

**REPORT OF THE STREET RAILWAY
COMMISSION TO THE CITY
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CHICAGO; DECEMBER 1900; PP.
1-135**

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Report of the Street Railway Commission to the City Council of the City of Chicago; December 1900; pp. 1-135 by Milton J. Foreman

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MILTON J. FOREMAN

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CHICAGO;
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89

Chicago.

Report of the Street Railway Commission

TO THE

City Council of the City of Chicago



Ald. MILTON J. FOREMAN, Chairman

Ald. WILLIAM S. JACKSON

Ald. ERNST F. HERRMANN

Ald. WILLIAM F. BRENNAN

Ald. JULIUS GOLDZIER

Ald. WALTER J. RAYMER

Ald. WILLIAM MAVOR

GEORGE C. SIKES, Secretary

December, 1900



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**RESOLUTION CREATING THE STREET RAILWAY
COMMISSION, AND SUPPLEMENTARY RESOLU-
TIONS AND ACTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
RELATING TO THE COMMISSION.**

The City Council, at its meeting of December 18, 1899,
adopted the following resolution, offered by Alderman Foreman:

WHEREAS, The contractual relations at present existing between several of the companies operating the street car systems in the City of Chicago and the municipality of the City of Chicago will shortly expire; and

WHEREAS, The problem of the renewal or extension of these franchises, and of all others that are to expire in the future, presents itself at the present time, and in view of the magnitude and variety of interest involved is of paramount importance; and

WHEREAS, It is the almost unanimous opinion of the people of the City of Chicago that the existing laws and ordinances concerning street railway franchises and the municipal regulations of the operation of street railway systems are antiquated and were enacted at a time when the City of Chicago had not reached its present stage of development, and such acts and ordinances are wholly inadequate to meet the needs and requirements of the City of Chicago, both with respect to accommodations and facilities for passengers and for compensation for the use of the public streets and highways by said operating companies, and in many other regards; and

WHEREAS, In view of these existing conditions, constructive legislation is necessary, looking toward the enactment of such contracts as will result in a correction of the evils and defects of the past and assure to the people of the City of Chicago good and efficient service, as well as just and adequate remuneration for the privileges enjoyed by the companies to whom such franchises or renewals thereof may be granted; and

WHEREAS, The question of municipal ownership of street railways is engrossing public attention and finds many advocates amongst citizens having the interest of the city at heart, and the expediency and desirability of this step is one of the questions that must be taken into serious consid-

eration before any final steps are taken toward renewing existing or granting new franchises; and

WHEREAS, The people of the City of Chicago look with deep concern and jealous eye at the ultimate solution of these questions and should have a voice in their settlement, and with this in view a submission of the same to the arbitrament of the people by means of referendum, may be advisable; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Mayor be and he is hereby authorized and directed, by and with the concurrence of the City Council, within thirty days after the passage of this resolution, to appoint a committee of seven members of this Council, whose duty it shall be to:

First—Examine into the feasibility and practicability of the municipal ownership of street railways in this city and the terms and conditions under which this ownership may be established.

Second—Examine into the questions of kind and amount of compensation and the conditions for the renewal of existing or granting of new franchises or renewals, kind of motive power best adapted to various sections of the city and at varying times; the condition in which the streets, highways and tunnels are to be placed and maintained by companies using the same; accommodations to be furnished passengers; amount of fares; commutation tickets; transfers; terminal facilities and switches; extension of lines; the hours of employment and compensation to the employees; protection of the citizens against accident, and penalties for non-compliance with the laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.

Third—To report to this body such measures, modes of procedure and ordinances as shall be requisite and necessary to carry into effect after their passage the recommendations of this commission.

Under authority granted by the foregoing resolution, His Honor the Mayor, on January 3, 1900, sent to the City Council a communication, making appointments as in the said resolution provided for, as follows:

MAYOR'S OFFICE, }
January 3d, 1900. }

To the Honorable, the City Council:

GENTLEMEN—In accordance with a resolution passed by your Honorable Body at its meeting of December 11th empowering the Mayor to appoint seven Aldermen to serve as a committee to investigate various matters in connection with the street railway systems in the City of Chicago, I

hereby appoint the following Aldermen as members of such committee and respectfully ask the concurrence of your Honorable Body:

Ald. Foreman, Chairman.
Ald. Herrmann,
Ald. Jackson,
Ald. Brennan of the Tenth Ward,
Ald. Raymer,
Ald. Mavor,
Ald. Schlake.

Respectfully,

CARTER H. HARRISON,

Mayor.

The City Council, at its meeting of January 15, 1900, adopted the following resolution, offered by Alderman Goldzier:

WHEREAS, Grave doubt exists as to the right of a number of the traction companies of the City of Chicago to operate street cars by cable or electric power; and,

WHEREAS, It is expedient and necessary, previous to the expiration of the various franchises of such companies, that this question shall be definitely determined, so as to fix the respective rights of the city and of the traction companies; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Special Committee on Street Railway matters be directed to report at as early a time as possible all information attainable on the following points:

First—Which of the traction companies (if any), to whom the right of operating cars by other than animal power is granted by the City of Chicago, are authorized by their charters from the State of Illinois to so operate street cars.

Second—Whether a grant by the city of the right to use other than animal power in street car service is valid, when made to a company which is prohibited by its State charter from using other than animal power.

Third—Whether the act of 1865, under which various of the traction companies claim certain rights, confers power to operate street railroads by other than animal power.

Fourth—What street car lines (if any) may be acquired by the City of Chicago by virtue of the provisions of the ordinances under which the various street railways are operating?

The City Council, at its meeting of February 5, 1900, adopted the following resolution, offered by Alderman Goldzier :

WHEREAS, One of the most important questions before the people of this city is that of sufficient means of street car transportation; and,

WHEREAS, The congested condition of the streets in the heart of the city makes it practically impossible to burden the surface of streets with more vehicles by increasing the number of cars upon the various surface roads centering in the down town district; and,

WHEREAS, Under similar conditions in other cities the system of placing street cars underground has been found practicable; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Special Committee on street car matters be and they are instructed to investigate the question of the feasibility of subways in the heart of the city to accommodate all street cars which are now operated upon the surface of streets, and that said committee make a full report to this Council upon this subject, giving an outline both of the technical side of such a plan and of the proper financial methods of securing such improvement.

The appropriation ordinance for 1900, as passed by the City Council March 26, 1900, and amended April 4, 1900, contained the following item:

For secretary and expenses of Street Railway Commission, \$4,000.

Under the authority thus conferred the Commission selected as secretary, Mr. George C. Sikes, whose service with the Commission began June 12 of the present year.

The City Council, at its meeting of April 23, 1900, adopted the following resolution, offered by Alderman Brennan (Tenth Ward) :

Resolved, That the Street Railway Commission be continued, and the Mayor be empowered to fill such vacancies as may have occurred.

In accordance with the authority conferred by the foregoing resolution, His Honor the Mayor appointed Alderman Goldzier to fill the vacancy in the Commission caused by the retirement of ex-Alderman Wm. E. Schlake.