

News of Electric Railways

Plans for Interurban Station and New Franchise at Columbus, Ohio

With the introduction of four ordinances in the City Council of Columbus, Ohio, last week, the plans of the Ohio Electric Railway for a new interurban station in that city are disclosed. They are much more extensive than was at first reported, and include a freight station and a union interurban station for both freight and passenger purposes to cost with the necessary sidings, spurs and additional track more than \$400,000.

The proposal of the company is based on concessions asked from the city, viz., that the company be allowed to abandon the present interurban loop which requires about 30 minutes to traverse, and that it be given permission to lay T-rails within the city. Under a suspension of rules the ordinances were given their second reading and then referred to the committee on railroads and viaducts, where they will remain pending a public meeting to be called to learn the sentiment of the people.

The first ordinance provides for the grant of a blanket franchise that will substitute the franchises under which the four separate lines constituting the Ohio Electric Railway in Columbus now operate, and extend the life of these franchises seven years. The blanket franchise is for 25 years and provides for the construction and operation of new lines on streets not now occupied. The four individual lines covered by the ordinance are: The Columbus, London & Springfield Railway, the Columbus, Grove City & Southwestern Railway, the Columbus, Buckeye Lake & Newark Traction Company, and the Columbus, Newark & Zanesville Electric Railway. The first ordinance further provides that an interurban station to cost not less than \$300,000 shall be built on South Third Street, extending from Town Street to Rich Street, west on Town Street 171.87 ft. and west on Rich Street 212.5 ft. The station and tracks are to be completed within three years after the granting of the franchises. The company is not to be required to operate over the present loop and is to be allowed to lay 7-in. T-rails weighing 90 lb. The franchise also provides for 5-cent cash fares within the city and for seven tickets for 25 cents. Two per cent of the earnings from city fares is to be paid the city and the city auditor is to have access to the company's books. Should the company be required at any time to sell eight tickets for 25 cents, it is to discontinue the payment of the 2 per cent to the city. Provision is made for the use of the interurban station by other companies on terms to be mutually agreed upon or submitted to arbitration. The cars are to be limited to a maximum speed of 12 miles per hour within the city limits and the company is to grade unimproved streets.

The second ordinance provides for the laying of tracks by the company on Town Street from Scioto Street, where the cars of the Columbus, London & Springfield Railway enter the loop to Third Street or the north end of the proposed station. This is to be a cut-off and will enable the company to secure entrance to the city without passing around the long loop.

The third ordinance provides for the vacation of a portion of Walnut Street over which the proposed station is to be built, and the fourth ordinance gives the company the right to construct a spur from Rich Street along the west side of the station site for the handling of material.

The foundation of the new station is to be so constructed as to accommodate seven stories, although at the present time it is the intention to build only two stories. The structure proper is to be of brick and stone.

Extension of Hudson & Manhattan Railroad Approved

The Public Service Commission of the First District of New York approved the proposal on April 1 of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad, which operates under the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York, to extend its line from Thirty-third Street and Broadway, New York, to the Grand Central Station. The commission received from a sub-committee, consisting of Chairman Willcox and Commissioner Maltbie, a report on the character and location of the route and directed its counsel to prepare a certificate and order of notice for a hearing on April 21, at which the matter will be finally adopted. The report of the sub-committee declares that as the result of conferences with the engineers of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad it is convinced that the proposed route can be constructed so as not to interfere with any tunnels that may be built in the

future. The report of the sub-committee outlines the course of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad extension—from Thirty-third Street and Broadway up Sixth Avenue and around into Forty-second Street, with an easy curve under Bryant Park, so as to take an easterly direction at a point midway between Sixth and Fifth Avenues. The Hudson & Manhattan Railroad, with two tracks, will be located on the south side of Forty-second Street, passing under Fifth and Madison Avenues on the third level, or two levels below the present subway, and then coming into its terminal station at Grand Central on the level below the present subway and between it and the station of the Steinway tunnel to Long Island City. The station of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad will extend from the westerly side of Park Avenue to the westerly side of Lexington Avenue, and will afford connections with the present subway, the Steinway tunnel and the Grand Central Station. The route is planned so as to have stations at Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue and at Thirty-ninth Street and Sixth Avenue. In conclusion the report says that the committee considers the plan of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad desirable for the reason that it will afford connections from the Grand Central Station, the proposed Broadway-Lexington Avenue Subway, the present subway, and the Steinway tunnel with all parts of Sixth Avenue and with all of the New Jersey terminals of steam roads.

Discussion on Depreciation in Report of Philadelphia Committee

The report of the special committee of Councils of Philadelphia, which investigated the street railway situation in various large cities, contains a short discussion regarding depreciation and amortization by F. W. Brooks, general manager, Detroit United Railway. The discussion in the report regarding the abuse of transfers was published in the *ELECTRIC RAILWAY JOURNAL* of April 3, 1909, page 663.

One of the formal questions submitted by the committee was as follows:

"What would you consider a fair proportion of the actual replacement cost of the system; that is to say, of the track, overhead work, rolling stock, power plants and appurtenances, to be set aside each year in addition to ordinary expenses for maintenance, in order to provide a fund for replacing the system when it became worn out, or antiquated, in case no new capital was available for those requirements?" The report adds:

"None of the companies answered this question specifically. Mr. Brooks, of Detroit, discussed the question at some length, and in the course of his discussion said: 'It is a great big question. I can see that if any city in America had required its transportation company to earn sufficient money within its life as determined by these franchises, then certainly the people of that city would have an enormous burden to bear; and whether it is proper to say that these properties shall be corrected and shall earn that cost and their replacement out of the pockets of one generation or several generations is a problem that the wisest men have stumbled over.'

"In speaking of the practice of his company, Mr. Brooks said: 'We are charging off every year to depreciation something like \$250,000. We are doing it on the theory that the entire property will not have to be reproduced at one time; we had hoped to meet any reasonable situation, replacing any cars that got out of condition each year, more as a matter of maintenance and replacement than as a matter of reproduction. Now, the thought in my mind was that if you say to a transportation company in the city, 'You construct this plant and operate it for 30 years, and at the end of 30 years there shall not be one dollar owed by this company, discharge all bonds, mortgages, etc.,' then I say that you have done a thing that amounts to confiscation so far as the public at large is concerned.'

Illinois Central Railroad Electrification

Edward H. Harriman passed through Chicago on March 31 on his way from California to New York on business. Although he was in Chicago only a short while, Mr. Harriman consented to be interviewed. He is quoted as saying that the talk about his retiring is not worth denying. Mr. Harriman discussed the railroad situation in general. He said he had been misquoted in Denver, and carefully explained his attitude toward consolidations. He said that