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THE
STREET RAILWAYS OF AMERICA.

A REVIEW OF A PAMPHLET RECENTLY ISSUED, ENTITLED

FACTS
RESPECTING STREET RAILWAYS.

REPRINTED FROM THE *MORNING POST* OF FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 21, 1866.

ALSO THE CORRESPONDENCE WHICH APPEARED IN THE "DAILY NEWS,"
RESPECTING THE EFFECT OF STREET RAILWAYS IN INCREASING TRADE AND
IMPROVING PROPERTY IN THE STREETS THROUGH WHICH THEY RUN.

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THE STREET RAILWAYS OF AMERICA.

(From the *Morning Post*, December 21, 1866.)

A VALUABLE pamphlet has just been issued, containing replies to a series of questions addressed in the year 1865 to the municipal authorities of the principal cities of the United States and Canada. The transmission of those queries obtained reports from the City Surveyors of New York, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia, the Superintendent of Streets of Boston, the Surveyor of the Highways of Providence, and the Street Commissioner of Newark, New Jersey. All the above-named reports are authenticated by the Mayors of the several cities, and those of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Providence bear the further certificate of the British Consul for the respective States in which those cities are located. There are also reports from the Mayors of Baltimore, Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto, and from the Board of Public Works at Chicago. The original documents may be seen at the offices of Messrs. John Noble and Co., No. 10, Bridge-street, Westminster.

The most ample information is contained in these valuable documents respecting the working and effects of street railways, both in relation to the facilities they afford to passengers and their effect upon ordinary traffic. In order to present our readers with the substance of the reports, we reprint the questions proposed, with a summary of the various replies appended to each question, the special features of each report being distinctly stated.

The first question proposed was :—

“ Are Street Railways in your city found generally to interfere with the ordinary traffic of your streets ? ”

The universal reply is that street railways do not interfere with ordinary street traffic. In New York difficulties were experienced on their introduction, owing to the peculiar construction of the carts in use in that city which backed against the kerb-stone, and took up an unproportionate space

of the carriage way. This has, however, been long since removed. Another was the enmity of the drivers of other vehicles, which has now disappeared. The report adds—"You will further observe how unfavourably the lower part of our city is situated for the accommodation of its immense traffic, on account of the narrowness of most of its streets, not to speak of the want of proper police regulations. I verily think that in this respect, there has nowhere a more severe test been put on the feasibility of street railways than in the city of New York." The Brooklyn report says:—"The rails are of the flat-grooved pattern, and laid uniform with the pavement, and can readily be crossed by vehicles when not occupied by a passing car; and as the car is compelled to keep a certain line, there is little danger of collision, except by gross carelessness of the person driving the vehicle; whereas, when omnibuses were in use, their course was on any part of the carriage-way at the will of the driver, and as the omnibus was strongly built, he was not always careful in giving way, knowing that in case of collision with a lighter carriage he would receive but little damage. If the same number of passengers were now carried by omnibuses as are by the cars, that part of Fulton-street would have to be abandoned almost exclusively by all other vehicles, which would be a serious damage to the storekeepers on that street."

2. "*Have they been introduced into any of your crowded streets; and what has been the effect?*"

"They have been introduced into the most crowded streets without inconvenience, and have caused in many instances the entire discontinuance of omnibuses. In Boston they have benefited the retail trade of those streets." In Philadelphia "they are built upon the most crowded thoroughfares—those that are exclusively devoted to business purposes—and have had the effect of driving off the throng of omnibuses, which in number were certainly a nuisance upon streets approaching their general terminus; and in practice one car will carry nearly three times as many as the old omnibus, the number of vehicles upon the street is very much reduced. In Quebec, on "the line of wharves and the great commercial centre of the city, the track has been laid on one side of the street about 15 inches from the curb-stone. Not the slightest obstruction has resulted, although before the track was laid it was the opinion of many that it would prove an intolerable nuisance."

3. *"In comfort and convenience, how do the cars compare with the omnibuses formerly used?"*

"There can be no comparison between them. The cars are much superior, being wider, more roomy, and far easier of access, and consequently much more comfortable and convenient." The New York report says—"As to the comfort of passengers on street railways, compared with our omnibuses, there is no diversity of opinion. Cars are easy of ingress and egress, requiring only two low steps to overcome, with wide and sufficiently high doors to pass through; the seats are wider, and so is the passage-way between; the motion is easy, and its direction remains the same, excepting curves here and there. Just the reverse of an omnibus. It is a matter of exertion to climb the high steps of this antiquated conveyance without knocking your head against the roof, or to get out backward, balancing nicely, or else you will be prostrated by the impatient driver. You are cramped on a narrow seat, with legs drawn under it; the rumble over the pavement underneath and the noise of passengers overhead, the continual jerking of the carriage to the right and left, receiving new-comers or evading some obstacle or passing vehicle, tend surely very little to your comfort."

4. *"Would you think the danger to pedestrians from street cars greater than from omnibuses carrying the same number of passengers; and what of the relative danger to passengers themselves?"*

"The danger is very much less both to pedestrians and passengers from street railway cars than omnibuses. The following return from the coroner's office of New York is a striking evidence of this fact. In 1865, there occurred in the city 135 vehicle casualties, of which twenty-five were caused by steam cars, forty-six by street cars, 26 by omnibuses, and 38 by trucks or other vehicles. The number of passengers conveyed by city railways in 1865 was 60 millions, and those carried in omnibuses $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions. At the rate of casualties from street cars, the number of killed by omnibuses should have been $4\frac{1}{8}$, instead of twenty-six, which goes to prove that the safety on street cars is six times greater than that on omnibuses. The reason is quite obvious. The omnibus driver being seated on deck, has not the same command over his horses as when on a level with them. There are no breaks on our stages, and consequently they cannot be brought to a sudden halt, while the

street car stops easily within the double of its length. Pedestrians distinguish at a distance the approach of a car by sight and ear, and fear danger from it but at one particular point, which is the crossing of the track. Stages, however, are swaying from one side of the street to the other, to accommodate passengers; and pedestrians are taken unawares by the sudden change of their course. The utter recklessness of passengers getting on or off the steps while the car is in motion appears, to judge from the records, to be the most fruitful cause of accidents, and railway companies should be censured for not guarding the front platforms with gates or otherwise." The Philadelphia report says:—"In case of an obstacle requiring a sudden stoppage of an omnibus, the strength of a driver was the main dependence, as they were here arranged; but with the street car, the arrangement of brakes is such that it enables the car to be stopped within its own length when moving at the rate of six miles an hour, giving the driver complete command over the movements of his car. The first line of passenger railroad laid in our city commenced operations on January 20, 1858, and I am aware of but very few accidents that, during these eight years, have happened to pedestrians, and none to passengers, that has not been the result of carelessness on the part of the injured." In Baltimore, "the cars during the last year have travelled 1,201,920 miles, carrying 7,665,664 passengers, killing but one pedestrian, and inflicting no serious injury on any other." The Boston report says, "Persons driving their own vehicles are less liable to meet with accidents from collisions."

5. *"Was there much opposition originally to the introduction of railways in your city? and, if so, does the same feeling still exist?"*

"There was a strong opposition in every city, principally from the omnibus proprietors; the feeling has, however, since subsided, and there is now no opposition whatever." In New York there are, "at the present day," twelve Street Railroad Companies, with 838 cars, and eight stage lines, with 304 omnibuses in successful operation, traversing the city in all directions, and the latter flourishing more than ever before, spite of rail cars, or rather, thank these cars." In Brooklyn, "the rents of stores" along the lines "have more than doubled, and a proposition to remove the rails would be met with a decided opposition from the storekeepers." In Philadelphia,

when the first line was in progress of construction, all means, legal and otherwise, were resorted to, to prevent its being laid. The papers were freely used, to show how the rights of the citizens were being infringed, and much personal animosity was shown towards the projectors. But the road was laid, and no sooner were the cars in full operation, than a marked change in the feelings of the community was apparent; and in some cases, the most bitter opponent became a zealous advocate, and acknowledged his error of judgment." In Quebec "the largest property owner on the line was most opposed to the railway, but is now the largest shareholder."

6. *"Would a proposition to remove the railways, and replace the cars by omnibuses or any other known mode of conveyance, receive support from any large proportion of your citizens?"*

"Any such proposal would be strongly opposed: indeed it would be quite impossible to find any number of citizens in any city to favour it." In New York the cry is for "more cars and more routes."

7. *"To what class of your citizens do the railways afford the greatest convenience?"*

"All classes, merchants, professional men, ladies, tradesmen, clerks, mechanics, labourers, and factory girls, use the cars."

8. *"What description of pavement do you think best to lay between and directly outside the line of travel?"*

"In cities the testimony is in favour of granite pavement."

9. *"Has the expense to your corporation of keeping the street pavement in order on which the cars run increased or lessened?"*

"The expense is considerably diminished, as the companies pave and keep in repair all the roadway between their rails and some distance beyond." In the State of New York "there are 307 miles of street railway and 949 cars, which, in 1864, carried 83,510,850 passengers. In the city of Philadelphia there are 163 miles laid of a uniform gauge of 5ft. 2in. In New York a single track is laid in streets from 20ft. to 24ft. in width be-

tween the curb-stones, a double track where the width is from 30ft. to 36ft: in Park Row, 48ft. wide, four tracks are laid down." In Brooklyn "the width of the carriage ways of the streets on which the railways are laid are of various widths; some are 30ft., some 34ft., some 42ft., two are 60ft. each, and some few of 24ft." In Philadelphia "there are upwards of 139 miles of single track laid in streets 26ft. wide between the curbs. The streets through which double tracks are laid are 32ft., 34ft., 38ft., 40ft., 44ft., and 48ft. in width." In Quebec "the rails have been laid upon streets 17½ft., 20ft., and 25ft. in width." The following table shows the traffic passing both ways during 10 hours at several points in New York.

As to the number of cars and other vehicles passing certain points both ways, the following is the result of actual enumeration as to the latter, and of the starters' statements to the former:—

Place of observation from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	No. of passing cars.	No. of other vehicles.	Total.
Park-row, front of "Times" building	1,900	.. 1,540	.. 3,440
Intersection of Chatham and Chambers streets.....	1,120	.. 6,460	.. 7,580
Church-street, below Chambers-street	1,350	.. 940	.. 2,290
Canal-street, between Laight and West Broadway	1,350	.. 2,460	.. 3,810
West-street, at corner of Barclay-st..	400	.. 5,520	.. 5,920
Grand-st., intersection with Bowery..	1,500	.. 5,400	.. 6,900
Broadway, intersection with Park-row	—	.. 13,800	.. 13,800

It will be seen from the above summary of this pamphlet that it contains information of the most valuable description, especially at the present time when applications are being made to Parliament to authorise the construction of street tramways in London and other large towns.

STREET RAILWAYS IN TRADING THOROUGHFARES.

The following correspondence, which recently appeared in the Daily News, shows the effect of Street Railways upon the interests of tradesmen in the streets through which they run:—

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

“SIR,—Perceiving that a project is now on foot for introducing street railways into London, and hearing that it is likely to be opposed on the ground of supposed injury to occupiers of shops in some of the streets through which the proposed lines will run, I trust that your well-known desire to advocate all real improvements will induce you to afford space for the following facts which have come under my own observation in the city of San Francisco, U.S.

“Owing to the violent opposition from property owners and shopkeepers of Montgomery-street, on which at that time were situated the finest buildings and the largest and handsomest shops in the city, the company was obliged to lay their tramway through Sansome-street, a parallel thoroughfare of less pretensions. But a clause was inserted in the bill granting the right of laying a tramway through Montgomery-street whenever, and providing, a majority of the owners and occupants of the property should formally consent to it.

“The result was that within six months from the time of the completion of the tramway the shopkeepers of Montgomery-street were seized with a panic, for they saw the retail business of Sansome-street rapidly increasing, while theirs was diminishing.

“An arrangement was immediately made with the company, signed by every shopkeeper and most of the real estate owners in Montgomery-street, authorising them to lay their tramway through said street as at first desired.

“The Sansome-street shopkeepers, however, objected to a removal of the tramway from their street. Finally, a compromise was effected, resulting in this, that a line should be laid through Montgomery-street, and the carriages of the company should, during half of the day, pass north, through Sansome-street, returning south through Montgomery-street, and *vice versa* during the other half. The number of passengers carried over the tramway soon became four-fold greater than before by omnibus, and suburban property on the line within one year

increased 50 per cent., and often 100 per cent. and more in value. There are at the present time in San Francisco two other parallel streets, in which lines of tramway are laid by other and rival companies, all doing a profitable business at the uniform rate of threepence for any distance, from one hundred yards to five miles. In corroboration of the foregoing I would refer you to Mr. W. Shields, of San Francisco (now in London, 27, Claremont-square, Islington), who is one of the said property owners benefited.—I am, &c.,

“A. H. DIXON, of San Francisco.

“9, Rothwell-street, Primrose-hill, N.W.”

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

“SIR,—I have read with much interest the letter which appears this day in your columns on the subject of street railways, and it affords me pleasure to be able to corroborate the statement of Mr. Dixon with reference to the street railroads of San Francisco as being substantially correct.

“As an owner of property upon one line, and a lessee of ground upon another of the principal street railroads of that city, I should deem it a misfortune should they cease running. The rents of shops having in some cases been increased 25 per cent. since their establishment, I fear that a corresponding reduction of rental would ensue from their removal.

“Very respectfully yours,

“W. M. SHIELDS.

“27, Claremont Square, Islington, N

“January, 1867.”

The official reports from Brooklyn and Quebec, authenticated by the Mayors of those cities, corroborate the above facts.

At Brooklyn, “*There was a most decided and spirited opposition to the railways when they were first proposed, not only by individuals, but by the Common Council of this city, and of the storekeepers along the line of the proposed route, supposing that passengers would be carried past their stores without stopping, and that private carriages would be driven from the street. But that opinion has completely changed. The rents of the stores have more than doubled; and a proposition to remove the rails would be met with a decided opposition.*”

At Quebec, "*The opposition to the introduction of the railway was very strong. From merchants on the road, who feared an obstruction to the traffic of the streets, and cabmen, who foresaw a loss of business. The former opposition has altogether ceased; indeed, one of our principal merchants, and the largest property owner on the line of road, who was most opposed to the railway, is now the largest shareholder in the company.*"

At Philadelphia, according to evidence adduced before the Commission appointed by the Massachusetts Legislature upon Street Railways, and published by the House, the same result has been observed: "*Before the Fifth and Sixth street railroad was laid, the fashionable boot-maker, milliner, and hair-dresser, were very much opposed to it, and spent money to oppose it. They said no carriages would come to their shops; but they found that more people came in cars than ever came in carriages, and they would not now consent to its removal.*"

At Birkenhead, according to the evidence of Mr. Joseph Craven, house and estate agent, in 1861 the value of land in that town had increased twenty-five per cent. since the opening of the Tramway.

