

Page 8 - When the Employees Owned the Trams ISSUE : <u>Issue 24</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1979/12/1

running, you'd run with the pole to the rear up. (And the seats?) Well, on the old cars they were side seats that ran the length of the car and people rode facing one another, riding sideways. And at night the conductor, usually he took the head? light off and carried it to the other end. He usually did this when he shifted the poles. The conductor would get off, take down the pole you were running on, and put up the one at the other end. And at night he'd take the headlight off and carry it around. There would be three cars out at any one time. One left Reserve going to Sydney, two left Reserve, one going Dominion way and one going to Glace Bay • and they crossed at number 2, right below the col? liery there--and they all met back at Re? serve at the same time. They'd transfer passengers to Glace Bay, Dominion, or Syd? ney, and all left again at the same time. Every hour and ten minutes. And in bad weather, you did the best you could. It was surprising • except one fellow would get stuck and that would tie the other up till you got in touch with him and found out where he was. You'd have to know where he was before you'd go. (Why did the employees decide to sell out?) Well, everyone wasn't agreeable to that either, and we had several meetings. The older fellows all felt that soon they'd be retiring, and they thought they should get some money out of it • and by selling at the time, they thought they could get a pretty good price. Compared with what we bought it for. Others felt we should hang onto it, keep it. But the old? er fellows wanted it sold, and that's what they did. (The company was sold in 19". It had cost the employees about \$6000 in 1931 and about the same amount in 1932. They sold it in 19'7 for \$216,000.) In 19'7 they started taking the tram cars off. They took up all the line in Glace Bay and they just ran from Sydney to Re? serve. For about a year before they guit altogether. And I left them then and went on the buses. But you know, I loved the old street cars. I never liked the buses. Aubrey Cameron, motorman and conductor; removing the tram tracks from Commercial Stre"et, Glace Bay, 19'6; last tram car in the province, Halifax, 19" Our thanks to Weldon Cameron, 43 Connaught Avenue, Glace Bay, who supplied us with most of the photographs in this article, and first drew us to Dougald Blue. Weldon has a book-in-progress about the trams, xerox copies of which have been deposited in libraries in Cape Breton. He has asked that this article be dedicated to his fa? ther, Aubrey Cameron (pictured above), and that anyone who has more to contribute to a fuller story on the trams (particularly photos and such items as transfers used in the tram system) contact him. Our thanks as well to Mr. and Mrs. Donald MacAulay, MacLeod's Crossing, for photo of taking up the tracks. Some photos used here have come from the Public Archives of Nova Scotia and the Beaton Institute. Photo on page one is of the tram at Reserve Junction, 1925; Angus J, MacDonald, Henry MacChesney, Jack MacKay. 'Big Dan" Ferguson,