

Chicago Considers Fifty-Year Grant

At the meeting of the local transportation committee of the City Council of Chicago, Ill., on Feb. 19, Walter L. Fisher, counsel for the committee, was directed to prepare a bill which would make possible the granting of a fifty-year franchise to the consolidated surface and elevated lines and provide for their acquisition by the city at any time during the period of the franchise. The bill previously proposed by the committee was for a thirty-year period and included a clause which prohibited the city from taking over the property until a certain per cent of the capital had been amortized. With this clause inserted, Mr. Fisher stated that the thirty-year franchise was of no consequence and that the city might as well grant a fifty-year franchise with the city having power to take over the property at any time. L. A. Busby, president of the Chicago Surface Lines, told the committee that it would be impossible to finance the proposition on a thirty-year franchise unless the per cent of the capital should be fixed upon that was to be amortized before purchase by the city became possible.

With these differences before the Council committee, the fifty-year franchise bill was ordered drawn, and will be brought before the committee together with the thirty-year franchise bill for joint discussion at the next meeting.

Great Northern Considering Electrification

The Great Northern Railway is making a study looking toward the possible electrification of some 300 miles of its main line between Spokane and Seattle. Engineers from the Westinghouse and General Electric companies are working up preliminary data at the present time, and no decision as to the character of the installation has been made. However, it is anticipated that the company will proceed with this project in 1918, though nothing has been authorized as yet. The project has been initiated because of the successful operations of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul's electric zone. Whether or not it is to be carried out in the immediate future depends upon developments in the foreign and domestic situation during the next few months, the programs for improvements on Western railroads in general being held largely in abeyance just at present.

\$800,000 Project for Newark

Extensions of Hudson River Tunnels System to New Newark Terminal

Thomas N. McCarter, president of the Public Service Railway, Newark, N. J., outlined on Feb. 19 a plan before Mayor Thomas L. Raymond in Newark for an underground extension of the tracks of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad in Newark, with a terminal under the apex of Military Park and Park Place in that city. The project is designed to connect the tube line with the Public Service Railway terminal on Park Place.

For more than a year past the Pennsylvania Railroad and Public Service Railway have been negotiating with reference to a combination of their terminal facilities in Newark.

It is proposed to abandon the present Park Place Station of the Pennsylvania as a terminal and to utilize the ground now covered by it to depress the tracks below street grade; to cause the tracks thus depressed to cross underneath Park Place and Center Street at their junction and continue under Park Place and a limited portion of Military Park to a sub-surface station located approximately at the apex of the park, which sub-surface station will be provided with convenient and direct means of ingress and egress to Broad Street and to the concourse floor of the Public Service Railway terminal.

By this means the whole Public Service Railway system, local, suburban and interurban, will be brought into direct connection with the high-speed line of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad to uptown and downtown New York, and, through it, with the whole metropolitan transportation system with which it connects.

This plan is a return, in an enlarged sense, to the original location proposed by the Pennsylvania for its terminal in Newark, which at the time was favored by the city authorities, but which was abandoned because the necessary enabling act passed by the Legislature of 1910 was vetoed by Governor Fort. The construction of the Public Service Railway terminal in the meantime has accentuated the desirability of this location for the terminal.

Railway Men on Defence Committee

Matthew C. Brush, president of the Boston Elevated Railway; P. F. Sullivan, president of the Bay State Railway; Clark V. Wood, president of the Springfield Street Railway and the New England Street Railway Club, and C. D. Emmons, general manager of the Boston & Worcester Street Railway, have been added to the Massachusetts transportation committee which is investigating railway co-operative measures related to the present international crisis. Many men well known in the engineering and utility fields are associated with the main organization, under the chairmanship of James J. Storrow of Lee Higginson & Company, Boston. Among the members of the committee on industrial survey are Howard Rogers, of the Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation, Boston, vice-chairman, Walter C. Fish of the General Electric Company, Lynn, Mass., and Howard Coonley of the Walworth Manufacturing Company, South Boston. Fred T. Ley of F. T. Ley & Company and G. Dresser, superintendent of the New England Telephone & Telegraph Company, are members of the committee on emergency help and equipment. At a meeting of the executive committee in Boston on Feb. 19 General Sir Sam Hughes, former organizer of the Canadian overseas expeditions, conferred with those present upon preparedness problems from the standpoint of civilian aid.

Increase in Wages in Fargo.—C. P. Brown, general superintendent of the Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway, Fargo, N. D., has announced an increase in the wages of the trainmen in the employ of the company. The employees have been receiving from 19 to 24 cents an hour, based on length of service. Under the new scale the men will receive from 20 to 25 cents an hour.

Bill to Provide Steam and Street Railway Connection.—Representative Gans of Philadelphia, Pa., has introduced a bill into the Legislature of Pennsylvania, amending the public service law so as to provide for switch and other connections between street railways and steam railroads when required by the Public Service Commission, and establishing through and joint fares.

Electrification Nearing Completion.—The work of electrifying the West Side line of the Southern Pacific Company into Corvallis, Ore., is practically completed, and it is expected the line will be ready for operation before April 1. The official date for the opening. McCoy, 8 miles south of Whiteson, has been the northern terminus of the electric division of the Southern Pacific Company.

Franchise Controversy in Muskegon.—A controversy has developed between the Muskegon Traction & Lighting Company, Muskegon, Mich., and the city over conditions of the street railway franchise of the company, which has until 1931 to run. Officials of the company have announced their willingness to enter into negotiations for a new grant, but only on condition that the validity of the present rights of the company to operate be not contested by the city in court.

Savings Bank Reviews Toledo Utility History.—The Home Savings Bank of Toledo, Ohio, issues an eight-page monthly business letter for the purpose of giving its depositors and customers information concerning the business life of the city. The current issue contains an historical sketch of the Toledo Railways & Light Company, operated by Henry L. Doherty & Company. The article briefly reviews the inception of the Toledo Gas Company in 1853, the securing of a franchise for the operation of a street car system, and finally the merging of several companies into the Toledo Railways & Light Company.