

Montreal, April 15, 1954.

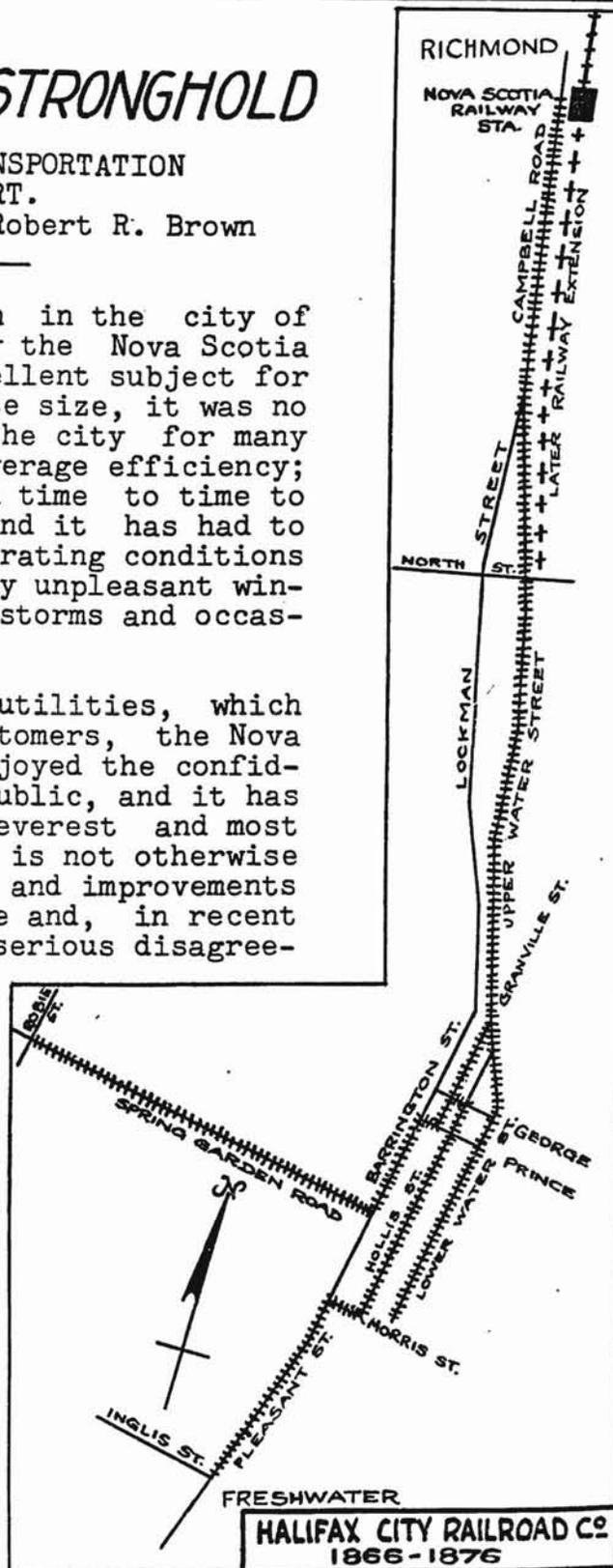
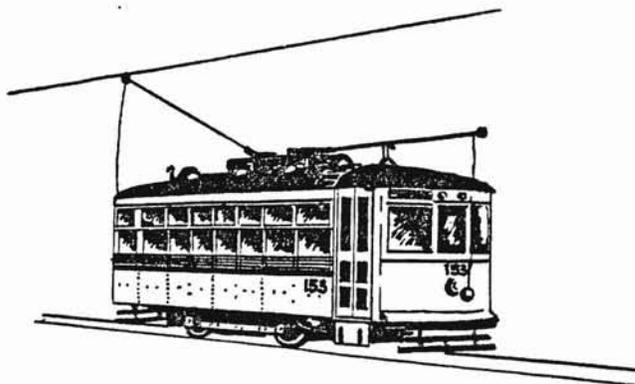
# HALIFAX: BIRNEY STRONGHOLD

THE STORY OF STREET RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION  
IN CANADA'S EASTERN PORT.

by Robert R. Brown

The urban transportation system in the city of Halifax, operated in recent years by the Nova Scotia Light and Power Company, is an excellent subject for study by rail enthusiasts. Of moderate size, it was no Toonerville Trolley; it has served the city for many years with considerably better than average efficiency; it has modernized its equipment from time to time to meet the growing needs of traffic, and it has had to contend with some very difficult operating conditions - narrow streets, steep hills and a very unpleasant winter climate with ice, frequent sleet storms and occasional violent blizzards.

Unlike most monopolistic public utilities, which are inclined to 'high hat' their customers, the Nova Scotia Light and Power Company has enjoyed the confidence, and even the affection, of the public, and it has been responsible for some of the cleverest and most effective publicity in a field which is not otherwise noted for brilliance. Plans, changes and improvements are discussed and explained in advance and, in recent years, at least, there have been no serious disagreements with the city and the public. The polite, cheerful and obliging platform men are noted far beyond the limits of the city and they are undoubtedly just reflecting the general policy of the Company.



The ancient city of Halifax faces the Atlantic and the traditions of the sea have strongly influenced almost every thought and action for over two centuries. Founded originally as a fortress and naval base, it has served as such in six wars and its periods of greatest prosperity were during those wars. Peace often imposed periods of quiet stagnation and these violent fluctuations in economic conditions created unusual problems for the city's public utilities.

Behind the city lies one of the most barren and desolate regions that can be found in eastern Canada. Some 125 years ago, it was realized that if the city was to survive, some convenient form of transportation would be needed to connect Halifax with the fertile valleys of the Shubenacadie, Gaspereaux and Annapolis Rivers. The first plan was a canal and it actually was built only to be abandoned a few years later. Finally, in 1854, the provincial government commenced the construction of a "Y" shaped railway to connect Halifax with Windsor and Truro. It was completed in 1857-58 and a few years later, a private company extended the line to Annapolis.

#### TWO AND SIX TO RICHMOND

It was the building of these railways which led eventually to the introduction of street cars in Halifax. For reasons of misguided economy, the Nova Scotia Railway built its terminus in the northern suburb of Richmond, opposite Mulgrave Park and near the foot of Duffus Street. This meant that passengers going to or from the railway station had to walk or drive three miles or more over the worst possible muddy roads. Wiseacres of the day opined that it was much easier to go from Government House in Halifax, to Windsor, by boat, a distance of nearly 500 miles, than it was to go by any means from Government House to Admiralty House, a distance of less than two miles.

For a decade, the passengers of the Nova Scotia Railway were at the mercy of local cabmen, who charged exorbitant prices. The fares varied from 1 s. 3 d. (25 cents) to 2 s. 6 d. (50 cents) per person, depending upon the destination in the city; that was a lot of money in those days. Large numbers of poorer people could not afford to ride and had to walk long distances. However, in 1863, a Haligonian named William D. O'Brien decided to build a street railway and on April 29th of that year, the Halifax City Railroad Company was incorporated.

#### HALIFAX CITY RAILROAD COMPANY 1866 - 1876

Most of the merchants had their money invested in blockade runners trading with the Confederate States of America, and it was not until the spring of 1866 that money could be found for local improvements. Construction started about the middle of April on a line running from the railway station at Richmond, southward on Campbell Road, Upper Water Street, Granville, George, Hollis, Morris, and Pleasant Streets, to Freshwater Bridge, near the foot of Inglis Street. A combined stable and carbarn was erected at the southeast corner of Campbell Road and Hanover Street.

The official opening took place on June 11th, and the contemporary account in the Morning Chronicle, indicated that it was considered an event of the greatest importance:

" An immense gathering of our citizens witnessed the opening of the Street Railway, which, as our readers are aware, extends from Richmond Station in the North to Freshwater Bridge in the South. Streams of flags might be seen at several points along the line, indicative of an event of no ordinary kind in our midst. Besides five passenger cars, which, by the way, are light and airy, we might almost say elegant, there were two platform cars in front carrying the fine band of the 4th Regiment of the Line which discoursed sweet music along the route and at the Richmond Buildings. The cars, which were filled with invited guests, including the Mayor and Aldermen, and a number of prominent citizens, with their ladies, started from the Provincial Building at 12 o'clock, and proceeded along Hollis Street to the rear of the Government House, where a halt was made to receive His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and suite, Major-General Doyle, the Provincial Secretary, and others, who took their seats in the leading carriage, while the Band played the National Anthem. The party being now completed, the cars again started, passing through Hollis, Morris and Pleasant Streets, returning through the same thence by Granville and Water Streets to the Richmond Depot where the company were received and welcomed by Mr. O'Brien. The eastern end of the building was decorated with evergreens and flags, and a reception was held with speeches and a sumptuous luncheon with wines and delicacies. "

In 1869, O'Brien decided to expand his operations and a branch line was built from a junction with the main line at the intersection of Granville and George Streets via Granville, Prince, and Barrington Streets and Spring Garden Road to the corner of Robie Street. To eliminate the necessity of uncoupling the "hayburners" at the end of this line, a small turntable was installed, and the horses were able to pull the cars around. This was considered a great novelty and convenience, and the company was proud of it.

LINE ON LOWER WATER STREET

Another line was built about 1869 on Lower Water Street, connecting with the main line at or near the foot of Buckingham Street; just why it was built is not entirely clear. It was only a short block from the original line on parallel Hollis Street and there seems to have been no apparent need for it. The harbour was a very busy place in those days, and large quantities of freight had to be carted between the various wharves and warehouses, making Water Street very congested. Cartage was a very slow and expensive means of transportation, especially the long haul between the railway station and the harbour with a minimum charge of 3 s. 9 d. (75 cents) for a small load which could be carried in a sloop, and proportionately higher charges for bigger and heavier loads. So, it seems reasonable to suppose that O'Brien intended to operate a freight, and possibly a passenger service from the railway station direct to the principal wharves, connecting with the steamship lines and the coastal schooners.

This line does not seem to have been used very much, and was soon abandoned, indicating that the opposition of the carters was too powerful and successful. Six years later, the Water Street merchants, wharfingers and teamsters claimed that the unused rails were a nuisance and a menace and demanded that they be removed.

It is probable that O'Brien's street railway was of the broad gauge (5'6"), the same as the Nova Scotia Railway, because when the first locomotive built by the Montgomery Iron Works, at Freshwater, was moved to Richmond, it was hauled along the street railway track on Water Street, causing so much inconvenience that subsequent moves were made over temporary rails by a more circuitous, but less congested route. Perhaps it was the sight of a locomotive cruising along among the drays, slovens and longcarts and excited horses that led to the demand for the removal of the rails.

In the beginning, the cars ran every fifteen minutes from 6:00 AM until 10:00 PM, weekdays only, but in 1874, three larger cars were acquired and the service was increased to a car every ten minutes between 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM, and one every fifteen minutes at other times.

The Nova Scotia Railway, built originally by the Provincial Government, was taken over by the Dominion Government in 1867, to form part of the Intercolonial Railway and in 1876, when that project was completed, it was decided that the line in Halifax would be extended southward from the old and unsatisfactory station at Richmond, to a fine new station to be built at North Street, much closer to the centre of the city. This extension required much heavy excavation, and parts of Upper Water Street would have to disappear completely. The railway requested O'Brien to remove his track from Upper Water Street and relocate it on Lockman Street agreeing to pay all expenses involved. This was a reasonable offer but, to everybody's surprise, he truculently refused to consider it. Negotiations continued for a time, without success, until May 18th, 1876, when, without any warning, O'Brien discontinued the service and a few days later sold his cars, his fifty horses and the rails. Probably the truth of the matter was that he had not been making much money with his horse car line, the failure of his Water Street project undoubtedly was a great disappointment and, too, he probably realized that, when the Intercolonial Railway completed its new North Street Station, the distance to the centre of the city would be so much less that most people would prefer to walk. So, for the next ten years, the more affluent Haligonians used cabs or their own carriages, and the rest either used "shank's mare" or patronized a very primitive omnibus service.

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HALIFAX RAILWAY COMPANY - 1884

In the early Eighties, there was much talk about streetcars being propelled by a mysterious new agent called electricity. No one knew much about it but, being very modern, a good deal of enthusiasm was aroused. Halifax was not going to be left behind, and a group of prominent citizens obtained a charter, on April 19th, 1884, for an electric street car line. The time was not yet ripe, noone would invest money in such a chimerical venture and nothing came of it.

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HALIFAX STREET RAILWAY  
1886 - 1890

In 1886, a new company was formed to build a horse-operated street railway; the charter was obtained on May 11th, and on May 29th the rights previously granted to the Halifax Railway Company in 1884 were transferred to the new Halifax Street Railway.

Construction started on August 2nd and fifteen new cars were received from John Stephenson Company on September 10th. O'Brien's old buildings at Hanover Street were bought to serve as stable and carbarn and Adams' omnibus line was bought to eliminate the possibility of competition.

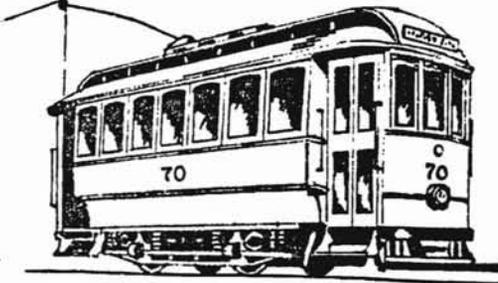
The line consisted of the south end loop on Pleasant and Inglis Streets, Tower Road, Victoria and South Park Streets, and Spring Garden Road, then a line extending northward on Barrington and Lockman Streets and Campbell Road, to Richmond. This route bore the name "Main Line" for many years -- until the lines were rearranged in 1927. The official opening took place on October 21st, 1886:

" A large number of prominent citizens were invited to attend the opening of the city street railway. At about three o'clock, eight cars of the line, gaily decorated with flags, arrived at the corner of Barrington and Sackville Streets, for the purpose of receiving the invited guests and conveying them to the northern terminus of the line. The arrival and departure of the cars was witnessed by a large crowd of spectators, and the interest taken by the public in the new enterprise was further shown by the numbers of people collected at every corner all along the route. On arrival at the end of the line, some time was spent in looking through the stables. The guests were then invited to partake of a luncheon which had been arranged for them. Speech-making followed as a matter of course, the general sentiment being good will toward the company and best wishes for their success. "

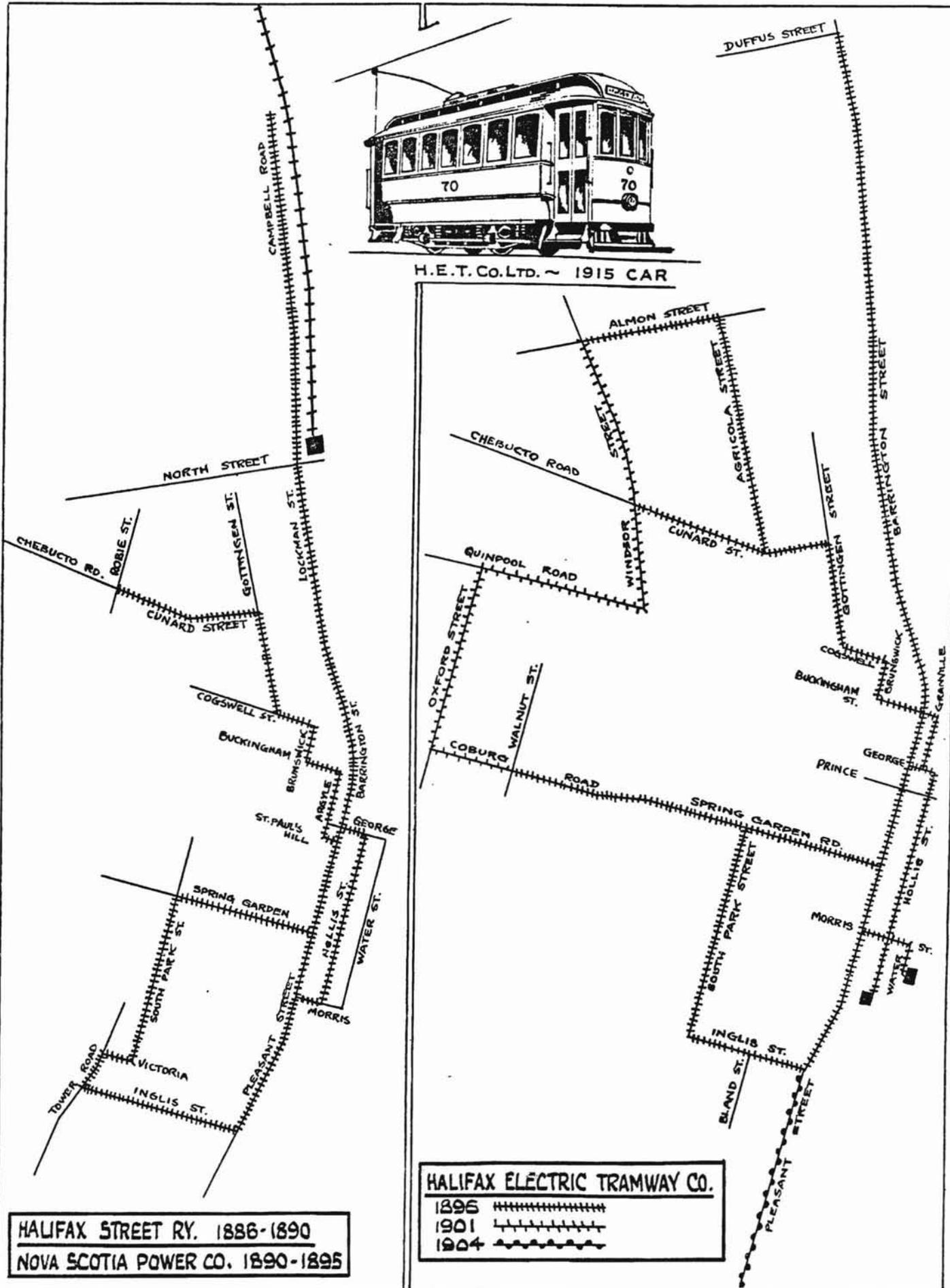
At first, the south end loop was not finished and the cars ran from Richmond, and up Inglis Street only to the corner of South Park Street; the remainder of the loop on South Park Street and Spring Garden Road was completed in the following spring. In those days, the principal hotels, offices and business establishments were on Hollis and Water Streets, so the company built a new line on Hollis Street connecting with the Main Line at George Street at the north end, and at Morris Street, at the south end. This line was completed on October 30th, 1886. It is probable that some cars from Richmond ran via Hollis Street.

New suburbs had developed up over the hill to the northwest and the omnibuses of the old Adams line were used on a new service from Barrington Street, at Buckingham Street, to the corner of Cunard and Robie Streets. This was not entirely satisfactory, so in 1889, the Company started to lay tracks over the hill to serve this area but financial difficulties developed which prevented the completion of the work.

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H.E.T. Co. Ltd. ~ 1915 CAR



HALIFAX STREET RY. 1886-1890  
 NOVA SCOTIA POWER CO. 1890-1895

HALIFAX ELECTRIC TRAMWAY CO.  
 1895 ██████████  
 1901 ██████████  
 1904 ██████████

NOVA SCOTIA POWER COMPANY  
1890 - 1895

This company was chartered in 1889 to generate and sell electric power and also acquire the street railway and electrify it, and, in accordance with these powers, it purchased the property of the bankrupt Halifax Street Railway.

The northwest branch was completed in 1891, running from Barrington Street via St. Paul's Hill, Argyle, Buckingham, Brunswick, Cogswell, Gottingen and Cunard Streets, to Robie Street. This company was insufficiently supplied with working capital and not only was there no effort made to electrify the line, but in a few years it was necessary to curtail the service. The Hollis Street branch was discontinued in 1893 and the northwest branch, in 1895.

HALIFAX ELECTRIC TRAMWAY COMPANY  
1895 - 1917

The Halifax Electric Tramway Company was incorporated on March 20th, 1895, and on March 30th, it purchased the bankrupt Halifax Street Railway and the Nova Scotia Power Company for \$25,000.00 at an auction sale held in the Court House. Also acquired was the Halifax Illuminating and Motor Company which had a power house on Lower Water Street, below Morris Street. The new company, having ample capital at its disposal, made rapid progress in converting the old horse-operated street railway into a modern electric tramway. A new car barn, accommodating thirty cars, was built on the Water Street property and a connecting line was built on Water Street, and up Morris Street to a connection with the Main Line on Pleasant Street.

Fourteen closed car bodies, twelve open car bodies, and fourteen sets of trucks and electrical equipment were ordered from Rhodes, Curry & Company, of Amherst, Nova Scotia, the oldest predecessor of the Canadian Car & Foundry Company. The first two units were received on February 3rd, 1896:

" The exterior of the car presents a strikingly handsome appearance, being finished in light straw colour and Indian red, which is relieved with black and aluminum leaf decoration. The interior is of quartered oak worked into magnificent designs and the mountings are of bright bronze. The upholstery is all done, in mohair goods. The windows are of fine plate glass in oak sashes, and are so arranged that they may be dropped down thus making an open summer car. Along the sides are buttons ready to the touch of passengers, when it is wished to stop the car. Underneath the seats are electric heaters. The fronts of the cars are provided with safety guards of basketwork of sheet iron and in a position that it is practically impossible for a person who is knocked down by the cars to get beneath the wheels. Guard gates are placed on the platforms so that passengers cannot get off on the wrong side of the car, in front of a moving car on another track.

All cars are fitted with signs, visible both day and night, showing the routes and destinations. "

A trial run was made on February 12th, 1896:

" At 4:45 o'clock in the afternoon, the first electric car, No.2, to run in Halifax, left the car stables at the foot of Morris Street. A large crowd had gathered to witness the event, both sides of Morris Street being lined with people. On the whole, the trial proved successful. The ice on the track was the only drawback to the trial, preventing the company from carrying out their intention of going around the Spring Garden loop. After running down Pleasant Street and up Inglis as far as Bland Street, the trolley was reversed and the car returned the same route arriving at the carbarn at 6:05 o'clock. On the return trip, from the foot of Inglis Street to the corner of Morris and Pleasant, the car moved along in fine style. As the electric was passing South Street, where there was no turnout, the horse cars left the track, pulling into the street and giving way to their successor. The first fare was collected from Mr. DeFresne by engineer Ross who forgot to "ring in" until reminded to do so by a passenger. "

For several months, the electric cars ran only on the south end loop, as heavier rails had to be laid on Barrington and Lockman Streets to Richmond.

On May 9th, 1896, a line was built out Spring Garden Road and Coburg Road to Walnut Street, and the "Coburg Road" cars began running from Walnut Street via Coburg Road, Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street, to St. Paul's Church. A week later, the rehabilitation of the old Hollis Street line was completed, and the "Coburg Road" cars began running via Coburg and Spring Garden Roads, Pleasant, Morris and Hollis Streets, to the corner of Hollis and Prince Streets.

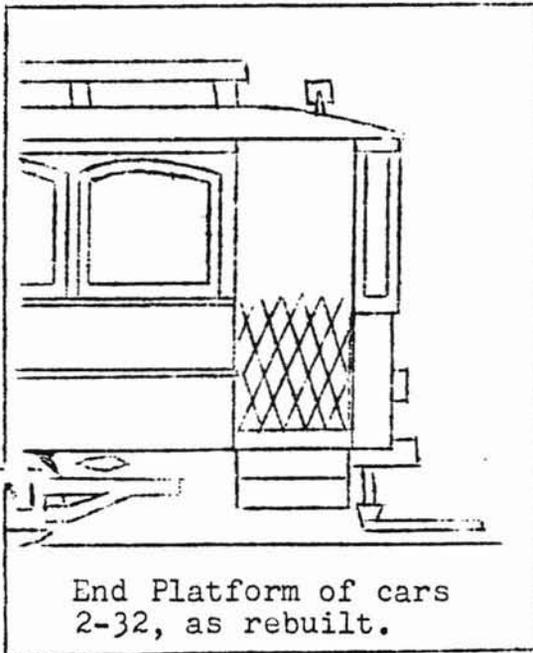
END OF THE HORSE CARS

May 31st, 1896, was the last day for the horse cars. The electric cars had been running north on Barrington and Lockman Streets to Cornwallis Street and the horse cars had been running beyond. The next day, a start was made laying heavier rails and within a few days, the electric cars began running north to Duffus Street. Oddly enough, half a century later, the last electric cars operated over the same line as the last horse cars.

The northwest branch was completely rebuilt and was ready for traffic about the middle of July 1896. Cars ran from Morris Street, via Hollis, George, Granville, Buckingham, Brunswick, Cogswell, Gottingen, Cunard, Agricola and Almon Streets to Willow Park, at the corner of Almon and Windsor Streets. Another short branch continued up Cunard Street, from Agricola to Windsor Streets, and was to have been extended out Chebucto Road, but was never comp-

This line proved to be a very busy one, and before long, new residential areas began to be built up in the section between the two extremities of the line. Accordingly, in 1901, the track was extended up Coburg Road, then by Oxford Street, Quinpool Road and Windsor Street, to Willow Park. The "Willow Park Coburg Road" line then became known as the "Belt Line" and continued as such until 1927. In 1904, the "Greenbank" line was built on Pleasant Street to Greenbank, a small park overlooking the harbour about 1/3 of a mile south of Inglis Street. Later, about 1912, it was extended to the south end of Steele's Pond, near the entrance to Point Pleasant Park. Double track was laid on Barrington Street in 1906, and two years later, on Spring Garden Road from Barrington Street to South Park Street.

THE PLATFORM MAN'S FLIGHT



End Platform of cars 2-32, as rebuilt.

Several earlier accounts, in the press and elsewhere, have stated that most of the Halifax cars had open platforms until about 1911, and that at that time, several women's clubs became interested in the plight of the poor platform men who were exposed to the icy blasts from the Atlantic, and that these clubs were instrumental in having a Provincial Law passed requiring enclosed platforms.

However, this is not quite correct. The Rhodes-Curry cars, nos. 2 - 32, did have open platforms originally, but about 1902 or 1903, after the arrival in 1901 of nos. 34 and 36, which were built with closed ends, they were fitted with closed ends, in the form of a three-window end structure above the dash. Platform sides were open except for folding iron gates.

Nos. 34 and 36, received in 1901, were constructed with rounded ends, almost semi-circular; the dash being vertical tongue-and-groove wood strips. There were five end windows and probably the platforms were not fully enclosed when received. Strangely enough, nos. 38 and 40, acquired in 1905, did not follow this pattern, but came with closed ends similar to those applied to the earlier cars -- namely, fairly flat ends with three windows and metal dash. The only difference was that the end windows were not arched. These were fine looking cars.

About 1911 fully enclosed vestibules were applied to all of these cars. The blind side of each platform was filled in with wall and sash, and the boarding sides equipped with a simple two-leaf inward-folding door, which, however, was seldom used.

In 1912, a new line was built on Gottingen Street from Cunard to Kay Street, and in the following year, the Armdale line was built on Quinpool Road from Oxford Street to the Arm Bridge.

The Armdale cars ran downtown via Oxford Street and Coburg Road. Also, in 1913, double tracks were laid on all of the Belt Line and also on South Park Street.

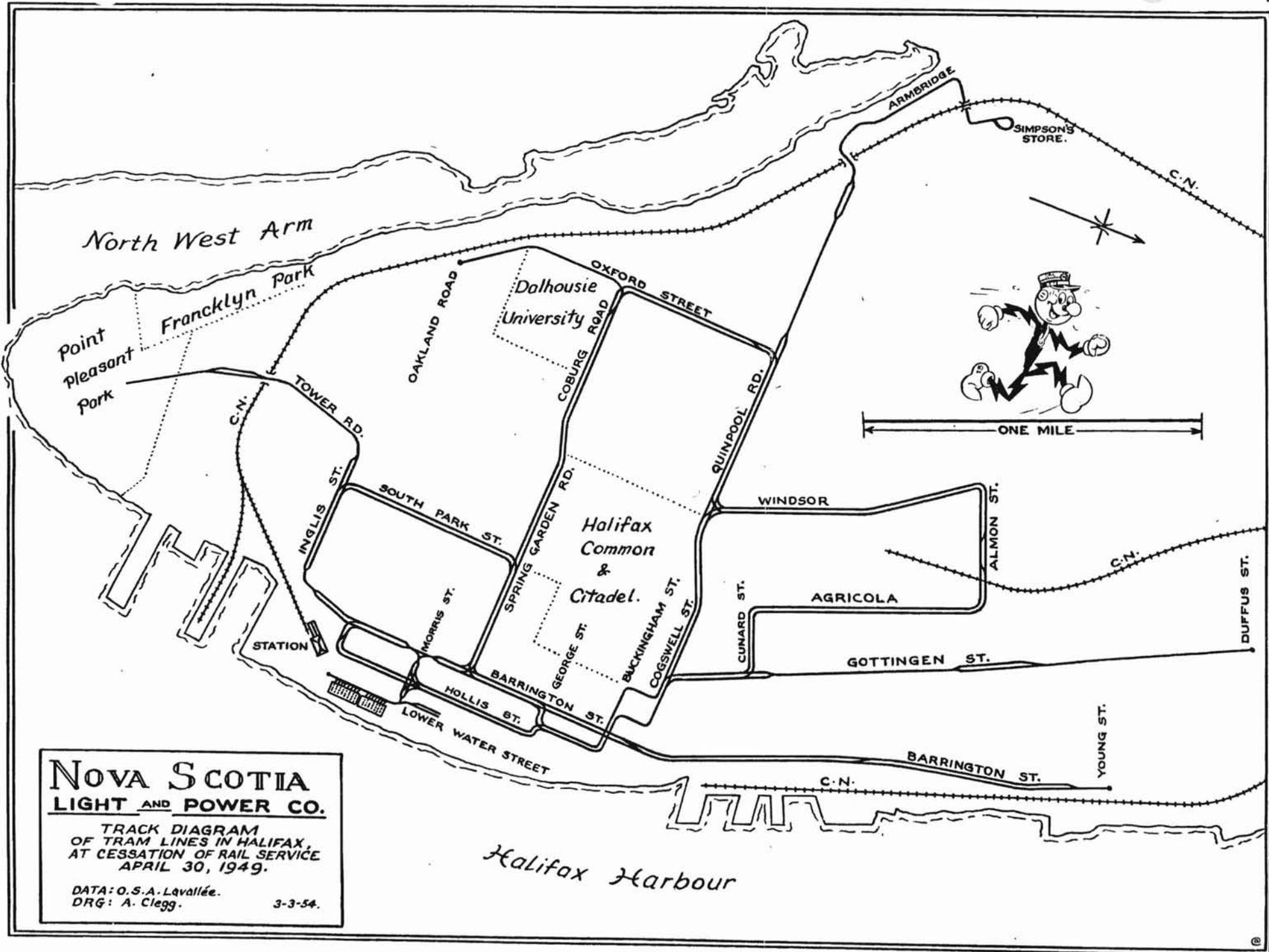
The outbreak of World War II in August 1914 put a stop to further expansion although in 1916 a new brick carbarn, with a capacity of forty two cars, was built on the Water Street property. The Green Bank line was abandoned in 1915 because of the construction of the new Halifax Ocean Terminals Railway. A serious manpower shortage developed early in the War and in 1916 or 1917, the Company employed twelve women as conductors with very satisfactory results. Early in 1917, the Company was re-organized and the name changed to Nova Scotia Tramway and Power Company.

#### THE HALIFAX EXPLOSION

Just as people were beginning to think about Christmas in 1917, disaster struck the city. Early in the morning of December 6th, 1917, a rusty little French tramp steamer, the "Mont Blanc", entered the harbour practically unnoticed, except by a small group of naval officers, who, alone in all the city, knew about the terrible danger that lurked in her holds. The cargo included 250 tons of trinitrotoluol, 2300 tons of picric acid and a deck load of drums containing petrol and benzol. Strict orders had been given that not a ship was to move until the "Mont Blanc" had safely reached its anchorage in Bedford Basin. Just as the ship reached the Narrows, another vessel was seen through the early morning mists coming out of the Basin and around the Richmond Bluff. It was a Norwegian, the "Imo", chartered by the Belgian Relief Commission, and it appeared to be steering a very erratic course. Although many Haligonians thought it was sabotage, the actual reason why it disregarded instructions will never be known. At 8:40 AM, the two ships collided almost head on and the crash of rending steel attracted the attention of people in the shipyards and on the streets of the thickly-populated Richmond suburb. News about the collision spread rapidly, and large crowds gathered on Campbell Road and Fort Needham Hill; children paused on their way to school and hundreds of workers forgot about their jobs.

Some of the drums on the deck of the "Mont Blanc" had burst open and the volatile fluid ran along the deck, soon to burst into flames; in a matter of minutes, huge clouds of black smoke billowed up from the ship. Some of the officers tried bravely to extinguish the flames but most of the terrified crew abandoned the ship and rowed ashore. A boarding party from the British cruiser "Highflyer" tried to scuttle the red-hot ship but had barely reached the deck when the explosive cargo let go.

A thin flame, blinding white like lightning, was seen to rise up through the black smoke and then, at 9:05 AM, there was a terrific explosion which completely destroyed the "Mont Blanc" strewing fragments far and wide. The anchor flew right over the city and was later found on the far side of the North West Arm, three miles away; the cannon, which had been mounted on the



**NOVA SCOTIA  
LIGHT AND POWER CO.**

TRACK DIAGRAM  
OF TRAM LINES IN HALIFAX,  
AT CESSATION OF RAIL SERVICE  
APRIL 30, 1949.

DATA: O.S.A. Lavallée.  
DRG: A. Clegg. 3-3-54.

*Halifax Harbour*

vessel's stern, was found two miles away in the opposite direction.

Three tremendous forces struck the city in rapid succession; first was the incredible noise of the explosion, which was apparently beyond the range of human ears because survivors described it as a sensation of shock rather than sound. Then, the concussion smashed the city like an angry giant's fist -- Richmond ceased to exist -- its homes, schools and stores a shambles of splintered wreckage and most of its people dead or dreadfully injured. The concussion spread out rapidly like an unbelievably powerful hurricane. When it reached the south end, which was sheltered to a certain extent by Citadel Hill, it had double the force of a gale, and when it reached Truro, 60 miles away, many windows were broken. A huge wave rolled out to sea and, many hours later and a hundred miles out, a large ship lifted suddenly and the crew thought it had struck a floating mine.

A huge pillar of flaming gas and smoke rose high in the air; its mushroomed top was so high that it cast a shadow over distant Bedford. Tongues of flaming and exploding gas burst over the city, igniting the wrecked buildings, many of which had already been set on fire by their own overturned stoves. During that awful day, as on many other occasions, the people of Halifax proved their steadiness in the face of danger; there was no panic and the survivors immediately set to work to rescue the injured, many of whom were trapped in the burning buildings. Thousands were injured horribly by flying slivers of glass and many were blinded. Emergency hospitals were set up in private homes and public buildings, mostly in the south end; every one worked until exhausted. Worse was in store for the city, however. The following morning a howling blizzard brought deep snow and extreme cold, and with so many broken windows, the misery of the people was extreme. With a population then of about 55,000, nearly 2,000 lost their lives and 12,000 more were injured.

Reaction by Canadians everywhere was swift and effective; almost before the dust settled, trains loaded with doctors, nurses and other relief workers, medical supplies, food and building materials were rolling toward the stricken city. One of the first to arrive and one of the most appreciated came from Boston and its thousands of exiled Nova Scotians.

One of the principal sufferers was the Nova Scotia Tramways and Power Company - its poles and overhead wires in the north end were a tangled web and the power had to be shut off for many days. Eight or ten of its tram cars were badly damaged, and two, which had been up at Richmond at the time of the explosion, were completely demolished. Nothing was ever found except the broken and twisted trucks. Repair work was hindered by the fact that many of the employees were injured. The rehabilitation of the tramway system was carried out as quickly as possible but it was some time before all of the damaged cars could be repaired. The north end of the city was so completely destroyed that tram service beyond Richmond was never restored.

For a time after World War I, but previous to 1920, the Göttingen Street line, from Cunard Street to the North End, was serviced by a one-man car. No.12 was altered for this purpose;

doors were provided at all four corners and passengers paid the motorman when leaving, the rear doors being closed.

**BIRNEYS COME TO HALIFAX**

By 1919, when the wartime activity came to an end, the company found that most of its cars were old and in poor condition -- many having been given only temporary repairs after the explosion -- so twenty four new Birney cars were ordered for delivery in the Spring of 1920. At the same time, a new line was built on Cogswell Street across the Common, from Windsor Street to Gottingen Street, thus providing a direct route downtown for the Armdale cars, which then began running via Hollis Street to the new railway station in the south end.

In 1922, the following routes were established, some of which, of course, were not new:

BELT LINE	5.8 Miles	Included north west loop.
MAIN LINE	5.6 "	South end loop and north on Barrington Street to Richmond.
GOTTINGEN	4.9 "	Gottingen Street to Railway Station.
ARMDALE	6.7 "	Arm Bridge to Railway Station.
DINGLE	4.0 "	Barrington and Buckingham Streets to the south end of Oxford Street, via Coburg Road.

In 1923, the rule of the road in Nova Scotia was changed from Left to right and all of the cars had to be rebuilt. The older cars were converted very easily as most of them had been built originally with steps on both sides, but the Birneys were changed only with the greatest difficulty.

In 1926, the Company embarked on an extensive programme of improvements. The track was rather primitive, with light rails and at many points where double track lines intersected, they narrowed to single track at the crossing so that only one diamond was needed instead of four. The single crossings were eliminated, new curved connections were installed at the Gottingen-Cunard and the Windsor-Quinpool intersections; short connecting lines were built on George Street between Granville and Barrington Streets, and the lines on Oxford and Gottingen Streets were extended. In 1926 and 1927, twenty-two additional Birneys were purchased and all of the remaining old-type cars were scrapped.

In 1927, after the work was completed and the new equipment received, the routes were rearranged as follows:

ROUTE	NAME	IDENTIFICATION LIGHTS	ROUND TRIP MILEAGE
1 & 2	BELT LINE	Red - White	3.76
3	RICHMOND-GOTTINGEN	Green - Green	10.54
4	OXFORD	Green - White	4.60
5	ARMDALE	Amber - Amber	7.24
6	DINGLE	White - Blue	4.38
7	AGRICOLA-SOUTH PARK	Green - Red	6.60
8	WINDSOR-INGLIS	Red - Red	6.60
9	POINT PLEASANT PARK	Blue - Blue	4.18

Route 9 via Tower Road to the Martello Tower in Point Pleasant Park was opened only in 1928 and about the same time the Armdale line was extended from Arm Bridge to Simpson's Store. Route 9 was built primarily to serve a Company venture known as Francklyn Park, a picnic ground and dance pavilion on the North West Arm, adjoining Point Pleasant Park. Subsequently, service was discontinued on several sections. In 1928, the part of the line on Barrington Street north of Young Street was abandoned and about ten years later, the part of Route 9 inside Point Pleasant Park was discontinued; the cars stopped at Miller Street just outside the park.

WAR FORTIFIES A CARBARN

The impact of World War II was greater, in many ways than World War I, and created many serious difficulties for the city and its transportation system. I was in Halifax on the grim September day in 1939 when the war started; strange submarines had been seen cruising offshore for several months and a hit-and-run attack was expected at any moment. During the afternoon and early evening, thousands of citizens congregated along the waterfront somberly watching ships of the Royal Canadian Navy, with hundreds of Halifax boys on board, slipping out to sea to meet the unknown. There were no bands playing, no flags flying and no patriotic songs or speeches, but an old gentleman in Point Pleasant Park provided a fitting climax when he quietly recited Rudyard Kipling's verse on Halifax:

" Into the mist my guardian prowls put forth,  
Behind the mist my virgin ramparts lie,  
The Warden of the Honour of the North,  
Sleepless and veiled, am I. "

The only bright spot of the day was watching hundreds of frightened American tourists re-embarking with indecent haste on board a Swedish cruise liner, evidently convinced that the "Bismarck" was waiting for them off Sambro.

In the days to come, there was much foolish adverse criticism -- about crowded hotels, restaurants, theatres and street cars -- but those who suffered the most, and in silence, were the Halifaxians themselves; on the whole, Canada had good reason to be proud of its usually nameless "Atlantic Port".

One of the amusing sights of the War was the fortified carbarn! The company's storage, repair and power facilities were located close to the waterfront and it was feared that the Germans might come ashore in force some dark night, seize the tram cars and rapidly spread out through the city, capturing the army and navy headquarters and other key points. Consequently, the carbarn and powerhouse took on the appearance of an armed camp, with plenty of barbed wire and sand bags. Nothing ever happened, but it was reliably reported, on several occasions, that captured U-boat crewmen were found to have Halifax theatre and street car tickets in their pockets!

In 1939, the population of the city was about 60,000 and the Company's fifty nine Birney tram cars efficiently handled the pre-war normal of nine million passengers per year; by 1941, however,

the population had risen to about 120,000 and the poor little Birneys staggered under a wartime load of 31 million passengers. To cope with this tremendous congestion, the Company bought 23 additional Birneys but even with the enlarged fleet, the cars were terribly crowded. It was physically impossible for the management to continue its usual high standard of maintenance, and the rolling stock deteriorated rapidly - the extremely damp climate being a constant menace to the steel car bodies. When peace came at last, the company found that it would have to replace practically all of its cars and rails, and as new tram cars were no longer being built and good second hand cars almost impossible to find, it was decided, after careful study and consultation with civic authorities and transit experts, to scrap the street railway and replace it with a modern trolley coach system. The proposed changes were explained carefully to the public and great interest was aroused. Nearly everyone regretted the passing of the little Birneys which had done their duty so well and so long, but even their best friends could not claim that they were comfortable.

BIRNEYS BOW OUT

The changeover was made with as little inconvenience as possible; gasoline automobiles were rented from out-of-town operators to provide temporary service for a few days on each route while the old trolley wires were being taken down and the new ones put up, and also, because of the numerous stub lines operated during the transition period, more passengers were obliged to transfer.

The first routes to be converted were Nos.1 and 2, "Belt Line" No.7 "Agricola-South Park" and No.8 "Windsor-Inglis". This meant the complete elimination of trams from the centre of the city. March 26th, 1949 was the 'Day of Sadness' when the Birneys ran downtown for the last time and car No.177 was decorated for the occasion with a tearful bewhiskered face painted on the front and farewell messages were painted on the side panels:

" Good-bye, my friends, good-bye !  
Good-bye, my friends, this is the end;  
I've travelled miles and miles  
And watched your faces through the years,  
Show anger, tears and smiles;  
Although you've criticized my looks  
And said I was too slow,  
I got you there and brought you back,  
Through rain and sleet and snow. "

On the back panel there was a special message to motorists:

" Farewell to all you motorists,  
To-day my journey ends!  
So let's forget past arguments,  
Shake hands and part as friends.  
You've followed me around the streets  
And many times you swore  
Because I beat you to the stop  
And dared you to pass my door!

The Birneys continued to operate on the outer extremities of several routes and, as they could not get down to the carbarn, they were parked on the streets at night, when not in use:

Route 3	BARRINGTON ST.	From Buckingham St. to Young St.
" 3	GOTTINGEN ST.	" Cunard St. to Young St.
" 5	QUINPOOL ROAD	" Oxford St. to Simpson's Store.
" 5	HOLLIS ST.	" George St. to Union Station.
" 6	OXFORD ST.	" Coburg Road to Oakland Road.
" 9	TOWER ROAD	" Inglis St. to Miller St.

Other conversions followed rapidly; route 9 on Tower Road on March 31st, 1949; Gottingen street on April 5th; the whole Arm- dale line, route 5, on April 16th, and finally on April 30th, the Birneys ran for the last time on the oldest line in the city -- to Richmond. As the Birneys were retired, they were towed to the carbarn by trucks and no.157 was the last one to operate under power in regular service.

Many offers were received for the old car bodies for conversion into tourist cabins and roadside hot dog stands -- one offer coming from as far away as Florida -- but the company very properly believed that they deserved a better fate than that. Col. J.C. MacKeen, the President, said "They are definitely going to be scrapped after a long and faithful service. They are not very pretty when they are around the country as eyesores. "

The post-war population leveled off at about 100,000 and in 1949 it was thought that sixty five new trolley coaches would be sufficient for many years to come. A noted transit authority predicted that in 1952, when the novelty would have worn off and normal conditions would prevail, the new transportation system would handle fifteen million passengers, but 1952 came and went and probably no one was more astonished than the Company itself when it was found that 28 million passengers had been carried instead of the expected 15 million. Twelve additional coaches had to be purchased to help handle the unexpected load.

No true railway enthusiast will willingly admit that a bus service is better than a street railway but in the case of Halifax one must admit that the new trolley coach service is swift, quiet and efficient; the new vehicles are much more comfortable and in every way the modernization of the transportation system has been a great success.

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**FARES**

Since about 1925, tickets have been three for 25 cents, with transfers given where needed, and, prior to 1949, passengers paid their fares when leaving the cars. This worked very well with the Birney cars which had only one entrance-exit but the trolley coaches have a treadle-operated rear exit and it was necessary to change the fare collection system to "pay-as-you-enter".

In addition to the regular tickets, there is a very interesting system of weekly passes which are used by most Haligonians and by visitors, too. Each Monday morning, the operators sell,

for \$1.50, individual passes which are good for unlimited use for one week. Halifax is small enough for most workers to go home for lunch and thus it is estimated that each pass represents an average of about 25 rides per week. This would seem to indicate a considerable loss of revenue, but actually it is a concession to the passengers who use the service frequently. Many Halifaxians admit that they could and would walk if they had to pay full fare four times a day but with the passes they ride even if going only a few blocks. While the passes tend to reduce the average revenue per passenger carried, it gets people into the habit of riding, it keeps the equipment at close to maximum use, it creates a great amount of good will and, no doubt, in the long run, the advantages to the Company are considerable.

TIME	CASH	TICKETS		WEEKLY PASS
Previous to 1920	5¢	6 for 25¢	25 for \$1.	--
About 1920	7¢	4 " 25¢	--	--
April 1, 1925	10¢	3 " 25¢	14 for \$1.	\$1.00
January 1, 1928	10¢	3 " 25¢	14 " \$1.	1.25
March, 1952	10¢	3 " 25¢	12 " \$1.	1.50

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**ROLLING STOCK COLOUR SCHEMES**

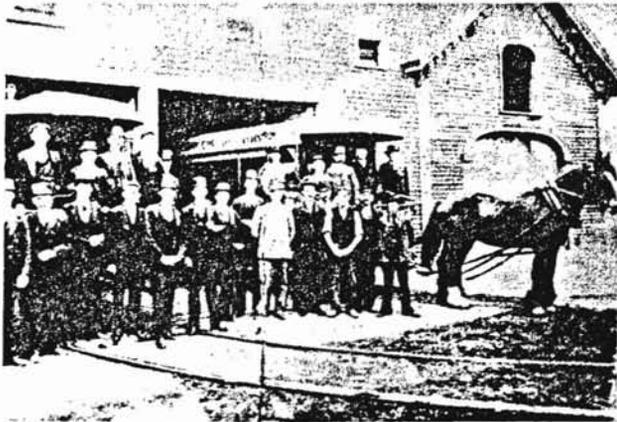
There is no record now of how the old horse cars were painted but since the colours of the new electric cars received in 1895

were mentioned rather prominently, this suggests that a change was made at that time. There is one possible clue, however; in 1906 or 1907 a dilapidated closed car body was resting on the ground beside one of the buildings on Water Street. It was a faded blue colour and bore the number "14" - obviously one of the old horse cars.

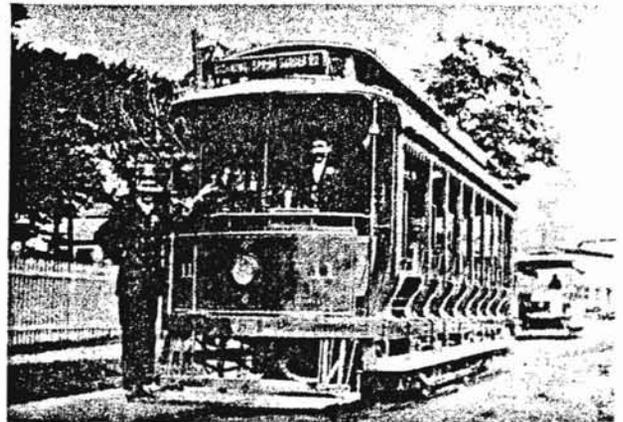
The closed cars of 1895 had the end dashboards and the upper side panels painted Indian Red, while the lower side panels and the window frames were cream. The open cars were painted in a similar manner with the end dashboards Indian Red and the bench pedestals cream.

When the first Birney cars were received in 1920, they were painted a dark green (similar to the green used by the Montreal Tramways Company) with cream posts. However, this did not prove to be satisfactory; as the number of automobiles increased, it was found that the dark green could not be seen easily in the dark and narrow streets downtown, especially in rainy or foggy weather, so, about 1924 or 1925, several cars were given an experimental coat of traction orange. Orange is about the ugliest colour for a Birney and the innovation was not popular, perhaps too because there were many Irish from the eastern shore living in the city. The Company then selected a very pleasing shade of canary yellow which has been standard ever since, having been adopted for the new trolley coaches, too. The bright yellow not only provided excellent visibility but gave the cars a cheerful appearance. Although this colour must be kept clean with difficulty, the cars and coaches have always been spotless, mute evidence of frequent care.

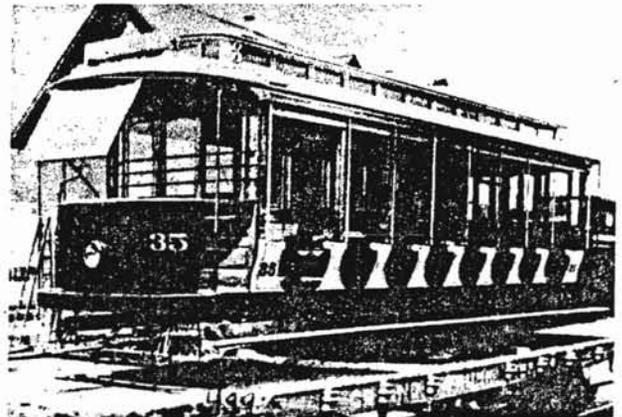
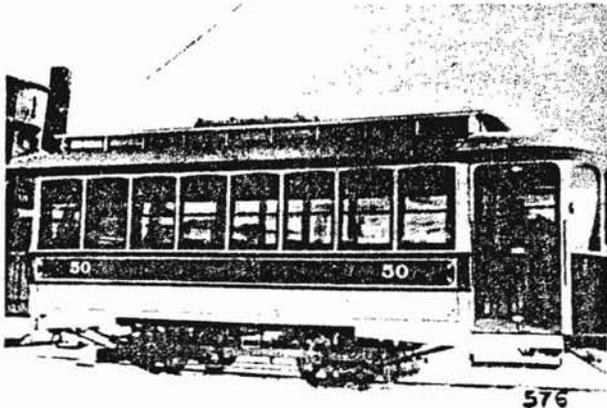
# ROLLING STOCK - HORSE CAR TO BIRNEY



Derby hats were all the rage for off-duty platform men in 1894 when this photograph was taken at the Halifax Street Railway Company's car barn at Barrington and Hanover Streets.



At the dawn of the Twentieth Century, this dapper mustached conductor and his less photogenic co-worker, stopped No. 11 for a photographer, on Barrington at Roome Street.

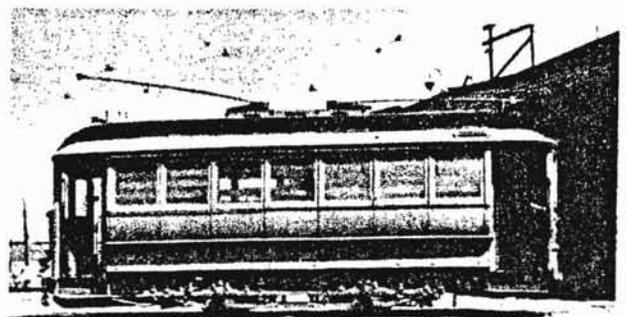


When winter brought icy gales blowing in from the Atlantic, Haligonians were glad to seek the warm comfort of closed cars like No. 50, built by Ottawa in 1909.

Open, single-truck No. 35, pictured as it left Ottawa, where it was built in July 1906, was transported to the Maritimes aboard a Grand Trunk flatcar.



Cape Breton to California — Birneys came from everywhere. Two of them passing in front of the Union Station were snapped by Lusher Hay of Canton, Ohio, on October 21, 1948.



When Sam Mitchell moved No. 76 out of the NSL&P Water Street carhouse on May 30, 1949 for a CREA delegation, it was the last time this car moved under its own power.

ROLLING STOCK

HALIFAX CITY RAILROAD - 1866-1876

Little is known about the rolling stock of O'Brien's company beyond the fact that he commenced operations with five small passenger cars and three platform cars. The latter presumably were used for construction work during the building of the railway but there is good reason to believe that O'Brien intended to use them for a freight service between the station of the Nova Scotia Railway and the harbour but he was not permitted to do so. In 1874, several larger passenger cars were acquired and it is probable that they were the platform cars rebuilt.

HALIFAX STREET RAILWAY 1886-1890  
NOVA SCOTIA POWER COMPANY 1890-1895

The Halifax Street Railway commenced operations with fifteen closed cars and six open cars, all built by John Stephenson Co., of New York, then the principal builder of such equipment. Probably additional cars were acquired later. The only known photograph, taken in that era with the car number visible, shows open car No.25 and this suggests that the company followed the fashion of the time by numbering its closed cars with even numbers and the open cars with odd numbers.

HALIFAX ELECTRIC TRAMWAY COMPANY 1895-1917  
NOVA SCOTIA TRAMWAYS & POWER COMPANY 1917-1928  
NOVA SCOTIA LIGHT & POWER COMPANY 1928-

CLOSED CARS (Even numbers only)

2 to 28	1896 Rhodes Curry & Co., Amherst, NS Single-truck, double-end two-man cars; deck roof, six windows. Scrapped before 1925: 2,4,6,14,28. Scrapped in 1925: 16, 18, 20, 26. " 1927: 8, 10, 12, 22, 24.	14 cars
30 - 32	Oct.1898 Rhodes Curry & Co., Amherst, NS Same as 2 class, but with seven windows. Both scrapped in 1927.	2 cars.
34 - 36	1901 Rhodes Curry & Co., Amherst, NS Same as 2 class, but with closed ends. Both scrapped in 1927.	2 cars.
38 - 40	1905 Rhodes Curry & Co., Amherst, NS Same as 30 class but built with end windows. Both scrapped 1927.	2 cars
42 - 48	1912 Nova Scotia Car Works, Halifax, NS Seven windows, railway type clerestory roof. Scrapped before 1925: 42. Single-truck, double- " in 1927: 44, 46, 48. end, two-man.	4 cars
50 - 52	1909 Ottawa Car Mfg. Co., Ottawa, Ont. Single-truck, single-end, PAYE type, eight windows, deck roof. Type used only on Belt Line.	2 cars

- 54 - 56 Dec.1909 Silliker Car Co., Halifax, NS 2 cars  
Same as 50 class.
- 58 - 68 1913 Nova Scotia Car Wks. (formerly Silliker 6 cars  
Car Co.) Halifax, NS.  
Single-truck, double-end, two-man; clerestory roof.  
Car 60 lost in 1917 explosion.
- 70 - 80 1915 Nova Scotia Car Works, Halifax, NS 6 cars.  
Same as 58 class.  
1920: Car 76 became work car. Car 78 became sand car.  
No.76 scrapped 1949; No.78 scrapped 1940.

With exceptions noted, cars 50 to 80 were scrapped in 1927.

- 82 - 92 Single-truck, double-end, two-man cars, 6 cars  
M.S.R. roof. Bought from Montreal Tramways  
Company early in 1919 to meet the needs of increas-  
ing traffic. They were altered and reconditioned  
by the M.T.C. and shipped out, all six together on  
flatcars, from MTC Youville Shop, Montreal, on  
March 25th, 1919.
- |        |                |          |      |            |
|--------|----------------|----------|------|------------|
| No. 82 | ex MTC No. 182 | Class 17 | 1900 | Mtl.St.Ry. |
| " 84   | " 194          | " 18a    | 1899 | "          |
| " 86   | " 136          | " 17     | 1900 | "          |
| " 88   | " 52           | " 17     | "    | "          |
| " 90   | " 116          | " 17     | "    | "          |
| " 92   | " 98           | " 17     | "    | "          |

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OPEN CARS (Odd numbers only)

- 1 - 13 1896 Rhodes Curry & Co., Amherst, NS 12 cars  
Single-truck, double-end, 9-bench, open cars.  
It is said that only the bodies were bought and  
each spring, twelve closed cars would be retired for  
the summer and their trucks, motors and other equip-  
ment used to fit up the open car bodies. In the aut-  
umn, the process was reversed. This proved to be a  
nuisance however, and caused considerable damage to  
the car bodies, and after a year or two, additional  
trucks were acquired so that every car was fully  
equipped. A small carbarn was built at the corner  
of Hollis and Fawson Streets in which to store the  
cars not in use -- open cars in winter and some clos-  
ed cars in summer. These cars were scrapped c. 1920.
- 25 - 27 1898 Rhodes Curry & Co., Amherst, NS 2 cars  
Same as 1 class. Scrapped about 1920.
- (1st) 37-41 3 cars  
Very small, single-truck, double-end 8-bench open  
cars. They were very light, had no bulkheads and  
their general appearance suggests that they might have  
been horse-cars originally. They were bought in the  
spring of 1902 but no record has been found as to  
their origin. It is probable that they came from  
some road in the vicinity of Boston and in Halifax  
they retained their original numbers. They were not

very satisfactory and in the autumn of 1906 they were sold to the Yarmouth Street Railway where they ran until 1924.

53 - 59

4 cars.  
Single-truck, double-end, 9-bench open cars bought in the spring of 1904 from the Worcester Street Ry. Supposed to have been built by J.M. Jones' Sons of Watervliet, N.Y. These four cars were used extensively on the North West Arm line, a summer service running from north Barrington Street to the corner of Oxford and South Streets (North West Arm Rowing Club). They were also used as extras on the other lines. They were never repainted in Halifax as the Worcester colours were similar to Halifax, and they also retained their Worcester numbers which were painted in the centre of the side sill instead of on seat pedestals, as on the Halifax cars. They also had a different kind of truck. For some obscure reason, the cars were popularly known as the "Blueberry Specials". They were scrapped about 1909.

29 - 35: July 1906 Ottawa Car Mfg. Co., Ottawa, Ont. 4 cars  
Similar to 1 class. Scrapped about 1920.

2nd/37-41) 1907 Ottawa Car Mfg. Co., Ottawa, Ont. 4 cars  
1st/43 ) Same as 29 class. Scrapped about 1920.

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BIRNEY CARS (Numbered consecutively)

100 - 123 1920 St.Louis Car Co., St.Louis, Mo. 24 cars  
Originally built for left-hand rule of the road. When that was changed in 1923, these cars had to be rebuilt with doors and controls on opposite sides.

124 - 133 1920 J.G. Brill Co., Philadelphia, Pa. 10 cars  
Bought in 1926 from United Railways & Electric Co. of Baltimore, Md. Former numbers: 4007, 4010, 4011, 4012, 4014, 4015, 4016, 4019, 4020, 4022.  
No.126 destroyed V-E Day, May 8, 1945.

134 - 137 1926 Ottawa Car Mfg. Co. 4 cars  
Same as standard Birneys but had square roof ventilators instead of the usual round dome type.

138 1918 J.G. Brill Co., 1 car  
Bought in 1926 as a sample. Built originally for Toronto Civic Ry., no.70; later Toronto Transportation Commission #2236. Reconditioned and changed to standard gauge by TTC.

139 - 145 Same as No.138. Bought in 1927. 7 cars  
Ex T.C.R. nos, 73, 74, 75, 76, 79, 80, 82.  
Ex T.T.C. nos. 2242, 2244, 2246, 2248, 2254, 2256, 2260.

- 146 - 155 1920 J.G. Brill Co., 10 cars.  
Bought 1928 from the United Railways & Power  
Company of Baltimore. Former nos. 4003, 4005, 4006,  
4008, 4009, 4013, 4017, 4018, 4021, 4023.
- 156 - 158 Built about 1917 by J.G. Brill Co., 3 cars.  
Built for one of the Stone & Webster lines in the  
U.S.A. First type of Birney; had six roof ventilators  
instead of the usual eight. Bought about 1923 by the  
Cape Breton Electric Co., Sydney & Glace Bay. C.B.E.  
numbers not known but in 52-59 series. Bought for  
Halifax in 1932.
- 5 - 6 - 7 Origin unknown. 3 cars  
Bought about 1923 by the Moncton Tramways, Electricity  
& Gas Co., and numbered 5 to 7. Bought for Halifax  
in 1932 but they were in such bad condition that they  
were dismantled and the parts used to recondition nos.  
156-158 from Cape Breton which also were in poor  
condition. These cars from Moncton were not assigned  
new numbers in Halifax.
- 159 - 172 1918 J.G. Brill Co., 14 cars.  
Same as No.138. Bought from T.T.C. in 1940-41.  
Ex T.C.R. nos. 62, 66, 72, 77, 78, 81, 83, 84, 61,  
63, 64, 65, 68, 71.  
Ex T.T.C. nos. 2220, 2228, 2240, 2250, 2252, 2258,  
2262, 2264, 2218, 2222, 2224, 2226, 2232, 2238.
- 173 - 174 1923 J.G. Brill Co., 2 cars  
Ex Cape Breton Electric Co., nos.60-61.  
Bought in February 1942.
- 175 1921 J.G. Brill Co., 1 car  
Originally Sherbrooke Ry. & Power Co., no.22.  
Sold in 1938 to the Quebec Asbestos Co., at East  
Broughton, Que. Bought for Halifax, November 1942.
- 176 1920 Wason Mfg. Co., Springfield, Mass. 1 car  
Originally car "C" of the Dover, Somersworth & Roch-  
ester Railway of Rochester, N.H. Bought by the Sher-  
brooke Railway & Power Co. in 1924 and numbered 29.  
Sold in 1938 to the Quebec Asbestos Co.  
Bought for Halifax in November 1942.
- 177 - 181 J.G. Brill Co., 5 cars  
Originally built for the Union Traction Co. of Santa  
Cruz, Cal.; later Bakersfield & Kern Electric Ry.  
(Bakersfield, Cal.) nos. 17, 19, 20, 21, 23.  
Bought for Halifax in July 1943.

Note: Except as noted, all Birneys scrapped in May and June, 1949.

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WORK CARS

- 1 - 3 1896 Rhodes Curry & Co., 3 units  
Single-truck, double-end snow sweepers.  
Scrapped 1949.

- 4 1904 McGuire Cummings Mfg. Co. Chicago. 1 unit  
Single-truck, double-end snow sweeper. Scrapped 1949.
- 5 - 6 1912 McGuire Cummings Mfg. Co., 2 units  
Single-truck double-end snow sweepers. Scrapped 1949.
- 7 1 unit.  
Single-truck, double-end snow sweeper. Origin unknown  
but bought in 1927 from J.E. van Loan of Dover, N.J.  
Probably from some road in New Jersey. Original  
number 10. Scrapped 1949.
- 8 McGuire Cummings Mfg. Co. 1 unit  
Single-truck, double-end snow sweeper.  
Bought in 1932 from Moncton Tramways, Electricity &  
Gas Co. Scrapped 1949.
- 7 1920 Ottawa Car Mfg. Co. 1 unit  
Single-truck, single-end Conway snow plow.  
The Conway plow was invented by a lumber dealer of that  
name in Quebec city. It consisted of a fixed, straight  
blade plow under the front of the car, adjusted to  
throw the snow to the right; usually, a small, adjust-  
able wing plow on the blind side to clear a little  
more than half of the devil strip; and a long, adjust-  
able wing plow on the right side to clear from six to  
ten feet of the roadway beside the track.  
Scrapped 1939.
- 8 1920 Nova Scotia Car Works. 1 unit  
Conway plow, like no. 7. Scrapped 1949.
- 76 Tool Car. Former passenger car no. 76. 1 unit.  
Scrapped 1949.
- 78 Sand Car. Former passenger car no. 78. 1 unit.  
Scrapped 1940.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The content of this Bulletin is based on material gathered a number of years ago by Mr. Stanley Borden, formerly of Halifax. Mr. Borden made extensive research in this particular field, and his sources included the official records of the various companies involved. The recollections of earlier years, of my fellow member, Mr. R.M. Binns, now of Montreal but a native of Halifax, have enabled him to make many constructive observations. To both of these gentlemen, I am very grateful.

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