Section 2.—Electric Railways*

Replacing the horse-car systems, used in Montreal and Toronto as early as 1861, electric street railways were first seen in operation in Canada in 1885, when a successful experimental railway was constructed and operated at the Toronto Exhibition Grounds. Before many years their safety and convenience resulted in the discarding of the older systems. The first electric railway line in Canada, and probably the first in North America, ran between Windsor and Walkerville and was established early in June, 1886 (it is recorded that it was in active operation before June 11).

The cheap and reasonably rapid conveyance of human beings is a necessity of modern urban life. In the cities of Eastern Canada, electric street railways are generally operated by private companies under city franchises, while in a considerable number of cities in Ontario and the West the electric railways are owned and operated by the municipalities.

Statistics presented, cover the urban and interurban operations of the electric railway systems.

Subsection 1.—Equipment of Electric Railways

The single overhead-trolley system is used by all electric railways but Edmonton, Montreal, Winnipeg and a few other municipalities have begun to use trackless trolley-buses (77 of these buses being in service in 1946). Of the 33 systems, 23 operated both electric cars and motor-buses in 1946, the buses numbering 1,491. The main advantage of the bus is that it is not confined to a fixed route and, in the case of both motor-buses and trolley-buses, the expense of track maintenance is eliminated.

A summary of the equipment operated by electric railway companies is given in Table 18.

18.—Equipment of Electric Railways, 1943-46

Item	1943	1944	1945	1946	Item	1943	1944	1945	1946
	No.	No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.	No.
PASSENGER VEHICLES—					OTHER VEHICLES—				
Closed cars	3,303	3,350	3,361	3,358	Baggage, express and mail cars	19	19	19	17
Open cars	8	4	4	4	Freight cars	163	165	165	154
Combination passenger and baggage	8	8	7	7	Locomotives	52	53	53	56
Cars without electrical equipment	139	138	131	133	Snow ploughs	70	77	75	71
Motor-buses	1,329	1,444	1,454	1,491	Sweepers	148	148	149	148
Trackless trolley-buses	41	42	67	77	Trucks	163	147	148	162
					Miscellaneous	202	194	206	207
TOTALS, PASSENGER VEHICLES	4,828	4,986	5,024	5,070	TOTALS, OTHER VEHICLES	817	803	815	815

Subsection 2.—Finances of Electric Railways

When electric railways have ceased to operate because of either a decline in traffic or the substitution of motor-buses, their statistics have been excluded from the following table. Consequently, fluctuations in revenues, etc., have been affected by variations in traffic and also by changes in the mode of local transportation. Despite these changing conditions, the gross revenues of electric railways

* For further details see "Electric Railways of Canada", 1946, published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.