

The company met the competition by slashing fares, improving service and lobbying the government to ban the jitneys as unfair competition. After years of haggling, the city was finally given the power to ban the jitneys, which it did in 1918.

The number of passengers taking the streetcar dropped dramatically. The streetcar company claimed the competition was costing it \$2000 a day in lost fares.

They toured the city picking up people who were waiting at the streetcar stops. Sometimes the jitney's fare was a couple of pennies less. But even when it wasn't, cars were still enough of a novelty that passengers jumped back to the car, climb onto the roof, crawl up side down in front of the astonished face of your colleague.

During the First World War, the transit company was plagued by competition from a new arrival on the streets of Vancouver, the jitney. Jitneys were large automobiles, usually Model T Ford.

The electric Interurbans remained in service until the 1950s. By that time, trucks and buses were taking over the freight and passenger business. The Fraser Valley Line closed in 1950. One by one the other lines did the same. The last Interurban made its final run between Marpole and Steveston on February 28, 1958.

As well, trains hauled milk and fresh produce from Valley farms, and played a vital role in the economic development of the region. The electric Interurbans remained in service until the 1950s. By that time, trucks and buses were taking over the freight and passenger business. The Fraser Valley Line closed in 1950. One by one the other lines did the same. The last Interurban made its final run between Marpole and Steveston on February 28, 1958.

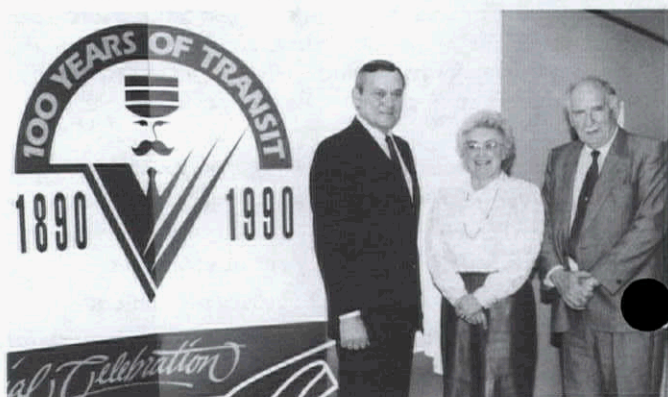
Westminster line via Burnaby Lake. Commuters on Vancouver Island's Saanich Peninsula welcomed the opening of their Interurban to Victoria in 1913.

BC Transit celebrates centennial!

BC Transit invites you to celebrate with them 100 years of public transit in British Columbia. It all began in 1890 with a tiny fleet of rickety streetcars clanking through the streets of Victoria and Vancouver. As the province grew, the streetcar system grew along with it. For 60 years electric streetcars were the backbone of public transit.

Times changed. The streetcars gave way to rubber-tired buses. Then times changed again. SeaBus and SkyTrain made their appearance. Today transit systems in the province carry more than 120 million passengers a year.

During 1990, BC Transit will be honouring the people and the vehicles which over the past 100 years have helped to keep British Columbians on the move.



The Honorable Rita M. Johnston, minister of transportation and highways, unveils BC Transit's centennial logo. With her are Don Ross, chairman of the BC Transit board of directors and Mayor of Vancouver, and Don Ross, chairman of the Vancouver Centennial Transit Commission. The logo, designed by the Richmond firm of Cochrane and Cassidy Design, will be featured prominently by the Corporation during its commemoration of the centenary in 1990.

BIRTH OF THE BUZZER

June 2, 1916 -- A small pamphlet containing household hints, timetable information, coming events and lame jokes began appearing in all the city streetcars. The original issue had no name. A prize of \$5 was offered for ideas and the public responded with over 5,000 suggestions. The winning entry was...you guessed it, THE BUZZER.

Before long, Interurban tracks ran through Richmond to the fish cannery at Steveston, along the Fraser River to connect Marpole to New Westminster, and along a second Vancouver-New Westminster line. The first Interurban in the province -- indeed, the first in North America -- was the 43 kilometre line between downtown Vancouver and New Westminster. Known as the Central Park Line, it opened in 1891. Two trains a day, one in each morning and the other at dusk, carried passengers on a 45-minute trip through the unsettled wilds of Burnaby for 50 cents, 75 cents return.

At its peak, B.C. Electric operated the largest electric rail network in Canada. City streetcars represented only one branch of the system. Another was the Interurban railways -- larger, faster, and carrying passengers and freight into Victoria and Vancouver from the surrounding rural areas.

Times improved. The decade before the First World War saw tremendous economic growth in Vancouver. As new houses spread out from the city centre, the twin rails and overhead wire streetcars, gaily painted green and white, carried passengers along 375 kilometres of track.

On some cars, the conductors walked along open running boards collecting the nickel fare. The cars were double-enders; at the end of the line the motorman simply walked to the other end of the car and set off back down the track. The directors of Vancouver's street railway were a little too ambitious. In 1891 they expanded across False Creek and built a line along Broadway before there was enough traffic to support it. The result was economic ruin. The finances of the city's transit system remained bleak until 1897 when the B.C. Electric Company took control.

Riders of the streetcar in the early days required a strong stomach. The tiny four-wheelers bounced along, jostling passengers up and down on the hard benches, swaying from side to side as they rounded corners. The cars each carried 35 people. If too many passengers crowded on to the front or back platform, the car would lift at one end.

Riding the Rails the Old-Fashioned Way

(Cont. from page 2)
False Creek near today's Terminal Avenue. The second route ran out Powell Street as far as Campbell.
Six miles of track and six tiny streetcars -- a humble beginning for a Vancouver transit system that today serves a larger area than any other system in Canada.

Centennial Celebrations 1990 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan 11	Centennial flag raised at Oakridge Transit Centre. Centennial flags will fly at all transit work sites. Restored buses put on display.
Feb 9	Closing date for submissions of art depicting the centennial received from elementary school students in the Lower Mainland. Representative pieces will be selected and made into banners for display at transit facilities.
Feb	Training sessions, and a speakers' package containing a script and slide show will be made available to transit employees who would like to volunteer to speak to clubs and organizations on the centennial.
Feb	A mobile display bus will be unveiled. The bus, a 1957 GM in B.C. Electric livery, will visit shopping malls, recreation centres and schools in Vancouver and Victoria throughout the year. The story of 100 years of transit will be told through photographs and videos.
Feb 22	Transit in Victoria celebrates 100th birthday.
Mar-May	Open houses will be held at operating centres in the Lower Mainland.
Mar	Scott Road SkyTrain Station will open.
Mar	The Centennial Centre at Stadium Station will feature displays on all aspects of public transit's first 100 years including a working scale model of the BC Electric rail systems.
May 1	Commemorative book will be published.
June 26	Transit's 100th birthday party in Vancouver. Commemorative Buzzer will be produced.

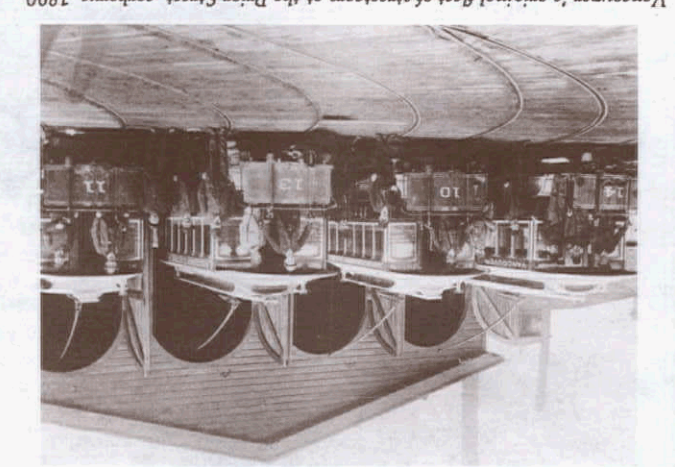
Initially there were just two routes through the city. One followed Granville Street north from Pacific, then out Hastings and Cordova Streets to Main where the tracks veered south again to look to them!"

Two days later the system opened for paying customers. Five electric streetcar system in Canada, and Vancouver was showing its pride.

giving free rides up and down the track. It was only the fourth off with a load of well-wishers. Soon all the cars joined the fun, Dugald Carmichael tending to the passengers, Car #14 started motorman Aubrey Elliott manning the controls, and conductor York. Finally, on June 26, 1890, the system was ready. With trolley wire was hung and electric cars were ordered from New

Opening Day -- 100 Years Ago

Vancouver's original fleet of streetcars at the Prior Street car barns, 1890



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The Buzzer

B.C. Electric and Buzzer logos from the 1920s

Centennial Celebration

100 YEARS OF TRANSIT

1890-1990

BRITISH COLUMBIA

A special edition of the Buzzer covering the highlights of public transit in British Columbia since it began in 1890

DOWN THE YEARS

100 years of public transit in B.C.



October 8, 1891 - first run of the Interurban between Vancouver and New Westminster

1890 An electric street railway begins service in Victoria on February 22. It is the first true public transit system in B.C. On June 26, Vancouver follows suit when the first streetcars go for a run on Main St., then called Westminster Ave.

1891 On Oct. 8, Canada's first interurban rail line, between Vancouver and New Westminster, opens for through service.

1896 On May 26, the worst transit disaster in Canadian history occurs in Victoria when an overcrowded streetcar plunges through the Point Ellice bridge, killing 55 passengers.



An open streetcar at Denman and Davie on the Mt. Pleasant Line.

1897 Out of the wreckage of the bridge collapse emerges the B.C. Electric Railway Company, based in London, England. The new company takes control of all public transit in Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster.

1899 Two electric streetcars begin operating in Nelson, B.C. Dubbed "the smallest streetcar system in the British Empire", it was taken over by the city in 1914 and ran until 1949.

1906 On Labour Day the first streetcar chugs up Lonsdale Avenue, bringing public transit to North Vancouver.



One of the famous observation cars.

1909 The first open-air, sightseeing car in Vancouver carries the Governor General and a host of dignitaries to the opening of the Granville Street Bridge on Sept. 6. Observation cars would be a popular feature of the transit system for the next 40 years.

1910 Beginning in October, passengers can ride the new Fraser Valley Interurban all the way to Chilliwack.

1912 The population of Vancouver reaches 122,000. The city is four times larger than it was when the century began.

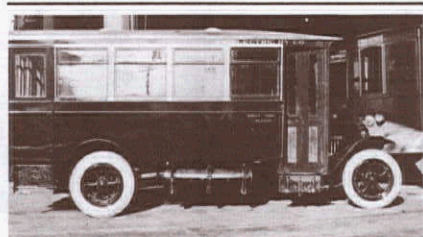
1922 On the first day of the year traffic switches overnight from driving on the left side of the road to driving on the right side.



FARES PLEASE

In 1900 conductors on the streetcars began collecting fares in a leather-bound brass box with a jug handle, soon dubbed "the coffee pot". For many years the fare was 5 cents, even less if you bought the special "worker's tickets" at eight for a quarter. The first fare increase didn't come until 1918 when car fares went up to 6 cents.

1923 The first motor buses go into operation in Vancouver. Buses are used in outlying areas to supplement the streetcar service.



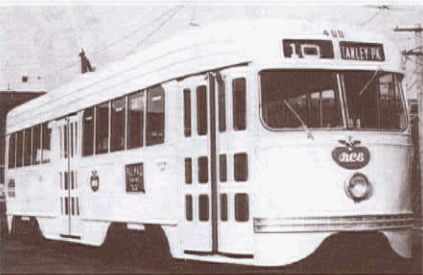
One of the first B.C. Electric motor buses, put into service in 1923.

1929 On January 1, the municipalities of Point Grey and South Vancouver amalgamate with Vancouver, more than doubling the size of the city at one stroke.

1938 The first automobiles cross the new Lions Gate Bridge to the North Shore.

1939 The first of the new President's Conference Committee (PCC) streetcars goes into service. Eventually, 36 PCCs joined the Vancouver fleet.

1943 With so many men away at war, woman "conductorettes" appear on the streetcars for the first time.



A PCC car, the latest in streetcar technology

1948 B.C. Electric officials have decided to replace streetcars with trolley buses. On August 16 the first Brill trolley coach begins regular service in Vancouver.

1955 On April 24, Vancouver's last streetcar makes its final run, and a colourful era of public transit draws to a close.

1958 The last of the interurban electric passenger trams makes its final run to Steveston on February 28.



With the men away at war, conductorettes went to work on the streetcars in 1943.

1961 On August 1, the provincial government nationalizes the B.C. Electric Company. Next year it creates a new crown corporation, B.C. Hydro and Power Authority.

1973 The Bureau of Transit Services takes over planning and funding of transit in B.C. and initiates a major expansion of transit services province-wide.



One of the original Brill trolley coaches on the first day of passenger service.

1978 The Urban Transit Authority, a new crown corporation, takes over the duties of the Bureau of Transit Services.

1980 On April 1, the Metro Transit Operating Company takes over the operation of transit in Greater Vancouver and Victoria from B.C. Hydro.

Inauguration of the handy DART system, providing door-to-door transit service for the disabled.



SkyTrain crossing SkyBridge to Surrey

1982 The Urban Transit Authority becomes BC Transit.

1985 The Metro Transit Operating Company is merged with BC Transit.

1986 SkyTrain begins service in time to handle the millions of visitors flocking to Vancouver's gala celebration, Expo 86.

1989 On September 5, SkyTrain makes its first trip across SkyBridge, the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world designed solely for rapid transit.

1990 Regular SkyTrain service begins across the Fraser River to the Scott Road Station in Surrey in March.

Revolution of the Rubber Wheels

In January 1939, Vancouver got its first glimpse of a brand new generation of streetcars, the sleek, streamlined President's Conference Committee (PCC) car. Lightweight, roomy, fast, the PCC was the Cadillac of streetcars, and won the hearts of operators and passengers alike.

But the popularity of the PCC could not save Vancouver's streetcars. At the end of the Second World War the system was aging and run down. Roads were more crowded than ever with automobiles. Streetcars, with their fixed tracks and inflexible routes, were an inconvenience compared to their rubber-wheeled rival, the motor bus.

The transit company had a choice to make. It was already using motor buses on some of its routes. Should it rebuild the street railway system, or convert completely to buses?

The final decision was a kind of compromise. The streetcars would go, but they would be replaced by the electric trolley bus. A newcomer to the transit business, the trolley bus had the advantage of operating on the existing system of overhead wires. On August 16, 1948, regular trolley coach service began in Vancouver. The first trolleys were Brill coaches made in Ontario. One by one they replaced the old streetcar lines, until in 1955 the last of the electric cars rumbled into retirement and the "rails to rubber" conversion was complete.

Today the Vancouver Regional Transit System (VRTS) operates 244 trolley coaches, the second-largest trolley fleet in North America after San Francisco. The original Brills are gone, replaced by a new generation of Flyer coaches. Using these coaches, along with 613 diesel buses, the SkyTrain and SeaBus, the VRTS carries 113 million passengers a year.

Transit System for the Future

In many ways, SkyTrain embodies the 100-year history of transit. Inaugurated in January 1986, in time for the gala Expo 86 celebration, SkyTrain is the newest addition to the Greater Vancouver transit fleet. Fast, fully automatic, energy efficient, it represents the very latest in transit technology.

Yet the idea of a speedy train service linking New Westminster to Vancouver was not born with SkyTrain. It originated 100 years ago with the construction of the first Interurban tram line designed to whisk commuters from the suburbs into the city. In fact, the elevated guideway that carries SkyTrain today follows most of the right-of-way used by the Interurban trams in 1891.

Likewise, many Vancouverites will recall the old ferry that used to ply back and forth across Burrard Inlet between North Vancouver and downtown. In 1958 the ferry stopped running. But in 1977 it reappeared, in the form of the ultramodern SeaBus. Today these high-speed passenger ferries carry 4 million passengers a year across Vancouver's harbour, and a ride on the SeaBus has become a "must" for out-of-town visitors.

Transit in Vancouver has come a long way. Yet it builds on a long

tradition. And there is much more to come. In 1990, SkyTrain will cross the Fraser River to the new Scott Road Station in Surrey, cutting in half the commuter time to downtown Vancouver. The connecting link is

UNDER CITY STREETS

The CPR built the Dunsmuir Tunnel under downtown Vancouver in 1931 so that trains could travel between Vancouver harbour and False Creek without interrupting street traffic. Today the tunnel finds a new use as a route for SkyTrain beneath the city centre.

SkyBridge, at 616 metres the world's longest cable-stayed span designed solely for rapid transit use. And that's not all. The provincial government has announced a \$1 billion rapid transit construction program for Greater Vancouver in the 1990s. This includes:

<> a rapid transit connection to Richmond, with a possible spur to the Vancouver International Airport.

<> a SkyTrain extension to Whalley Town Centre, bringing this community within 38 minutes of downtown Vancouver.

<> another SkyTrain extension to Lougheed Mall in Coquitlam.

<> the purchase of articulated SuperBuses and SuperTrolleys for use on major transit corridors.

<> a third SeaBus to cross Vancouver Harbour.

<> a feasibility study into a high-speed passenger ferry between Port Coquitlam and the downtown SeaBus terminal.

The next hundred years of public transit in British Columbia promise to be every bit as exciting as the first hundred!