were being sewn the first seeds of an electrical enterprise that was destined to outshine, and later even to embrace the capital city.

Standing at the village of Granville on Burrard Inlet in 1884, Sir William Van Horne (whose name will always be linked with that historic building from the Atlantic to the Pacific of the Canadian Pacific Railway) said to Hamilton, the C.P.R.'s Land Commissioner, who had laid out in the forest the streets and blocks of the new city . . . "Hamilton! Hamilton! This is destined to be a great city! Perhaps the greatest in Canada. We must see to it that it has a name commensurate with its dignity and importance, and 'Vancouver' it shall be, if I have the ultimate decision."

Two years later, this city hewn from the stubborn forest, still held only a thousand souls, but they were people determined to make their city grow and prosper. They were, for the most part, tough, rough people who had already succeeded by the sweat of their brows in laying, within their small community, the foundations for a future greatness. Logging, fishing, mining, farming, ship-loading . . . those were jobs that called for both sinews and staying power. They had the sinews and they stayed.

The Canadian Pacific Railway had reached Pacific tidal water at Port Moody, but it was in the new Vancouver that there must be built the great terminus that the future would demand of them.

They set to work with a will. They had few of the graces and the older traditions of Victoria, but in their steady eyes glowed the lamps of destiny. Their womenfolk were simple in tastes and modest in manners, and they made the best mothers in the world. Their children discovered early that life was a thing of labour, but there was a warmth of neighbourliness, a sharing of trials, a joint merrymaking too, for often among the echoing mountain rang the hearty laughter of people who had earned their joy.

Over the C.P.R. there came among these pioneers a man who was to play a further part in the bringing of electricity to this growing community.

The man was Harry Braithwaite Abbott. He came to the city with a record that was already distinguished. He was born in Abbotsford in Quebec, in a family that produced another son—Sir J. J. C. Abbott, K.C.M.G. — who became Prime Minister of Canada. Harry Abbott started a long railroad career in 1857 . . . a career which sent him through all strata of life as well as through all types of territory. One of his jobs had been to supervise the conveying of troops sent from the East to suppress the Louis Riel rebellion. It was his handling of this and other urgent situations which led to his appointment, in 1886—the same year as the incorporation of the City of Vancouver—as General Superintendent of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia.

With a close railroad friend of his—George Alexander Keefer—Harry Abbott first talked of the bright future that the entry of the railway into a Vancouver terminus would bring to the city. Both men saw a great opportunity not only to make good money but also to help the community they had both come to serve. Keefer was himself a man accustomed to looking ahead . . . there had been no other direction in which to look when surmounting some of the obstacles in the building of the famous Fraser River section of the C.P.R. (his special responsibility, and one in which a station "Keefers," is named after him). It was, indeed, Keefer's foresight that led him to go to Vladivostock to advise on the Eastern end of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

In 1886, Keefer and Abbott, together with a third man, William Fitzherbert Bullen (an Ontario pioneer who had married one of the grand-daughters of Sir James Douglas, K.C.B., "father" of British Columbia) applied for a charter to authorize the incorporation of a Vancouver Electric Illuminating Company Limited. The initial authorized capital was set at $200,000, but provision was made for an increase to a maximum of $500,000. A problem of the time is reflected in a special provision incorporated into the charter prohibiting the employment in any capacity whatever, directly or indirectly, of any Chinese, under a penalty of from $10 to $20 for day that each and every Chinese should be employed. In addition to the white men working on the construction, during the last few years of the Canadian Pacific Railway across British Columbia, the Railway Company had also imported about ten thousand Chinese. On the completion of the line many of these men were unemployed but wished to remain in Canada. Since the white workers on the construction sections were also anxious to remain in British Columbia, a situation arose which it was considered necessary to remedy by strict embargoes on Chinese labour in such enterprises.

The Vancouver Electric charter was granted by the Legislature in an Act which received the Royal Assent on April 6, 1886. No immediate use was made of it. There was little time. For less than ten weeks after the granting of the

Charter a catastrophe happened which is still talked of as one of the great disasters of the West's long history—the Fire of Vancouver.

On June 13th, 1886, the newly incorporated city was swept by a raging fire which destroyed, in the Midsummer weather, most of the homes which had been so hopefully built in the forest clearing. It was a blow which only men and women like those early settlers could have survived. With burning tree-stumps all around them and blackened earth where they had planned their busy thoroughfares, they returned with a will and with redoubled energy to rebuild and re-establish. How little the tragedy of the fire touched their unflinching spirit is shown clearly enough in the first edition of the "Vancouver News" to re-appear after the disaster, on July 23rd—six weeks after the event.

In adjoining columns of the same issue are two advertisements. One read: "Fire ! Fire ! Grant & Arkell, Vancouver, are in the field again with a full range of General Merchandise !"

The other one states: "Fun ! Fun ! Globe Hotel, Water Street. Free Entertainment ! Come One, Come All—and see Cartier, the Funniest Man in British Columbia !"

Amidst a page-full of announcement concerning Re-openings, Sales of Damaged Goods, Testimonials as to the indestructibility of certain Safes, and Fire Insurance Advertisements, the dignified Editorial read, "OUR REAPPEARANCE. The *Vancouver News* makes its re-appearance today for the first time since its publication was unavoidably suspended a few weeks ago. Its chief object will be . . . to represent to the local and Eastern Capitalists the advantages which the City offers for investment."

Gradually the city of Vancouver rose again. With its rise came the question of street lighting, and a new group of Vancouver business men had formed an entirely new Company, to be known as The Vancouver Electric Illuminating Co. Ltd., which was incorporated on January 20th, 1887. The trustees were John Boultbee, Hugh Forbes Keefer, R. Balfour, Jonathan Miller and Ben Springer. The Company's

capital was set at $35,000, divided into 1400 shares at a par value of $25. The City passed a By-Law empowering the Company to build and operate an electric-lighting system in January, 1887, and in the Spring building started on a power plant at the corner of Pender and Abbott Streets.

Preparations for lighting Vancouver took eight months after the granting of the Charter. The incandescent lights used seem mostly to have been of 32 candle-power, and were later looked down upon and referred to as "Glow-worm lamps." Only praise, however, greeted their first advent. The *News-Advertiser* of August 7th, 1887, reports:

"The electric light was turned on last night over the whole circuit, and gave entire satisfaction in every case. The light was bright and steady; the absence of flickering, which is very common and to be expected with a new system, was remarked by many who have seen the first trial made by electric light companies in other cities.

"If the light supplied is kept up to the standard of last night there will be no reason for anyone to complain of it."

Five months later we find the *News-Advertiser* writing: "Vancouver is now the best-lighted city of its size (about 5,000 population) in the World." And in another six weeks there appeared the first recorded tribute to electricity as used in British Columbia for yet another service.

The *News-Advertiser* of February 23rd, 1888, reads:

"Commencing with our issue of yesterday, the *News-Advertiser* is now being printed by electricity, the power being supplied by the Electric Light Company. It will doubtless be interesting to the people of Vancouver to know that this is the first paper in the Dominion to be printed in this manner."

There follows a comment of great significance and obviously of great sincerity:

"It is pleasing to us to make a note of another instance of the services rendered to the progress of Vancouver by those citizens who, so early in its history, and when the condition of things was so different from what it is now, risked their money to supply the city with an electric light plant."

The scorn that had been heaped on those earnest first efforts of Robert Burns McMicking in Victoria, from the disdain that had greeted almost every step in the history of electric light development in British Columbia, we have travelled far. Here, at last, is public tribute. The first bouquet.

With that bouquet in mind, it is time to turn to one of the most vivid developments in electrical history . . . the rip-roaring, boisterous, free-speaking, bell-clanking birth of the electric street car.

CHAPTER III.

IT seems in key with the nature of those early street cars that their first appearance in British Columbia should be largely due to another figure from the Gold Rush days. The street cars themselves were something of an adventure. There was something of the same sort of gamble about them that there was about the Cariboo. With no forerunners in the country it was not possible, at first, to gauge their future. As they wheezed and whizzed their way along at ten miles an hour they were considered the last word in convenient travel, though many were the anxious thoughts of Victorian mothers as their sons (and worse, their tomboy daughters) made these dizzy dashes hither and yon about the busy city.

The man from the Cariboo was David William Higgins.

Higgins was a Maritimer — who left his native Nova Scotia in 1885 to join the great trek across the American plains to the golden State of California. This man, who was to father the project which gave British Columbia its first street cars, arrived in the country as a journalist. He helped to found one of the most famous journals of the West—the *San Francisco Call*— in 1856, but two years later the thrill of the Gold Rush proved too much for his adventurous blood, and he moved with the 'fifty-eighters up the Fraser.

Like some of the other pioneers in this story of light and power, he did well for himself up in the Cariboo, and came back to journalism on the *Colonist's* staff in Victoria— where he met his domestic destiny in the shape of pretty

Mary Jane Pidwell, and married her, with more good Clicquot and bridal cake for the "first Editor married in Western British America."

He had a family of five children.

In Victoria the wise and witty pen of David Higgins won him many stalwart friends. One of them was Thomas Shotbolt—whose work in the electric lighting field we have already recorded. Together with three other prominent Victorian citizens—James Douglas Warren, Andrew Gray and Joseph Hunter—they obtained an agreement with the City of Victoria, signed on November 20th, 1888, authorizing them to "construct a street railway within the city limits." Construction of the Railway was to commence not later than Ocober 1st, 1889, and the cars were to be running by July 1st, 1890. And no matter how severe the temptation, the cars were "never to exceed ten miles an hour."

The agreement was officially confirmed by a civic By-law in December. David Higgins and his group of five thereupon promptly organized the National Electric Tramway & Lighting Co. Ltd., the Company being empowered to construct and operate a system of outlying tramways to connect with the proposed street railway in the City of Victoria. The Company was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature on April 6th, 1889. The names of Messrs. Shotbolt and Warren, however, do not appear on the list of first Directors — but the names of three newcomers to the Board are given, Maynard H. Cowan, Thomas J. Jones and G. L. Milne. Capital was authorized at $250,000.

The "tramways to connect" with the street railway in the City proper, were to serve the areas of Cadboro Bay, Esquimalt and Craigflower (and in the following year, 1890, the further districts of Metchosin, Sooke, Beechy Bay and Goldstream were added).

Although the new Company did not formally take over the city franchise (for lighting as well as street railway services) until 1890, the transfer took place immediately, and on May 14th, 1889, the ratepayers of Victoria approved a by-law guaranteeing 5 per cent interest on $40,000 worth of

The Point Ellice Bridge disaster, Victoria, May 26, 1896.

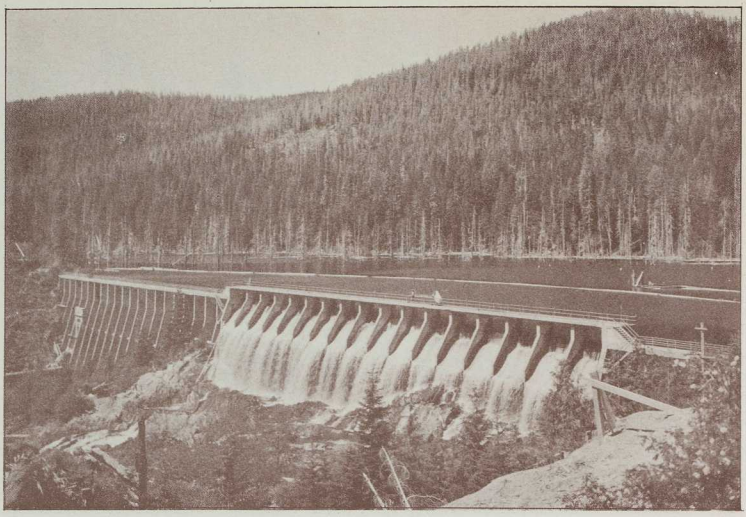
A close-up of the ill-fated street car in which over fifty persons lost their lives.

The corner of Hastings and Cambie Streets, Vancouver, 1898.

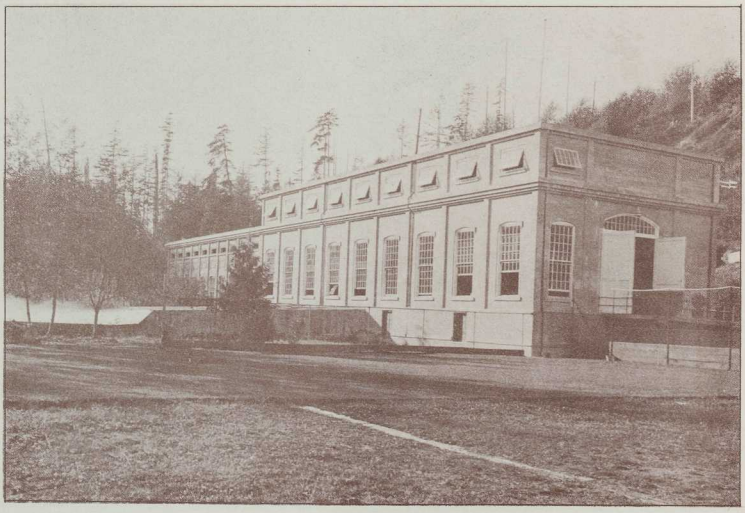
Looking west from Carrall Street along Cordova Street in Vancouver, 1898.

October 3, 1910—Sir Richard McBride, Premier of British Columbia, drives the last spike on the longest interurban system in Canada,—The Fraser Valley line.

The silver thaw of 1933 created havoc with power lines and disrupted all traffic in the Fraser Valley.



The diversion and main storage dam, Jordan River, Vancouver Island.



The Power House, Jordan River.

National Electric Tramway & Lighting Company bonds. This guarantee was to take full effect when the Company had expended $70,000.

Having finished the spadework, the new Company got busy on translating into practical fact the powers and plans at its disposal.

To the firm of Lyne and Milne went the job of building the needed power house and car barn, and a start was made on September 2nd, 1889, on both erections at the corner of Constance and Store Streets. The plant housed a 110 h.p. steam engine and two Thomas-Houston generators.

By mid-February of 1890, about four miles of line had been finished, and all was ready for the first big testing.

The people of Victoria had watched all this activity with mingled trepidation and enthusiasm. Opinions, criticisms and flatteries, confidences and doubts were offered freely in the ears of the company's workmen in all directions. Among the doubts were apprehensions about the James Bay Bridge. Was it strong enough to carry these fearsome new street-cars or wasn't it?

To settle the matter David Higgins—now President of the National Electric Tramway & Lighting Company—stood with the Mayor himself (Mayor Grant) plump in the middle of the wooden bridge while one of the formidable vehicles was wheeled bravely out of its barn and driven with anxiety across the bridge and past the gallant Mayor and President. Everybody was safe. So was the bridge. With a resounding anticlimax the Mayor announced that "the vibration was not as perceptible as that caused by a heavily-loaded wagon." Not to be robbed of drama, however, the Victoria *Times*, in reporting this incident, added, "Along Superior Street extra speed was put on, and the car whizzed along at a great rate, no jar or rocking being noticeable."

The actual opening of the street railway—the first in British Columbia—was invested with all the pomp and circumstance of a National Occasion, which indeed it was.

The *Colonist* adopted the grand manner. Its editorial for February 23rd, 1890, commences, "Yesterday will be looked upon as an era in the History of Victoria. The starting of street cars shows that the City has arrived at an important stage in the path of progress. That the street cars are running through our city is in a great part due to the foresight, the energy, and the perseverance of Hon. David W. Higgins."

The man from the Cariboo must have felt well satisfied that day. But there was also a serious side in the nature of David Higgins that must have found a deeper satisfaction. An aspect of the great event is touched on in the same editorial which puts the matter clearly before the people. "The establishment of the street car service will at once very considerably increase the area of the city, and will make available many lovely spots which were considered a few months ago too distant from the centre of business to be valuable for the sites of residences, and it will bring the country near to the poor man, and the poor man's children."

The actual opening of the line is described in the *Colonist's* news columns of the same day.

"Pursuant to invitations issued, about 200 prominent gentlemen gathered at the Power House, Rock Bay Bridge, at 1:30 p.m. where they were cordially received by the President of the Street Railway, Hon. D. W. Higgins, and the other officers of the road, who escorted their guests through the engines and car-rooms, and explained the, in some respects, mysterious workings of the system."

Champagne was next opened, and they all sang "God Save the Queen."

At about 2 o'clock, cars No. 1, 2, 3 and 4, which were waiting on the bridge, were boarded by the Company, and all prepared themselves for the excursion over the line. His Honor the Lieut. Governor, accompanied by his Private Secretary, Mr. Herbert Stanton, Premier Robson, Mayor Grant and the City Council, members of the Provincial Cabinet and Legislature, the Bench, the Bench of British

Columbia and many of Victoria's business and professional men comprised the party, and when all were seated, His Honor advanced to the front platform of Car No. 1, and, bowing to the citizens who thronged the roadway and sidewalks," delivered to them his opening address.

After this speech, Mr. Higgins "replied with a promise of safety, and called for three cheers, to the echo of which he turned the motor lever and the wheels of Car No. 1 began to revolve faster and faster as it passed down Store Street, followed by its three companions, at a speed of about ten miles per hour."

All along the line the citizens had decorated their premises and one of them, Mr. Henry Saunders, displayed a huge banner inscribed "Success to the Tramway and President Higgins."

"In the evening the cars were brilliantly illuminated, and filled with passengers, dashed through the streets in busy, metropolitan style; the admiration of all lovers of enterprise, convenience and progress."

And *was* Victoria progressive? In the advertisement columns of the same issue appeared for the first time in the History of Canada's West, a phrase that was to become immortal:

"Two well furnished rooms to let, 63 Superior Street behind Government Buildings. *Cars pass the door!*"

And the cars, incidentally, *stopped* at the door also—for no "Stop" signs had then been thought of, and cars could be hailed and alighted from at will, always provided that the vehicles were not "dashing through the streets" too quickly to make a timid hail apparent.

The electric street car had now been well and truly born. It was not only the first such system in the West but the third in all Canada (the only previous electric street railways to go into operation being both in Ontario—at Windsor and St. Catherine's).

The whole idea, as well as the system, could go on from strength to strength, and from suburb to suburb. Before the

end of 1891 the four miles of track had grown to 11½ miles, and eleven street cars were in operation.

Mr. Higgins rode on this wave of success to far parts in search of new ideas and new equipment. He made a very comprehensive tour of the United States, from which he reported a "rapid increase in the acceptance of electric power for street cars," and a steady decline in the use of mules and horses. He reported with a glow of local pride that "on New York's famous Broadway the track is rougher than on any portion of the road operated by the Victoria Company."

He ordered, among other equipment, rails for extending the system to Beacon Hill, the Driving Park, Tolmie Avenue and for double tracking Government Street. Five new cars were also soon on their way to the Capital, and three of them were "large Palace coaches of great speed and the acme of comfort."

In his enthusiasm for the new street cars David Higgins never ceased to watch the welfare of the growing army of men working under him. Over in New Westminster the *Daily Columbian* of September 21st, 1891, reported: "An improvement which Mr. Higgins has for some time been endeavoring to bring about comes into operation under the new schedules. It is that the man last on duty at night will not be required to report for duty until about noon the following day, instead of, as under the old schedules, having to report at six o'clock the next morning."

With such improvements, and under such conditions, the National Electric Tramway & Lighting Company prospered. Receipts from February 22 to December 31, 1890, had totalled $38,705, and for the whole year the total rose to $78,000.

With that satisfactory picture in mind as far as the capital city is concerned, it is now time to record the parallel street car development in the City of Vancouver.

By two years after the Great Fire, enthusiasm and dogged perseverance had spread the young city to a point where the building of a street railway became not only a necessity, but

quite obviously a good investment. The same kind of faith which rebuilt the homes among the embers now went into the planning of a great metropolis. Men with the courage not only of their convictions but also of their imaginations, set their minds to commercial enterprises which far outvisaged the actual needs of a small population in a small and struggling city.

Among those men was a Londoner called George Turner, who had come to British Columbia, when still a boy, with Colonel Moody's famous detachment of the Royal Engineer's sent out by Her Majesty's orders to survey the route to the Cariboo. When the job had been completed, Turner was one of the members of the sturdy band who decided to take the option of remaining in the new land—and did so, putting his good faith into good works, and infusing all around him with his own enthusiasm.

By 1889 we find his name heading a list of the Directors of the Vancouver Street Railway Company—a Company incorporated by an Act assented to on April 6th, 1889. His fellow Directors were prominent business men of the period —Richard Plunket Cooke and Frederick C. Innes. The initial capital was $250,000.

This first Vancouver street car company was empowered to "carry passengers by the force of animals, or such motive power as it may deem expedient." The "force of animals" provision was the cause of a considerable upheaval in the Company's opening activities.

On April 27th, 1889, the Company awarded a contract for the laying down of the preliminary lines, and on July 9th another contract was given for the building of a horse barn to hold fifty horses, on the South West corner of Westminster Avenue. While this work was in progress a "good judge of horse flesh" was sent South to Oregon to buy the necessary horses . . . but hardly had he gone when a report from a group of electrical contractors convinced the Directors that satisfactory electrical equipment could then be supplied, and that electrical operation would indeed be more of a profitable venture in the long run than the protected "force of animals."

The change of mind appears to have been made in a hurry. An undated, pencilled note from H. T. Ceperley, the Company's Secretary, asks Mr. Garden (Mr. James F. Garden, then of Garden & Hermon, the Engineers, later Mayor of Vancouver) to "see the contractors for the barn, and have them stop all work as regards interior arrangement until further orders, as we will probably change to electricity, and will not need the stalls."

The work was stopped. The tracks were bonded. The horses gathered in Oregon were sold. And the stables were disposed of, at some loss, to Gurney's Cab Company.

Electric cars were ordered from George Steveston of New York, and by May of 1890 six of them had been delivered . . . each of which could carry thirty-five passengers in "comfort and convenience."

The following month—on June 26th—all was ready for a test, and with Motorman Aubrey Elliot and Conductor Dugald Carmichael, one of the elegant new cars was brought out for the purpose. Carrying a number of shareholders, the car sped up and down Westminster Avenue (now Main Street). As the car moved under the admiring eyes of Vancouver's passers-by, it also acquired a fair representation of the local citizenry, and last but by no means least, it acquired a baby with a dirty face!

Mrs. Alice Crakanthorp, pioneer, left a record to the effect that "James Edward Smith was the first baby to ride on a street car in Vancouver. The car left the barn, which was at the foot of Barnard Street, and ran along Westminster Avenue as far as Hastings Street. A neighbor of the Smiths, a Mr. Snyder, picked the baby up, and said he would give him a chance to say in later years that he was the first baby to ride on a street car in Vancouver. His mother, Mrs. Smith, protested that his face was not washed—that it was dirty. But Mr. Snyder ran off with the baby, calling back as he went that it did not matter; the car was coming and he couldn't stop. Baby would do as he was, dirty face and all."

By the time the street cars had begun their era of busy journeying, an Act of Legislature, on April 26th, 1890, had

incorporated the Vancouver Electric Railway and Light Co. Ltd.—in which the Vancouver Street Railway Company joined forces just under a month later (May 21st, 1890). Shortly afterwards followed the consolidation of the Vancouver Power Plant—as at Pender West, and a new steam plant just erected at the foot of Barnard Street (now Union Street). New dynamos for the city's lighting, were installed in the Barnard Street Power House, and the Pender Street plant was dismantled and used as a warehouse.

It was, in British Columbia, as in all Canada, a period of amalgamation and reinforcement. The men of Canada were finding strength in a new unity, and that unity was reflected in the issues of their daily lives.

Old methods, old systems, old landmarks were fast passing. In 1888 the revered old *Beaver*—first steamer of all of them round the Horn and beloved symbol of Fort Victoria and those old Colonial days—had met her end at the entrance to Vancouver Harbour. Wide eyes in Vancouver were looking further afield. The first real Trans-Pacific Liner—the *Abyssinia*—had deposited in the port the first truly modern merchandise from the Orient. The ship *Titania* had sailed with the first through cargo direct from Vancouver to London.

Close on thirty years had passed since those Gold Rush days of the 'sixties.

Victoria considered herself grown up. Vancouver scarcely stopped to consider anything but the job in hand. And just around the corner in New Westminster?

The marvels of electricity had had a strange beginning in the Royal City. There had occurred, for instance, the celebrated instance of the "stolen" light!

CHAPTER IV.

Towards the end of the year 1889 there lived in New Westminster, serving the local Telephone Company in the capacity of manager, a young man called George Pittendrigh —a young man with an adventurous spirit. His taste for adventure may well have been inherited from his father—Capt. George Pittendrigh, one of the heroes of Balaclava. Be that as it may, however, it was certainly because of young Pittendrigh that New Westminster first saw the electric light.

The *Daily British Columbian,* on December 9th, reports: "For the first time in the history of the Royal City the electric light shone in Westminster last night. By some means the new telephone line got crossed with an electric light wire in Vancouver, and Mr. George Pittendrigh, the local manager, noticing that something was wrong, disconnected the Vancouver line and closed it to the ground line. In doing so he received a shock so severe that he dropped both wires and fairly danced with pain. Knowing that some unusual power was at work on the wires, Mr. Pittendrigh procured a carbon and attached it to the ground wire, brought the Vancouver line in close proximity to it, and in an instant the Central Telephone Company was ablaze with electric light. The stolen light lasted some time, but was finally shut off and the telephonists were once more reduced to probe their way by the blinding glare retailed by the Westminster Gas Company.

Amidst the laughter and gossip caused by this unwitting "theft" from Vancouver of the new light, serious plans were going ahead for the establishment of a municipal lighting

plant. In 1890 the plan materialized into the building of a power house on 10th Street, not far from the Royal City Planing Mills. Two dynamos were installed, and one 180 h.p. steam engine. While one dynamo was to cope with the arc lighting the other could serve 650 sixteen candle power incandescent lamps.

All these developments were watched by the New Westminster people. And while these preparations were being hurried along in the Royal City, Vancouver, too, was experimenting and improving. Biggest of these improvements was the introduction of arc lights—which went into service in Vancouver on July 3rd, 1890, when for the first time 90 new Thomson-Houston 2,000 candle power arc lamps flooded the city with brighter light at night than it had ever had before. This, moreover, was at a time when night life itself was beginning to take on some of the dignities of metropolitan living. February 9th of that year had seen the opening of the Vancouver Opera House. Celebrities of no small magnitude appeared on its stage. Lectures, concerts, dances were growing in quality and in frequency. The little town of Granville had "grown up."

Back in New Westminster preparations for lighting were completed by the New Year. On the evening of January 2, 1891, arrived the first big moment. "The streets," writes the *Daily British Columbian* on the following day, "were thronged with people last evening for several hours, who inspected with interest and delight the new electric light. Shortly after the *Columbian* had been delivered, making known the fact that the lower part of the city had been illuminated for the first time with the new electric light, people commenced to move down town to see it. Ladies and children made at least two-thirds of the throng and all appeared charmed with the effect and brilliancy of the new illuminator."

Not for another three weeks, however, was the whole city lighted. On the evening of January 28th in the presence of Acting-Mayor Curtis, the city Aldermen and a large gathering of citizens, the switch was thrown "and the next instant the city was ablaze, east, west, north and south for the first

time." Within a few days New Westminster had 80 street lamps. But, as in so many other cases, the Province was growing too quickly for its development. In October of the same year the ratepayers approved a By-law for $25,000 to buy a 1,500 light dynamo and some other needed equipment. A few years later yet a second arc dynamo was needed, and by the end of 1890 nearly 5,000 incandescent lamps were in use in the city—which even then, incidentally, had no electric light service during the daytime.

While electric lighting in New Westminster was going through this period of rapid expansion, the city, fed by news of street car developments in Victoria and Vancouver, had also become determined not to fall behind its rivals in this newer field. An act of the Legislature on April 26th, 1890, had incorporated the Westminster Street Railway Company, with a capital of $250,000.

The first directors were three energetic men who were themselves well accustomed to the overcoming of many obstacles. The men were Benjamin Douglas, Henry Valentine Edmonds and Samuel T. McIntosh. Henry Edmonds shared with some of the earlier pioneers in this history—men like John T. Little and Robert Burns McMicking—a driving desire to improve the life of his fellow men. This sturdy Irishman, once Mayor of New Westminster, is honored as the originator of the famous May Day Festival throughout the Province, and both he and his kindly Irish wife, Jane, won a very special place in the hearts of the growing Province's young children. Benjamin Douglas was another of the old pioneers to come around the Horn in 1862 and he, like many of them, had also tried his luck in the gold rush. The three friends had brought with them into New Westminster not only the determination to succeed, but the habit of success. The two just mentioned Douglas and Edmonds, also became directors of another company incorporated by an Act of Legislature on the same date—the Westminster & Vancouver Tramway Company, whose capital was listed at $500,000.

The two companies thus incorporated on the same day —(The Westminster Street Railway Company and the Westminster & Vancouver Tramway Company) were formally

united a year later, by yet another Act of Legislature on April 20th, 1891, keeping the name "Westminster & Vancouver Tramway Company."

Edmonds, Douglas and a third director, Isaac Oppenheimer (one of the most popular of the Mayors of Vancouver) had long considered the prospect of linking the cities of Vancouver and Westminster with an electric railway. Twelve miles of electric railway track, however, was then an unheard-of proposition. In the whole of Canada no other such interurban line existed or was planned. Yet the men behind this enterprise were not of the kind to be dismayed by the absence of previous models. They felt already that the prospect they had in mind might become one of the great colonizers of the Province. Its twelve miles of track might bring into being around it the homes of thousands of successful, contented British Columbians. It was with this dream in front of them that these three men of action started in June, 1890, work on the Interurban line between Vancouver and New Westminster. Once started, the work was rushed with all possible speed. Towards the end of the work, the imminence of the New Westminster annual exhibition, with its anticipated crowds from all directions, gave yet an additional spurt to the development, but labour and equipment were not equal to the extra rush. The disappointment was mirrored in the *Daily British Columbian* on September 25, 1891. In an issue covering news about the 150,000 people moving into the Exhibition grounds, the harvest of the pickpockets, and a report on the eagerly anticipated sculling race between world-famous Canadian and Australian oarsmen, the editorial announces: "The Royal City has done itself proud in the great Fair and Carnival which comes to a close tonight. There were a few disappointments, of course, such as the failure of the Street Railway and the Westminster-Vancouver Electric Railway services to get into full operation."

Even when properly launched, however, the city service was a cause of trouble. F. E. Handy, General Superintendent for the Company, remarked that the line was neither very successful nor profitable "largely on account of the severe

grades and numerous curves required to travel from south to north" (uphill all the way).

The new Interurban line ran into and overcame its own special brand of trouble. Gangs of workmen had sweated to clear a 100-foot right of way through dense forest, and all trees likely to fall across the track had been felled. Despite their great contribution, however, the grades remained as high as 9 and sometimes even 11 per cent. There were many breakdowns. But by October 3, 1891, we read that the Interurban "tram cars are now making daily trips to Vancouver—two per day, at 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.—single fare 50c, return 75c." There were only two stopping places en route between the two cities. One of them Isaac Oppenheimer had named "Central Park" as tribute to his wife—for it was in the neighborhood of Central Park, New York City, that Mrs. Oppenheimer had been born and reared. The other was the siding known as "Largen's Corner," at the end of the present Glen Drive on Venables Street. A news item of October 3, 1891, reports also that "at the power house the men's boarding house is now finished and in running order."

The system of working hours, and the movement of men up and down the track had been well worked out, and was becoming an established success. In an effort to repeat this success in the operation of the line itself, the Company ordered new and more powerful machinery to supply the motors with greater power. The people of New Westminster had already developed a taste for speed.

Two years later, in 1893, the Company invested in six Brill passenger cars, each 35 feet long and described as being "wide and roomy and nicely upholstered." At Fair time they succeeded in carrying as many as 110 passengers each, a fact which speaks much for the enthusiasm of the passengers. Enthusiasm, indeed, was a characteristic of the period. A saving of time had also aroused enthusiasm—it had been effected by the opening, during the summer of 1892, of the 12th Street "cut-off," which carried the cars straight down 12th Street to the New Westminster Terminus and eliminated a long winding track through the City. This "cut-off" reduced the running time between the Cities to 45 minutes.

Enthusiasm is also delicately expressed in an advertisement issued by Shadwell's (H.B. Shadwell and Co.) during October—an announcement advertising " a most stylish and nobby assortment of Ladies' Ulsters and Reefers." And the "nobby assortment" was being flaunted in British Columbia street cars at a time when the other cities of Canada were still having to rely for their transportation on the "force of animals !"

Despite the zest, however, with which life was lived at that period, the Province of British Columbia had entered a period of hard going and bad business. Starting in 1891 a nationwide depression had arisen. It had spread in ever-widening circles to embrace at last Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster. The expected flood of new population into the Province did not arrive. Business failed to increase as expected. The new public utility companies were badly hit. Primitive equipment led to many disappointments and irritations and through all these difficulties the electrical pioneers were also fighting in an unfamiliar field against conditions they could not have anticipated. The Street Railways sensed growing disaster. In Vancouver, even disregarding the depression, patronage had become increasingly small once the novelty had worn off. It was estimated that 75 per cent of the population lived within 10 minutes' walk of their places of employment, and as a City by-law prohibited the operation of cars at a greater speed than 6 miles per hour (Victoria was still sticking to its maximum of 10 m.p.h.) prospective passengers had found it almost as quick to walk to and from their work. The building of the tram lines had, moreover, been based on a very generous prediction of the rapid growth of Vancouver. High railway officials, leading bankers and prominent business men right through the Dominion had made the most glowing forecasts. But the financial depression was general enough, indeed, and put a sharp check on all kinds of hoped for developments. The company found itself operating a number of lines, built in

advance of settlement, into districts which continued without population !

Drastic steps had to be taken. Vancouver Electric Railway and Light Company offered the city its holdings at a valuation of $477,000. The City would not oblige. Deficits ran up to $1,300 per month. The directors appointed at the annual meeting in February, 1893 (whose names are given as Isaac Oppenheimer, President, William Farrell, Thomas Dunn, C. D. Rand and H. T. Ceperley) were faced with a major crisis. In May the trustees for the bondholders took over the Company's management. Traffic had fallen to such an extent that service was totally discontinued on the Powell Street line (East of Westminster Avenue) and on the Fairview line. The Mount Pleasant service was also very much reduced. With such a picture it is scarcely surprising that the Vancouver ratepayers rejected, on May 30, 1894, an offer for $380,000 authorizing the city to purchase the whole Street Railway and Lighting system. The property and assets of the Company were then bought in by a new Company—The Consolidated Railway and Light Company, which had been incorporated on April 11, 1894, with an authorized capital of $1,000,000. The charter of this new Company was secured in the names of Alfred Graham Ferguson, William Sully and William Farrell, and its purpose was declared as the acquisition of the Vancouver Electric Railway & Light Company. The Consolidated Company's capital was partly local, but a great deal of it came from English capitalists represented by Frank (later Sir Frank Stillman Barnard, who became General Manager of the Company.

The new company acquired the Vancouver property for $290,000 and later also acquired the small holdings of another company—the North Vancouver Electric Company Limited, which had been incorporated in 1892.

Vancouver was not alone in being called upon to pass through the sharp effects of the depression. The Westminster & Vancouver Tramway Company also moved into deep waters, and just when the company was already struggling hard against a general fall-off in its passengers, lightning struck

and burnt out one of the dynamos in the Edmonds power house. The cost of repairs proved a mortal blow to the Company's finances. Like its neighbor in Vancouver, the Company defaulted. In May, 1893, its assets were seized on behalf of the bond holders and eight months later the Bank of British Columbia filed a judgment of $261,250.17, and later also filed three smaller judgments, which brought the total up to $280,436.75.

Faced with this calamity, the Westminster & Vancouver Tramway Company appealed to the Provincial Government, and the Government came to the rescue. By yet another Act of the Legislature, the Government made the Company a free grant of 196 acres of public land, now part of the City of Vancouver. This new grant, together with additional urban and suburban properties, assured the judgment holders of their equity.

On April 13, 1895, Sheriff J. D. Hall of the County of Vancouver sold the tramways which lay within his jurisdiction (including new acreage for $9,765 in excess of the liabilities). Two hours after the sale of this property, T. J. Trapp, acting for Sheriff Armstrong, sold the Westminster & Vancouver Tramways holding in New Westminster. The purchaser in both cases was Frank Barnard, acting on behalf of The Consolidated Railway and Light Company.

Early in 1894, Frank Barnard had figured in a meeting which was to affect not only the destinies of those early light and transportation companies but also the whole future of Western Canada.

Barnard, as a director of the Columbia and Kootenay Navigation Company, had made a trip to the Kootenay area. While at Nelson he met a young Englishman by the name of Robert Montgomery Horne-Payne . . . a man of singular persistence and determination. Horne-Payne had a genius for finance, and a clarity and perception in the weighing of a situation that may well have been inherited from his barrister father. Even at the age of twenty-four he had won a partnership in one of London's most prominent firms of stockbrokers, Sperling and Company, and it was on this

Company's business in 1894 that he had come out to Canada. The job in hand brought the young Englishman in contact with the president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Sir William Van Horne, who took a quick liking to the very cheerful and energetic young man. As a result of this meeting, Horne-Payne was invited to go as Sir William's guest on an annual inspection over the whole system of the Canadian Pacific Railway, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The impact of this long journey on young Horne-Payne was sufficient to alter the rest of his life. He saw unfolding before him much that his mind recognized, even then, as material on which to help build a country that would take a leading place in world affairs. He sensed a natural wealth beyond his own perception. But he saw also that capital in hundreds of millions would be needed to release and realize the opportunities that lay in the wide latitudes that rolled with apparent endlessness before him.

Immensely stimulated, he determined there and then to throw all the force of his character into the development of Canada. He was to be the means of directing $500,000,000 worth of capital into Canadian industry and investment.

Robert Horne-Payne first found fertile ground for his plans in the meeting at Nelson with Frank Barnard. Barnard invited Sir William Van Horne and Horne-Payne to make a tour of Kootenay Lake and inspect mining developments then in progress there. The short inspection proved to be of great importance. During it Horne-Payne, his thoughts still glowing with his fresh discovery of this land, asked many questions—and into the discussion came inevitably the field of light and power.

Frank Barnard not only explained the difficulties under which the Street Railways were operating at that time but protested his faith in their future, and imparted that faith to Horne-Payne so earnestly that after further and fuller talks with the Consolidated Company in Vancouver, Horne-Payne decided on a bold plan of action.

For the first time there was mentioned the possibility of an amalgamation of the electric systems of the three cities—

Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster. The amalgamation would be a very big job. But it would have a big future —and the self-imposed assignment was of the size and calibre that the young Englishman liked to handle.

The C.P.R. tour came to an end, so also did Horne-Payne's principal mission to Canada. He returned to England in the autumn of 1894, and with a hard-hitting energy that would have done credit to any of the old pioneers, began his fight for funds, not only to liquidate the debts of the Consolidated Company but to provide for replacements and for additions to plants and extensions to the existing lines. It could not have been easy to sell the future of *any* undertaking so far away from England—let alone an undertaking that was in deep water.

By May, 1895, however, Horne-Payne's enthusiasm had won his cause and the Railway Amalgamation Syndicate was formed, with a capital of £200,000 sterling. Enough capital was thus guaranteed to place The Consolidated Railway and Light Company in a position not only to fulfil its obligations but to explore the possibilities of another part of Horne-Payne's ambitious dreams — Hydro-Electric development. When the Legislature met in January, 1896, a Consolidated Railway Company Act was introduced which became effective on April 3, 1896, and the incorporation was actually effected on April 17th of the same year. This Act brought under control the Vancouver Electric Railway and Light Company, the Westminster and Vancouver Tramway Company and the North Vancouver Electric Company. (The Victoria system was not yet included as the terms for its purchase could not be agreed upon, but provision was made in the Act for its later inclusion when acquired by the Consolidated Company.) The new Act increased the Company's capitalization to $1,500,000.

The very fact that the Victoria proposition had not gone through as rapidly as anticipated was an obvious challenge to a determined mind like that of Robert Horne-Payne. He arrived in Victoria soon after the passage of the Act. He investigated the position . . . and found that for six years the Street Lighting System had been owned by the

City, while other lighting services were operated by the Victoria Lighting Comapny. (The earlier company—the Victoria Electric Illuminating Company had been absorbed by the Victoria Electric Company Limited in October, 1890). Two years previous to Horne-Payne's arrival, on April 6, 1894, the Victoria company had been reorganized and became the Victoria Electric Railway & Lighting Company Limited, with an authorized capital of $1,000,000.

Before the end of April, 1896, the acquisition of the Victoria company by The Consolidated Railway Company was completed and for the first time in history, Island and Mainland were united in a single electrical corporation.

The way was now clear for full speed ahead. Horne-Payne and Barnard, working enthusiastically together with the unity they had created, got down to the consideration of present and future needs. They drafted a policy for future operations and just when their plans were fast maturing, there happened a tragedy which all but wrecked the whole structure they had so carefully nurtured.

On May 24th, Victoria was in festival dress for the Queen's birthday. The Royal occasion was justification for a three-day merrymaking, ending with a sham battle at Esquimalt staged by the North Pacific Coast Squadron of the Royal Navy. This sham battle was the climax of the jollifications and Horne-Payne, who was house guest with Frank Barnard at the time, decided to go along. It was one of those clear, sunlit, blue-and-golden days of which the Pacific coast so rightly boasts at that time of year. All the Victoria street cars running between Douglas Street and the North Yard were crowded, almost to suffocation, on every trip. Horne-Payne and Barnard tried to board a car but the throng was so great that there was no chance of their even reaching it. They walked down the street, hired a hack and went ahead of the street car by just a few minutes. Nearly 124 people were in the street car behind them when it started.

Under the weight of that car and its load of merrymakers the Point Ellice Bridge collapsed—and the car and its passengers plunged into the waters of Rock Bay. Within a

minute or two, the news of this tragedy had reached Horne-Payne and Barnard. They galloped back to the bridge and helped in the rescue of the living and in the recovering of the dead. Fifty-four lives were lost in the disaster.

All festivities were immediately cancelled, and the whole town was plunged into the deepest mourning. In heavily black-bordered columns the Victoria newspapers reported messages of condolence from all over Canada and the United States.

The dramatic news had also reached London — and promptly the Railway Amalgamation Syndicate withdrew its offer to finance Horne-Payne's undertaking.

The attempt to carry on under this blow was futile. The Consolidated Railway Company failed to meet its obligations and was taken over by the bondholders. After two years spent in fighting doubts and misgivings, of countering prophecies of business failure and other suggestions of discouragement, Horne-Payne had built up his great enterprise only to find it shattered at his feet. The public assumed that the Company was responsible for the accident. Damage suits were entered enough to aggregate the entire value of the Company's assets, and the long slow wheels of an investigation began to turn which were eventually to prove that the collapse was due to the decayed and faulty structure of the bridge itself.

The Company was acquitted of negligence and the City of Victoria was held responsible. Before that decision was announced, however, Horne-Payne had returned to London, refusing to believe, despite all material evidence, in the complete failure of the idea. It had been hard enough to sell so far-away an enterprise, even in the beginning. Yet on receipt of the verdict he began again to gather together the broken ends. Once more he found the capital to launch the great organization.

In October, 1896, the Receiver disposed of the various properties by Sheriff's sale at Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster. Except in the case of New Westminster city lines there was no competition. Frank Barnard bought in the

whole for an aggregate of $2,250,000. (A newcomer, Mr. Marchant, bid considerably more than Mr. Barnard for the New Westminster city lines, and they were knocked down to him. He failed, however, to find the money and Mr. Barnard's bid was therefore accepted.)

From these ragged ends Horne-Payne and Barnard constructed a new company. It was registered in London on April 3rd, 1897, and twelve days later took over the properties and other assets of the Consolidated Railway Company.

The Company was given a new name — that of the "British Columbia Electric Railway Company Limited."

B.C. Electric had stepped upon the stage of Canadian History.

CHAPTER V.

The first meeting of the British Columbia Electric Railway Company Limited was held on April 15, 1897. The Directors then elected were R. M. Horne-Payne, F. S. Barnard, J. Horne-Payne, Q.C., A. C. Mitchell-Innes, R. Northall-Laurie, G. P. Norton and R. K. Sperling. Robert Horne-Payne was unanimously nominated Chairman and Frank Barnard assumed the duties of Managing Director of the Company's affairs in British Columbia for a term of five years.

As General Manager, the Company promptly appointed a very enterprising and popular Vancouver man who had come out some years previously from Copenhagen, Johannes Buntzen, and R. Henry Sperling (another Englishman of the same Sperling family as that represented in the list of Directors) was appointed General Superintendent.

"B.C. Electric's" first Head Office was at Threadneedle House in London, with Canadian headquarters operating first from a room on the first floor of the Barnard Street Steam Plant and later from a one-storey building on Cordova Street near Cambie.

And what of the City itself, what of Vancouver in 1897—the growing community which was to become the centre of all the vast expansion destined to grow from that first B.C. Electric meeting?

The English board meeting was held on the day before Good Friday. On the same day the Vancouver papers were presenting a very varied picture—a picture ranging from the

Turko-Greek crisis to advertisements for Easter bonnets and the new fashion of coloured gloves to go with them. Also tied in with the Easter parade might be found an advertisement, in the *Vancouver Daily World,* announcing, "Carriage Horses and Stylish Turnouts and Everything First Class in the Livery Line at the Palace Stables."

I asked an old-timer—George Dickie—for some recollection of the period. George has worked for the Company since it started. He came originally from the Maritimes and brought a New Brunswick forthrightness with him. He is a keen-faced man, with the kind of eyes—deep, wise and far-seeing—that have watched with wonder a city grow from small beginnings to an almost sudden greatness. He is shrewd and kindly, and gifted with a mellow sense of humor. "1897," he said, looking over my shoulder into the far past. "That was the year of the Klondike! You should have heard the row those dogs kicked up! Thousands of husky dogs in hundreds of ships, going North to the Gold Rush! The Indian canoes were still pulled up on the beach by the dozen in those days. And along the quayside you would run across fresh bales of silk from China . . ."

The workers of those days—the first men of the B.C. Electric among them—were a cheerful bunch of people, well content to live in and for their work. George Dickie said they were like a large family. There were few outside attractions; still fewer distractions. Comradeship enriched the whole, wide, simple fabric—and there was in the comradeship, an all-around peace of mind. The greatest excitement, said George, might well be "the sound of the Salvation Army Band marching up the street."

There was also, in those days, a very real pride of work. Another old-timer, Stanley Peele, now living in Victoria, added a new note with the comment "Service with the B.C. Electric often ran in the family." From the earliest days of the Company's history, fathers, sons and brothers have been proud to work together under the same banner, and many a son has taken over his father's job when the older hands have withdrawn from the scene of action.

Stanley Peele began as an apprentice in the Burnaby Armature Room, and his first meeting with the General Manager Buntzen was to discuss the delicate matter of a more ambitious future than was indicated by a $45 a month pay cheque. Stanley Peele is another man with a sense of humour. He looks back with a reminiscent smile, at those early days towards the close of the nineteenth century, when the outside world knew so little of electricity and its systems of production, that once, after he had described with pride to a reporter of the times, the niceties of a new three-phase machine . . . he found himself reported the next day as having described something entirely new in the mechanical world—a "three-faced machine"!

That "three-faced machine" was part of the first hydro-electric plant to be built on the West Coast, the plant at Goldstream in 1898—father of all the tremendous power installations with which the Company was to become associated.

To supervise the installation of electrical equipment at this new plant, the young company in Vancouver sent over an electrical wizard of those days called George Tripp. So well did he do his job that he was placed in charge of the plant's supervision, and later became Electrical Superintendent of the Company, one of the most popular figures in the Victorian scene.

The Goldstream plant of 1898 was the fruit of much concentrated thought on the subject of water power.

Ever since that first meeting between Frank Barnard and Horne-Payne on the Kootenay Lake, the idea of Hydro-Electric development in British Columbia had been taking shape in Horne-Payne's mind, and had been the subject of much discussion between the two associates. Because it was the first of its kind, the Goldstream River development was watched with close and somewhat anxious interest by the new Company, as well as by the people of southern Vancouver Island. The power plant—erected in an area of great beauty, some fifteen miles from Victoria—used water supplied by the Esquimalt Water Works Company, which de-

veloped the reservoirs and pipe line. The original installation consisted of two Pelton Water Wheels of 600 h.p. each, directly connected to two General Electric stationary field generators—but it was not long before this plant had to be enlarged to meet the rising call for power, and two much bigger wheels installed. The Goldstream power plant then had an installed capacity of 3,500 h.p.

The need for expansion had not only become apparent in the new field of electric power. In 1897 the Company had needed a larger home for its own administrative workers. A new one-storey Head Office Building had therefore been built at the corner of Hastings and Carrall Streets, incorporating a new car barn. In that new building was gradually assembled the mental material for big planning. Yet physical and structural difficulties were not the only ones with which they had to contend. Side by side with the practical vigor of those men there had risen in other local quarters an over-confident sense of civic and provincial dignity . . . a pomp and circumstance that did not always sound sincere. There were newcomers to the city "playing grown-up" before they had attained maturity. With a teriffic frothing of the dullest words in the dictionary, for instance, the *Daily News Advertiser* summed up, on January 1st, 1900, a review of the past year's progress with: "It is consequently clear that there is abundant scope for well-devised endeavors to make the social progress of British Columbia commensurate with the evident advance of our material status."

Officialdom was flowering like a green bay tree.

Into this rarefied air of the new Vancouver, however, the twentieth century dawned a year later, briskly, healthily and with fresh vigor. In Victoria the new century was welcomed noisily. The *Colonist* of January 1st, 1901, describes the celebrations thus: "A young man who in the other 364 days of the year wears a serious look was marching up and down the street with a drum, followed by some professional men who for the occasion made up a rabble army; and a score of small boys with blackened faces banging tambourines and wearing antiquated plug hats and last summer's straws, straggled along near by; a crowd of well dressed

young men marched in a military manner up the middle of the road, blowing Chinese flutes, another set of gentlemen and ladies had some cymbals of saucepan lids and a varied assortment of noisemakers—all contributed their quota, whether small or large, to the noisy celebrations to welcome the new century. The old one was gone and buried as soon as the bells had chimed the midnight hour."

Beneath the banter, however, flowed the blood of the pioneers. Achievement was still the daily life of this place and period. New enterprise was at that time pushing up new buildings all over Victoria and Vancouver. The latter city was now growing faster than its plans. Only too often was a project started and, during its completion, entirely altered because of some newly realized and greater demand. Typical of the pace of growth was the B.C. Electric's development at Lake Buntzen.

Before the turn of the century, another company—the Vancouver Power Company Limited—had been incorporated in the B.C. Electric to build and control a projected new hydro-electric development at the north end of Lake Beautiful, where the erection of an intake dam would create a small body of water that was to be named "Lake Buntzen" in honour of the General Manager. The Vancouver Power Company acquired, with this development in view, the Coquitlam Water Works Company Limited (which had been incorporated April 6th, 1886, by a special Act, to supply water between the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet.)

Buntzen Plant No. 1 was originally designed to supply 12,000 h.p. but so quickly was Vancouver growing that plans had to be changed while the work was actually proceeding. Plant No. 1 was extended, and later on, Plant No. 2 was constructed. Instead of the original 12,000 h.p. projected the combined plants ultimately had an installed capacity of 76,125 h.p.

The plant itself was set on tidewater on the North Arm of Burrard Inlet, about fifteen miles north east of Vancouver, the water supply being derived from the Lake Coquitlam

watershed, which drains south and east to the Fraser River, and is actually separated by a high mountain ridge from the Buntzen plant.

A long, back-breaking job was undertaken by the Lake Buntzen men in the building of a tunnel 12,750 feet long, to carry the water through the mountain ridge from Coquitlam to Lake Buntzen. This long tunnel, a very considerable engineering problem, was commenced in 1902, and, although the first unit of the Buntzen plant (a single 1,500 kilowatt machine) was put into service in 1903, the tunnel to ensure the larger power supply was not completed until three years later, in 1905.

Only for a short time was the No. 1 Buntzen Plant adequate for the tremendous increase in the demand for power. The Coquitlam tunnel, too, had to be enlarged to twice its original size while building, and more and larger generating units installed!

Also to be put in hand was the tremendous job of building transmission circuits over rough rock and heavily timbered land to Vancouver — including a long water span at Barnet. It was no mean achievement when this 20,000 volt transmission line finally reached the City. Yet a year later, another 20,000 volt 2-circuit transmission line carried from Lake Buntzen to a new substation at Burnaby (adjoining the Edmonds Steam Plant) and to New Westminster. The first Lake Buntzen power was actually delivered to Vancouver on December 17th, 1903. (Up to this date, electrical power had been supplied to the City from a 2,000 h.p. steam plant on Barnard Street—this plant being subsequently closed down, although it was again used temporarily during a bitterly cold winter four years later.)

In common with big developments all over the area, the field of both lighting and transportation now also called for prompt attention. With regard to lighting, an important development was the decision to raise the voltage of the primary circuits of the distribution system from 1,000 to 2,000 volts and that of the secondary circuits from 50 to 100 volts. This change meant new transformers and meters

throughout the system . . . a man-size job which brought the men to their toes with extra and instant alertness. Work on the big change-over began a year after the formation of the B.C. Electric and was completed about the same time as "Buntzen Plant No. 1"—in 1903.

In all the homes of Vancouver and District already wired for electric lighting—and the population of the City was now estimated at 22,800 — the old Thomson-Houston sockets gave way to new lamps with Edison sockets, with a screw base like those still in use. The street arc lamps had by this time proved a great success in the United States, and now became an accepted feature of the Vancouver night scene also.

With B.C. Electric's emergence from its cradle days, and with the general recovery from the big depression of 1891-1896, the street cars were once again beginning to attract more customers. The resumption in the City's expansion set Vancouver people clamouring for a line down Robson Street and another one down Pender Street to Stanley Park. East end residents also petitioned for extensions, but the Directors were forced to go to the City Hall for a new franchise every time a new car line was needed—a long-winded procedure that did not help them in interesting capital in Vancouver.

The City Council, however, agreed in 1901 to the consolidation of several franchises, making matters much simpler for all concerned, with provision for all future street car extensions that might be necessary. The decision was a wise one, and no sooner had it been announced than mile after mile of the needed new tracks began to fan out from the City centre.

New street cars also appeared, and a year after the formation of B.C. Electric, open side cars made their debut in Vancouver, carrying bevies of local ladies and gentlemen in unconcealed glory at the dizzy speed of nearly ten miles an hour along the Stanley Park line to the band concerts.

New personnel also appeared. A year later, a vigorous young Toronto man, James Milne, was made General Super-

intendent of the system and Assistant to Johannes Buntzen. And the same year saw the appointment of J. B. Rannie as Traffic Superintendent.

Major structural improvements were also made – one of them being launched on February 24th, 1899, when the B.C. Electric submitted to the Vancouver Board of Works plans for a new car barn on Westminster Avenue, now Main Street.

In New Westminster the same stirring of progress was also colouring the city's history, and the year 1900 saw the opening of the Sapperton line.

Over on Vancouver Island the street railway was spreading out, in response to constant demands, into districts then very thinly settled. The Victoria population, which at the time of the B.C. Electric's formation in 1897 was 19,300, was rapidly growing . . . so rapidly that the areas along the street car lines, and the districts of both Oak Bay and Esquimalt, were soon built up and linked with the Capital – the fare each way between Victoria and Esquimalt being 15c, or 25c return.

The street cars themselves were small, single-truck affairs, with seats running face to face lengthwise. The implicit faith of the Islanders in the glories of their own climate was brought harshly home to the motormen and conductors of those cars – who had no protection of any kind from gales or rains, and after sunset had to rock grimly on into the night with nothing to light their way but inadequate coal-oil head lamps.

By the turn of the century, twenty street cars were operating in the various routes in Victoria–all of them of the single-truck forty-passenger type. And now the fare box system had also been started – a system made very necessary by the increased flow of passengers. Another result of this revival of prosperity was the building of new car barns in Victoria on Pembroke Street in 1902.

The Directors of the Company could now feel that in all three cities the growing public utility services under their control were at last being recognized for what they were –

great forces hard at work in the building of the country. The roots had been pruned. The ground for further expansion was on all sides being well cultivated.

Part of the expansion which lay before Horne-Payne and Barnard and the other Directors of the Company was the development of gas services.

In 1904, Horne-Payne, with Ernest Maes Harvey (who later became one of the London Directors, and was subsequently knighted in 1919 for his part in helping to complete the financial arrangements for the stabilization of the Austrian Empire) visited the old gas plant on Keefer Street at Columbia. As a result of that visit, recommendations were made that the gas company be acquired. The whole question of possible competition between gas and electricity services was thrashed out, and the same year (1904) a holding company, the Gas Investment Company Limited, was incorporated under English law, and acquired the Vancouver Gas Company, limited liability. A year later, it also purchased the Victoria Gas Company, Limited, thus bringing into the B.C. Electric orbit the company whose earliest record, in 1859, began this history.

The forty-five years that had elapsed since John T. Little awaited the old original gas equipment on its way round the Horn in those three sailing ships, had not apparently damped the ardour of the men who chose this type of public utility for their career.

I talked to friendly "Old Bill" Major, who literally grew up amidst the gas plants of the B.C. Electric. Looking at him today, I imagine that when he was a little boy, living in the old Keefer Street Gas Works, he must have been not only a very spirited youngster but quite probably a naughty one. His father, William Major, was Resident Gas Engineer —an old-timer who came out in 1863 after serving with the famous Gas, Light and Coke Company in England. Bill, the son — or more officially "William D." — is now a grey-haired, roundish-faced man with a twinkle in his eye, a tremendous amount of energy, and pretty nearly non-stop conversation.

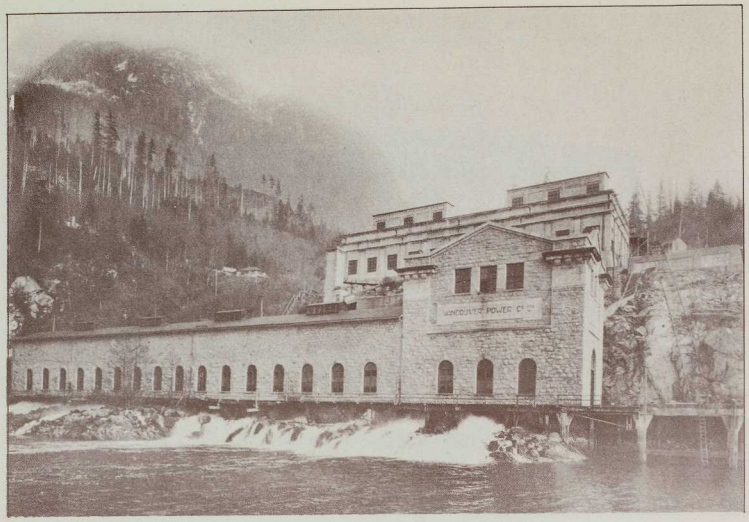
He joined the Company himself as a hand-stoker and water gas operator. In those early beginnings, retorts were stoked by hand. Cranes were an unheard-of luxury and the coal was wheeled up planks in wheelbarrows. Work was invariably *hard* work. I got the impression, not only from Bill Major, but also from another old-timer, James Smith, a dry-witted, keen-eyed Scotsman, that muscle power and horse power were the two main ingredients of the period. Every gas fitter had a horse and rig, and each fitter looked after his own horse—with a man in the Company's stable to superintend the whole. B.C. Electric was then running a much-admired two-decker stable, just south of Georgia Street. There came a day, alas, when the gas manager startled both horses and horse lovers by getting a new motorcar, and to add injury to equine insult, brought in a new ½-ton motor truck to haul coke! It was driven by a man called Charlie Brown, who could, and did, look down upon the teams of horses—as they heaved and hauled their heavy tar extractors about—with all the disdain of the new auto age!

I asked Bill Major what the men did in their spare time. It seems there wasn't much of it. His eyes glimmered, as he remembered swimming in the "hot water tank" at the bottom of Prior Street — into which flowed the warm condensate water from the boilers of the Union Street Steam Plant. As for the other leisure occupations of the day, "Well, there were some in those days who kept rabbits—white rabbits with pink eyes."

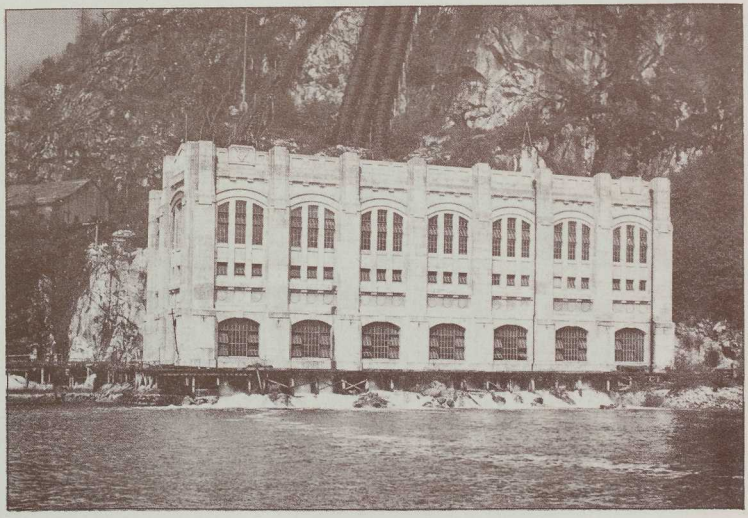
These sturdy men of the early days of Vancouver's gas project saw many changes. When taken over by the B.C. Electric, 45 million cubic feet of gas were being distributed annually, through forty miles of mains, to two thousand customers. 1905 saw the acquisition of another half-million cubic foot gas holder at Grandview. The whole original gas production plan was being improved and extended. Mechanical stoking of the retorts was introduced, and in 1906 water gas equipment was installed capable of manufacturing 1¼ million cubic feet per day. The same year

First bus to run in Vancouver, March 19, 1923. Civic and Company officials pose with the new equipment.

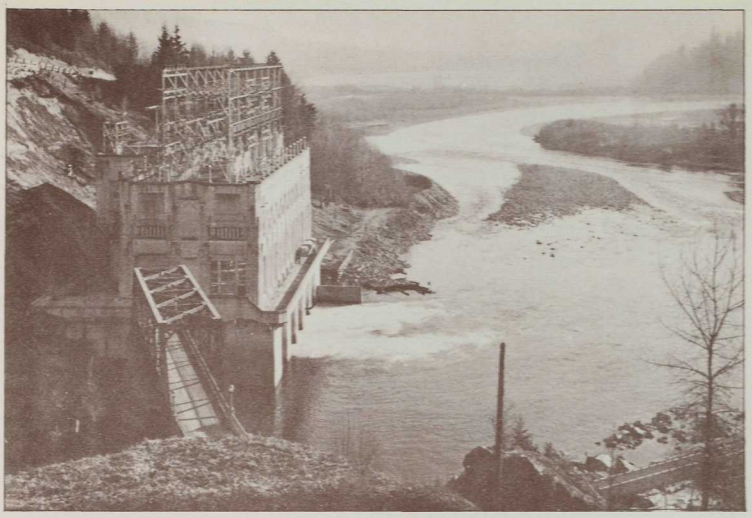
A B.C. Rapid Transit Company's bus running between Vancouver and New Westminster, 1924



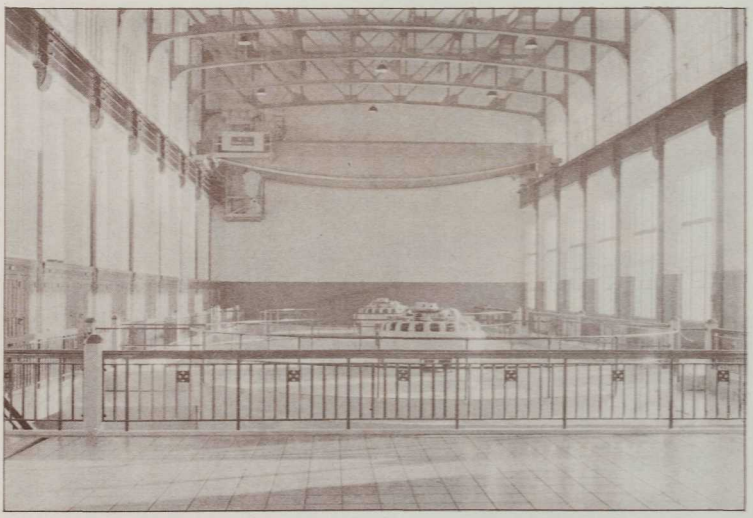
Lake Buntzen No. 1 Plant.



Lake Buntzen No. 2 Plant.

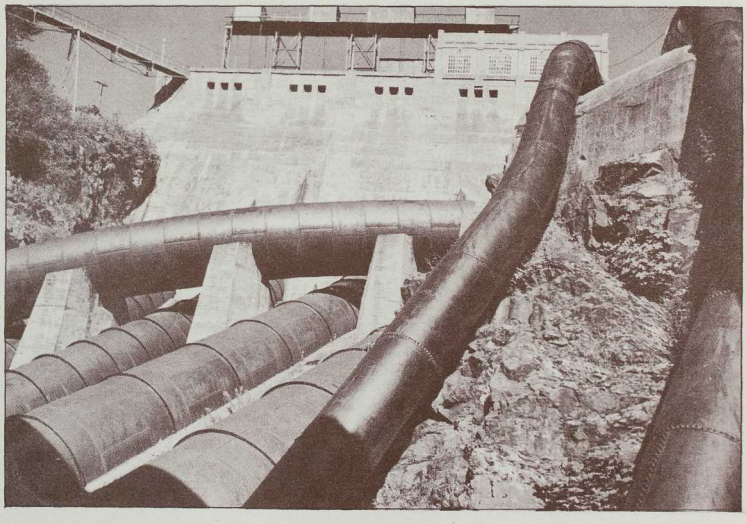


The Ruskin Plant.



Interior of the Ruskin Plant, main floor.

The Grandview substation, Vancouver.



Stave Falls dam and penstocks.

saw the installation of a new horizontal plant, purifier and holder, the new plant using seventy tons of coal per day. The price of oil was low and coal gas manufacturing equipment very rudimentary, but within five years the mileage of mains had doubled and doubled again in four years more. Another big change was the installation of a highly important Carburetted Water Gas plant, built by the Economic Construction Company in 1908 (by which time the miles of gas mains had risen to 60 and the number of gas consumers to 4,100).

All this great increase coincided with the first beginnings of a real estate boom in Vancouver in 1908. The feverish search for land and purchase of likely lots was now sweeping all over the southern Mainland of British Columbia. Lots were advertised right across the City. C. D. Rand, writing in the Daily Province for September 1st, 1908, remarks, "Unless I am very much mistaken, real estate men will have a very lively market. West End lots are being quietly bought up, and it is doubtful if there are twenty lots between Burrard Street and Stanley Park which can be purchased without paying a very considerable advance on the present asking price." Promising blocks along the "Cloverdale Tramlines," for instance, were offered for $75 an acre. New homes were springing up in all directions. And new homes meant new street cars. In October of the previous year the Mount Pleasant car barn had been opened.

More and more streets were pushing themselves further in all directions from the City centre. New suburban districts had been opened up in Victoria, Vancouver and around New Westminster, and into these new districts—sometimes ahead of them—went the B.C. Electric.

The vision of David Higgins, pioneer of the Victoria street car development, the dream of "bringing the country to the poor man and the poor man's children" was becoming a warmly-welcomed reality. Over in Victoria in 1905, the poor man's children too, were pleased to take the opportunity of joining in a great occasion on July 26th, 1905.

On that date the B.C. Electric took quite a different step forward—the first in its long history—towards the development of a purely cultural and social daily life for the great masses of the people. This new departure, considered quite revolutionary at the time, was the opening of the B.C. Electric Gorge Park—a green and leafy little stretch of land with the sea arm rippling in sunny silver and deepest shadow around a thousand mossy inlets, haunted by wild duck and innumerable creatures especially designed, or so it seemed, to intrigue the young heart. This pioneering move by the Company received such a genuine welcome that the report of the opening is here quoted in full from the Victoria *Daily Colonist* for Thursday, July 27th.

"WONDERFUL TRANSFORMATION IS WROUGHT BY STREET RAILWAY COMPANY: The opening of the B.C. Electric Railway Company's new park at the Gorge took place last evening with great eclat. The occasion will be long remembered in the history of Victoria as a celebration, as it were marking the parting of the ways between the old regime and the new.

"The successful completion of the first of the series of new departures which are to transform the somewhat stagnant summer evening life of the city complained of by tourists into a thing of movement and beauty. Of the ultimate success of this new venture on the part of the company everyone felt or said they felt assured, but no one ventured to predict the astounding alacrity with which the Victorian public responded to the call of progress and flocked in their thousands to see the new park.

"Last night the capacity of the company's rolling stock was taxed to the uttermost and car after car was filled to overflowing. Car after car succeeded in its place, nor did the strain relax until a happy crowd of about three and a half to four thousand persons were landed safely in a fairyland of sylvan beauty lit by countless electric lamps and enlivened by the strains of a good military band. Around the centre of attraction, the band stand, which itself bristled with points of electric light, the scene was difficult to briefly

describe. The effect of the electric lights cleverly arranged amongst the interlacing trees was one, the stagic excellence of which it would be hard to exaggerate, producing as it did a conception of depth and distance that was really and wonderfully artistic. The ubiquitous reporter wandering amongst the groups overheard the conversation of two evident old-timers: 'It's beautiful,' said one after a long silence. 'Beautiful," replied his friend, 'I call it wonderful. I feel as if it were all a dream.' Such indeed seemed the feeling of all, admiration mixed with wonder at what had been achieved in the space of three short weeks.

"The scene, viewed from across the placid waters of the Arm, was most striking and beautiful. Almost every small boat, launch and canoe in town, and they could be counted by the score with their human freight, were in evidence dotting the entire expanse of the water, while on the green sward immediately beyond the boats thousands of people passed to and fro under the innumerable electric lights. And as a background for all towered the sombre masses of the grove of pines."

Growth of more prosaic business in Victoria had by this time expanded enough to necessitate new Island headquarters, and it was in the same year—1905—that plans were prepared for new offices on Langley Street. Over in Vancouver, 1905, also saw the opening of the B.C. Electric's Kitsilano line from Granville Street to Greer's Beach, by agreement with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

"The Interurban" was also eating up the miles. That same year the "Vancouver and Lulu Island Railway" was leased from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and opened for service between Granville Bridge Station, via Kitsilano Railway Bridge, to Steveston. Until well on in 1906, the new Lulu Island line operated as a steam road, the service continuing to run out of the old C.P.R. Granville Station. At long last, the growing farm communities in the Fraser Delta, increasing year by year their rich yield from some of the richest earth in Canada, were thus being given the advantages of quick transport for themselves and their produce into the busy markets of Vancouver and New

Westminster. Down in that latter area it was in 1905 that the great new Fraser Bridge was opened — more and more Americans began to come North across the river to investigate and share in the new opportunities that were springing up in the southern Mainland of British Columbia. More and more Canadians were also travelling South into the United States territory to explore similar possibilities. The foundations had already been laid and were now being reinforced for intimate business friendship between the two countries. In this linking of North and South, the B.C. Electric was already playing a part which has a very definite place in the history of the North American continent.

In 1905 came also the beginning of the B.C. Electric developments on the North Shore. On August 16th of that year the Company was granted a franchise by the District of North Vancouver for the building of street car lines in the District. Construction started in August. And 1906 saw the extension of the light and power services to that area. North Vancouver was already becoming a residential district for numbers of enterprising citizens who were making the daily journey by ferry to Vancouver. Building was going on all the way up the hill from the ferry, mostly on or near to Lonsdale Avenue. Track was therefore laid along Lonsdale up to 12th Street. Plans were also made for a Capilano line. Delays, however, were numerous and it was not until September 3rd of 1906—Labor Day—that the street car service in North Vancouver was finally opened. Managing this North Vancouver office was a jovial Englishman who had come out to Canada—and to the B.C. Electric—at the turn of the century.

Still in the North Vancouver car barns is the motorman who drove the first street car up Lonsdale on that day—Bert Giffen. Giffen is an Ontario man, raised in Manitoba—and he speaks of the old days with quite an obvious touch of regret, for in 1906 there were but six men in the B.C. Electric's North Shore development, and there was a family feeling which was warmhearted and gratifying. Bert Giffen remembers the first North Vancouver street car coming over the inlet on a scow. He remembers, too, how the cars stopped

whenever and wherever they were waved for. And among other things he remembers the extra numbers of passengers coming in the fall of the year for the horse races, which were then run along Second Street from Lonsdale. Those trials of equestrian speed could hardly be considered, however, a fashionable racing event. Another North Vancouver old-timer, William Rogers, says that "anything that could run was considered a race horse."

Bill Rogers was a conductor on the first street car to go on the night shift—September 7th, 1906. He looks back down the long years with pride upon those stirrings of activity that he watched as the new little city of North Vancouver began to take shape before his eyes. It was not long, for instance, before the Lonsdale cars which had been running to 12th Street ran on the 21st, and soon to 25th, and soon again came the first regular hikers (nearly all men in those days, very few women seem to have braved the perils of the mountains!)

The westerly expansion of the North Shore brought about the opening of the Capilano line on September 10th, 1906. The men of the day were looking ahead. Sometimes they looked a little too far ahead — and, as far as that early equipment was concerned, over-estimated their own abilities. There was an instance when two of those early street cars attempted to tow up Lonsdale hill a Canadian Pacific Railway flat car, loaded with machinery for the old Western Corporation mill. The ambitious little cavalcade got as far as the City Hall (now the Post Office) when brakes, patience and ambition all gave out at the same time, so that street cars and machinery were deposited, safely, automatically, and without harming anybody, in the rising tide of Burrard Inlet.

The genial Bill Rogers in those early days of 1906 met one of British Columbia's first stenographers, a beautiful and sprightly girl called Edith Smith, and it wasn't long before they were married. Women in those days had still to gather considerable courage to invade the masculine realm of office administration. But a foundation was being laid

for all the successive generations of secretaries, stenographers and other feminine helpers, with their pads, their pencils, and their dreams, who would "take over" in the years to come.

In 1908 Manager Perry arrived to open his North Vancouver life history on December 2nd. He later wrote, "After an uneventful voyage I arrived at the ferry landings and soon found my way to the 'office.' There I greeted the office 'staff,'' Charlie Chislett. After this ceremony had been satisfactorily performed, the 'staff' inquired if I had any credentials, as he had received no official notice of my coming. My reply was, 'No, but I will soon get them,' and returned to Vancouver and secured from Mr. Hope the necessary authority. Back across the stormy main, up to the office, tacked up my authority, and at once commenced to dig in.

"And this is what I found: A street railway 'system' with five miles of track, three wee, dinky cars operating a half-hour service, and to celebrate my coming we carried 706 passengers that day."

Manager Perry also found that the Company at that time had 246 light and power consumers and that the city was illuminated at night by 50 street lights.

Work was increasing in other directions too. Traffic had already made necessary the double tracking of part of the Central Park line on the interurban. And it was now clear to the Directors that no longer could a survey be delayed on the route for another, and greater, interurban line . . . a line up the Fraser Valley.

The conception was a bold one, yet if a line could be driven to Chilliwack, 64 miles up the Valley, it might prove an inestimable boon to the growing farm communities then moving in substantial numbers into the district.

Another Company, The Vancouver Fraser Valley and Southern Railway Company, had been incorporated in 1906, and was acquired in 1907 by the B.C. Electric.

The first surveys were made along the Valley.

And the first 21 mile stretch—that part of the projected line presenting least difficulty—was actually built, completed and placed in operation 1910.

It was from then on that really strenuous effort began to push the line to Chilliwack. Simultaneously with the building of a branch line from Marpole to New Westminster by Canadian Pacific Railway Co. in 1909, construction gangs moved into camp at Abbotsford, a small agricultural community half-way between Cloverdale and Chilliwack. They set to work with an energy worthy of the older pioneers of the great country through which work was now moving. They had to contend also with pioneer-size obstacles. Solid rock had to be bored, dense forests had to be cut down, and mile after mile of muskeg had to be crossed. That muskeg pretty nearly wore out the patience of the men who fought it. Corrie Noble, a sunny-natured Scot from Glasgow, told me of the endless repeat job it was to put poles in the muskeg —poles which, during the night after their erection, would sink down and be found lying across the uncompleted line in the morning. The muskeg also had a voracious appetite for gravel—seemingly endless quantities of which were put in to make the bed ready for the new line. Nor were these the only difficulties. Not least of the handicaps sent to try the work gangs was a plague of caterpillars, which got into everything and "covered the line solid."

Through the heat of a record hot Valley summer, however, the men pushed on—men from the Old Country, men from Canada, men from the States, men of all types and histories, some even from the old nobility of Scotland, choosing to work in this way and with no questions asked. Dysentery struck through the summer heat at many of them, but people are good neighbors in the country, and there was fresh milk and fresh farm food as the work went on. And as compensation from work, there were crowded week-end journeys back to New Westminster on open flat cars every Saturday to see the famous lacrosse games which New Westminster was providing for enthusiasts every Saturday night. On the track went, past Sumas Lake—which was later reclaimed—past Sinclair and Yarrow and Woodruff,

past Lychman and Sardis, and finally into Chilliwack. And on October 3rd, 1910, beflagged and beribboned interurban cars of the very latest style and remarkable comfort carried the Premier, Sir Richard McBride, up the line to drive in the last spike.

Shortly before this achievement another epic journey had started out this time from Victoria. By 1908 it had become obvious in Vancouver Island that the power developed by the Goldstream plant would no longer suffice the growing community. Something much bigger in the way of water power would have to be found. Likely areas in the southern part of the Island were surveyed and at length planning began on a bold scheme of very great promise—but with obstacles which must have seemed to the planners almost insuperable.

It was decided to build a great new hydro-electric development at the mouth of the Jordan River, thirty-seven miles away from Victoria along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. And once the decision was made, the B.C Electric promptly incorporated a subsidiary — the Vancouver Island Power Company Limited — for the principal purpose of acquiring and developing other water power sites on Vancouver Island. To fulfil the Jordan River plan, however, a great deal of thought had to precede a great deal of energy.

It was a formidable barrier of rock and forest that confronted the first party of engineers on their arrival by tug from Victoria, in the summer of 1908. Near the mouth of the river the rugged band of men established their camp. It was to be a focal point for three years of ceaseless activity in the movement of men, supplies and machinery for the building and fitting of a power house close to the mouth of the river. It was the opening of a project that was to lead to the development of 41,750 h.p. and an expenditure of $5,000,000 in this part of the Island. Over on the Mainland during this year the original 20,000 voltage from Buntzen was stepped up to feel the full impetus of the new "boom" period. From all parts of Eastern Canada and from Great Britain, settlers were beginning to arrive in mounting numbers. On November 9th, 1909, a minor effect of this de-

velopment was the introduction in Vancouver of Settlers Tickets (10 for 50c) on the street cars serving the Hastings East line.

In 1909 the Great Northern pushed its way over the Creek into the City — to a station on Pender Street near Carrall Street. And an ocean development which affected all the Canadian West was the purchase of the famous Allan Line by the Canadian Pacific Railway during the year. Newly arrived immigrants were swelling the crowds of commuters travelling daily to and from their homes into the city, and to cope with the extra numbers, "pay-as-you-enter" cars went into service, though it was to be another twelve years before the small portable farebox carried by the conductors was finally abandoned.

Administration was suffering from growing pains too. It was in 1909 that the first plans were drawn up for the new Head Office Building at the corner of Carrall and Hastings Streets.

"Big business" had meantime been awaiting with interest another growth in the City's history, which culminated in the opening of the Granville Bridge on Labor Day, September 6, 1909. One of the Head Office Administration's tasks in that year was to devise a way not only of coping with the 15,000 people who would attend the opening ceremony, but also of arranging an official street car procession. The Governor General, His Excellency Earl Grey, made the opening speech and Lady Grey cut the red ribbon which opened the bridge to traffic. Immediately after the cutting of this ribbon, the B.C. Electric's open observation tram, "tastefully decorated" with flags and bunting, led a distinguished, if somewhat noisy, parade over the bridge and along the other side of it back again to the Hotel Vancouver, where the Governor General was staying during his visit.

It was with these significant improvements that Vancouver went forward into 1910.

And what of the year just ending? In this year the lines of the B.C. Electric had carried 39,727,014 passengers! Among other things, this was the era of the suffragettes. A note in

the *Daily Province* towards the end of the year reads: "Pomologically speaking, the imprisoned suffragettes might be classified as canned peaches." The world of the suffragettes was a world of many changes and innovations, advances and improvements. People was talking, for instance, not only of suffragettes, but of Home Rule and Tariff Reform. A newspaper heading of the times shouted: "The British People are Politically Mad!" and goes on to say, "The Tories are fighting for tariff reform and against Home Rule for Ireland, while the battle cry of the Liberals is 'People against Peers and the continuance of Free Trade.' " Scruples in 1910 were somewhat elastic. A real estate advertisement with sombre implications read: "Take advantage of the misfortunes of others." But Vancouver was warm of heart and kind of spirit. There had been for many years a genial coloured man down on English Bay, Joe Fortes, teaching all who wished to swim. He became a beloved personality. In December of 1910, citizens subscribed to a fund as a testimonial to this man, and to show him some symbol of affection.

But a serious and very important step had been taken during the year in another direction. After much bickering and argument, expressing of views and asserting of opposite views, a site had been selected on which to build a University. A Royal Commission had recommended that an area beside Point Grey be set aside for this purpose, and in 1910 Premier McBride inspected the site. The hard work of the long decades had built first a town and then a city, the streets had been laid to carry the people North, South, East and West. Trade was flowing briskly, settlers were arriving in a steady stream. Amidst the turbulence and the boisterous changes of the day, the citizens were turning towards the higher dignities. At last Vancouver was making plans for the building of a University in keeping with the vision of her pioneers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE beginning of 1911 found work on Vancouver Island's big hydro-electric scheme at Jordan River progressing smoothly and visibly. Men, machines and supplies were still making the difficult 7½-mile journey up across the rock and through the forest from "the Beach." Fast as it was, however, the pace was not fast enough! Increase in the use of power throughout the Victoria area was outstripping the entire Jordan River scheme. By 1911, the Company made a decision to install a second unit at the site, thereby doubling the capacity called for in the original plans.

Work on the Lake Buntzen development over on the mainland was now progressing very successfully. Plant No. 2 was now in construction, under the guidance of G.R.G. Conway, Chief Engineer, one of the most brilliant engineers who ever worked in Canada and later President of the Mexican Light & Power Co. Ltd., With an eye on the rapid growth of the "Interurban" on the Lower Mainland, the Directors had been giving much thought to the possibility of building another interurban line on Vancouver Island, to link Victoria —through the farms and "Country residences" of the south-western tip of Vancouver Island—to Deep Bay on the Saanich Peninsula. The route surveyed, though passing through some of the loveliest country in British Columbia, was a bad one. Had it extended to Sidney the whole story might have been different. But the men who acted on the surveyors' report in 1911 could not have foreseen the difficulties that lay ahead, nor could they have known that they were planning a line which would have to put up such a struggle for its existence—and finally succumb to circumstances.

Over on the Mainland, however, development was on surer ground. The street cars were by now playing a big part in the growth of Vancouver. Services were being extended and running schedules augmented. And on April 17, 1911, the first "owl cars" were introduced—on the Fairview, Pender, Kitsilano and Grandview lines. These owl cars started after midnight and the last run listed on the schedule was at 3:20 a.m. The "owl car" service was not so much a profitable one as a needed public service for certain night workers and other necessarily nocturnal travellers. The "owl car" crews of those days may have been obliged to see life in the dark, but they certainly saw it with considerable clarity. I have talked to some old-timers whose work carried them through that colourful period. As far as the owl time tables are concerned, they pointed out that immediately after midnight fares became double (and so, incidentally, did speeds). Fierce and stubborn arguments were apt to rise between conductors and passengers concerning the question as to whether they had boarded the car a few seconds before midnight or a few seconds after it. Clocks were not always reliable and neither were tempers. And since the bulk of Vancouver citizens appear to have been safely asleep in bed by ten o'clock at night, only night workers and the wicked stayed up till after midnight. The "wicked," as a rule, chose other forms of transport, but there were several cases of night hold-ups, chasings-down-the-street, and so on, and I heard one happy tale of a night duty policeman who found it so difficult to keep awake on his beat that just in case he fell asleep, a secret compact with an "owl car" motorman was made, to tap him on the shoulder every time the car came round, to ensure that he would be awake by the time the Sergeant appeared.

The year 1911 saw no less than 234 miles of track in service all over the Company's territories. Incredible things used to happen in the street car world of the period. John Macdonald (who, despite the fact that he is heavily built and hefty, must have been a sort of fairy godfather of the car barns) told some quaint stories. And he should know. This genial old Scotsman joined the Company in 1905, after working in the original Hastings Mill. John Baldwin, another

early street car man, and Harold Till, now Traffic Superintendent, who started with the "B.C. Electric" on July 8th, 1911, as a conductor on the City lines—also added some nostalgic comments.

After talking to these men who nursed the street cars through their heyday, I came away with numerous impressions of the problems they had to deal with.

Slightly inebriated gentlemen—not sufficiently so to warrant expulsion—would get on a street car and go round and round the loops with no sense of time, little sense of direction, and a happy oblivion as regards destination. Other citizens apt to go travelling round the tracks were unfortunate babies and small children, left by their trusting mothers with the conductor to be put off at a certain place—infants who, after a change of conductors en route, could not say where they were going and could only scream their heads off up and down the car tracks, until the police, the public, and the harassed conductors found some way of reuniting them to their families. Speaking of children, pre-World War 1 youngsters, particularly at Hallowe'en, were addicted to putting imitation bodies on the line in the moonlight. They were mostly rags and straw but they were apt to give unexpected shocks to both passengers and crews travelling late at night. One child tied a street car to the fence—with the result that both street car and fence were well on their way down town before the neighborhood woke up to the fact. It was also found in practice that motormen and conductors had, alas, a hazy memory for faces. Passengers were consequently identified, when it came to giving them their change, by the neckties they were wearing (if they were men) and by the hats they were wearing (if they were women). Painful situations were therefore apt to develop between two women wearing red hats or two men wearing striped neckties of similar colours. There were other embarrassing incidents in which passengers bending over the fare box had dropped their dentures with their tickets, and since the keys for these fare-boxes were at Head Office, red-faced people in no mood or anatomical condition to talk, had waited until the car finished its run and hurried, complete with fare box and con-

ductor, to the Head Office for relief. Is it any wonder that the conductors themselves sometimes became a little imaginative. One of them had a habit, when the car was without passengers, of climbing outside the back window of his car, getting up on the roof and creeping forward over the top to dip his head down in front of the motorman at the other end in order to call "Boo!"

An innovation of the year 1911 was the hobble-skirt car, only one of which was purchased. It had a three-inch step off the ground—and when seen in New York, was the latest car of its kind. It cost $15,000—and ran for two days only! It was found, too late, that Vancouver's streets were too lumpy, so it was retired with shame and sorrow to the car barns and was finally sold for $50! The new car did not warrant any repeat orders!

Plans were now pretty well advanced for the erection of the new Carrall Street Head Office Building, and a start was made on the demolition of the old one. During this move, the Head Office staff moved to the New Holden Building where over-congestion did not help matters, despite the fact that it was only temporary. Another centre of activities was also now ready to take its place in the Company's service—the $60,000 New Westminster Station building.

And structural changes were not the only ones being considered. The Directors of the Company in 1911 were: R. M. Horne-Payne, Blundell Brown, Harold Brown, J. Buntzen, E. I. Evan Thomas, E. Maes Harvey, and G. P. Norton. In 1911 the Columbia Estate Company Limited was incorporated as a subsidiary under British Columbia law to hold real estate and took over the St. Nicholas Estate Company, an English real estate holding company. The new Columbia Estate Company was transferred to the Gas Investment Company on August 21st, 1911.

And another financial development occurring in this year was the incorporation of the British Columbia Gas Company Limited by the "B.C. Electric." It was under this new Company that gas mains were laid in Point Grey, Burnaby and South Vancouver, North Vancouver, Hastings Town-

site and D.L. 301 (then not included within the area covered by the Vancouver Gas Company franchise). This Company was transferred to the Gas Investment Company two years later.

The British Columbia directors now brought in from New York, with the best will in the world, three new key men to effect what was then considered a very necessary speed-up and general tightening of management. These men were Samuel Thompson (a former Canadian), Mechanical Superintendent, James A. Roosevelt, Manager of Transportation (a nephew of the famous Theodore Roosevelt) and James Hilton, Traffic Superintendent. The three men studied the problem in front of them, drew up plans for structural changes, and proceeded to put them into effect. No organization in the world, however, if it is to be built by the help of men with ambition, can be entirely free from human friction. It is, in fact, this question of individual conflict which so very often mothers some new and progressive step forward.

The advent of the three New Yorkers caused trouble. All did a strenuous job of work according to their own viewpoint—but the viewpoints clashed. Dissatisfaction and dissension grew among the men of the Company upon whose shoulders fell the carrying out of orders from the new triple source. In the face of this situation, James Roosevelt and Samuel Thompson both returned to the quicker tempo of the world they had left. James Hilton alone remained, as Traffic Superintendent.

The Company was also suffering some bitter lessons in other directions. There were at this period two very unpleasant accidents — one of which was the Lakeview catastrophe. On the Central Park Line a carload of lumber on the eastbound track was being switched at Nanaimo Road. It ran downhill and crashed into a passenger train bound for New Westminster. The lumber cut right through the passenger car and there were several fatalities, with many injured.

On November 4, 1911, five freight cars also ran away on 12th Street hill, going into New Westminster. The cars piled

up after turning on what is now Columbia Street. By some miracle, Motorman Albert Mercer crawled out of his demolished cab unhurt, but Conductor Cooper was killed on the spot. Brakemen Gracey and Sincock jumped clear, and so escaped serious injury.

With the number of journeys completed and the growing crowds of passengers, it speaks well, however, for the men of the "B.C. Electric" of the time that accidents were so few and so far between. This was a testing period. It was a proving time for all the widening departments under the "B.C. Electric's" control, and success in matters of internal cohesion was not won without experiences of external bitterness. On December 15, 1911, the Point Grey service, for instance, had to be abandoned after a dispute with the Point Grey Council about the terms of the previously acquired Franchise. The Sasamat line was completely withdrawn and the Shaughnessy line cut at 16th Avenue. This clash of opinion, however, dwindles to small proportions indeed in the face of the over-all picture of the Company's development at that period.

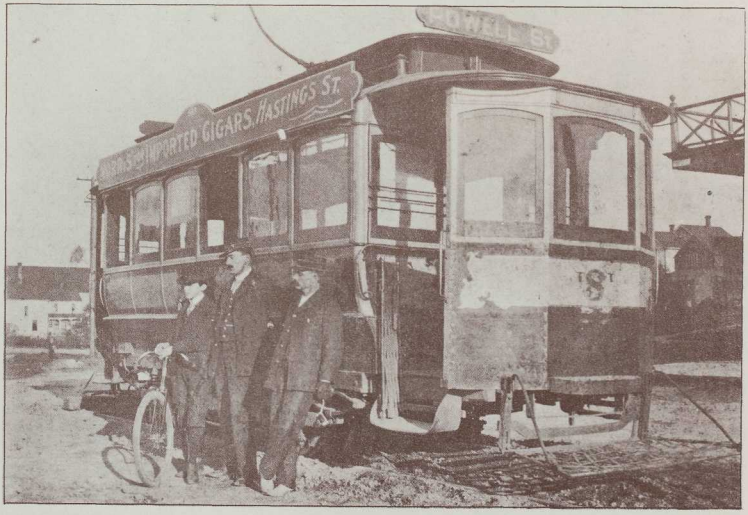
To the great chain of the interurban system . . . first the Central Park line, then the Lulu Island Line, next the Fraser Valley line . . . was now added, in 1911, the Burnaby Lake Line, to serve the growing number of new homes between Vancouver and the Fraser. The new line, 14.7 miles in extent, was opened on June 12, 1911.

Traffic over the whole interurban system was now growing smoothly and steadily. In 1912 no fewer than 65,581,267 passenger journeys were made on all the Company's lines. And with the spreading of the service came also a stepping-up of staff. Men, and a few women, from all over Canada were now coming into the Company's service in Vancouver, New Westminster and also in Victoria. To bring these men and women together, a great two-day picnic was arranged, the first Staff Picnic, on July 24th and 25th, 1912, different sections of the organization releasing personnel to attend the picnic on one of those two days. Says the Vancouver *Province* on July 24th:

Columbia Street, New Westminster, after the fire of 1898.

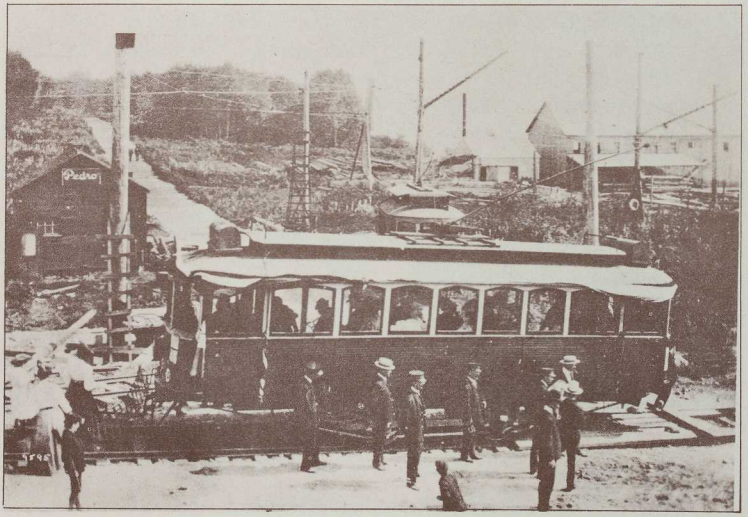
The original B.C. Electric office and interurban depot building in New Westminster, erected 1899.

The original Carrall Street Building, offices and depot, Vancouver.

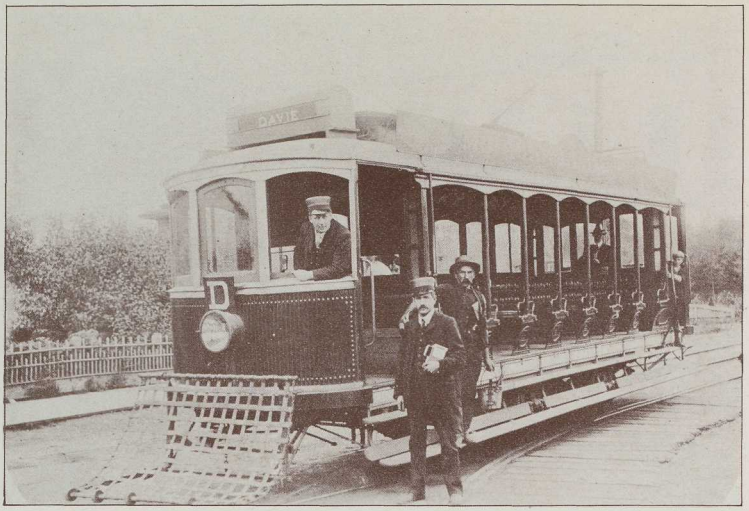


One of the old timers, car No. 8, on the Powell Street run. Motorman was G. Lenfesty, leaning against car, with J. C. Barton, conductor.

Flat cars were used to carry eager lacrosse fans from Vancouver to New Westminster. . . . leaving Hastings and Carrall Streets.



The first street car in North Vancouver, September, 1906.



One of the open-side street cars in Vancouver, 1903, at the Georgia Street entrance to Stanley Park.

Trial run of the first stepless car, Vancouver, March 18, 1913.

"There are still a few people on the city streets who enquire why the Canadian ensign is flying on the street cars today. Many people can supply the answer: The B.C. Electric Railway employees are holding the greatest picnic that ever was held in this city. They are picnicking at Hastings Park.

"The arrangements for the success of the two days' picnic are on a most comprehensive scale. In the dining-room provision has been made for seating and dining large numbers. That the children should form a large and perhaps the most important wing of a picnic party is a fact which those responsible for the arrangements have recognized. Therefore the calliope, the merry-go-round and the coaster."

In spite of the merry-go-round and the coaster, however; in spite of the general friendliness of this big concourse, the experiment of a general all-section picnic was never repeated. "B.C. Electric" was already getting too big to collect all its staffs for a social gatherings of this kind. In later years sectional staff picnics were organized by different groups within the Company's structure, and any joy of unity that may have been lost was more than made up for in enthusiasm within the smaller groups. A Social Club was also opened in this crowded year—and made as much of an impression with its first ladies night as did the complete staff picnic which had brought people in from all over the Province.

As for working environment, at least some members of the staff could now breathe more freely. The new $400,000 Head Office Building at Carrall and Hastings was completed and occupied. Ed. Lytle, an enthusiastic Northern Irishman who joined the Company in 1912, remembers carrying heavy furniture over from the Holden Building and stopping every now and then to regain breath with the only consolation that at long last, the Head Office Staff would have room to turn and to move about its lawful occasions.

Those minds absorbed in a greater vision had been active too. The men in charge of hydro-electric development had by this time been looking further afield, and still further into the future. On March 12th, 1912, the holding com-

pany—the Vancouver Power Company—acquired the Burrard Power Company, Limited, which had been incorporated six years previously for the purpose of developing power from the waters of Alouette Lake. The surface of this Lake was 370 feet above tidewater and would present in the future, excellent opportunities for the construction of a dam, which the promoters planned as part of a project carrying water to a power house to be built some miles down the Alouette River. Construction of this plant, however, was merely an investment in the future. No actual work was yet begun. Another step forward was now taken, however, in the power already existing.

In 1912, the big power house at Jordan River on Vancouver Island, with its two generating units of 5,500 h.p. each was completed. And for 45 miles along the coast, through virgin forest (which entailed a prodigious effort in both locating and clearing the right of way) the high tension transmission line to Victoria had been completed. Before the end of the year the first electric power from the Jordan River plant was transmitted to the Capital. Yet despite the success of this first completed stage of the big Jordan River undertaking, power, and plenty of it, was now so vital to the Company that no risks of breakdown or stoppage could be taken. In case, therefore, of trouble on the long transmission line between Jordan River and the substation in Victoria, it was thought wise to make definite provision for auxiliary power.

Beside the tranquil inlet of Brentwood Bay on the Saanich Peninsula, near to the new Vancouver Island Interurban line to Deep Bay, the "B.C. Electric" now erected a steam stand-by plant as an auxiliary. The site was chosen because of its frontage along tidewater—permitting the direct delivery of vital oil by sea, and giving the plant plenty of water for condensing purposes. With that eye to the future which all the Company's planners and builders were now acquiring, space was provided in the 1912 power house for two additional complete units should they be required in later years. This new plant was to be brought into operation only when power from Jordan River was for any reason not available.

Owing to the difference, however, between the high-water periods (the latter sometimes lasting over a period of many months) the storage capacity of the Jordan River dams was unable to rise to the demands made upon it. This meant a vital need for the conservation of the stored water throughout the Summer months—a need met by "balancing" Brentwood Bay with the Jordan River plant, often for months at a time. The new Brentwood Bay plant, therefore, which was started and completed in the same year, lost its identity almost immediatley as a stand-by plant, and became an integral part of the whole scheme of power development on Vancouver Island.

Over on the mainland, gangs of men were now going out to complete the double tracking of the Lulu Island Interurban Line between Vancouver and Marpole. The south bank of False Creek was given new impetus as a home building area with the opening, by the Duke of Connaught, of the Cambie Street Bridge in the summer of 1912. Princess Pat accompanied him and the city was much taken with the charming Princess.

Passengers on the Vancouver street cars observed in June a new "two-punch transfer" going into effect, and also found, just before Christmas, a new system of electrical signal buzzers to enable them to signal, for the first time, to the motorman, as well as to the conductor—a new and exciting sort of temptation which the Vancouver children found it so hard to resist that harsh words and childish squeals punctuated many a stopping place through the Christmas rush.

In no corner of the British Empire was Christmas more faithfully observed than on Vancouver Island and many of the farms and country houses that were springing up within a few miles radius of the Capital were being copied from their English originals. It was through an area rich in these facsimiles from the "Old Country" that the Saanich Interurban line ran its first train on June 18, 1913. Again, the last spike, before this eventful journey could be opened to the public, was driven by the popular Prime Minister, Sir Richard McBride. This 24-mile strip of line began its eleven year history on a fine summer day under the best possible

auspices. One of the builders of that history, another old-timer named Frank Pickin, who became Superintendent of the Saanich Interrurban line, told me that one day early in 1914 the passengers on this line were tactfully questioned as to the countries of their origin. Roughly 300 people travelled on that day. It was found that 295 of them were folks from the "Old Country," mostly English and Scottish. Only five had been born in Canada!

The summer of '13 gave the motormen and conductors of the mainland a new Social Club of their own at the Prior Street Depot—a pleasant place where they could continue the jovial rivalries of the day in an atmosphere of billiards or cards. Not by any means least of the facilities were a gymnasium which, I am assured on good authority, was very popular, though truth to tell, the comfortably rounded figures of most of the old-timers do not bespeak a very energetic youth in the Prior Street gym. Those street car crews had just been presented, on January 1st, 1913, with new transportation badges, which they added with pride to uniforms that had already become familiar symbols during over twenty years of public service.

The whole traffic department at this time was, however, having its ups and downs—especially its "downs." The traffic department of the time was suffering from the difficulties of a dual management, that of J. B. Rannie and James Hilton. Both Rannie and Hilton (who, it will be remembered, came out from New York with James Roosevelt and Samuel Thompson) were extremely energetic men. They had decided views. The experiment had been made to prevent any overlapping of duty, but it resulted in far too many people in the Traffic Department of the Company's work not knowing who they were working for, with the resulting dissatisfaction which only the Company's own good faith, and individual high spirits kept from any further unfortunate developments.

Another significant change occurred in the Company's management at this time. R. Henry Sperling (who had done yeoman service with the Company since its inauguration in 1897) became a Director of the "B.C. Electric" and into his place, stepped one of the most esteemed men, whose name

has often been associated with the "B.C. Electric" story. The new General Manager was George Kidd.

George Kidd first secured his job with the "B.C. Electric" by answering an advertisement in a London newspaper in 1907. For four years he worked with the Company's staff in London, and came out as comptroller in 1911. He shared some of the driving energy which had flowed through the activities of Robert Horne-Payne in laying the Company's foundations, and he also brought to his job a tremendous fellow-feeling and a compassionate understanding of the problems of the great and the little men around him. George Kidd was destined for far places and great achievements.

These "achievements" began to take shape around him as he accepted his appointment as General Manager on May 6th, 1914.

And it was at this time and tide in the Company's affairs that a new consolidation of the great lighting services was affected. For nine years the distributing facilities in the Vancouver area—both A.C. for light and power, and D.C. for traction—had been centred in and radiated from a central substation on Main Strret, adjoining the Barnard Street Steam Plant. This station was now very much enlarged and completely re-arranged, and simultaneously with the changes, two new substations were built—one on Earl's Road and one on Haro Street, to improve distribution facilities generally. The use of electricity for lighting, traction and power can well be gauged by the total output of kilowatt hours for 1913, a figure no less than 213,157,899. During that year there were only ten minutes of total power interruptions in the "B.C. Electric" mainland system (exclusive of the Fraser Valley) and the number of light and power customers had risen to 51,133 . . . a fact which speaks well for Manager "Charlie" Rummell, the kindly Wisconsin man who had joined the Company before the turn of the century and whose life was yet another long record of devoted service.

The year 1914, one of the most momentous in the world's history, had opened with the Company consolidating the gains it had made in the past years, stepping still further

forward, over-coming yet further obstacles, drawing closer together in its corporate life, looking yet further afield towards its wider destiny. An appointment was made which brought to the forefront a brilliant man who had been quietly working his way through the ranks of the electrical world's busiest men of action. This man was William George Murrin.

"W.G." as he became affectionately known to the whole vast organization, had by this time already begun to make the force of his individuality felt among his fellows. "W.G." was an Englishman, with the sturdy beginnings of the Royal Navy School, Greenwich, behind him. He had started his electrical career as early as 1903, with the City of London Electric Lighting Company, afterwards becoming Works Manager of the London United Tramways Company. In 1913 he was chosen by Horne-Payne, still the redoubtable chairman of the "B.C. Electric" in London, and the other London Directors, to be sent out to British Columbia as Mechanical Superintendent. In 1914 his clear-sighted, forthright, downright conduct of the affairs within his widening world won him the appointment as general Superintendent in charge of the City and suburban transportation departments, in addition to the Company's Mechanical Department.

"W.G." was a man of great administrative stature. In the new job he found scope to match his promise, and little by little there began to radiate from him those currents of positive, powerful, almost aggressive confidence from which the Company was to derive so much of its motive power in the years ahead.

And the Company was to need them. On August 4th, with pitifully little warning, the Empire went to war and Canada sounded from Atlantic to Pacific her stirring call to arms.

The "B.C. Electric," on the verge of so many developments, had now, in common with corporations all over the continent, to alter its plans. Vancouver, 8,000 miles from the scene of battle, went to war. In Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster, men who had joined the Company years

before—or a few months before, or a few days before—left it again for training camp and France.

A wonderful spirit dominated and inspired these men. Typical of all of them was Freddie Glover . . . who left his desk as Executive Assistant to General Manager Kidd and was so determined to get into the fighting that he took several years off his "official" age in order to join the famous Seaforth Highlanders, then bound for France.

Glover, it seems, had quite a capacity for getting into historical arguments—he was in the Winnipeg Rifles, and saw the Riel Rebellion.

The older men took up the tools the young men left behind them. And it was brought home to them that light, transportation, power, were needed more than ever, so that the first year of the first world war still saw active hands completing many of the more vital tasks which the Company had earlier set itself.

Over on Vancouver Island, the Jordan River power house, completed only two years earlier, was rushed into enlargement to accommodate, first two extra generating units, then three. It was also in this significant year that those left of the men working seven miles up above the mouth of the river, finished their work on the huge storage and diversion dam. The dam could then divert the waters of the river and store it during flood periods in order to equalize the flow of water during the "low water" periods of the river. The men and women of Vancouver Island could, from now on, and for some of the critical years to come, be assured of the light and power that now more than ever they were needing.

Late in 1915, came the first signs of an altogether different scourge in the Island and Lower Mainland. On to the streets of the North American continent, up from San Francisco, Portland, Seattle surged an epidemic of "jitneys." These overloaded "jalopies" made their appearance all over Vancouver. They operated on regular routes which could, however, be changed merely by the changing of a destination card or ticket, if suitable numbers of passengers did

not show up. They cut heavy inroads into the street car traffic by charging at first 5c, and later 10c, for passenger fares to all parts of town. They were nearly always old cars run to death, and forever breaking down. Their drivers were a gang of happy-go-lucky or unhappy-go-nowhere men, as the case might be. Their hours were as elastic as their scruples, yet while they were the butt of everybody's derision there seems to have been a great incentive among the ordinary rank and file of Vancouver citizens to get into a jitney at all costs. As a jingle of the period by Aubrey Goodall sings:

For a nickel or a dime
You can cheat old Father Time,
and be switched with speed incredible
And half an hour to spare,
Over snags and stones and stumps
In rebounding breathless bumps,
To arrive in playful pirouette
With punctures past repair.

The jitneys were to pursue their piratical course for some years. In 1915, there was a different kind of war to be considered. And there were also other matters of local moment now unfolding. August 27th saw the arrival of the first transcontinental train of the Canadian Northern Railway, later known as the Canadian National. The President, Sir William McKenzie, expressed his satisfaction on the completion of the trip and said that for the time being it was their intention to come into Vancouver over the rails of the Great Northern.

In the month following, on September 30th, the University of British Columbia at last opened its doors in a group of low buildings on Willow Street. This was a "temporary" measure, but at least it was a beginning. It was not until some years later that work was even commenced on buildings in the University site proper on Provincial Crown Lands adjoining Point Grey.

Despite the war, the city could manage to struggle on with the building of its first grain elevator, and other minor

changes came along. During the year the City speed By-laws were amended to permit street cars to travel up to 16 miles per hour. On October 12th, 1916, the general public received for the first time "B.C. Electric" car schedule booklets.

A new hand was now playing its part in the maintenance of those schedules—that of W. H. Dinsmore. Dinsmore entered the "B.C. Electric" with the turn of the century in 1901. He was a shrewd, pleasant and strangely benevolent man, quieter than most, who rose from his job as a conductor to that of inspector, then to Chief Inspector and at last, in 1916, to Traffic Superintendent, one of the most important positions in the Company's activities.

This was the year when another little friendly link between the Company and the people it served was forged. In April there appeared on the streetcars for the first time the chatty little *Buzzer*, a small folded leaflet on street car events and aspects of "B.C. Electric's" life. The *Buzzer* was destined to become a gay and eagerly looked for event in the lives of countless thousands of travelling British Columbians and their visitors.

By 1917, with the war absorbing more and more of the younger and more vigorous men of the Company's staff, an older and slower type of man was being forced into the Company's service. There was neither the possibility nor the energy, now, for great changes. The number of gas customers, and light and power customers, after rising rapidly for so many years, now became static. Freight tonnage, however, both on the Mainland and Island lines showed an increase of over 100,000 tons for the year. Passenger traffic remained about the same. Alterations were confined mostly to alterations of name, such as that which occurred up the Fraser when the District north of the river, previously known as Eburne, became changed to Marpole, and the district south of the river was renamed Eburne.

On April 3rd, 1917, the United States joined the war, an event greeted by the Canadian press with undisguised relief. The *Vancouver Sun* commented editorially: "In

Canada . . . the true significance of the participation of the great republic is deeply appreciated, and inexpressible joy will be felt in this country at the decision of the American people."

The people at home were doing their best, in the words of the most popular song, to "Keep the Home Fire Burning." There were few of them not closely affected by events on the far-off battlefield. Perhaps it was for this reason that they drew closer to each other.

Even the greater unity did not prevent troubles at home, however. On June 13th, 1917, there started an 8-day strike for higher wages, affecting all street car men. The Company agreed on an increase when the City of Vancouver, in turn, agreed to investigate the jitney situation. This investigation was conducted by Dr. Adam Shortt, the eminent Canadian economist.

Meantime life within the Company was becoming more and more closely knit. It was at this period in the Company's history, for instance, that the old Social Club blossomed out into a full-grown Office Employees Association. And here, within the framework of this new association was scope, at last, to deal more intricately, yet still collectively, with all the manifold problems of the office staff. In this period, then, were laid the foundations for the pension scheme, the health plan, home building, organization and other aspects of corporate life which later became a part and parcel of life within the "B.C. Electric." By 1918 one of the factors helping towards a better understanding between the different sections of the B.C. Electric staff was the new *Employees Magazine*.

This magazine, destined to become a community voice in thousands of square miles of Canadian territory, first saw the light of day in April, 1918, and the first issue was a strange mixture of over-conscious dignity and colloquial high spirits. The first editorial reads in part, "The need of a medium of communication between the numerous employees and departments of the Company was voiced first in the executive of the Office Association. The suggestion was later placed before the Management of the Company

and fully approved, with the result that this medium has been placed at the disposal of the employees by the Company, in which to print news and exchange views on current affairs about the Company." Yet two pages earlier, in referring to the New Westminster-Vancouver Interurban, we find, "This line now carries a daily average of 6,000 passengers. Going some, what?"

The magazine brings for the first time the field of sport into this history. It describes the opening, on March 8th, of a Company tennis club, with A. C. Eddy as Chairman, and W. C. Murrin, A. Vilstrup among the Committee. A quaint note was also inserted in the magazine to the effect that "under the direction of Mr. F. C. Potts another enjoyable social was held in the Club Rooms on Saturday night, March 16th. In spite of its being bath night there was a good turn out."

More serious problems, however, began to occupy the minds of the men of the "B.C. Electric," particularly those associated with all the street car developments. Jitney competition was at its worst, and faster speeds had done nothing to check the inroads that the "pirate" jitney was making into the business. Despite the settlement of the 1917 strike, dissatisfaction with wages again began to be expressed all over the Company's system, a dissatisfaction which the Company could not meet if fares were to remain the same and if the jitney competition was to remain unchecked. The position drew to a stalemate. By the end of June, 1918, the position had become critical. On the 2nd of July the men went on strike.

The strike included all employees—motormen, conductors and barn staffs in Vancouver, New Westminster and Victoria. On hundreds of miles of tracks no car appeared—and only the Fraser Valley line and the Lulu Island line still operated.

A shout of dismay went up from the local papers. A conciliation board was set up under the Honourable Mr. Justice Macdonald, but both sides stood firm. The *Vancouver Sun*'s headlines illustrate the deadlock: "Strikers Will Accept no Compromise, and Adhere to Demands" and "Com-

pany's Staff is Operating Service and Unable to Attend Proposed Conference." A letter from George Kidd to the Hon. Mr. Justice Macdonald reads in part, "any interference in service of our light and power department would so seriously jeopardize the public interests that we consider our first duty is to maintain that supply of light and power which is essential to the hospitals, the insane asylums . . . military establishments, munition works, etc." The tramless days dragged on. Commuters had to walk to work or find some other means of transport. For the first time, however, they realized the full value of the street car system which they had by now come only too readily to take for granted.

Strong words were expressed on both sides, but the case finally came before an arbitration board. This board, after debating the matter in noisy discussion, goaded by pin pricks from the public and the press, as well as sledge-hammer blows from both employees and Company, gave a majority decision in favor of the Company. The men, who had agreed to the arbitration board, now refused to accept its award.

From over in Victoria, the Provincial Government revealed its powerful hand. Dr. Adam Shortt, the Commissioner who had been making a full investigation of the economic conditions and operations of the undertaking—with especial reference to the possibility of the street car service being maintained in competition with the jitneys issued his findings. Those findings were:

1. That efficient street car service cannot be maintained under conditions which permit competition from "jitneys" or public automobile service.

2. That operation of one man cars be given a fair trial.

As a result of the findings, jitneys were abolished, and an increase of 1 cent in the street car fare was authorized. This permitted, at least an increase in wages, which was immediately granted to the street railway and electrical workers. And on July 11, nine days after it started, the men went back to work. The incident was now considered closed and it was felt generally that a foundation had been laid for deep, all-

round satisfaction, as well as fuller, healthier growth in the Company's service. The new *Employees Magazine* could not resist a parting shot: "Having been accused by the public," it writes, "of starting the strike wilfully and with malicious intent, the Company daily expected to be charged with having caused the dry summer, the Russian Revolution, the San Francisco earthquake, the present war, and the ukelele epidemic."

Shortly after the end of the strike came also the end of the Great War. On November 11th, Armistice Day, the world, with an audible gasp of relief, gave itself up to a day's unparalleled rejoicing. Vancouver daily newspapers headlined "Downtown Streets Maelstrom of Laughing, Jubilant, Flag-bedecked Humanity — Every Variety of Noise-making Apparatus Brought into Play — Most Extraordinary Scenes in City History."

After four years of bitter warfare, Canada, in common with her fighting allies, could again turn her attention to the things of peace. The plans that had lain in the drawers and and on the shelves could be taken out again. The men in the mud-filled trenches of Flanders could think again of Capilano on a May morning. The Company was indeed waiting for them, but more importantly, so were their wives, their sweethearts and their families.

And what of those who did not return? George Kidd, one among many, gave a dinner in May of 1919, to the returned soldiers of the "B.C. Electric." At the end of the dinner a lonely figure with a bugle rose to sound a final "Last Post" for the conductors and the motormen, the young workers and the older workers, who had made on the fields of France and Belgium their final contribution to the glory of Canada.

The home fires had been kept burning.

Recovery after the war was slow, slower than most people had imagined possible, but it was, in the long run, very sure. Steps were taken throughout the Dominion to help that recovery, to assist the wheels of commerce and the tireless ploughers. One of these measures was the introduction on March 31st, 1919, of Daylight Saving. That there was

much argument in connection with this innovation is evidenced in the *Vancouver Sun*'s editorial comment: "Parliament is probably a little surprised at the unanimity and vigor of the sentiment displayed in favor of turning the clock ahead in town and cities. The situation has developed into what our American neighbors used to describe as an 'irrepressible conflict' in which there is no chance for compromise, and one side has to take a beating."

Another introduction was the eight-hour day, which, after considerable discussion came into effect on the Company's street car lines in September. Working conditions, however, brought their own headaches during the summer. On July 5th there broke out a "Sympathy Strike" in support of a general strike in Winnipeg. The strike "petered out" as the days went on . . . but the hold-up had lasted a very damaging twenty-five days by the time the strike was over. By August the whole Company was getting down to a peace time basis of work and play again. Towards the end of that month, the men employed in the Gas Department of the Company, possibly feeling that they had not received their due share of attention, held a monster picnic.

I had a chat with Tom Hayton, one of the Gas old-timers who was at that picnic. Tom is a Westmoreland man, who looks so much like the usual representations of John Bull that he could double for him any time, has been working with the Company ever since 1908, two hours after his arrival in the City. Tom won the tug-of-war and 14 pounds of sugar. It must have been quite a picnic, to be remembered through so many busy years.

In September, British Columbia was putting on its best bib and tucker for the visit of the Prince of Wales, and George Kidd and Superintendents Murrin and Dinsmore were having their work cut out to draw up plans for serving and helping the large crowds expected. That they did so successfully is obvious from the accounts of the visit in the local papers. In the evening, "H.R.H." was guest of honour at a great ball held in the Arena, and stepped "upon the floor with Mrs. R. R. Gale, wife of the Mayor, at 10:35 p.m., dancing a one-step." Cheering crowds everywhere

greeted the Prince, and one little boy created some surprise by jumping on to the Prince's auto during the parade and crying, "Hello, Prince!"

On the financial side of the Company's activities, August 12th, 1920, saw the dissolution of the Gas Investment Company Limited. And a major step in "B.C. Electric" development was the purchase of the Western Power Company of Canada Limited—a purchase destined to have a vital influence on the progress of British Columbia. Eleven years earlier, there had entered the power field as a competitor, the "Western Canada Power Company Limited." This Company had built an important power station, housing two 8,825 KVA. generators, at Stave Falls, about 29 miles due east of the City on one of the Coastal tributaries of the Fraser. By January 1st, 1912, the Western Canada Power Company had also completed a 60,000 volt transmission circuit to Vancouver (with somewhat limited distribution facilities in the city). Four years of development at this site, however, found the Western Canada Power Company Limited in difficulties, and it failed to meet its bond interest. The war had left a very serious imprint on load charts, as well as on the financial statement of the Company. A contract was therefore entered into between the Western Canada Power Company Limited and the B.C. Electric Railway Company Limited, under which power was sold to the latter in increasing quantities over a period of years. And about this time, the Western Canada Power Company Limited also secured a contract for energy to be used in bulk by the City of Bellingham—at a not very profitable rate.

The competitive company was reorganized on December 30, 1916, and emerged as the Western Power Company of Canada Limited, under which new name it continued for yet another four years in competition with the "B.C. Electric."

The revival of business following the end of the war in 1918 brought with it a renewed demand for extra power in and around Vancouver. "W.P.C." therefore enlarged its Stave Falls plant by the installation of a third generating unit. In the meantime the "B.C. Electric," itself faced with a formidable demand (and the prospect of a still greater one in

the future) was forced to look further afield for power. It had to look beyond its own sources and even beyond its contract with "W.P.C." The "B.C. Electric" already held water rights on Alouette Lake and it became apparent that the logical source for the needed extra power would be the Stave River.

One clear answer emerged to this problem. This was the purchase, in 1920, of the Western Power Company of Canada Limited. Common management of the two companies became almost immediately effective, and the growing number of customers for electrical power in the province soon began to benefit from the consolidation of the transmission and distribution facilities of the two companies.

The province was by this time indeed beginning to feel the benefits of having in its midst the various essential services made possible by the growth of the "B.C. Electric." Population had now grown to 169,399 in Vancouver, 38,727 in Victoria, and 14,495 in New Westminster.

This decade, ending so soon after the end of the long war years, closed in an atmosphere of disturbance and uncertainty. Out of the unrest in Ireland came ominous reports of Sinn Fein activities—assassinations and explosions and fiery speeches to stir up further unrest. France, understandably wary of Germany, threatened military occupation of the Ruhr Basin, and pointed out the danger of disarming if the Hun pocket still contained weapons. Germany was flooding the markets with cheap goods. In Vancouver, the unemployed were making plans for a parade. But come weal or woe, the ladies were still interested in fashion. The *Province* of December 31st announced that "Snakes in the Grass" were now to be "Found on Milady's Feet." Snake skins were all the rage for up-to-date footwear. Scarlet tongues were also 'chic.' As for milady's hat, feathers were another 'must.' And back in 1920, Hollywood was itself at last taking note of British Columbia's mountain scenery — and getting scenic backgrounds for a forthcoming production, "Snowblind," starring Pauline Stark and Russell Simpson! Vancouver was no longer merely the centre of interest in British Columbia. The world was sitting up and taking notice.

CHAPTER VII.

WITH the beginning of the next decade — from the 'twenties to the 'thirties — the home life of the people, the routine of kitchen and fireside, was moving towards a new conception of labor saving. Especially was this true in the kitchens of British Columbia. The decade was to see many big improvements in cooking — especially gas cooking — and gas heating. The national trend itself was now towards the "scientific approach" in housekeeping, and the "B.C. Electric" was going before the public with the slogans "Heat with Gas,' the Scientific way" and "Cook with Gas, the Scientific Way." Exhibits and demonstrations in different shows carried the message firmly into the minds and homes of more and more new homemakers in Vancouver, New Westminster, and Victoria.

Over on the Island, the swing to improvement in home cooking and house heating soon made itself felt in increased consumption. In 1920, the Victoria daily gas consumption was approximately 90,000 cu. ft. and the number of consumers roughly 4,000—served through 54 miles of mains.

In the beginning of 1921, the demand for gas had risen to a degree that called for further development. Coal, however, had gone up considerably in price. Despite that rise, the Company was determined to compete with solid fuels for heating—though the low rates offered to the public for this class of business made it necessary to plan the installation of a more economical and efficient gas plant.

Here again, however, determined policy was justified. The flow of business became faster than the plans permitted.

The new plant—a continuous vertical retort type of plant, with a daily capacity of 700,000 cu. ft. — had hardly got into operation when it was decided to increase the size of the whole scheme by the addition of another new 500,000 cu. ft. capacity gas holder and a still larger purifying plant.

The placing of the new gas equipment contracts formed a happy link with those earlier days of the Company's gas history sixty years before. Just as the equipment for that first beginning of Victoria's gas service came from the Old Country, so did the equipment for this new, modern gas holder. The big holder was erected by Robert Dempster & Sons of Elland, England. It was put into operation in the Spring of 1925.

The output of gas in Vancouver also made the news. That output reached this year a total of 700 million cu. ft.— a sensational change from the 45 million cu. ft. output for the year in which the "B.C. Electric" took over the old Company.

Gas, indeed, appears to have been not merely in the news, but in the forefront of it. Exhibitions and demonstrations went on in all the towns and cities served by the company. And the Company inaugurated a hybrid but happy educational-entertainment series known as "gas lectures." That these lectures were not entirely technical is evidenced in a contemporary report on one of them. "Immediately after the lecture," reads the report, "Messrs. Bjorke, Urwin, Jaggard and King rendered the ballad, 'Stoking! Stoking!' These gentlemen are sure of a steady job in the next era below." And the comment on the event concludes, "The evening was a jolly one, the time did quickly pass; the audience all are still alive, a tribute to our gas!"

That sort of thing was a challenge to the men of the electrical division. They rolled up their sleeves for bigger business. Victoria opened a bright new showroom where all the latest electrical appliances of the period could be thoroughly scrutinized and some of them tried out. There were electric fires, vacuum cleaners, sewing machines, fans, wringers, washing machines, cookers, toasters, and, of course, a

tremendous range of home lighting fixtures. Of all these electric appliances, by far the biggest sellers were the electric irons. In April, 1921, Vancouver demonstrated this in Carrall Street, and a small new store on Granville Street, by selling between them only six table lamps, but in the same period, four hundred and forty-three electric irons!

The "B.C. Electric" was by this time playing more and more an accepted part of the life of British Columbia. The Company's power sources then being developed were being turned with swiftly growing usefulness to the advantage of the new settlers, among them many who had come out from the Old Country during the three years that had elapsed since the end of World War I.

These newcomers, for the most part, also owed the precision of their daily journeys to the smooth-running operations of the B.C. Electric Railway. Improvements in street car travel were manifold. During the year 1921, all the 205 cars in service on the city lines were equipped with gates—an extra safety measure which involved a great deal of expense but reaped a rich harvest in extra security and a higher general efficiency. Track space for the new equipment in Vancouver had also by this time become a pressing problem. And, for a time, the morning and evening specials all had to be housed in the Carrall Street yards. The congestion was remedied on June 27th of that year. On that day, for the first time, the street cars were driven up on to the roof tracks over the Mount Pleasant Car Barns.

There was also an innovation in fare collection — when conductors welcomed the introduction, on July 17th, 1921, of the new easier to handle Cleveland Farebox.

A much bigger change of routine, however, was pending — one to effect sweeping revisions all over the Company's system. It was announced in 1921 that on the first of January, 1922, the rule of the road itself was to be altered. Street cars, and the trains of the interurban would, in future, drive on the *right*.

This decision on the part of the Provincial Government —and fortunately announced long in advance of the event—

meant months of replanning and the rebuilding of rolling stock. And everywhere, from Chilliwack to Saanich, alterations had to be made, not only to the cars themselves, but also to the track switches on the streets.

This full-scale undertaking had, however, to be completed during ordinary working days, when the full traffic had to be kept in running operation at the same time! Endless headaches preceded the big changeover, but in the end the job was tackled with a persistence worthy of the same pioneers who had laid down the tracks so many years previously.

Helped by all manner of warnings in the press about the possibilities of accidents immediately after the change, the actual switch-over to right-hand drive (effected during the night hours of December 31st) was achieved without mishap.

It was a result which owed much to the vigilance of the drivers and train crews of the time. The general public had also paid the greatest attention to the publicity campaign through which the newspapers had been training them for the change.

The year 1922 was to see other big changes — in the Company's hydro-electric developments. Construction work began that would double the water storage of Stave Lake. Big things were also happening up there at the "Blind Slough" — the name that had been given to the channel which was originally the main water course of the Stave River. Previously to this operation, beavers had themselves damned this river and diverted its main stream to the westerly channel which ran over Stave Falls. Here now rose the 60 (max.) foot high Blind Slough dam, equipped with sluice gates and spillways, and having a capacity of 100,000 second-feet.

The new provision for spilling through the Blind Slough now made it possible to close up the existing sluice dam adjoining the main Stave Falls intake dam, and the sluice dam could therefore not only be built in solid, but also raised 25 feet to make clear the way for further power developments at a later date.

Another feature of the changes happening up in the Stave area was electrification of the little railway—only three miles long—which ran from the construction plant at Stave Falls down to Wilson's and an electric locomotive was put into operation, hauling gravel from the river bed to the falls.

All these forward steps were watched with the closest interest by the Company Directors and its officers. From his wheel chair in England, Robert Horne-Payne still held the reigns of government. He still wrote, with faltering hand but with unflagging determination, many letters to his British Columbia friends, guiding and helping them in the husbanding of their tremendous enterprise. Late in the spring of 1922, his son John came over from England himself to join the B.C. Electric's staff for a short time. He wanted to study, at first hand, the fruit of his father's labours. He made many friends. When he left again, after a year's service with the Company, he sent a message to the staff which has something of the flavour of his father's all-embracing vision and kindliness. "It was my endeavour," he writes, "to bid farewell personally to as many as possible before I left, but numbers alone made it impossible to see all. I shall continually think of them all as a big host of real friends."

1922 had other matters of personal moment to the "B.C. Electric." On June 29th, Vice-President A. T. Goward, in Victoria, received fresh evidence of the feelings of his big Vancouver Island family of workers, in the presentation of a rose bowl in commemoration of his 32 years of service. The choice was a happy one, for the popular Vice-President took a tremendous pride in the roses he grew in his own garden, and had a liking for all flowers, particularly violets.

Another individual link with the Company's past was broken on October 2nd, 1922, when Johannes Buntzen's death occurred in Copenhagen, in Denmark. This man had taken time, despite the far-reaching negotiations and agreements through which he steered the Company, to follow, with a very genuine interest, the progress of the whole staff of the Company working under him. He had done much to make more comfortable, more secure, and more pleasant the lives of the "B.C. Electric" staff. And it seems a fitting

tribute that, although he was never to hear of it, shortly before his death occurred in far away Denmark, the staff of the big power plant that bears his name at Lake Buntzen, formed, in the warmth of their community, a little orchestra which was to bring great laurels to the colony up on the "North Arm," and would do much through the succeeding years to make more pleasant the lives of the busy people.

The Lake Buntzen colony was not the only one by this time that had achieved an air of mellow establishment. There were other spots in the Company's geography which were building an individual history. Up at Jordan River, a third generation of children was now growing up who had never known their neighbourhood without its familiar flume and its busy camps, its friendly faces and its occasional, exciting visits to far-away Victoria. These children were being well looked after in the Jordan River school. And it was a school which possessed one of the most popular teachers in all the Company's wide territory. These "outpost" children were getting more than the sound rudiments of education; they were getting plenty of healthy exercise in one of the healthiest parts of the world.

And so, for that matter, were the employees in New Westminster and in Vancouver. A nation-wide movement towards a fuller enjoyment of the "great outdoors" had spread up from the United States and was sending people every week-end far out into the highways and byways. A veritable, but praiseworthy mania for healthy hiking broke out – and most energetic of them all were the women. The B.C. Electric Employees magazine gave its blessing to the movement in an article headed, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Girls Are Marching!"

Part of the area through which those girls were so purposefully marching was a strip of North Shore mountain country which was now beginning to take its place as one of Vancouver's loveliest homelands.

North Vancouver had already been well established, and "B.C. Electric" had been serving it for sixteen years. Now it was the turn of West Vancouver. At the end of 1922 West

Vancouver Municipality entered into an agreement with the Company for the supply of electric current to a district which then had six hundred homes as the nucleus of its spectacular future.

Back in Vancouver itself, the Company had been running into contract difficulties. Since 1920, the Vancouver street lighting contracts had lapsed, but during 1922 the Company succeeded in obtaining agreements with Burnaby and South Vancouver at rates more akin to a fair price for the service. Street car fares were also under scrutiny. In Vancouver an agreement had been reached with the City that existing fares should be extended until December 15th, by which time a modified franchise agreement was ready. The winning of material modifications was not an easy matter. Like all other major moves in the Company's long history it was attended with bickerings, protests, doubts and downright opposition. When the franchise modifications, however, finally reached the City Council, five of the seven aldermen voted for it.

The Company was given the right to charge a six-cent fare for another three years, and lighting rates in the city were reduced from 6c to 5c per kilowatt hour. Under the new agreement the Company was to spend $105,000 on new tracks, and $250,000 in underground wiring. "B.C. Electric" also undertook to pay the City $10,000 as a share in the cost of removing Main Street Bridge and $5,000 for maintenance of pavements between the car tracks.

An altogether new clause—coming for the first time into "B.C. Electric" history — was one dealing with the operation of motor buses. Provision was made for the Company to operate buses where there was "A reasonably good roadway." Half the deficit on operation, up to $5,000, was to be paid by the Company and the remainder by the City (out of the percentages paid to it by the Company on gross fares.)

The motor bus service envisaged by this clause in the agreement first saw the light of day in March of 1923. Two buses, looking, by present standards, something like glass incubators on wheels, began a half-hourly service on the Grandview Highway, making connections by transfer to all the

City street car lines. On the 17th of March the first of these buses gave itself a grand showing-off before Mayor S. E. Tisdall and the City fathers. George Kidd acted as host and the civic representatives duly complimented him on the carrying out of the franchise promise.

This first venture into the precarious world of motor bus operation was watched with interest and not a little anxiety. Would the bus route take passengers from the Central Park interurban line, or would it develop traffic of its own? Would it continue to prove a success once the novelty wore off? These were only two of the questions which time alone could answer.

One aspect of the Company's service about which *no* doubts were raised was the steady upswing in the use of "B.C. Electric" power for industry. Among all the lighting and power contracts then being entered into between the Company and all manner of commercial and industrial enterprises, none was so important in 1923 as the contract made with the Britannia Mining and Smelting Company at Britannia Beach, on Howe Sound. A 34,000 volt high tension transmission line was built from North Vancouver to transmit 4,500 to 6,000 horsepower. On the one single contract alone an expenditure of $150,000 was necessary in order to deliver power to a sub-station built by the Britannia company on its own property. The completion of the transmission line itself, through thirty miles of rocky coast line from North Vancouver, was a job that challenged every man on it. It was done with the gusto, and the goodwill, of the earlier pioneers.

The development of the Britannia Mines contract was watched with considerable interest, not only by big business in British Columbia, but also from the South, across the American border. It provided tangible evidence of the Company's determination to do all that a public utilities corporation could do to foster the welfare of its country.

And it was only *one* example. The same policy was being maintained in every section of "B.C. Electric's" vital activities. Another necessary link in the chain of those activities was the "B.C. Electric's" own freight traffic.

From the start, this enterprise was beset by competition—truck competition, competition from other freight lines and competition with sea routes. Though, geographically, the position was enviable (the Fraser Valley line and its terminus in Vancouver were connected with no less than five trans-continental railways, which made it possible for "B.C. Electric" freight cars to travel right from dockside to destined warehouse) it had to face and overcome its own particular problems. By 1923 the supply of Fraser Valley timber was itself becoming exhausted . . . a critical development, for traffic in forest products had long been the biggest source of revenue. The bulk of the reduced lumber traffic was, moreover, beginning to move from the mills on the Lulu Island branch. To the rescue of that situation, however, came the Fraser Valley farm produce! Farm clearings were appearing thick and fast in the stump strewn area, and farm stock, farm equipment and farm produce began at last to swell the traffic lists.

Another freight beginning to add its weight to the recovery owed its increase to the development of the fruit trade. At the border town of Sumas, long trains of refrigerator cars carrying oranges, bananas, watermelons, grapefruit, cantaloupes, strawberries, were arriving from California and all the fruit-growing States of the U.S.A. From Sumas, "B.C. Electric" locomotives hauled their perishable loads along the Fraser Valley into New Westminster and on to Vancouver.

Traffic between the United States and Canada, despite the first ominous beginnings of a general depression, was becoming firmly entrenched along accepted channels. Outside and above the industrial world, moreover, other ties were helping to cement closer and friendlier relations between the two countries. On July 26th, 1923, President Harding paid a visit to the City and gained still further friends for his administration and for his country.

Among the leading men of British Columbia who helped to make the visit a success was George Kidd, who had now assumed the title of President of the Company, and another man who in this year stepped up to a Vice-Presidency in the Company, W. G. Murrin. Nine years had elapsed since this

enterprising, active mind had swung into the orbit of "B.C. Electric" affairs. An amazing capacity for detail had brought "W.G." to a place where fuller control of the Company's activities was inevitable. The date of this assumption of office was June 20th, 1923.

The humbler members of "B.C. Electric's" widespread family were finding themselves more and more fully catered to in the field of honest-to-goodness social welfare. That summer saw a great demand for accommodation in the "B.C. Electric's" holiday colony at White Rock. These delightful holiday cottages, close to the ocean and with all their wonderful hinterland of forest and mountain could be rented for $6.00 per week per family, and even more cheaply before June 16th and after September 15th.

To bring still more sports facilities into the lives of the Company's employees, George Kidd opened the "B.C. Electric" Athletic Club the same autumn. The new club promptly threw itself into a fever of "physical jerks" (for both men and women) basketball, volleyball, and swimming, the latter in a swimming tank at the Canadian Memorial Church. To prove its democratic ideal, the club was also available to a limited number of very close friends of its members, and the entire staff was, of course, eligible for membership.

Simultaneously with the announcement of the "B.C. Electric" Sports Club, many of the Company's employees in New Westminster were carrying off laurels in the flower show section of the annual New Westminster exhibition. And the Exhibition itself largely owing to special cars from Vancouver, which the Company ran for that purpose — had been a great success.

During the year, interurban and city lines between them carried 67,441,665 passengers. And it was also during this year that traffic conditions compelled the closing of Granville Bridge Station from December 2nd onwards. The Lulu Island line service then began to run from a small new station at Davie and Seymour.

The gradual spread of depressed business conditions from the East and South had not yet affected major developments

that had by this time been getting into full stride on the Stave River. The plant, originally owned and operated by the Western Canada Power Company at the Falls of the Stave River, 29 miles due east of Vancouver, had become the nucleus of one of "B.C.Electric's" "major systems of power expansion."

Stave Lake was originally nine miles long by a mile wide, with its outlet some seven miles upstream from Stave Falls (the site of the plant). The building of the Stave Falls dam would raise the level of the lake another 45 feet and flood the entire area above it, forming a lake 18 miles long, with a storage capacity for power of 471,000 acre-feet, sufficient (when joined with the Alouette Lake storage) to regulate the plant water supply to 3,810 c.f.s. continuous flow. The Stave Falls dam system was actually to consist of two dams—the intake dam, which closed the main channel, and the sluice dam, which closed the seperate East channel. The power station itself was already built just below the intake dam. Five steel penstocks, 14 feet to 16 feet in diameter, carried the water from the enlarged Stave Lake to five turbine-driven generating units with an annual energy capacity of 250 million kilowatt hours. The Stave Falls work went steadily forward through 1923 and the dam was completed on January 31st, 1924.

With the completion of the Stave Falls project, work was also finished on three transmission lines which carried the power direct to the Horne-Payne receiving station in the north central city area in Vancouver. A fourth transmission line was also projected (but not yet built) to form a tie-line with a still larger hydro-electric development planned for a spot 3½ miles below the plant, near the junction of the Stave and the Fraser.

1924 saw the beginning of work, not only on a fifth unit at Stave Falls, but also on the Alouette itself.

Eighteen years previously, the Alouette water rights had been granted to the Burrard Power Company, and when this Company was taken over by the "B.C. Electric" in 1912, plans were put in hand for the development of this water source. But delays in perfecting these rights — and finally

the coming of World War I itself – caused the whole project to be temporarily abandoned.

It is interesting to record that the original development, however, as planned in 1906, would have involved diversion of water at the outlet of the lakes into a flume which would have traversed the whole of the westerly slope of the Alouette River valley for some seven miles, attaining an elevation of 280 feet above the valley floor. Pipe lines were then to have conveyed the water from the end of the flume to a power house on the river bank where some 14,000 horsepower would have been generated.

The acquisition of the Western Power Company of Canada in 1920-8, however, completely changed these plans, and the Alouette project which was finally approved in 1924, embraced a completely new order of operation. The new plan was devised to get the fullest possible advantage from Alouette Lake's 140 foot height above Stave Lake and River, 370 feet above sea level. The plan to connect the two lakes was a very bold one.

The "B.C. Electric" engineers, however, were by this time trained to take just such a line of action. While the two lakes were separated at the southerly end by several miles of wooded ridges, at the northerly end the seperating ridge dwindled to a relatively narrow hogs-back of granite.

Two steps were necessary—the raising of the level of Alouette Lake by building a dam at its southerly outlet, and the piercing of the narrow granite rim with a 3,600 foot long tunnel to divert the raised waters into Stave Lake. At the tunnel outlet on the Stave side a new plant was projected to convert the falling waters to a useful form of energy on their way to the lower levels of Stave Lake.

The work of nature—the wearing down through countless ages of the clay barrier that had held the upper Alouette Lake in being was thus to be set back, in a few short months, by a group of engineers who would reconstruct that barrier with a dam, and restore the river channel at a higher level.

The cost of the Alouette project was estimated at $2,300,000—but the power from the new development was much

needed. The lumber industry, the furniture industry, the fishing industry, were all calling for heavily increased power supply. One of the principal new contracts of 1924 involved the supplying of power to operate Vancouver Harbour Commissioners Elevators Nos. 1 and 2 – forming between them one of the biggest and fastest grain elevator blocks in the world.

It was not only power that was claiming attention on the West Coast. The whole scheme of electric lighting also came up for review in 1924, and in Vancouver plans were made for a complete overhaul and improving of street lighting arrangements. By the Spring of 1924, Vancouver's system was considered completely out of date. Traffic was increasing not only in the day time, but at night also, and safety alone demanded that something should be done about the situation. Out went the five-cluster lighting standards with which Vancouver citizens had become familiar, and in came the long lines of ornamental standards with a single high-efficiency lamp of 1,500 (and in some cases of even 2,500) candlepower.

The life of the city streets was itself altering. Horse drawn vehicles had almost disappeared from the traffic stream, and the long hold-ups that horses had caused on the City bridges were now becoming a feature of the past. During the mid-twenties, motor traffic was increasing, quite literally, by leaps and bounds, and the whole country had by this time become road-minded.

The introduction of the Grandview buses in the previous year had by this time become an acknowledged success, and in the Spring of 1924 a more ambitious move was made by the Company in this new field. A new subsidiary was incorporated with a capital of $500,000 under the name "British Columbia Rapid Transit Company Limited" to purchase motor passenger and freight lines then operating in competition with the interurban railway service between Vancouver, New Westminster and Chilliwack.

Six of the very latest type of motor buses were ordered for the 12½-mile run. These buses, five Fageol and one White

model, were considered thoroughly "de luxe transport." Inside woodwork was polished mahogany. The smoker was grey leather. And "the first class compartment was finished in dove grey velour of the best grade obtainable." The bodies were built by "Tupper and Steele" and the entire fleet was delivered in time to begin service by May 1st (1924).

A feature of the new buses was their precautions for safety—principal aspect of which was a floor only 21 inches from the ground when loaded. The inauguration of this new bus line was even a bigger success than had been anticipated, and many passengers made the return trip simply for the thrill of a new-style luxurious ride through the country.

It is significant to note that a year later a move was made in the field of motor transportation that was later to have a direct bearing on, and a very big share in the general development of the B.C. Electric. This was the incorporation, in December, 1925, of "B.C. Motor Transportation Limited" —a merging of six different road transportation services operating on routes between Vancouver and White Rock, Haney, Ioco and Seattle. Another route commenced after the merger was made between Vancouver and North Shore points operating via the Second Narrows Bridge. This line first operated as far west as Caulfield, and when Marine Drive was pushed through to Horseshoe Bay, the line was extended to that point. "B.C. Motor" also took over, in the year after its incorporation, the White Star Motor Line, operating buses between Vancouver and Ladner.

Much of the area around Vancouver was now becoming a highly developed district. So were other outlying areas. In the few years between the end of World War 1 and 1924, South Vancouver and Point Grey had also filled up, and with the addition of these two areas to the "B.C. Electric" territory, a big increase in the Company's services was to be rapidly expected. One aspect of that increase from these two new districts was an anticipated demand of millions of cubic feet of gas per year.

Off to England went John Keillor to investigate and arrange for a new gas plant. He wasted no time in England.

He finished his survey of the situation and immediately arranged with the West Gas Improvement Company of Manchester for a $400,000 plant, to be built alongside the existing one in Keefer Street. Fifteen miles of new mains were also laid during the year, but the new plant would more than be able to cope with the situation. No less than 40 vertical retorts were to be added to the 24 then in operation.

Unlike that first delivery of gas equipment in 1860, when John T. Little had had to wait so many weary months for his ships to come round the Horn, the material for the new 1924 gas plant arrived quickly and on schedule — no small achievement over so great a distance, even in 1924. It was because of this speed of delivery — and the thoroughness of the work in Vancouver — that the whole job was finished before the end of the year.

The Company then took yet another step forward in the world of gas production. Late in August, 1924, a new liquid ammonia plant, just completed in the Keefer Street works, made the first commercially pure aqua ammonia produced in British Columbia — the "B.C. Electric" thus fathering a brand new industry in the province. Gradually the Company was able to supply not only most of the local market with this new product, but even some users as far away as Winnipeg.

Quietly and unobtrusively in the summer of 1924, a beginning was also made on the boldest and biggest of all "B.C. Electric's *power* developments. In the early summer a party of fifty engineers and their assistants (under the direction of E. E. Carpenter, Construction Engineer) left Vancouver to work on an extensive field investigation of the power resources of the Bridge River. Much would soon be heard of them.

In the midst of all these activities, the Directors of the "B.C. Electric" found time to arrange a unique contribution to the open air life of the district. It was one which formed a happy tie with the gesture made nineteen years previously at the opening of Gorge Park on Vancouver Island.

On a beautiful early autumn day in September, 1924, the Company deeded to the City of Vancouver the Capilano Canyon. For over thirty years the "B.C. Electric" had held 145 acres of Canyon property. President George Kidd in offering the Canyon to the City referred to it as an area "which had always been regarded as one of the chief beauty spots of the vicinity of Vancouver." "The public," he went on, "has, of course, always had access to this property but we feel that it should belong to them in deed as well as in name."

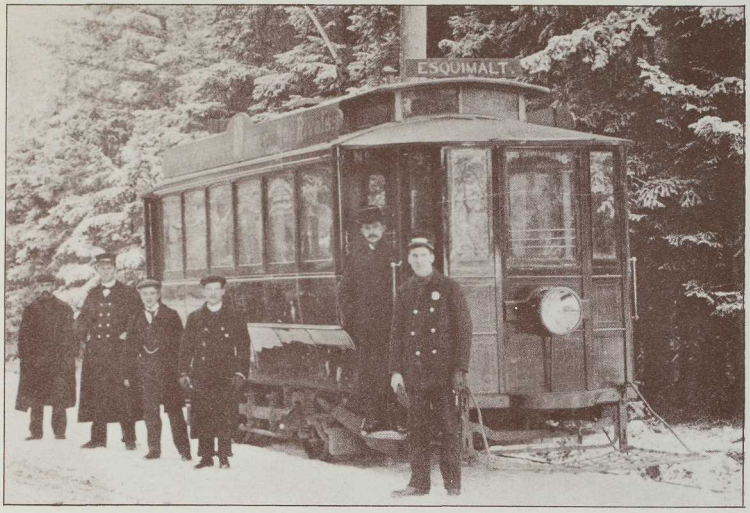
The only proviso made with the gift was that the Board of Trade should set up machinery that would enable the Canyon to be kept "for the benefit of the people in perpetuity." J. K. McRae, President of the Board of Trade, replied, with very obvious sincerity, "I can hardly find words to express my appreciation of the splendid gift that the B.C. Electric Railway Company Limited, through its President, Mr. George Kidd, has made to the people of Vancouver and the public of British Columbia."

One of the loveliest valleys on the West Coast of Canada had by this simple means been assured of freedom from all depredations.

Almost simultaneously with this Canyon gift, however, another beautiful area of land on Vancouver Island became the scene of one of those few failures without which no great commercial family of men and women could hope to achieve lasting prosperity.

On October 31st, 1924, the Saanich interurban line on Vancouver Island went out of service. Since its start, eleven years previously, the line had never paid its operating expenses. The building of roads around it took away bigger and bigger slices of its payload and World War I itself provided the death blow. By 1924, the operational loss had amounted to $350,000, and despite a possible improvement in conditions, the Company took a realistic line on the whole question. They accepted the loss, closed the line and salvaged the equipment to the best possible advantage.

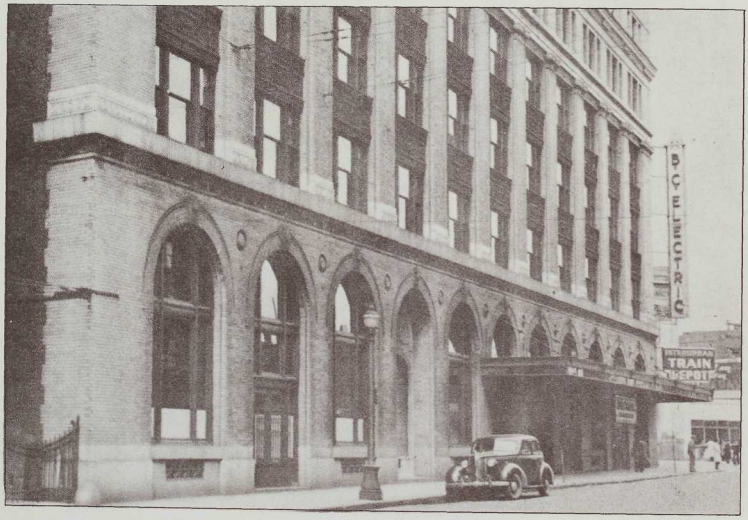
Elsewhere on Vancouver Island, however, Company developments moved steadily forward. For eight months, dur-



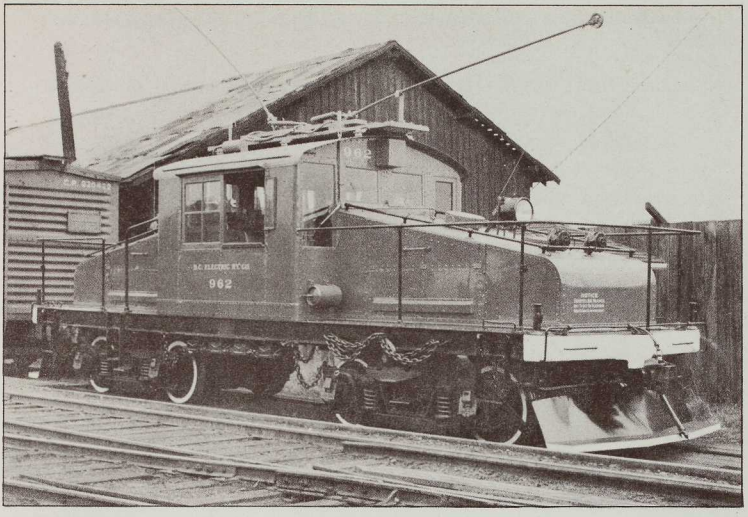
Dec. 30, 1898—A winter scene on the Esquimalt run of Victoria's street car system.

The Yates Street office in Victoria, 1904. The late Arthur Lineham, chief clerk, and the late A. T. Goward, local manager, standing before the counter opening.

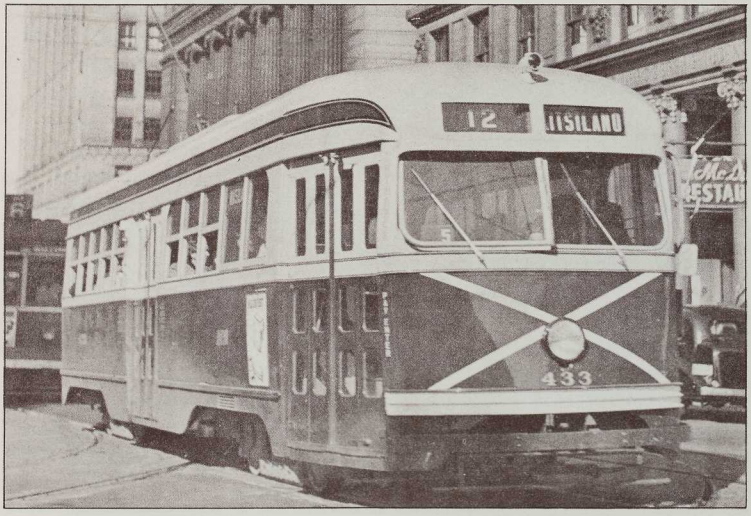
The first Granville Street showroom, Vancouver, 1922.



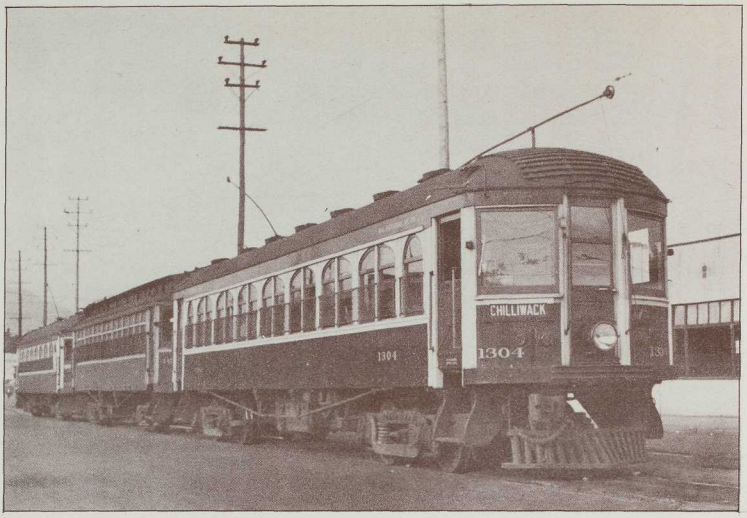
The Head Office building, corner of Hastings and Carrall Streets, Vancouver.



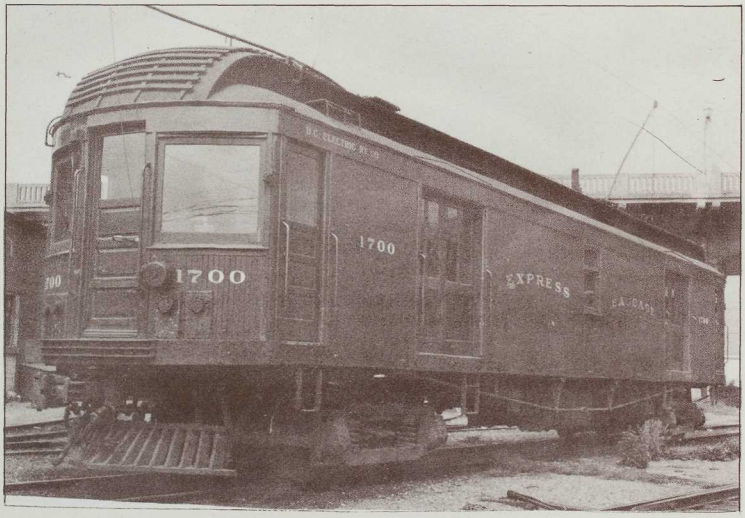
One of the electric locomotives, handling the freight over B.C. Electric mainland lines.



The modern, streamlined P.C.C. type street car.



An interurban train on the Vancouver-Chilliwack run.



An express and baggage car on the run between Vancouver and Chilliwack.

ing the spring and summer of 1924 (and despite the threat of quite a dangerous bush fire which surged across the area in the driest part of the summer) the Company's engineers had been building a new high tension line between Jordan River along the twenty-five-mile length to Humpback Bridge, where it was tied in with a further four-mile section of high tension line which had been constructed twelve years previously to Brentwood Bay.

Strenuous work on the high tension line, however, did not prevent the Company's Jordan River family from enjoying itself. Albert Sjoberg set up a 9-piece orchestra. He brought them to first class concert pitch during the year, and the whole organization of this little musical enterprise — which meant an investment of $2,000 without the piano — was completed without any call for financial aid to the Company!

The energy at Jordan River was being duplicated in the other outposts of the Company on the mainland. 1925 not only saw the completion of the Alouette tunnel between Alouette and Stave Lakes, but also the finishing of work on the fifth unit at Stave Falls, and the building of an outdoor switching station to handle the increased power. This extra power put another load on the engineering division — because it included a still further increase in the capacity of the transmission system relaying that new power to Vancouver. To meet the need another quarter of a million dollars was spent by the Company in big alterations at the Horne-Payne and Burnaby substations, and in the transmission lines with which they formed the central links. The men who brought this big power development to completion must have experienced no small satisfaction, during later years, in watching the result of their handiwork. The work itself had been hard work but like less manual and more mental forms of activity in the Company, it was always deeply appreciated by the Company's Directors.

Individual effort was recognized in 1925 when Traffic Superintendent Dinsmore celebrated his silver jubilee with the completion of twenty-five years service to the Company. The B.C. Electric Employees Magazine for February, 1925,

in marking the event, says, "In spite of the responsibilities, trials and tribulations of the job, "W.H.D." is one of the brightest spirits in the Company's service. His healthy sense of humor and his passion for efficiency keep him young in mind, spirit and body."

With eyes on the relatively far future, men with a similar outlook were seeking power sources which would be able to serve the half million population expected between 1945 and 1950 .

The Bridge River country, almost uninhabited and abounding in game and fish, was an adventure, a challenge, and a promise, all at the same time. Up on the edge of the Caribou this turbulent river joined the Fraser near Lillooet. And the territory confronting Carpenter and his men was strewn with major difficulties. The difficulties were dealt with as they arose. The men moved from open camp to open camp, along the rocks and in the forests that bordered the river, depending upon pack trains for all communication with the outside world. After covering the River's lower basin, they drove further above La Joie Falls into a practically unknown region which they surveyed for a further twenty-five miles — an extra strip which took the men up the great snow fields and glaciers that fed the river. Fifty-five miles of the Bridge River Valley had *now* been most meticulously covered, and as the results of the survey began to be tabulated, it was realized that here indeed lay the future main heart and centre of British Columbia's power supply.

The persistence of these engineers was being matched in less strenuous sections of the Company's service. Over in Vancouver Island, another popular man, T. H. Hodgson, helped, in his own necessarily smaller way, to make "B.C. Electric" history in that part of the territory by opening and supervising the new gas and electric showrooms in Victoria on Pandora Street in June, 1925. The big new showrooms brought all the newest gas and electrical equipment right under the eyes of the passing public. The showrooms became popular immediately and it was not more than three or four months before ambitious classes in domestic science were being held under Mr. Hodgson's control and that of

Victoria's new Home Service Department. Financial appropriations for the running of this Home Service Department and other development sections of the "B.C. Electric" formed, however, only a small part of the bigger budgeting which was being planned.

On September 25, 1925, after receiving the results of the Bridge River survey, the "B.C. Electric" bought the shares of a Company which had been formed thirteen years previously, the Bridge River Power Company Limited. On this Company's incorporation in 1912, it had secured development rights on the Bridge River but had constructed no works during the intervening period of thirteen years. "B.C. Electric" now bought out the shares of the old Bridge River Company, and transferred them a few months later to its new subsidiary, the British Columbia Electric Power & Gas Company Limited.

Up to the time of this transaction it had been necessary to raise all new funds to provide for such increasing facilities from England. The widening circles of interest in the Company's progress in Western Canada, however, made it advisable to issue some form of capital security in which local British Columbian participation could be assured. It was recognized as only right that the source and centre of the Company's actual physical growth should have a bigger voice in its affairs.

As usual, however, in this story of achievement despite difficulties, problems arose at once in the minds now concentrated upon this move.

"B.C. Electric" was an English Company. Interest, or dividends on any of its securities, if sold locally in British Columbia, would be subject to British Income Tax. The difficulty could only be overcome in one way, and on March 4th, 1926, an entirely new holding Company, the British Columbia Electric Power & Gas Company Limited, was incorporated under the British Columbia Companies Act.

The new Company acquired from its parent organization the entire issued share capital of six of its subsidiaries—the Victoria Gas Company Limited, the Vancouver Power

Company Limited, the Bridge River Power Company Limited, the New Westminster Gas Company Limited, the Vancouver Gas Company Limited Liability, and the British Columbia Gas Company Limited. In consideration of these holdings (and the transfer to it of certain undistributed surpluses, reserves and debentures of the subsidiary companies) the British Columbia Electric Railway Company Limited received $15,243,003 par value common shares of the new company.

Assured in this manner of an adequate net income, the new Company offered for subscription in the same month (March, 1926) 2¼ million 6% preference shares with dividends guaranteed by the "B.C. Electric." More than 10,000 applications were received for over seven million dollars' worth of the stock, but the amount finally issued was five million dollars.

In organizing the British Columbia Electric Power & Gas Company Limited, the Directors had also other major objects in view. The new company was to acquire the undertakings of both the British Columbia Electric Railway Company Limited and the Western Power Company of Canada Limited. Under an Enabling Act, passed by the British Columbia legislature, the new Company was empowered to take over "all property, both real and personal, contracts, rights, powers, privileges, immunities, concessions and franchises held by the other two companies."

To have completed the contemplated financial programme, it would have been necessary to place the British Columbia Electric Railway Company Limited in voluntary liquidation and arrange for the refunding of £2,788,170 of 4¼% perpetual consolidated debenture stock and other stocks of that Company held by the public. This programme was completed only in part. On April 23rd, 1926, the "B.C. Electric" acquired the shares and properties of the New Westminster Gas Company Limited, which was later dissolved. This last arrangement brought the British Columbia Electric Power & Gas Company into a position where it

controlled practically all the power production plants except Goldstream, as well as all the gas companies and gas production plants.

The new financial structures now took care of a very big organization. At the end of June, 1926, there were 3,240 employees on the Company's payroll and the total outlay in wages and salaries was between five and five and a half million. The Company's territory had grown to 1,500 square miles, and it now served a population of over 375,000.

Among the statistics of that period is a significant item, the miles of City and interurban car lines between them reached a total of 345.32—served by over 400 street cars, interurban cars and motor buses.

In 1926, a new fleet of cars was delivered from Montreal, where they were manufactured for service in Vancouver. The first eight new street cars arrived on July 14th, and four two-car trains were shipped from the East about the same time. A feature of the new cars was quick acceleration — a vital advantage with traffic conditions in the City becoming busier and more congested each year. The whole of the Company's street car service was also improved during this year with the introduction of Tungsten lamps — the disappearance of the old carbon filament lamps breaking yet another link with the past, and with the earlier days of street car traffic. The brighter light in all the new cars — both interurban and City lines — made a great hit with the public, especially in the winter months.

"Brighter light," was, in fact, one of the keynotes of the late 'twenties, and experiments were being made in all kinds of new lighting which would soon bear fruit in homes, offices, shops, industrial plants, churches and theatres. The Capitol Theatre in Vancouver made experiments in the psychological factors of theatre lighting arrangements and, based on these experiments, an entirely new approach was made to the use of light *as part of* and not a mere *adjunct to* entertainment.

Eight years after the close of World War One, Vancouver was now paying more and more attention to the

finer subtleties of modern living. There was a stimulus of intellectual exploration in the air, and a scrutiny of the country's cultural prospects. A high standard of technical as well as artistic training offered itself to the shaping of the future of this western province, and from that technical field the Company drew some brilliant engineering minds for the start of its biggest undertaking.

On a warm day towards the end of June, 1926, a steam shovel on a hillside near the Caribou made the first move of the vast operations that would be called for in the Bridge River project.

On the bank at Seton Lake, the P.G.E. Railway built a freight yard for the equipment which would be coming in. The mountainside adjoining it was excavated to give room for a standard passing track with two unloading spurs and an oil spur, and from this spot began the construction of a road over Mission Mountain.

These beginnings were the first practical evidence of a hydro-electric development which was to provide work for British Columbians for generations yet to come. In the light of the impressive array of figures and facts which were to follow, it makes an almost wistful link with the old days of the Company's history to record that the first Bridge River contract, dated May 11th, 1926, was to two simple young Indians from the Shalalth reservation—Patrick Old Man and John Tom, both of whom were required "to cut and hew by hand" railway ties for the new job.

It was not long before the first equipment began to arrive, and the site of the diversion dam on Bridge River, some four miles downstream from Mission Bridge, began to see the first sprinkling of the traffic that was to come. The trip from Mission Bridge down to the dam site was made by canoe (with an outboard motor) in 15 minutes. The trip back — up the swift current — required over an hour and a half! Despite the struggle many tons of freight were safely delivered to the dam site by canoe.

Early in 1927 a contract was awarded for driving the tunnel from Bridge River to Seton Lake. The job would

cost two million dollars. Boring of the tunnel started very soon after the signing of the contract — an undertaking that was to be the largest and most ambitious of all the Company's tunnel-boring projects, with a total length of 13,200 feet and 14 foot, 3 inches internal diameter. The contract also included the building of the surge chamber and intake — and the fall of the year saw a start on these other developments.

The tunnel was built on a very slight grade, and at its outlet over Seton Lake would allow a drop of 1200 feet to power generators on the lakeshore. Use of this tunnel would give a head three times greater than at Lake Buntzen and ten times greater than that at Stave Falls!

A further contract was awarded to S. M. McLeod of Vancouver for the building of permanent community buildings — a guest house, operators' cottages, hospital, work shops, offices and sanitary bunkhouses with hot and cold showers.

To cope with the number of workers who would shortly be engaged on the Bridge River project, the Canadian Bank of Commerce showed its enterprise by opening a branch in the new Community site during the month of October. The little bank on the edge of Seton Lake was nothing but a wooden shack—but it embodied the ideals of thrift and sound economy, and it was also a demonstration of faith in the working man of British Columbia.

Similar faith in the men of British Columbia and in their country inspired, in 1928, another major financial move. On May 19, 1928, the preferred and deferred ordinary shares of the "B.C. Electric" were purchased by a group of men who incorporated the British Columbia Power Corporation Limited.

The new group included some of the biggest men in Eastern Canadian business. And the step they had taken was proof positive that the eyes of prominent Easterners were now turning towards the West.

Nor was it only the industries that were looking westward. From Ottawa, in April of '28 came Their Excellencies

the Governor-General and Viscountess Willingdon. Among their other engagements, Their Excellencies identified themselves with all forward-looking men of the province by making a visit to the Company's plant at Jordan River.

Simultaneously with the incorporation of the B.C. Power Corporation came the resignation, after thirty-one years of continuous service, of Robert Horne-Payne.

The man who founded "B.C. Electric" now withdrew into the background. Although, in his later years, Robert Horne-Payne had suffered so patiently the burden of the paralysis which had attacked him, never once had he faltered in holding and guiding the reins that had been placed into his hands.

Towards the end of September he wrote to George Kidd a letter of farewell. In it he says: "Yesterday saw the completion of my resigning of the chairmanship of the B.C. Electric Railway Company after thirty-one years of service, and I feel very sad about it, especially at the severance of my relations with many old friends in the service of the Company, for whom I shall always retain the warmest feelings of affection and regard." He asked that this message of farewell should be given to every single employee on the staff of the Company, requesting that his thanks should be carried to "each one of them for their splendid loyalty in the years that are passed."

The withdrawal of Horne-Payne marked the end of an era. The big dream that had begun on the deck of a small steamer on Kootenay Lake, that had taken visible shape and had survived setback after setback, had now become so solid a reality that the reins of office could safely be passed into new hands.

By this time the driving force of George Kidd was being felt in every avenue of the big organization under his control, and in this important office, President Kidd realized that on his shoulders was an ever-increasing load of responsibility.

But he also saw a great opportunity. In eight years there had been a 300% increase in Vancouver's manufacturers. In the last five of them Vancouver had added over 100,000

people to her population. More people were, therefore, calling for transportation; more industries were calling for power, more homes were needing more current, and more gas.

The completion, in 1928, of the automatic power plant at Alouette added 12,500 horsepower to the capacity of the system. And the new industries and the new houses needed every bit of it.

Before the end of the year those new homes were to be served by—and from—a magnificent new "B.C. Electric" store and showroom on Granville and Dunsmuir Streets. Here, at last, was a worthy shop window for those of the Company's services affecting directly the women of British Columbia. The six hundred thousand dollar building was designed by architects Hodgson and Simmonds, with McCarter & Nairne as consulting architects.

As befitted the symbol of "B.C. Electric" service, the new building embodied lighting that was a step in advance of anything yet seen in stores on the continent. A system of automatic dimmer controls and color lighting made possible effects which were a great attraction to passersby after nightfall. And as befitted such a symbol of service, the big new store was lit by electricity and heated by gas. With the help of both these services, a whole series of model kitchens, permanently installed but thereafter brought up to date from time to time, showed the women of the district just how handsome, just how economical and just how delightful a "B.C. Electric Kitchen" could be. Two 40-foot high steel towers on the roof of the building relayed broadcast programmes to sound-proof listening booths, so that customers might try out any type of radio set in the store.

1928 had also seen the formation of a Repair and Service Department for automatic appliances, with a very speedy service on refrigerators, washers, vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, ranges, radio sets and all other home electrically operated items. Within twelve months, over 3,000 service calls were made at customers' homes in Vancouver and district.

Nor was it only the City homes which benefited by the Company's services in the late 'twenties. Very many homes

in the new farm area of the Fraser Valley now had brilliant lighting at the touch of a switch for the first time. Also in the Fraser Valley, newcomers in the industries were being supplied—prominent among them the Macken Lumber Company's mill at Sardis. Poultry farms in the area were taking to the idea of electrified hatcheries and brooder houses, and by the end of the year, New Westminster department officials were contemplating the day when the majority of poultrymen from the lower mainland would be using electricity in an all-around campaign to increase egg production.

Very few of the newcomers who settled in the Fraser Valley and in the Lower Mainland left it again. Though individual businesses here and there did not thrive as well as expected, and although the repercussions of financial depression in Great Britain and the United States were growing in intensity, there was something about the new life in the far West which captured and held these people, making them persist under all circumstances in their endeavors to establish themselves, and to send their roots deep into the soil of British Columbia.

There were many who chose this corner of the world in which to spend the less strenuous days of their career. Into the ranks of these men stepped "B.C. Electric's" popular President, George Kidd, when he resigned on January 28, 1929. He had become President at a time when the Company's standing with the community was not too high. His forthrightness and sincerity broke a lot of the ice that was cooling the Company's relations with the public, and all the different sections of "B.C. Electric" enterprise were colored a more vigorous hue by the man who held control. George Kidd had taken a tremendous personal interest in the lives of his big, commercial family, and though he was no longer to work with them, he was determined to live as near as possible to the scene of his heavier labours.

George Kidd, however, on his withdrawal from the more active role and place, accepted the chairmanship of the B.C. Power Corporation's Board.

W. G. Murrin now became the Company's new President. And with him began a new era of visible practical establishment and expansion.

In Vancouver the three-million-cubic-foot-capacity gas holder was then taking shape. The gradual rising into the Vancouver skies of this 250 foot high holder—only the second of its kind in Canada—symbolized the upthrust of new activity. February '29 saw the new automatic carburetted water gas plant coming into full use, the *first* of its kind in Canada. The first unit of this plant had been completed in November of the previous year; construction of the new unit was now a very active development. The two units together were designed to produce three and a half million cubic feet of gas per day.

On February 21, 1929, another kind of contract made the news — the contract for the first unit of an entirely new project at Ruskin. The site of this new development lay about 38 miles South and East of Vancouver, at Ruskin gorge, two miles upstream from the junction of the Stave River with the Fraser. Structural work on this first unit — which was to cost $7,250,000—was carried out by the Stuart Cameron Company and Armstrong, Morrison and Company, of Vancouver. This newest and biggest project on the Stave River was the third and last link of the Alouette-Stave-Ruskin group of power developments. On its completion three separate plants would successfully use the waters of the Alouette and Stave watersheds in their 482 foot drop from the Alouette Lake to Ruskin tailwater at elevation 90. The Ruskin development itself comprised the building of a dam 195 feet high to block the gorge through which the river made its last plunge into the tidal Fraser. The first unit was designed to produce 47,000 horsepower. Ruskin plant was so designed that, as and when required, it could accommodate four such units.

It was a very ambitious scheme, but the working gangs were now used to such ambitions. They were eager and ready to get on with the job. Within four days after the award of the contract, those men were building the first Ruskin camp.

Meanwhile the energy expended in that Spring of '29 was turning in other progressive directions. In March of 1929, President Murrin negotiated a new street car franchise for the City of Vancouver. The keynote of his task might be summed up in his own words to the City Council on that occasion: "What I do want to emphasize is that the City and the Company are inevitably partners in this business of giving the citizens good transportation, and that each partner must concern himself with the problems affecting the other." The question of one-man cars was taken up and their gradual introduction arranged for, though the President gave assurance that "not a man would be laid off by reason of the change," the men released by the introduction of the one-man cars being used up on new rolling stock which would be purchased. Fares were settled at 7c cash, 4 tickets for 25c, a limited ticket of 17 for $1.00 (good only between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.) and school children's tickets of 8 for 25c. This meant a rise of ¼c in fares in the old City portion of Vancouver, and a drop of ¾c in fares to and from Point Grey and South Vancouver.

The end of Spring saw another kind of adjustment made, both on the Mainland and on Vancouver Island. This was the start of a gradual change in distribution voltage from 2,300 to 4,000 volts—a changeover which involved work that took many a month of arduous labour as well as the spending of several hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The eyes of the engineers were on a wider horizon. They turned now to still further sources of electrical energy on Vancouver Island. In June of '29 the Company applied for permission to develop the water power at Campbell River. Three other companies also put in applications.

Between three and four months later the Minister of Lands in Victoria approved the Company's application, and preliminary surveys were agreed on in the new area. This time the lion's share of responsibility fell upon the shoulders of Vice-President A. T. Goward. In an article written by him at the time he declared, "How important this decision is to the industrial development of the Island is emphasized by the fact that our Company is pledged not only to develop

the undertaking in the truest engineering and economic sense, but for the interests of the whole Island at an estimated ultimate cost of nineteen million dollars."

With this potential spread of service in the Island "B.C. Electric" also entered into contracts to supply other areas under Victoria's control—Sooke, Mill Bay, Cobble Hill and Shawnigan. Consequent upon the disposition of the Campbell River rights, a great deal of commercial interest also became focussed on the "up-Island" districts, particularly the two adjacent townsites of Port Alberni and Alberni, known familiarly as "the Albernis." The district was to become living proof that the opening up of British Columbia owed much to the advance of the B.C. Electric.

Another striking demonstration of the way in which electricity was affecting the life of the community was the opening in New Westminster, on September 2nd, of a great cold storage plant to become famous under the name of the "Pacific Coast Terminals" . . . a striking example of how electricity, used to the limit in the most modern machinery and equipment, could solve one of the advancing age's major problems—the storage of food. New methods of refrigeration, which were being made available through the help of "B.C. Electric" services, represented only a small part of the benefit of many new inventions which were being made as the 1920's drew to their close.

Some of these new inventions, for instance, were helping the ordinary course of office administration and routine. Worthy of a place in this history were the new bookkeeping machines especially built for the "B.C. Electric" by Burroughs—a battery of almost human machines which performed their job at a speed to turn Commercial school diploma holders green with envy. These new machines, introduced into the Billing Department, itemized hundreds of thousands of bills, recorded a duplicate of each bill, and just by way of a final gesture of superiority, uncomplainingly added all the totals. Inventions like these were making life for the 4,099 employees of that time both easier and simpler, and "getting a job with the B.C. Electric" had indeed become a coveted aim in life for thousands of young

people—children of those very pioneers who had in their own day helped to found and form the Company.

Sports clubs and outdoor activities bred a healthy new generation in the "B.C. Electric" family and the control of indoor activities had blossomed into a smartly run, almost professional-standard organization. During 1927 the B.C. Electric" Dramatic Club, getting into its stride with the infusion of new blood, presented an ambitious performance of "Captain Applejack," a partly-period and partly-modern drama which set the whole town talking and received a great ovation from the press. Before the end of the year the Dramatic Club was enlarged to include a musical section and became the "B.C. Electric Musical and Dramatic Club." The two sections worked most harmoniously together and (possibly in unconscious aptness) the first performance of the new body was a play, "A Marriage Has Been Arranged."

Just about a month after "A Marriage Has Been Arranged," a new baby came into the family—the happy event taking place in Kamloops.

The new purchase of the power and light franchise, together with the municipal plants, from the City of Kamloops, brought into the "B.C. Electric" fold the largest city of the Interior. Numerous attempts had been made previously by outside companies to purchase the plants, but none of them were considered good enough by Kamloops to go before the citizens. An American-financed organization, the "Canadian Waterworks and Electric Company" put in a very high bid of $800,000 and though the Council accepted this bid, the by-law failed to carry. Negotiations were then opened between "B.C. Electric" and the City Council and the taxpayers endorsed the whole scheme by 498 to 220.

The Company welcomed the new city activities with open arms, and it was agreed that "B.C. Electric" would spend $100,000 on improvements and additions by extending its power lines to help the irrigation schemes in this flourishing dry belt.

Five days before Christmas public attention was focussed back on to Vancouver with the formal opening by Mayor W. H. Malkin of the three million cubic foot waterless gas holder. At the close of this important ceremony, President Murrin gave a brief picture of the future of gas development. "What you have seen today," he said, "is only the beginning of an ultimate plant with a capacity of twenty-five million cubic feet a day." The plant he described envisioned the building of a new wharf, a new coal-handling plant, a retort plant and many others.

Of the Company's expansion plans on Vancouver Island, the first major evidence of future possibilities was the completion of the Bay Street substation in Victoria in March, 1930. This big station served as the heart and centre of the southern part of the Island's electrical system. Through its transformers was to pass the power from Jordan River, Brentwood, and (later on in this same year) Goldstream. The building itself was an impressive one and a worthy addition to the larger buildings of the Capital City. Victoria itself was by this time assuming a much bigger share in "B.C. Electric" development and a steady increase of staff followed the carrying of electric light into the new districts along the Coast.

To the general staff picture, this time in Vancouver, was added another branch of service with the new motion picture section. Staff and public had been kept informed of the overall picture through talks, the daily and weekly press and through a great deal of interesting information in printed booklets. The new section would spread the story via motion picture projectors and films. Two Company films were completed, one of them a three-reeler entitled "Bridge River Power," and a short notice offering the films for public organizations was inserted in the *Buzzer*. It was surprisingly clear proof of general interest in the Company that this small notice was all that was necessary to evoke an immediate response. From then on enquiries for "B.C. Electric" films began to come in steadily and the organizers became duly enthusiastic. Subjects for films for the new department were now to be found in every section of the Company's

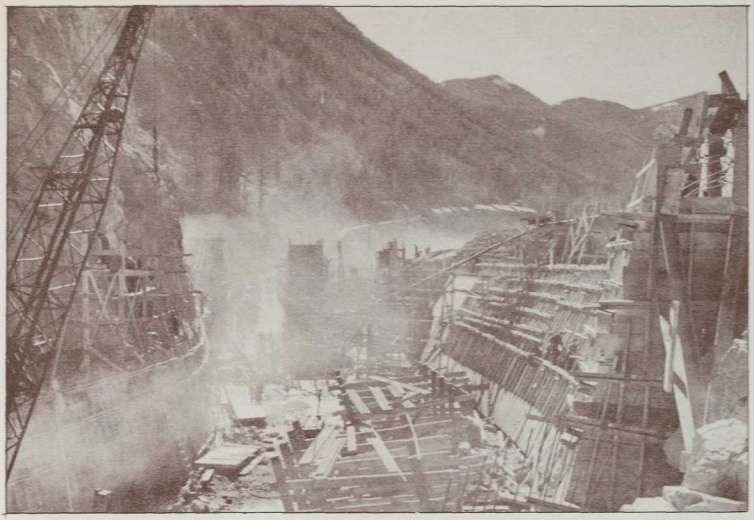
activities. One of them was the work of completing the Bridge River tunnel in the late summer of 1930.

The event was an important one—so important that the exact time of the break-through was recorded for posterity. The last barrier of rock in Mission Mountain, separating Bridge River from the open mountainside above Seton Lake was pierced at precisely 28 minutes, 10 seconds past 8 o'clock on Tuesday evening, July 8th, 1930. So accurate had been the calculations of the Bridge River engineers that the two ends of the tunnel had been bored in a dead straight line, so straight that when the two tunnel heads met, the difference between the centre drill in each case was only 1⅛ inches! No sooner had the break-through occurred than the lining of the tunnel got under way. And that in itself was a ten-month job of considerable difficulty.

Yet another good subject for filming, though perhaps of less future significance, was the arrival in Victoria in the autumn of 1928 of a new fleet of 23 passenger buses. The new buses were to run on a 15-minute schedule and they formed the beginning of very considerable motor bus activities on the Island. When the first of these buses took the road on the Haultain Street route, the vehicle was regarded as the last word in luxurious travel—making almost extravagant history with its "leather upholstered seats, plenty of knee-room between seats, wide centre aisle, ample head room, dome lighting, hot water heating and illuminated destination signs."

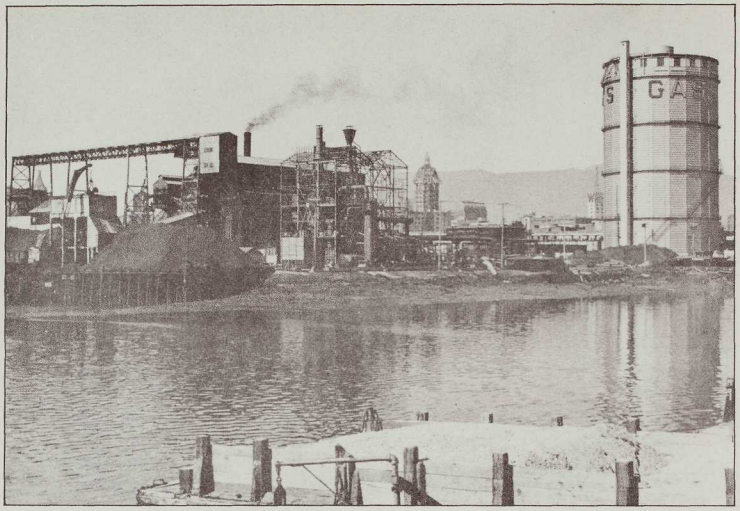
About the time that the new Victoria buses were coming to the help of the people of Victoria, back on the Mainland the residents in North Vancouver received with relief a "B.C. Electric" service they had been wanting for some time—a gas supply.

The very difficult business of taking gas across the Second Narrows Bridge to serve North Vancouver and the North Shore area was completed in the Autumn, but not before a part of the new equipment had been irretriveably dumped at the bottom of the inlet. The big difficulty in front of the engineers was to find a way of taking gas across the

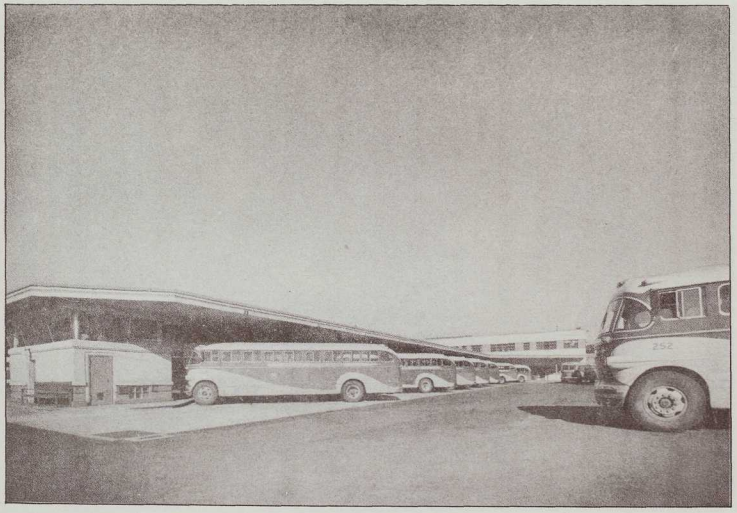


Spillway section of diversion dam, Bridge River Hydro project, shown under construction early in 1947.

Former president George Kidd (left) is presented with a memento of the occasion by former president W. G. Murrin at the opening of Kidd Substation April 7, 1948, while President A. E. Grauer applauds, and Acting Mayor of Vancouver George Miller watches with interest.



A part of the company's $50,000,000 postwar development program, a new water gas plant in Vancouver is shown under construction in 1947



The most modern transportation terminal on the North American continent was opened by B.C. Motor Transportation Limited at Larwill Park in Vancouver in August, 1947.

April 3, 1947, in the President's Office, celebrating the Company's fiftieth anniverary.

The temporary bus garage at Little Mountain Military Camp, Vancouver, 1947.

W. G. MURRIN

GEORGE KIDD

A. E. GRAUER

Photo by Karsh

R. M. HORNE-PAYNE

R. H. SPERLING

Bridge without interfering with the raising and lowering of the bascule span. This tricky job was done by installing a special joint incorporating a new type of automatic valve. This joint was the invention of one of the Company's own Gas Department men—Fred Reed. As the bridge opened, a series of check valves prevented the gas escaping and when the bridge closed again the joint was automatically recoupled and the valves reopened. The new North Shore gasholder, unlike all its fellows in the Company's service was a "silver ball"—a completely spherical storage tank, 28½ feet in diameter, with a capacity of 41,000 cubic feet.

It was not long after this achievement in "B.C. Electric's" gas section that "the big event" of 1930 eclipsed all other interests.

On November 18th, the Honourable Randolph Bruce, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, dedicated the new Ruskin Power Plant to the service of the people. All the leading men of the province made the journey to Ruskin for this great event, including Premier S. F. Tolmie, Mayor W .H. Malkin, Hon. Ian MacKenzie, and many of the Senators and others from all walks of life. They travelled to Ruskin by special train. To welcome them, with President Murrin, came also George Kidd, Sir Frank Stillman Barnard, K.C.M.G., and W. J. Blake Wilson, Directors.

The opening ceremony took place on top of the hydro-electric generator, almost the largest in the world. The actual ceremony—a unique one—was performed by the Lieutenant-Governor passing his hand over a silver ball without touching it. This simple act set in motion electric currents which opened the gates of Ruskin and started the machine.

"Ruskin," as all could see, was the last word in modern construction. And the men who had built it could feel proud indeed—for there was nothing finer of its kind in the world.

The great plant was designed and supervised by the Company's own engineers. Its construction was carried out by local contractors. It was, in fact, a 95% all-Canadian achievement and everybody, from the President down to the humblest worker on the job, felt that "Ruskin" evidenced full value for every dollar spent upon it.

With the history of Ruskin the names of J. I. Newell, Vice-President and Plant Manager, and E. E. Carpenter, consulting engineer and head of the Construction Department will always be associated. Twenty months of continuous activity had blossomed under the supervision of these two men.

The first Ruskin development cost seven and a quarter million dollars. It had employed a weekly average of 560 men, and those 560 men had between them brought into being a power plant whose ultimate development was aimed at 188,000 horsepower, all of which would be available for the prosperity of British Columbia.

Exactly a week after the inauguration of Ruskin, another smaller power unit built by the Company came into operation—an 18,000 horsepower generating unit, known as the "fourth unit" which had been in the process of installation at Jordan River during the past year. The ceremony this time was a simple one, witnessed by Vice-President, A. T. Goward, but actually performed by one of the erecting engineers, W. Simpson. Yet despite the way it suffered by direct comparison with Ruskin, the bringing into service of the new unit climaxed a programme that had been forging steadily ahead at Jordan River since the early part of 1925.

Now it was 1930. And at the end of this third decade of the twentieth century the first low warnings of a deepening world depression had been sounded in British Columbia. Paris, London and New York had already begun to realize how well founded were those warnings. The luxury trades were suffering. Public travel showed a slow but certain decrease, and the decrease in travel was reflected in the traffic returns of "B.C. Electric."

The worst was still another eighteen months ahead. Men and women on the Pacific seaboard were reluctant to admit the storm clouds they saw gathering on the horizon. Immediate living conditions were still good. Some aspects of life extremely so. By the end of 1930 there was a record congestion in applications for motor licenses in British Columbia. Food was plentiful, too; easy to buy and reasonably cheap. Clothes were also inexpensive. Spencer's, in that last

week of 1930, were advertising men's worsteds suits for $16.00. The usual Christmas rush had been undimmed, and Christmas trade in the stores had been good.

As for the larger picture of world affairs, Amy Johnson was startling England by her flight to China. General Joffre, the "grand old man" of World War I, died and was buried at the heart of his native France.

But in Italy a "noted Fascist chieftain was emphatic in asserting that neither he nor nor his people desired another conflict of arms. So far as the training of Fascist youth was concerned, it was being undertaken simply to make them strong and self-reliant."

The name of the Fascist chieftain was Benito Mussolini.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN 1931, despite the beginnings of the depression, the men and women of the "B.C. Electric" were working happily—and working harder than ever. More and more during the last few years they had become part and parcel of the corporate life of British Columbia. And more and more this group of private individuals was sharing in the public life of the Province. Small improvements were made. Individually they were of relative unimportance: collectively they were building the goodwill of one of Canada's largest and most widespread public utility corporations.

One of those smaller forward steps was taken at 10:30 on the morning of Thursday, January 15th, 1931—when an hour's programme of music and home talk was presented by B.C. Electric's "Homemakers" over the air, through Station CNRV. It was the Company's first broadcast. Through it the ideals of B.C. Electric Service went directly into the homes of many thousands of people who loved good music — and who, incidentally, welcomed the advice of trained women on their own kitchen and fireside problems. The number of those women—despite the storm warnings of depression—was still increasing, and many new citizens were now arriving, from Europe as well as from the Eastern provinces.

"B.C. Electric's" own population was mounting too. On June 30th, 1931, the number of employees on the payroll passed the four thousand mark, and many of these newcomers were buying themselves homes along the North Shore and in those farther outlying areas which made them very grateful for their own Company's transportation facilities.

Travel itself was "going modern." On July 22nd the new Airport was opened with a special three-day celebration which was itself a problem for the Traffic Department—who ran special buses out to the new airport from Marpole.

The Traffic Department, however, had, in those days, plenty of seats in its buses. As far as the street cars were concerned, it had too many. In spite of the arrival of new families in Vancouver, poor business conditions and the necessity for an "all-out" economy drive reduced the payload so heavily that drastic new schedules had to be put into effect.

These new "depression schedules" started to operate on July 16th, 1932. All the main line services were very considerably reduced—yet even with those reductions it was found that the service could no longer carry the operators it had hoped to carry. Twenty motormen and conductors had reluctantly to be laid off. There was no longer work for them, and minimum wage costs were too heavy to warrant their retention. An effort was made to combat the depression with weekly car passes, issued at $1.25 each. Although they were welcomed by the public they did not do as much as had been anticipated in fighting bad business.

An adjustment of gas rates also became an obvious necessity. In common with gas companies all over the continent "B.C. Electric" introduced the "minimum charge" as the most modern basis of gas rate schedules. This protected the Company against loss of its small gas users, whose rates showed a slight increase, and kept the good faith of its large gas users, whose total gas bill would show a reasonably substantial reduction. Many families, obliged to spend less money from the family income than they had hitherto allowed themselves, were finding it cheaper to eat at home—the reluctant increase in the gas cooking bill being much less than not cooking at all, and paying for meals outside.

The drive on home cooking, and a very thoroughgoing interest in it, brought 11,000 people to the Strand Theatre in May of 1932 to watch Agnes Reed, Director of the "B.C. Electric's" Home Service Department, demonstrating all the

economies of cooking in the biggest and most successful school yet sponsored, this time by the *Vancouver Sun.*

New cooking devices were put on exhibition for the first time in the Company's new territory at Kamloops – when the "B.C. Electric" opened a store, where Manager North made a special showing of new-style electric cooking-ranges. The urge towards domestic economy afforded a special tie-in with a drive on the preservation of life and limb itself.

Minor accidents, despite all caution, had been growing. And during the Summer months President Murrin set rolling a Company-wide "Less Accidents" campaign.

"W.G." himself donated a very handsome trophy shield to be held in succession by winning traffic teams. In talking to one of the winning teams at a banquet at the Hotel Vancouver, the President pointed out "Accidents are waste in the worst form, and this gathering here tonight is evidence that we are all putting our shoulders to the wheel in an endeavor to solve this problem. We are passing through a period of trial, and your livelihood to a very large extent depends on how we stand the test."

The new campaign was a wise one. Within a matter of months a new appreciation of caution had swept across the system, and even the smaller mishaps were reduced to a new level. This appreciation was evidenced by the general public. And for that matter, the whole attitude of the public towards the Company in this time of depression was becoming both friendlier and better informed. The men and women of British Columbia were realizing that 75% of "B.C. Electric's" purchases were made within the Province. Welcome proof of the significance of that realization came to Head Office in the shape of sincere testimonials from all sizes and kinds of different corporations in the area.

Just as the Company was thus drawing closer to the public which it served, so was the Company's own scattered family drawing closer together.

One day at the end of July—a gloriously fine day in the wettest July on record—the "B.C. Electric" staffs of both

Vancouver and Victoria at last got together in a mass picnic at Newcastle Island. Opportunities for the Mainland family to meet its Island "other half" had been all too rare. A breezy exchange of comments and opinions, and a day of hilarious sporting rivalries did more than months of polite correspondence might have done to help B.C. Electric, Vancouver to understand and appreciate B.C. Electric, Victoria.

Such an exchange of staff was not possible, however, with the further outposts. The ever-present *Employees' Magazine* was admirably filling that gap, doing a wonderful linking job with the more-scattered of its readers. It was through the magazine, for instance, that the engineers at Jordan River heard of a new achievement of their fellow engineers at Kamloops—right at the other end of the "B.C. Electric" Commonwealth. In September, '32, the new Barriere storage dam in the Kamloops territory got under way, and was completed just before Christmas of that year. The new dam (13 miles above the hydro-electric plant which supplied the City of Kamloops) created a storage capacity of 22,400 acre feet by raising the already-established dam another eight feet.

Another development—in yet another era—during 1932, was the installation of a diesel electric generating unit at Port Alberni. Eloquent evidence of the liaison between these different points in the Company's periphery was the transference of this new unit from the Bridge River construction work on the Mainland.

In the field of motor transportation 1932 also brought changes, for it was in this year that the seven-year-old British Columbia Rapid Transit Company Limited, with its passenger and freight services, was absorbed by the British Columbia Motor Transportation Limited. The name of the motor freight services operated by the Rapid Transit Company was now changed to the "Fraser Valley Freight Lines" and a couple of years later again changed to the "Consolidated Truck Lines" by which name it is still known.

No amount of consolidating, however, could hide bad times . . . and the year 1933 saw the depression at its worst. All over Canada private fortunes which had not already

crashed were falling thick and fast. Men and women of lesser means, but of no lesser faith, were feeling, in the ordinary routine of their daily lives, the pinch of want, and sometimes even the pangs of hunger. Yet there was something about these Westerners that sent them into the path of the storm with courage and with a cheerful confidence. Perhaps the spirit of the Pioneers was in them. When the great fire had swept across the little settlement of Granville thirty-six years previously, one of its stalwarts had remarked, in surveying the smouldering embers – "Now we have nothing left but our faith!" The same spirit, even the same fine ring of words, was abroad in Vancouver now.

On one hand there were vast numbers of men and women on relief. Others could not even afford hospitalization. Many who came West from the Prairies, driven by cold and hunger to a warmer climate, failed to find even the sustenance to live.

Yet despite these things, those who *had* work bent their energies to the providing of work for their less fortunate fellows. And it was at such a time that those two prosaic words "Public Utility" were called upon to demonstrate their richest meaning. New capital expenditures were kept to their barest minimum. Funds available were confined to those services which so badly needed such support. As for light and power, many mills which had previously been large customers were completely shut down, and other local industries—many of which depended to a great extent on patronage from these mills—were obliged to reduce their electrical consumption. Because so many were out of work, ordinary domestic consumption also suffered, and the collection of accounts, in 1933, was something of an ordeal. Only one project of any size saw completion in 1933 – that of the first unit of a major new gas manufacturing plant. Two years earlier, the Dominion Government, then anxious to produce a better quality of coke in Canada, had announced a plan to subsidize the construction of this type of plant. The Company availed themselves of this subsidy plan by ordering the construction of 24 new gas-chamber

ovens. They were completed by the beginning of 1933, and on January 31st, the new plant was opened by Mayor L. D. Taylor.

Before the end of 1933 yet another 12 similar ovens had been added and the total capacity soared up to 4½ million cubic feet per day.

The new plant made possible a greatly improved quality in its coke by-product – the demand for which was being perseveringly fostered by the sales organization.

Gas service also entered the picture of the year's events over on Vancouver Island. On August 16th, 1933, Mayor Leeming of Victoria, with the Reeves of Oak Bay, Saanich and Esquimalt, closed the switch which inaugurated a new high pressure service throughout Greater Victoria. It was the climax of a year's hard work on the high pressure gas main extension through certain parts of Victoria city, and the bringing of gas service for the first time into three fast-developing outlying municipalities.

This event, however, could not conceal the grim picture of the depression in all other aspects of the Company's services. The whole of the railway system was operating at a loss. Passengers carried had dropped from over seventy-seven million in 1929 to just over sixty-three million in 1933. Freight tonnage had dropped from over half a million tons in 1929 to 218,776 tons in 1933.

It was recognized that the maintenance of the Company's credit—to enable it to attract capital to provide for the needs of the community—was an essential factor in the well-being of British Columbia. Yet more than 25% of the Company's own revenue was absorbed in municipal, provincial and Dominion taxes.

The concerted effort of all the manifold departments, however, was soon felt. Minor steps—everything from the introduction of one-man cars on the North Shore lines, down to a "Save Paper" Drive in ordinary office routine, worked together, in the end, for the Company's good. It was, perhaps, the very thoroughness of these measures, which

led the way safely through the deepest trough of these difficult times, and brought the B.C. Electric family back on to safer ground.

During this difficult period the corporate life of the "B.C. Electric" did not suffer . . . rather did adversity draw closer the ties of friendship and common interest. It was, for instance, during these dark days that the B.C. Electric Employees Amateur Gardens Association was born. Under the guidance of Alex. MacDonald, members rolled in to the new Association at a dollar apiece, received advice and instruction in gardening and got quite an earthy thrill in a common interchange of bulbs and shrubs. Such "give and take" did, indeed, brighten the dark days of the depression.

Almost as if it were a symbol of the period, the year 1933 closed with a record-breaking storm which so held up the street car and interurban railway system as to become a definite item of local history.

Ice inches thick broke down eight sections of line — or the equivalent of two miles of circuit. Up the Fraser Valley, telephones to Chilliwack were down everywhere, and all details of the chaotic conditions were lacking for over twenty-four hours. Through three days linesmen worked day and night on repairs in the bitterest possible weather, and it was only by almost superhuman effort that the lines were finally cleared and the great system on its wheels again.

With the coming of the Spring a new feeling of promise was in the air, and already it seemed that the tide had turned. The promise of better-times to come was translated into practical shape with new constructive effort all over the Company's territory.

Up at Bridge River, March saw the placing of a contract for clearing the transmission line right of way. The contractor was E. Thomas of Vancouver, who had already erected one camp site in the field and was then starting the erection of a second. Mining activity around the Bridge River development was now becoming vigorous and active —and these activities themselves called for B.C. Electric service. The engineers began the installation of a generating

plant of 4,800 h.p. capacity, and built a transmission line through the Bridge River valley itself to serve a number of mines in that area. This local effort, which was to have much more than local significance, was completed in July, 1934.

The Summer of '34 saw yet another area—this time closer to Vancouver — brought into the "B.C. Electric's" orbit of service. In July, light and power services were brought into Deep Cove and Cove Cliff on the North Arm of Burrard Inlet. Tourists and holiday-makers—now fast discovering (perhaps a little too fast for some of the older residents) the vivid beauties of this tidal wonderland, were at last assured of up-to-date electric service in their holiday homes.

The visitors to Vancouver were that Summer to participate in an altogether new venture by the B.C. Electric. On Sunday afternoon, July 8th, a tremendous crowd of local people, tourists and visitors, attended the first of a series of four concerts presented by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and made possible by the B.C. Electric.

The Company had taken a significant step forward in identifying itself with the cultural life of the Province.

Nearly thirty years had passed since that day in 1905 when music sponsored by the Company had first delighted the thousands of Islanders who went to the opening of Gorge Park, near Victoria. In those thirty intervening years, closer and stronger had the Company drawn to the life of the men, women and children it served. The symphony concerts were a natural flowering of this policy. The first of the concerts also saw the presentation of a symphony "bowl" to the Park Board by W. H. Malkin, a Vancouver patron of the Arts who made the gesture in memory of his wife, after whom it was named the "Marion Malkin Bowl."

No less than fifteen thousand people gathered for that first B.C. Electric Symphony Concert. It was a gratifying success . . . and a special cause of satisfaction to Mrs. B. T. Rogers, President of the Vancouver Symphony Society, and to "B.C. Electric's" own W. G. Murrin, always a loyal follower and lover of good music.

The symphony was under the baton of Allard de Ridder. And the impressive concert was but one of four of these important musical events that were to succeed one another through the Summer. With the beginning of the Autumn, the B.C. Electric went on the air, on September 24th, with a weekly broadcast of symphony music, also under Allard de Ridder's direction. For this new radio broadcast Conductor de Ridder selected twenty-nine pieces from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

The innovation was welcomed with open ears. The whole world of entertainment had indeed become by this time a very necessary source of relief from the discords of depression.

But the depression was ending. When President Murrin addressed the annual general meeting of the "B.C. Electric" shareholders on September 27th, 1934, he was able to announce, "It is reasonable to suppose that the improvement now being experienced in the East will gradually become effective here." And the Company's annual report read, "There are signs of a general improvement in business conditions throughout Canada, and the Government statistics for the first six months of 1934 show fairly substantial gains as compared with the previous year. If it may be assumed that this Province will within reasonable time show gains in business equivalent to the average gains throughout Canada, then your Company will benefit considerably by such improvement."

As 1935 came upon the scene, the "B.C. Electric" family had come to the end of its period of marking time, and could step forward again towards its brighter future. The people it served had never lost their spirits. (Nor, for that matter had they ever lost their sensitiveness. Over in Victoria, the proud people of Foul Bay, after smarting under the indignities of such a name for more years than they chose either to discuss or remember, suddenly appealed to the authorities for their shame to be perpetually effaced from the records—with the result that all Victoria's No. 6 cars,

in the quiet hours of night, lost the offending name and rode forth into the daylight with the destination sign "Gonzales.")

The elements, however, were not so easily cheated. Victoria, and Vancouver too, woke up on Monday, January 21st, 1935, to find the power circuits broken, the street cars stalled, and seventeen inches of snow blowing and drifting through the city.

In Vancouver only two slim threads of conductor line were left to feed the city. Train services were cancelled. Trains themselves were pinned in by slides in front and by washouts behind. Bridges had gone, tracks were undermined, telephone and telegraph services went out of order, and before nightfall Vancouver had no contact with the rest of the world except by sea.

Four circuits from Buntzen were down, three circuits from Stave Falls, and for the first time, during the afternoon, B.C. Electric was forced to appeal to the public, via the radio, to refrain from using electric current during the peak hours (from five to six p.m.)

In Victoria a mud slide carried away part of the Jordan River flume, and cut off the entire water-supply to the forebay. A wall of flood water, 8 feet high and 306 feet long, roared over the spillway of the diversion dam into the river-bed below. At Bridge River the temperature sank 34 deg. below zero and all roads (including the railroad) were completely blocked by snow.

Patrolmen went out on skiis, sleighs, horses and on foot. Wednesday saw conditions improving, however, and by Friday the overworked engineers had succeeded in sending power out over the lines again.

It was in the Summer of '35 that the sale of coke reached its record height. From a modest gross of $3,000 in 1915, the business had expanded to the healthy figure of $210,000 for the year. When the Company had first started selling coke twenty years previously, employee sales had been practically nil. By 1935 they had reached 5,000 tons a year — sure sign that B.C. Electric men and women were confident of

the quality of the coke, and had practically tested the value of the new dry, properly-sized, well-screened, ovenized coke. Coke of any desired density or structure was by now being manufactured to meet any requirements—domestic or metallurgical. But as far as the ordinary men and women of Vancouver were concerned, they were sure of a steady, even temperature with no soot and no smoke, at the very low price of $8.50 per ton.

The improvement in the coke sales was cause for considerable relief and satisfaction, not only in the Coke Sales Department, but among the Directors of the Company. The year brought other advances into the picture. One of them, with especial historical significance, was the Jubilee of the Fraser Valley Line, which fell on Saturday, October 3rd. Twenty-five full years had passed since that first decorated train had rolled into Chilliwack station, carrying Lieutenant-Governor Paterson and Premier McBride — who drove in the last spike. The little town of Chilliwack had blossomed into "Chilliwack Garden City" and the busy freight yards up and down the Fraser Valley line were convincing proof of the prosperity that had marched up the Valley with the "B.C. Electric" pioneers.

New Westminster, considering herself the mother of this wide development, could sit back with pride and count her children's blessings.

The men of the B.C. Electric were doing a good job.

The first issue of the *Employees Magazine* for 1936 announced the appointment of Asger Vilstrup to the post of Chief Electrical Engineer as from January 1st. For fifteen years this popular man had been giving his unflagging energy to the big developments on the power side of the Company's operations. He had become Acting Plant Manager on the death of J. I. Newell and the new appointment was not only popular with all his friends but with the staffs of those distant scenes of his activities.

John Newell, whom he replaced, had worked too hard. He suffered from exposure and overwork in the snowbound

areas during the bitter Winter of 1935, and after a very brief illness, died on February 3rd, 1935.

Vilstrup tackled the new job with typical Scandinavian energy. He was able to announce that during the Winter all previous records for electrical consumption on the Lower Mainland had been broken. On one day alone – the Monday before Christmas, a total of 1,573,000 kilowatts had been generated by the "B.C. Electric" power plants on the Lower Mainland.

The brighter picture was emphasized by President Murrin in his New Year message to the press. In it he wrote, "I approach 1936 with a feeling of confidence, knowing that if evidence had value at all, this Dominion of Canada has passed from a condition of extreme sickness into a condition of convalescence . . . There are two things which I think should be kept very much in mind. One is that the patient is convalescing, and cannot therefore stand the shocks of a series of experimental operations authorized by well-meaning friends for the patient's good. Time is a real healer, and Time, in this instance, should be given a chance. The second important point is that we should not hesitate to face the future with a sane confidence. The psychological effect of a confident and courageous outlook at this time is of untold value in assisting recovery."

Towards the end of February, 1936, President Murrin met the Vancouver City Council's Special Committee to discuss a new fare agreement. He disclosed the very large capital investment of $11,800,000 in the Vancouver street railway system—and he revealed that the gross earnings were barely sufficient to cover the actual expense of its operation.

The agreement with the City of Vancouver with regard to street car fares was later renewed without change, for a period of a further three years, from May 8th, 1936. Thus a system that had been tried out, and that had been running with success in the past, was now given a new and more vigorous lease on life.

Indeed, the policies which had built "B.C. Electric" through a time of great difficulty had begun to emerge with

sureness and with success. This was in no small measure due to the vision of its founders. And its founders must indeed have rejoiced in its sturdiness and staying power.

One of those founders, however, had come to the end of his journey. On April 11th, 1936, there died in Victoria Sir Frank Barnard, K.C.M.G. It was Barnard, with Robert Horne-Payne, who had laid the foundations for the Company. It was he who had supported his colleague throughout the sudden collapse of all their plans, after the shattering blow of the Point Ellice Bridge disaster on Vancouver Island.

Barnard was a persistent man, and a hard-fighting one. This spirit was recognized in 1914 when he became Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, serving it through the difficult period of World War 1, and receiving his Knighthood at the end of it. The Company that had started from a conversation between Sir Frank and Robert Horne-Payne on Kootenay Lake in 1894 had indeed borne fruit past all his expectations, and it was with the knowledge of that deeply-grained success that he left the scene of his labours.

Vancouver itself was remembering, in this year of 1936, its earlier days. Vancouver's Golden Jubilee was greeted with a ringing of bells and a waving of flags on July 1st—Dominion Day. Its celebrations were entered into with a zest and forthrightness that would have pleased those very pioneers whose deeds the City then chose to honour.

Turning again to the story of the moment, another honour achieved within "B.C. Electric" was the appointment of E. H. Adams, Vice-President and Comptroller of the Company to the Presidency of the Canadian Electrical Association.

Sure evidence of the brighter tint in Company affairs was the restoration, during the Summer, of wage and salary reductions in accordance with agreements with the employees. It was an increase whose restoration of confidence very much more than offset the increase in the expense of "B.C. Electric" operation and maintenance. Passenger revenue on the railway system was another indication — with an increase of 4.7% over the previous year, and an operation of 279,000 additional car miles during the year.

In 1937 3,427 additional electric customers were added to the "B.C. Electric" total, and passenger revenue again showed an increase of 5% over the previous year, due to the extension of service and a welcomed increase in passengers carried.

New Westminster, which had been experimenting with bus services since 1924 — when it watched with interest the first Rapid Transit buses go into service — now went wholeheartedly into the "ride on rubber" movement.

After forty-six years of service by street cars, the complete transportation system became a motor bus operation on July 20th, 1937. Down came the trolley wires and poles, and up came the rails from street after street. In some places the rails were left in place and paving was poured over them. A magnificent fleet of new buses now rolled into service in the Royal City, and the whole effect of this sweeping change seemed to set up in the minds of the Fraser Valley people an urge for "cleaning house." The Company itself shared in the general blossoming. At Sapperton up went a new modern car barn to house the Interurban trains and a new substation to serve the line with power.

In New Westminster the old car barn on 12th Street was completely remodelled to make a highly efficient bus garage. Changes went into effect in the Columbia Street station too. A new ticket office went into action, and a new waiting room was opened. Modern lighting effects were installed all over the New Westminster headquarters.

Back in Vancouver another department of the Company's affairs, which had been quietly going about its work during the few previous years, came into the strong light with the appointment of a new Sales Promotion Manager. The man for the job was young and energetic, with a vigilant eye for detail and the double blessing of an apparently limitless amount of tact. The man was Harold Merilees. The new Sales Promotion Department gave Merilees a chance to lay before the public a clear and vivid demonstration of what modern electric and gas developments could do for daily living.

By that time he was, moreover, practicing what he preached, having married the popular Doris Greenwood of the Home Service Department—one of the Spring weddings of 1935.

The individual history of another "B.C. Electric" figure came back into the limelight when on July 30th the busiest of them all, and one of the most loved, celebrated his own silver jubilee of "B.C. Electric" service. On that day the staff gave their President an antique silver urn at a special birthday party picnic at Sechelt, a picnic highlighted with a two-tier birthday cake (made from a recipe copied from the one used for the wedding of Princess Mary and Lord Lascelles). President Murrin received another tribute to his popularity with the presentation of an illuminated testimonial from the B.C. Electric Amateur Gardeners' Association —one hundred and sixty of whose members, with their families, visited the President and Mrs. Murrin at "The Gables."

To "W.G." the presentation came as a welcome tribute —and a very pleasant little excursion in the midst of a very busy Summer. Among his responsibilities in these midsummer months of '38 were the guiding of expenditures on plant extensions and improvements amounting to nearly two million dollars.

Two of the major projects coming under this heading were the Grandview (Vancouver) Substation, and a second unit of 47,000 horsepower at Ruskin. The latter new Unit brought Ruskin up to a capacity of 94,000 horsepower. For months E. E. Carpenter, the Consulting Engineer, had plugged away enthusiastically with his staff, and despite considerable headaches caused by a delay in the arrival of some of the turbine machinery from the East, it was announced in September, 1938, that the job would be finished on schedule.

Many other major constructional projects were on hand at this time outside the Company's orbit. One of them — destined to affect the transportation system in no small measure—was the building of one of the world's most famous bridges—the Lions' Gate Bridge over the First Narrows between Stanley Park and the North Shore.

The bridge would provide a new main highway for the North Shore bus service. It would make West Vancouver (once just a pleasant little hamlet nestling under the forest slopes of Hollyburn Ridge) a thriving and beautiful residential area. The big new bridge was opened to pedestrian traffic on December 20th, and to vehicular traffic one week later, just at the turn of the year.

On the inside of the Company's plans, work was completed in February, '39, of a new two-storey steel-reinforced concrete building on Carrall Street—the electrical meter shop. The new building, though a small one, was a remarkable example of functional design. Delicate meter adjustments and other kinds of precision-demanding work were to be part of the routine within its walls, and for that reason those walls were mostly glass — with a special provision for artificial lighting after dark, a consideration which its new tenants, moved into the new building from their quarters on Main Street, were very quick to appreciate.

Life for "B.C. Electric" employees had become a well-ordered and quite enviable progress through these days of fruition of the Company's earlier promise. The employees themselves worked in an atmosphere of real consideration for each other, and for the interests of the whole. Over in Victoria, the "B.C. Electric" Office Association (Victoria and Vancouver Island Branch) was formed, and launched its career with an inaugural banquet at the Empress Hotel, under the honorary Presidency of A. T. Goward. Vice-President Adams gave a straight-from-the-shoulder speech, making still clearer to the men and women listening to him the opportunities they had, in their united strength, to build up the country they were so wholeheartedly serving as members of the "B.C. Electric" family.

It was not many months after this that the "B.C. Electric" staff of the Lower Mainland got ready for an event which was to be forever memorable in the Country's story—the visit of King George and Queen Elizabeth.

It was, though little did people realize it, the last brief hour of pageantry in British Columbia before the coming

crisis. Already the warning signals were visible in the world. And from Vienna to Victoria there were already minds which grasped the shape of things to come.

Those things were pushed willy-nilly into the background on the last three days of May in 1939. On the 29th, 30th and 31st, Their Majesties covered Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster. President Murrin, in a message to the staff, wrote of the event: "The actual passing of Their Majesties only took a few seconds; their whole stay in Canada only a few weeks, yet when it is all over, I feel there is something very valuable left behind. Their visit has helped us to realize that behind this individual life which we each one live, there is a background—the background of our City, the background of our Dominion, the background of the Empire, and that there is a unity between these backgrounds. We visualize, in the persons of the King and Queen, the symbol of that unity. There are millions to whom the singing of "God Save the King" in future will hold a deeper and more personal meaning."

The Royal Visit had put a challenging strain on the "B.C. Electric" Traffic Department. The long procession meant the bringing into service of every possible car and bus in the Company's possession. A staff of thirty-six men had been detailed to special duty handling the re-routing problems. Reports of traffic conditions throughout the City were relayed to Prior Street at regular intervals. Special crews from the Mechanical, Track and Line Departments were posted at strategic points to care for emergencies. To the relief of everyone concerned, they were little needed.

King George and Queen Elizabeth went home to the centre of the Commonwealth. And in but another two months the storm broke. On September 3rd Prime Minister Chamberlain broadcast to the nations of the Commonwealth, the news that Great Britain was at war with Germany.

For years the British Government, in front of the greatest provocation known in History, had striven for a peaceful settlement of the chaotic problems which then burst into flame in Europe. National pride had suffered bitterly.

It was called upon, at the expense of its pledged word to other countries, to suffer even more. But there was a limit beyond which the desire for peace could be pushed no further.

With Canada's declaration of war seven days after the Mother Country had herself crossed the bridge of decision, the whole Dominion mobilized itself as never before, not only for action, but for *victorious* action.

For the second time within a few short years, the men (and in this case, more than ever before) the *women* of the "B.C. Electric" rose with unmistakable vigour to the urgent occasion.

The trappings of war were noticeably missing. There was little "flag-wagging," and little drum-beating, and it was a *silent* bugle call which the men of Buntzen and Bridge River, of Jordan River and the Albernis, of Kamloops and New Westminster and Vancouver answered, as they moved into their khaki or their blue.

The journey to the battlefront was long—in whichever direction their orders carried them. But they went with pride, grumbling a little at the regimentation of the new lives which now engulfed them, yet joining their fellows from all the wide Provinces of Canada with an honest-to-goodness thrill of excitement.

Those left behind in "B.C. Electric," from Carrall Street to the furthest edge of the Company's orbit, took on an extra share of work, and put into it all the new strength which the new need had given them. Already some men of an older generation began to trickle into the staff to take the place of those at the war fronts.

It was at such a time that one further individual tragedy cast a shadow over the Vancouver scene. On October 23rd, the Company lost its Traffic Superintendent. For thirty-nine years Bill Dinsmore had serviced the Company – ever since the time when there were only thirteen cars in service.

He was succeeded in his work by Harry Cottrell – a smooth-natured, happy-hearted man who had himself for twenty-nine years been a member of the "B.C. Electric"

family. Eleven years previously he had been made a Traffic Inspector. Later he had been brought into the Traffic Department's inner operations—where his pleasant and tactful manner helped him to handle complaints.

People in those early days of war, however, had too much to think about to trouble themselves unduly with the registering of complaints. One of those major things about which they were thinking was the national War Loan. And it was a cause with which, at the beginning of 1940, President Murrin identified himself by officiating as a member of the British Columbia Committee of the National War Loan. George Kidd was another member. Still further members of the organization played other vital parts in this drive for greater wartime strength and unity.

1940 brought another new member into the "B.C. Electric" family in the person of J. Lorn McLean, new Assistant to the Vice-President and Comptroller.

McLean was born in Palo Alto, California – his father, a Canadian, being a member of the faculty of Stanford University. About the time the new assistant took over, the oldest of the Company's employees celebrated his Golden Jubilee.

On May 17th George Dickie, Superintendent of the Mechanical Division, rounded out his fifty years of steady service. Dickie had seen a half century of changes in the traffic organization to which he had contributed such sterling service. Now at the time of his jubilee, he was witnessing the strange phenomenon of an increase in street car traffic due to a shortage of gasoline!

Just as the street cars began to come into their own again, they, too, celebrated a Golden Jubilee – an event which brought out a special number of the Employees Magazine and a rash of nostalgic memories – especially in the car barns.

Within a few weeks, Victoria's street cars also had their day of Jubilee—five months late! Victoria's street cars had started operating in February, 1890, but February 1940 passed

with such a flurry of complications over the completion of the fifty years of civic franchise that Victoria passed its anniversary unheralded and unsung.

The Victoria street railway system was at that time carried on as a war emergency effort at the request of the authorities, and, in spite of a great many irritating--and sometimes more than irritating—difficulties, it did a wonderful job.

The Annual Report of the British Columbia Power Corporation Limited for 1940 crystallized the improvement in street car traffic by showing an increase over the 1939 figure (of passengers carried) of approximately four million.

The end of the decade saw British Columbia and Canada still deep in war, with the organization of the war industries and the response of their workers the main consideration.

The whole Canadian machine was being geared for a maximum war effort. Roosevelt had proclaimed the United States "Arsenal of Democracy" — and the Arsenal was beginning to deliver the goods.

Those were the days of the "uneasy calm" in Europe. In France the Nazi avalanche had not yet started . . . but the war of nerves was growing ever more aggressive. The people themselves were confident. And a wave of patriotism had swept the Commonwealth.

"There'll Alway be an England" was being sung around the Empire. And the comedians of screen and stage were keeping the free world's laughter wholesome and unabashed.

It was the day of the Marx Brothers and "Tin Pan Alley." And the mood was optimistic.

War optimism had indeed been justified in other than European fronts. The last day of 1940 found British troops seventy-five miles inside Libya. It was well that the desert army did not know, as it celebrated the New Year, of the disasters that lay ahead.

CHAPTER IX.

IT was with a new spirit of determination – and with sufficient energy to back it – that "B.C. Electric" moved forward into the fourth decade of the twentieth century. The war, for the Allies, despite success in North Africa, had been going badly. But it was in those very reverses that Britain was demonstrating her refusal to consider defeat. Almost the last words of Lord Lothian, British Ambassador to the United States, in that critical period—words spoken just before his death in office—were a vigorous appeal for help in need. "If you back us," said Lord Lothian to the American people, "you will not be backing a quitter. The issue now depends largely on what you decide to do. Nobody can share that responsibility with you. It is the great strength of democracy that it brings responsibility squarely to every citizen and every nation. And before the judgment seat of God each must answer for his own actions."

The peoples of the New World, as President Roosevelt reminded them, were going forth to the rescue of the Old. And in the echo of their marching feet rang very clearly the embattled might of Canada.

In every province and in every city men and women were laying aside their individual dreams for the common good. Hands that had done little more than hold a pen or push a lawn mower were making shells and ships. It was among these men and women of the new era that the family of "B.C. Electric" workers now moved up into the forward lines of the Peoples' battle. While the individual men and women (sometimes mere boys, sometimes just girls

from high school) were putting on their uniforms to leave unquestioningly the country of their birth, the great machine of the organization was harnessing itself with gathering momentum to the war effort of the Dominion.

Urgent necessity was the mother of urgent invention. In April of '40, Hugh Libby, of "B.C. Electric's" Gas Division, had designed and executed a gas furnace to heat rivets. The non-stop wartime shipbuilding activities had been depending on the heating of rivets with coke. Within a year, Libby had built seventeen gas furnaces in one West Coast shipyard. And gas made in "B.C. Electric's" plant was putting the Navy's ships into the water ahead of schedule!

In the spring of '41 the War Savings drive had got under way and War Savings Certificates were being bought with determination. With a spirit of great sacrifice even the humblest of "B.C. Electric" workers joined this movement — and the women of the "B.C. Electric" played a sterling part in this widespread effort. Faith enabled them to see, even in that darkest period of the war, that War Savings Stamps and Certificates were a sound investment.

Many of the Company's key men identified themselves publicly with the Government's War Savings scheme. Among them was Howard Walters, now General Sales Manager. Walters was loaned to the Government to take over the development of War Savings for British Columbia and the Yukon. His persistence made him an ideal man for the job — for it was a job in which the maintenance of a cheerful spirit was almost as important as the collection of the funds themselves.

Knowing their responsibility to those of the "B.C. Electric's" men and women left behind, and doing a more arduous job than ever, the "B.C. Electric's" publications also grew brighter. They became brisker. They developed in themselves a simple eloquence which deepened the affection in which they were held. And James Lightbody, who had been editing the *Buzzer* since June 2nd, 1916, sustained in his bright and chatty little paper a sharper wit and richer sense of laughter that helped to lift many a

worry, not only from the street car passengers for whom it was primarily intended but also from the staff.

Those street car passengers needed all the entertainment and cheerfulness they could find. They were compelled to pursue their journeys through the brownouts and even, on occasion, through total blackout. Some of those blackout tests were conducted only after weeks of preparation by a B.C. Electric Central Committee, organized by Chief Engineer Ingledow (as he then was) with the help of Transportation Manager Arnott, Gas Engineer Keillor, Assistant Chief Engineer Vilstrup, Sales Manager Walker, Fire Warden Griffiths and Building Superintendent Young. The blackout tests were a marked success. They served, moreover, to bring home to Vancouver the fact that a country so far from the actual fighting fronts could indeed be close to war. Back in Ontario, Premier Hepburn was warning — "We are satisfied to do too little too late, while Hitler does too much too soon. We talk big but we do not deliver the goods commensurate with our organized capabilities. Only stark realization of a two-ocean invasion will awaken us from our state of apathy."

How much the charge of apathy was justified in British Columbia remained a hotly debated subject. But certain it was that a goodly proportion of those who were not able to take up arms were helping as best they could . . . lending for the Victory Loan, putting all they had into their respective jobs.

But the war was moving to a fuller field. On the Sunday morning of December 7th the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. And immediately the Pacific Coast — the United States part of it as well as the Canadian — was fused into the common fight.

None knew, from that day forward, when the blow might fall on British Columbia itself. Emergency plans were drawn up and precautions taken all over the Company's system. To meet any such possible emergency First Aid lessons were also started (with a response that was both hearty and determined) everywhere from Chilliwack to Victoria.

Capable and competent George Lunn, helped by Supervisor Percy and Annie Hill, organized a First Aid service with employee volunteers. They were fully supplied with stretchers, blankets, medical kits, bottles and bandages to cope with any emergency. The *Employees' Magazine* of January, 1942, says, "Should it be shell fragments, flying glass, or wood splinters; should it be a faint or a fracture, cut or concussion, these are the mercy vendors who will take charge and give First Aid to the injured, and prepare the serious cases for evacuation to hospital through A.R.P. arrangements."

In case of possible air raids, fire-fighting drill also got under way. On June 18th, 1942, six hundred Head Office employees evacuated the five floors of Head Office in 2½ minutes! Yet despite these war emergency activities, routine service went on with as little interference as possible.

On August 24, 1942, there began at the Court House in Vancouver, some long-awaited public hearings at which the Public Utilities Commission was to consider the general rate base and rate of return to be allowed the Company. The Commission had previously started, in 1939, under the chairmanship of W. A. Carrothers, to make a valuation of the Company's property.

And the Company's case was now conducted by Vice-President E. H. Adams, supported by A. E. Grauer, J. Lorn McLean and V. Laursen.

The figure arrived at by the Commission's engineer, as of 1941, was $108,355,173, including $3,500,000 for working capital. On this basis the Company's allowed return amounted to 5.3%. In presenting the Company's case, Vice-President Adams said, "We believe this investigation will do much to remove public misconception and will provide public enlightenment, notwithstanding the fact that its final stages are being reached in a war-torn world where business conditions are unstable and change frequently overnight." A. E. Grauer submitted the Company's case on value and development cost, and J. Lorn McLean gave the second submission on the necessity for raising the upper limit of the deprecia-

tion scale, particularly on the ground of increased transportation loads which were shortening the life of the Company's property.

An accounting survey, made by the Commission's George A. Touche, had been publicly and devastatingly criticized as being "irrelevant, incomplete, inaccurate, one-sided and inadequate." Vice-President Adams himself took up these charges and very satisfactorily supported them — one by one. President Murrin brought the Company's case into the correct and broad perspective with a detailed history of the decision to proceed with the Bridge River development, quoting reports from eminent engineers of continent-wide reputation that it was the only power site available in the vicinity of Vancouver. For this development large amounts of capital would be required and it was essential, therefore, to secure a fair return if investors were to be favorably impressed with the Company's prospects.

Further regional hearings of the British Columbia Public Utilities Commission were held in Victoria from November 18th to 20th to give the Capital City and other municipalities the chance to present evidence dealing with rates and other matters affecting "B.C. Electric's" service in southern Vancouver Island. Vice-President Adams at this Island hearing said, "The allowed return of the Company will depend solely on the findings of the Commission as based upon these facts, and thus the consumer is given full protection against any possibility of inflated capital structures."

It was not until the beginning of 1944 that the Commission's report was finally issued. This report found the Company's rates to be much less than sufficient to provide a fair return on the rate base recommended. Owing to taxation at that time, however, including the excess profits tax, nothing could then be done to bring the return up to the standard set by the Commission. The principal effect of the report was to recommend the rate base, and the allowed rate of return. The rate base, as at the end of 1942, was set at $109,589,499 — and the Commission now allowed a return of 5.3%. More detailed finding and recommendations

of the Commission were highly complicated, but they afforded, as time proved, a satisfactory solution to some very vexed questions.

The public hearings were carried on in the urgent atmosphere of war. Major interest was the survival not only of Canada, but of the democratic ideal. And towards the perfection of that ideal both the Dominion and the United States were now working more closely than ever — and more satisfactorily.

On Thanksgiving Day, 1942, a big People's Battle Parade demonstrated this community of effort with dramatic sharpness. Detachments from the Navy, Army and Air Forces of both countries paraded together through the Vancouver streets — forming a long line of keen, smart, well-prepared fighting men which took two hours to pass any given point on the route. The parade itself called for extra precision in the handling of the crowds — and 110 special cars dealt with the men, women and thousands of children who were on hand to watch the men march by.

Towards the end of the year "B.C. Electric" received news of its first war honour—one of its employees receiving the D.F.C. for courage and distinction in the fighting. Conductor No. 836—now Pilot Officer Mansfield Beach — won his Distinguished Flying Cross for distinguished service in the war zone. He was to be followed by many more young "B.C. Electric" men who carried the spirit of British Columbia with such telling energy behind the enemy lines.

The beginning of 1943 saw the award of gold badges and War Savings Certificates to 90 motormen, conductors and operators, who had put in ten years of track performance without a miss. Collectively these men had chalked up a record of 900 years of operation . . . in which they had carried more than 135,000,000 passengers over 22,000,000 miles without any single chargeable accident!

The street cars carrying war workers to their heavy duties were now more crowded than ever. E. W. Arnott, Transportation Manager, pointed out that on normal days the "B.C. Electric" was carrying 280,000 passengers, as against

200,000 during December of the previous year (1942). In summer those passengers began to be happily aware of the presence in the City of the new "B.C. Electric" guides, a corps of smartly uniformed girls whose job it was to sell street car tickets and give general information. The new guides — by selling tickets outside the street cars — helped very considerably to speed up the boarding of large crowds.

Many of these guides were stationed at the Ferry Wharf to cope with the masses of busy workers moving over to the shipyards. And the shipyards had themselves so organized that they could absorb more labor than ever before in the big construction programme then getting under way on behalf of the coming invasion. In the launching of every single ship electricity was playing a vital part. In every single tool that was forged, electricity took a hand. Invasion barges—that were to be so vital a part of history within a year—were slipping swiftly, silently, almost surreptitiously, into coastal waters. And only electric lighting, after daylight had gone, made it possible to continue that job of production—to step it up, and to step it up yet again, without interruption.

The engineers in the Company's big hydro-electric plants, from Jordan River to Ruskin, were thus taking by their maintenance of power supply, a very definite part in the preparation for the big drive that was then being planned on continental Europe.

Shortly following the introduction of the "B.C. Electric's" guides came the first conductorettes. September, 1943, saw the coming of uniformed women into the street cars to fill the gaps left by men now serving in the armed forces.

Working conditions were the same as for other members of the Street Railwaymen's Union. With very few exceptions, the first conductorettes were wives of men overseas. Carefully trained, and guided by Traffic Superintendent Cottrell, they went out on to the tracks with a fine confidence, and did their job with cheerful efficiency.

"Cheerful efficiency," indeed, had become a symbol of these difficult times.

And cheerful efficiency marked the character of a new little entity who was to pull his part in the Company's war operations. The newcomer was "Reddy Kilowatt" – a jagged little personality with an engaging smile. Reddy Kilowatt was only a creature of pen and ink—but he went to duty in advertisements, booklets, movies, and took time off occasionally to prepare for his real post-war job of doing the washing, toasting the bread, cooking the meals, cleaning the carpets, bringing music via the radio and performing all the other functions which electric service (of which he was the symbol) now made possible.

1944 saw the coming of age of the "B.C. Electric" bus lines. The event happened at a time when the growing need for transit of war workers gave no opportunity, however, for any celebration. In the beginning of 1944 there were, in the bus lines, 21 regular operators and 57 alternating men —headed by Inspector Bob Dickie, the Company's first operator, and Acting Inspectors Mortimer and Leatherdale.

Another headache—and an almost incurable one – was a very serious water shortage which developed in the spring of 1944, at a time when electric power was more urgently needed than ever. It seemed almost as if the normal laws of water precipitation over the mainland coastal areas came to a standstill. The Coquitlam River, for instance, showed a precipitation, for the preceding ten months, of 89.48 inches. For forty years its average had been 128.80 inches. on April 1st, 1944, the flow at Wardner, on the Kootenay, was down to 55% of normal. At Garibaldi Park the precipitation, for the 6 months ending March 31st, was 35.09 inches, compared with a 21-year average of 47.01 inches. By the turn of the year this situation had become serious enough to warrant the Vancouver steam plant being put into operation. But the only real cure was more rain and plenty of it. Although the weather obliged over the Victoria Day holiday, and on several other occasions, no appreciable rainfall arrived to meet the case. Not until the autumn, when the people of British Columbia were snatching the last brief holidays in the open air was the answer fully given—and then the rains came. It was during this eventful year that another esteemed

member of the "B.C. Electric" family took his place in the ranks of the retired veterans. This was John Keillor who had served the Company faithfully for over twenty-five years . . . a popular Gas Engineer who had himself come from a famous Scottish family which had been identified with the gas business for generations (and, for that matter, with marmalade!) He was succeeded by E. H. (Roy) Rohrer who came from Montreal with a background of twenty-five years in the gas industry.

This was a time, however, of world-shaking events. It was on June 5th, after years of doubting, hoping, and planning that the invasion of Europe had got under way. Despite the anxiety which mounted in the hearts of so many British Columbians, there was no denying a new pride in the knowledge that some of the Company's own people were now moving into the heart of the biggest battle of the war.

Among those "D-Day men" of the "B.C. Electric" was Arthur Bunbury, who enlisted straight from his work in the steam plant in 1939 as Chief E.R.A. on the H.M.C.S. Saskatchewan. "Bunny" visited Cherbourg with the first wave of the invasion.

In the autumn of that same year another name came into prominence at home, a name that was to develop very big significance in the history of the Company and of the province. Five years earlier—on August 1st, 1939, a young man of exceptional ability had joined the B.C. Power Corporation as General Secretary. His name was Albert Edward Grauer, to be known generally and inevitably as "Dal." At that time he was only 33, yet he had behind him a very remarkable record. It was one that had been shaping him for leadership—and for contact with all kinds of men, having all shades and varieties of opinion.

Dal Grauer was a "native son" born on the family farm in Sea Island. Even as a boy there seems to have been about him a rare mixture of two great characteristics—a determination to succeed plus a regard for the feelings of other people; a mixture not often encountered in the young. At the University of British Columbia, he graduated with first class

honours in economics and history in 1924—at a mere nineteen. After leaving U.B.C. he took his Doctor of Philosophy degree in economics and political science at the University of California. And from there, as a Rhodes scholar from Vancouver, he moved on to yet a third University, gaining his B.A. in jurisprudence at Oxford—where, incidentally, he also found time to captain the University lacrosse team.

But throughout his progress in California and in England, he had retained his love of Canada and of things Canadian. From Oxford he returned, in 1931, to the country of his birth, where he joined the faculty of the University of Toronto. And here again his keen mind, and his quiet, unflagging observation of affairs pushed him inevitably higher up. He accepted an appointment as professor of social science. For six years—six energetic and eventful years (in which, moreover, he still made time to demonstrate the keenness which had made him a New Westminster Olympic Games lacrosse star) he remained in charge of the Department of Social Science. Dal Grauer was a member of the Senate of Toronto University until 1939—it was during that period of membership, in 1936, that he was retained by the Bank of Canada to make a study of Canada's taxation system, and to act as an expert on social welfare, social insurance, housing and labor legislation for the Rowell-Sirois Commission — the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial relations. On the completion of this Commission's work he came home again to British Columbia — taking the "B.C. Electric" general secretaryship, which gave him charge of the Public Utilities Commission data, and of the rate and wage hearings.

Dal Grauer married, when he was twenty-seven, the popular Shirley Woodward, member of yet another very progressive British Columbia family — a girl who shared not only his love of British Columbia, but the love of music which made Dal Grauer Director of the Vancouver Symphony Society. They evidenced, these young people, a fine capacity for family life — which fitted "Dal" very aptly to take over his duties as Vice-Chairman of the Family Welfare Bureau.

Vice-President E. H. Adams took farewell of the "B.C. Electric" staff on November 17th, 1944, and President Murrin,

on that day, presented him with a silver tea service engraved with a record of his thirty-seven years of service with the Company. Adams was an Irishman – with an Irishman's ready wit and eloquence. He was one of the few who had joined the "B.C. Electric's" London office staff in 1907 – a beginning which gave him a width of vision the Company found of unquestioned value in the long years of service that now came to an end.

Other staff changes in "B.C. Electric" leadership were announced in this important year. The Company took unto itself a new treasurer, J. Lorn McLean – and he was given jurisdiction over all financial and accounting functions throughout the system.

McLean was a man with a notable capacity for hard work. He, too, brought with him to the new job a University of Toronto background. And he brought with him also a love of the fresh air, of walking and exploring, that made him a very ready friend for the healthy-living people who now came closely under his influence.

Another appointment of the time was that of Chief Engineer Ingledow to be Vice-President and Chief Engineer.

W. C. Mainwaring, General Sales Manager, became Vice-President in charge of General Sales. E. W. Arnott, Transportation Manager became Vice-President in Charge of Transportation.

The newcomers did not find all their way smooth sailing – especially E. W. Arnott. In January, 1945, the street railway workers went on strike. Six months previously they had applied to the Regional War Labor Board of British Columbia for substantial increases in their rates of pay. No satisfactory decision was reached by the Board, however, until the strike action of January brought down a decision from the Board on January 5, 1945, awarding a general increase in the rates of pay of 4½c an hour, retroactive to March 1st, 1944. There were additional adjustments for certain categories, notably skilled workers and track maintenance men. The period for appeal to the Regional Board

expired on February 4th, 1945, without any action being taken, and on March 2nd, the men were paid the retroactive increases.

It was about this time that the whole question of salaries and wages came up for review and, on February 1st, 1945, the Company started a comprehensive job analysis and salary classification. This step had been previously agreed upon in Section 4 of the Company's agreement with the Employees' Association. The Company agreed to fix a rating in terms of salaries (or of a range of salaries) for all positions. It was agreed, also, that no employee should receive a reduced salary in any position in which he or she was employed as a direct result of the job analysis. The whole object was to secure a sound basis for the administration of salaries — one on which an employee's worth would be recognized in terms of his or her own individual development.

There were a great many important factors entering into this analysis. There was education to be considered, experience, and such matters as initiative, physical demands, and working conditions. These common factors were used as a measuring stick by which each job was carefully appraised. The relative values were then converted into point ratings and on these point ratings a fair and equitable salary scale was drawn up.

In addition to the complexities of job analysis the men in charge of "B.C. Electric" affairs now considered that the time had come to review the pension plan. By this time the Company was making monthly payments to a slowly mounting number of over 200 employees retired on pension. The plan was a non-contributory one, and it had developed during many years of Company development and service.

An actuarial study of this plan had been undertaken by this time, and negotiations had been opened with the Department of National Revenue, who held jurisdiction in these matters. After obtaining the necessary consent from the Minister of National Revenue, the "B.C. Electric" had paid into a fund (held by the Royal Trust Company as trustee) $400,000 for 1943 and $439,000 in 1944, in accordance

with the actuarial findings as to the potential pension liability accruing with respect to employees' services rendered in those years. Retirement of many much-esteemed old-timers was spreading now to larger numbers than ever before in all sections of the Company's service. The increase was in itself a tribute to their spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice — for most of the men who retired in the end of 1945 had deferred this step during the war to help keep up essential service at a time when their younger and more active colleagues were in the armed forces.

Age is no respecter of persons, and withdrawal into a less active sphere of life was a step now felt necessary by those with modest jobs and those with big jobs alike. Among the latter was A. T. Goward, Vice-President in charge of Vancouver Island operations.

For 55 years this stalwart man had worked with and for the Company and with its predecessors. And a man does not climb through 55 years in the service of the Company without making many friends. The gap left by his departure was no easy one to fill — even by the man who now moved up to fill it.

The new Vice-President in charge of Island operations was William Crossley Mainwaring, known throughout his long years of service to everybody in the Company just as "Bill" Mainwaring and (a tribute to his friendly attitude in high office) still so known. Bill Mainwaring was himself an Islander, born at Nanaimo. He joined "B.C. Electric" as Merchandise Manager in 1932 and became General Sales Manager in '36, when all branches of the gas and electric sales departments were amalgamated. He carried over to the Island with him not only a tremendously valuable knowledge of Mainland operations but also an international outlook that could not but help to broaden the Company's future, and draw more closely together the two main territorial spheres of "B.C. Electric" operations.

Also into retirement this year went amiable George Dickie, Mechanical Superintendent, and W. H. Cottrell, Traffic Superintendent. It was at this time, too, that Harold

Till, so long an active figure in the Traffic Department, stepped up to the rank of Traffic Superintendent.

So much for the outgoing men. With the coming of peace in Europe and the, so rapidly afterwards, peace in Japan, the wheels of the Personnel Department got busy with their work of running back into their proper positions the returning veterans. By the end of 1945, 322 of them had returned to their positions with the Company. And another 246 returned men and women found "B.C. Electric" jobs who had not previously been employed by the Company.

The year had also seen the setting up of an Industrial Development Department – its job being to foster industrial growth in the territory, and to assist in the conversion of wartime industries back to peace time production.

Back to the Company affairs from his Government service in developing War Savings in British Columbia and the Yukon came Howard Walters in 1945, to develop this new department and to foster an advertising campaign which was to be talked of the world over—a campaign under the slogan "Business is Moving to B.C." Also back from the National War Finance Committee, where he had acted as Public Relations Organizer for the Vancouver Division came Harold Merilees to establish a new department of Public Information under Executive Vice-President Grauer.

The advertisements of the new campaign, aimed openly, boldly and broadmindedly at the development of British Columbia industries, were placed in outstanding magazines and newspapers throughout Eastern Canada, the United States and England. In pointing the opportunities for development of secondary industries using the vast natural resources of the province, they afforded yet another instance of the way in which "B.C. Electric" was affecting the whole course of Western Canadian history. By the end of 1945, 594 enquiries had been received as a result of the Industrial Development Department's campaign, and new industrial consumers were planning an annual production of over $12,000,000, with annual payrolls of $3,440,000.

The seeds had also been sown for that post-war crop of developments which "B.C. Electric" directors had long been planning. To guide the harvesting of that crop, as President of the Company, came Dal Grauer . . . taking over the reins of office on April 25, 1946, on the retirement of the familiar figure of W. G. Murrin.

In his last message to a meeting of the shareholders, "W.G." said, "In conclusion, I wish to make a short statement that has a personal reference. This will be the last occasion upon which I shall address the annual meeting of the B.C. Power Corporation as its President. I have occupied this office since January, 1929. My decision to resign has been contemplated for some time, and I have every confidence in the virile and capable organization which I leave behind, effectively meeting the challenge of the post-war years."

"W.G." had always been remarkably clever in his choice of words. Those two adjectives, "virile" and "capable," summed up, more than any he could have found in the dictionary, the quality of the man who next took over his office. But virility and capability surged now not only from Dal Grauer but also from the band of people gathered into positions of authority and influence around him. The new office holders were tried people—and they were going to need all the experience their work embodied.

And it was also in this spring that a newcomer made his weight felt as General Secretary of the Company. The new Secretary was Lawrence Bennett Jack, or simply "Larry" Jack. He was a quieter, more studious type than most of the men around him, yet he had an air of power which augured well for the success of any secretarial duties, especially in the more diplomatic sense, that he might be called upon to undertake. Larry Jack was born in Japan but came over to Canada as a child and commenced to enjoy an education that was to involve four widely scattered Universities—U.B.C., California, Oxford and McGill. After leaving the latter, Jack became a member of the permanent staff in the International Labor Office in Montreal. He, too, was a Rhodes scholar—and a scholar in the truest sense of the word, with a voracious

appetite for books. He was himself the author of a considerable volume of material on economic and financial matters. He took up his important new "B.C. Electric" post at a time of great resurgence after World War II.

A new freedom was in the air, now—and a surer liberty of action. Perhaps the new sense of liberty crept at last into the veins of Government, for one mid-summer day street car speeds were raised by regulation to 18 miles an hour in both Vancouver and Victoria—a dizzy piece of abandon which would have made the early street car pioneers lift up their hands in horror (and form in line for a quick ride). Surprisingly enough, it was not until now that "unauthorized persons, including firemen and policemen" were banned from their practice of riding in the front vestibule with the motorman.

This was Jubilee year. And Vancouver was determined that the world should know about it. A steady stream of post-war publicity flowed out to the rest of Canada, to the United States and even to farther regions of the earth. Spectacular parades and displays were the order of those summer days. Everything, in fact, went to order except the weather.

But it seemed, in fact, that a new friendliness and a great heartiness was flowing into the land. In his first message to the Company, the new President sounded exactly this note of friendly co-operation. But his message had something new in it—the decided vitality of youth. There was nothing very formal; nothing very conventional. Said Dal Grauer, "You can count upon me to do what I can to further your welfare . . . If there is anything you wish to draw particularly to my attention don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I am your President. My door is open. We are living in exciting times. We are working with an exciting Company. With your help we shall face and conquer our problems as they arise—and have a lot of fun doing so."

Recognition came to two of the Company's men in the King's Birthday Honours — Bill Mainwaring (now Vice-President of Island Operations) and Fred W. Smelts, Manager of Coke Sales. It was Smelts who organized and

directed Vancouver's War Chest, the Coordinating Council on Civilian and War Work, and the Red Cross campaign.

More personnel changes took place before the summer was over, one of them being the appointment, as Assistant to the President, of Taylor M. Moran. "Tommy" Moran grew up in Ontario and Quebec. He spent twenty years as an engineer in Eastern Canada and the States, and it was not until he was in the middle of his war duties, as Assistant for the Deputy Minister for Air, in Ottawa, that he began to see himself in the Western scene. He came at length to the Pacific Coast, went back again, then, finally, as so many do, came here to stay. His hobbies are two: looking after his family and exploring the countryside he loves. Despite his solid background of engineering work he yet has time to be drawn by the sense of adventure in the green and blue horizons of his new land. And his curiosity about it is being well rewarded.

For another man who loved British Columbia, the time had now come to take farewell of it. On June 12th died Albert Toller Goward, former Vice-President, with over fifty-five years of service, just as he was beginning to enjoy the peace of the retirement for which he had worked so long and faithfully. There was none among those who had known him in the office in Victoria who did not feel the shadow caused by his departure. The President and two past Presidents of the "B.C. Electric" gathered for his funeral. But it was the little people, the humbler workers, to whom his loss came as a more personal blow.

In the embroidery of the fuller tapestry it is easy to lose track of the smaller threads. The death of Albert Goward meant also the retirement to private life of a humble little woman who had herself served him faithfully since 1907, Florence Creeden—almost as much a part of "B.C. Electric's" Victoria scene as the Victoria building.

It was with the same cheerful loyalty—expressed more forcefully—that another old-timer was still, however, doing his job. For many years, among the traffic of Vancouver streets Conductor Teddy Lyons had piloted his famous "B.C.

Electric" observation car. Teddy Lyons is a character. He has his own line of witty chatter about objects and places he can point out on his observation joyride. The new building "which everybody's dying to get in" turns out to be a new undertaking parlor on the route. Down Hastings Street, past the pawnbrokers, the significance of the three balls sign means "two to one you don't get it back." Teddy Lyons says that some of his humor is "pretty corny." But the customers love it.

In August, S. Sigmundson became Traffic Operations Manager of all Mainland lines. And his "new Command" was a sweeping one—involving not only Vancouver street cars and buses, but the interurban passenger and freight lines and even the Information Bureau. "Sig" was formerly a transportation assistant. He was a relative newcomer to "B.C. Electric"—a dark, sturdy, cheerful Icelander from Reykjavik, he came to Winnipeg in 1913 and later graduated from the University of Manitoba.

From that August onwards, Sigmundson's influence began to grow in Company affairs and gradually, but ever more surely, his friendly hand is guiding the great sweep of operations that pass beneath it.

Operations of a different kind came to a stop in September. On the 3rd of that month in 1946, the President announced that no further sales of gas and electric appliances would be undertaken by the Company, either on the Mainland or on Vancouver Island. It was a gesture which the dealers welcomed with relief, for the competition of a large organization in the comparatively few classes of appliances being manufactured at this time made it more difficult, especially for those of them who were ex-servicemen, to get on their feet again after the war.

Withdrawal from the sales field, however, still left open a Dealer Development Department to afford genuine liaison between the dealers and the Company, and to pass on to them the fruit of many years of trading in domestic appliances. With the passing of this policy of direct selling, the Company was now able to turn its full attention to the three-

fold operations on which it built its merit—Elecricity, Gas and Transit. Big plans were being drawn up in all three of these departments—plans which involved the expenditure of many millions of dollars. And already the first signs of these developments were becoming visible to the people of British Columbia.

From September 3rd to 9th, 1946, the first buses went on trial in North Vancouver with free public demonstrations through the district from 6:30 to 9 o'clock p.m. The buses were well received and well patronized— and the weather was gloriously fine.

On September 11th the City and District of North Vancouver also ratified the new twenty-year franchise—and this agreement, cancelling the street car lines, called for the substitution of buses.

The October *Employees Magazine* carried a special spread with photographs of eighteen men who formed a new Electrical Division and an Engineering Division now announced by the President. Heading this new group of men was Vice-President and Chief Engineer Tom Ingledow. For four years Ingledow had guided the destinies of the Electrical Department and his big, genial figure had become a friendly and familiar sight at Head Office and elsewhere in the Company's affairs. Tom Ingledow was a man with many interests and he was a hard worker. Despite the intensity of the work in his new appointment, however, he still devoted the greater part of his personal time to public service. An example of the kind of job he likes to do is that as executive member of John Howard Society—which concerns itself with the rehabilitation of prison inmates back to civil life. It was Ingledow who also formed the St. Mary's Church Men's Club—a club of which he is now President.

Emphasis of the new Electrical Division was on practical experience, supported by sound technical qualifications familiarity with operating techniques and knowledge of local conditions throughout the district and the community. A tremendous amount of thought went into the formation of these Divisions, and only when the right circle of men had

been drawn together was it felt that the heavy construction programmes of the future were now safe in sure and certain hands.

In October '46 the Company received a visit from Ronald Crammond, Director of the B.C. Power Corporation, representing the British shareholders. Crammond was also Chairman and Manager of the British Empire Trust, the organization which handled the original capital used to found the "B.C. Electric." Although his stay in British Columbia was a short one, his exploration of "B.C. Electric" activities and especially his study of the new street cars filled him with the kind of confidence that would mean much to the Company's prestige in its original "home hunting ground" in London.

An exclusive bus franchise was signed with the Municipality of Richmond, and the enabling by-law was carried in September by a large majority. Finally the City of Vancouver itself, at the end of the year, signed a new and exclusive franchise agreement, permitting the operation of trolley coaches and motor buses as well as street cars.

The end of 1946 also saw a further simplification of operations (and a very wise confining of them to the basic areas) when on January 1st, 1947, the outlying electrical properties at Kamloops and of the Company's interests in the central portion of Vancouver Island were disposed of to the B.C. Power Commission.

More and more was the Company now becoming identified with all that was new and progressive in the story of British Columbia. And to help in the unfoldment of that story, a new appointment was made on May 1st, 1946. Harold Merilees, whose individual development had already formed a part of "B.C. Electric" history, was appointed to the new position of Public Information Manager.

"B.C. Electric" had now attained the venerable age of fifty. But it was not just fifty years old; it was fifty years *young*. The celebration of that Jubilee was a quiet one—the simple cutting of a birthday cake, and the drinking of a toast in the President's office on April 3rd, 1947. Two past Presidents came to do honour to that occasion—George Kidd, and W.

G. Murrin. It was fitting that on this fiftieth birthday of the Company its founder should also be remembered—and a toast was given to the memory of Robert Horne-Payne. President Grauer presented the two past Presidents with gift cuff-links engraved "B.C.E.R. 1987-1947"—and was surprised to receive a pair of identical cuff links himself, with the same message.

The passing of the Jubilee marked also the passing of the older era of events in the Company's history. April, '47, saw the severance of yet another link with the old-timers, when the last street car in North Vancouver made its last journey on the night of April 23rd. On that day President Grauer with the Mayor of North Vancouver and many other guests, plus the Company's own key men of the traffic sections in Vancouver and North Vancouver, gathered at a farewell dinner party. It was a nostalgic affair—with Manager Perry back from retirement for an hour or so, to preside over the demise of the street car service he had controlled forty years ago. There was reminiscent music from those former days. They played, among other things, "The Good Old Summertime"—after which the old-timers listened, in a kind of intimate reverie, to the President's review of the long years of street car service on the North Shore. It seemed as if the last street car ride was indeed the running down of a curtain—on a different, slower, but more leisured way of life. It seemed, moreover, that the first journey of the gleaming new cream buses of the "B.C. Electric" along those same routes of North Vancouver marked the beginning, not merely of a new development, but of a new mood and a new tempo in the Company's history.

The hands at controls were now for the most part young and vigorous. As "W.G." would have said, they were "virile and capable." From the smallest events – like the repainting of a bus—to the biggest of all the Company's projects—the mammoth Bridge River development with its future 600,000 horsepower—all the new plans of the Company would demonstrate the new concept of quicker service, faster operation and more rapid tempo.

There were now, at the head of every group within the organization, men of tried and proven worth. Over the vital Electrical Operations, together with the Engineering Division which served the whole family group, stood Tom Ingledow, Vice-President and Chief Engineer, activating, with his wide experience, the minutest elements in his own broad arc of the Company's orbit.

At his side stood Jack Steede, and Jack Fraser — with Clare Colvin and Henry Smith to give a fuller momentum to the accelerating journey.

The overall picture was now sharp, clear, and full of promise. From all the differing sections and divisions of "B.C. Electric" stood out other names, some holding big power and high significance; others contributing their measure of outstanding worth in lesser walks of the Company's service. Without discrimination of rank or role, therefore, a few such names spring to mind in looking at the widening scene.

There were men like Vice-President Arnott—a native son with thirty-seven years of service in the "B.C. Electric." There were men like Lorn McLean, Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer . . . men like Ray Rohrer—"B.C. Electric's quiet, smooth, efficient Gas Manager . . . John Armstrong Brice, a New Zealander with the spirit of the pioneer Canadians . . . Fred Reed, Gas Sales Manager, with the sturdiness of a salt water mariner to bring into his job . . . dry-witted Fred Lazenby, Assistant Superintendent of the Generating Stations . . . Bruce Robertson, General Solicitor . . . precise John Kirkhope, Superintendent of Gas Manufacture.

In New Westminster was John Benjamin Mouat, the affable and friendly Superintendent. And there was the principal family of keymen over in Victoria and Jordan River, and Buntzen, Ruskin, Stave Falls and Bridge River.

B.C. Motor Transportation was also poised for progress . . . under the command of Ivor W. Neil, a vigorous-minded Welshman who came out to Canada in 1916, caught something of Saskatchewan's own wide outlook and brought it to bear on the problems of transportation in British Columbia.

The picture under his eyes had undergone a vast change since those early days of road transportation with their "first class compartments in dove grey velour."

B.C. Motor Operations now embraced the Pacific Stage Lines, Gray Line Motor Tours, the Consolidated Truck Lines and the Vancouver Transfer operations (the last-named being concerned with the movement of luggage.)

"B.C. Motor's" fleet had risen from a mere dozen vehicles to about one hundred and twenty. The one hundred and fifty people required to operate them had swelled to five hundred and sixty-nine. And over four thousand seats a day were now available to passengers in the company under Ivor Neil's guidance.

But all these men—big in Company stature, or smaller, as the case might be—were now part of a great family of nearly 6,000 "B.C. Electric" men and women with a yearly payroll of over $12,000,000.

They were the people whose hands would fashion the shape of things to come. They were the people who would be driving the new trolley coaches, the big new motor buses. They would be controlling the new carburetted water gas plant at Vancouver, and its opposite number in Victoria. They would be harnessing more power for more people than the pioneers had ever dreamed of. They were the people who would help to establish on the soil of British Columbia the future leadership of Canada. Yet despite their youth and their new approach, there flows in many of them, not only the blood, but the spirit of the pioneers, and it is on that link with the Company's far past that the record now pauses.

The history of human organization does not finish; it writes itself a little nearer to its goal with every passing moment, drawing its substance from the reality of its ideas.

In handling the writing of this history on to the people who make it, it is pleasant to glimpse for a moment one final little incident that ties the old days to the new ones.

On the evening of March 11th, 1940, an old and venerable woman in immaculate black satin went alone to Govern-

ment House in Victoria. It was the end of the annual observance of Blanchard Day, and on the invitation of Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Hamber, the Victoria sections of the British Columbia Historical Society had gathered for what would be their last celebration in war time. There were, among the festivities, tableaux vivants of the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors of British Columbia and Vancouver Island stretching back to 1851.

The old one sat alone, watching with obvious interest, and with what seemed like a glow of pride, the events that passed before her. When the night's affair was over and the guests had departed, the solitary figure remained behind. An aide enquired of her if he could help. She came out of her reverie into the present again—but only to realize that she could not remember where she lived, or how she might get there! It was with the greatest difficulty that kind friends of hers—Madge Wolfenden of Victoria's Provincial Archives and Major Harold Nation—succeeded in finding her home for her. It was her last public appearance, for shortly after that her name became but another part of history.

Who was she—this woman who had sat under the blazing electric chandeliers at Government House? None other than Margaret McMicking, widow of that same determined Robert Burns McMicking who had fathered the electrical industry of British Columbia—that same young Bob McMicking who had arrived beneath those billowing sails to build his dreams in Victoria in long-ago 1870.

Margaret McMicking had seen the whole long story unfold beneath those merry, observant eyes of hers. She had come to this land in the days of the sputtering candles; she left it in an age of lighting beyond even her Robert's dreaming. The happiness she had shown on that last public appearance was a justifiable happiness. For she had witnessed a splendid fulfillment. And she was content, at last, to leave to others the rest of the lighted journey.

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