

# Transit-Vancouver : Message: BBC trolleys for Vancouver?

December-28-07  
2:16 PM

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--- In [Transit-Vancouver@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Transit-Vancouver@yahoogroups.com), "Jim" <tovinman@...> wrote:  
*"It's unfortunate that one simple decision made in 1981 (the decision to go with Westinghouse over Brown Boveri) resulted in the overall cost of these new trolleys (Flyer E901/2) being some five times that of their replacements."*

What utter bullshit.

The BBC trolleys were a non-starter in Vancouver. It was not a "simple decision". BBC's decision to go prime and tie themselves up with the obsolete GM bus meant that they froze themselves out of the Vancouver market. Had they stayed in bed with Flyer they had a fighting chance of getting the order.

Wed  
Dec 26, 2007  
8:49 pm

▶  
"John Day"

>

In [Transit-Vancouver@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Transit-Vancouver@yahoogroups.com), "John Day" <johnmday@...> wrote:  
*The BBC trolleys were a non-starter in Vancouver. It was not a "simple decision". BBC's decision to go prime and tie themselves up with the obsolete GM bus meant that they froze themselves out of the Vancouver market. Had they stayed in bed with Flyer they had a fighting chance of getting the order.*

One of the sales reps at BBC who was involved in the whole Vancouver/Edmonton thing swore to me that Boveri was willing to supply Flyer with units, that it was Flyer and Vancouver's decision to package it as only/or, and the decision was eventually made to go only with Westinghouse, in Flyer bodies.

The other option was a bit problematic. GM hadn't really been aware of what 100 bus shells were going to be used for. When they realized that BBC was to equip them with electric propulsion, they quickly backed away from the deal, only to agree under much duress to honor the contract, subject to their not having any responsibility whatsoever with the finished product. This is why, to this day, GMDD claims they "never built trolleybus shells" and why the units have BBC, not GM, serials.

I think that if the order had been increased to 300 units, Edmontons' 100 plus the original Vancouver order, GM would have tanked completely on the idea of having 300 of their bus bodies as trolleys out there, so it's likely Vancouver never really had any chance of getting BBC/GM. Certainly the option order which resulted in 2904-2946 would have never been filled by BBC as they barely got the 100 bus shells they needed to complete Edmontons' order out of GM before the latter pulled out of the deal entirely.

Thu  
Dec 27, 2007  
10:41 am

▶  
"Jim"

I doubt very much that Vancouver could have got GM bus shells with Westinghouse propulsion, because of BBC's involvement in the shell procurement, so in the end it came down to BBC/GM bodies vs. Westinghouse or BBC in Flyer bodies.

In the end, it was Westinghouse that shaved a few points off the price, and while the actual electrical equipment they supplied was not directly the cause of Vancouver's problems (it was, in fact, the manner in which Flyer installed the equipment in their bodies) the fact remains that Edmonton has had far fewer problems overall with the BBC equipment than Vancouver has had with Westinghouse.

Would Vancouver have suffered the exact same problems with a BBC/GM trolley that they have with the E901As? It's possible they would have, but to a much lesser degree.

Edmonton's climate is cold enough that salt is not extensively used to melt snow and ice, because it's too cold to melt it, so sand is used more commonly. However, the 36 Edmonton units that were leased to Toronto did cause some problems particularly if a BBC/GM unit was run on a line in close proximity to other 1st generation E700As (those with salvaged Brill/Westinghouse components). Toronto also throws salt down, quite extensively, but the Edmonton units didn't have any issues with this.

Vancouver likely would have had similar problems when the buses were introduced in 1982-83, because the 2600s were electrically identical to Toronto's fleet (ie salvaged Brill/Westinghouse components) and it's the chopper controls that caused the problems in Toronto. It's also likely why 2601, fitted with BBC components as a test, didn't work that well mixed in with the other E800s and Brills.

The Flyer bodies have lasted 25 years, which is a lot longer than I gave them, having experienced all the problems with the D700A and D800 series up close, so I guess they've proved their worth despite all the problems.

>

Nice info John....

But I will need to disagree with one thing here....

From: "John Day"

*The BBC buses were not without their own set of problems. One which was never fixed was the incredible noise they make. Trolleybuses are supposed to be silent servants and that is one attribute which*

Fri Dec 28, 2007  
10:06 pm

*justifies the price premium. The BBC's blowers made enough noise to make them almost as intrusive as a diesel bus.*

**"Peter  
McLaughlin"**

The BBC's are MUCH MUCH quieter than Vancouver Flyer E901A / E902 Trolley coaches....

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