

unfit, £212; Dvr. A. B. Janetyke (65), 30 years, £550; Track Repairer J. M. Stephen (65), 36 years, £578; Dvr. L. T. Price, resigned, £81; and Con. N. L. Worsley, resigned, £75.

Death gratuities in respect of the late Bodymaker A. G. Elling (59), 27 years, and Shed Lab. G. B. Brookes (61), 22 years, amounting to £342 and £261 respectively have been paid.

SERVICE IN ONE FAMILY.

This issue contains another instalment of notable records of service achieved by groups of three in various Departments. But what of service by the members of one family? To start with, let us take the Browne family, members of which have been in the employment of the Board and its predecessors continuously for 61 years from 1886. Here are the details:—

A. Browne, late Depot Master, Hanna Street, 1886-1929—43 years, age 65;

S. A. Browne, Leading Hand, Preston Workshops, 1924-1947—23 years, age 49; and

A. L. Browne, Inspector, Glenhuntly, 1911-1947—36 years, age 54.

Aggregate service, 102 years; aggregate age, 168 years.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS.

The undernoted appointments are published for general information:—

R. J. Harper and G. R. Love, Preston Workshops, draughtsmen;

A. C. Piper, Victoria Parade, foreman (M.O.A. revision).

TRANSPORT OPERATORS INDICTED.

Big Concerns Accused of Monopolisation.

In viewing the street transport scene of the United States, and particularly the trend in the last 17 years or so in the smaller cities to discard trams for buses, it is highly necessary to remember that the change has been instituted, not by the cities concerned, but by a company whose capital has been contributed to substantially by oil, tyre and bus-manufacturing interests. The company referred to is the National City Lines, founded by the Brothers Fitzgerald. Starting in a very small way in 1919, the brothers are now the operators of nearly 100 concerns, including the American City and Pacific City Lines, with 8,000 vehicles and 20,000 employees, and with a gross annual income of almost 100,000,000 dollars. Out of that total of 8,000 vehicles, some 3,000 are trams running in Baltimore, St. Louis, Los Angeles and Oakland.

The *modus operandi* was simple. A tramway company would be purchased—very few cities or towns own the undertakings in the States—and before the citizenry could realise what was involved the trams were gone and all that was left for them to do was to pay the higher fares which usually followed the advent of the buses. "It is no secret," remarks "Mass Transportation," "that the change in the economic complexion in the world has caused the Fitzgeralds to think in the terms of the dime rather than the nickel even in the smaller cities." Which is a most euphonious way of saying that they now like to charge 10 cents for a ride which used to cost 5 cents.

But when you get big in the United States you attract a lot of attention, some of which you could very well do without. This is now being realised by the Fitzgerald Brothers and their associates, for they are facing an indictment that General Motors, Standard Oil, Firestone Tyres, Phillips Petroleum and Mack Trucks paid 9,500,000 dollars to the National City, American City and Pacific City Lines to buy control of local transit companies in 16 States. The defendants are charged with having conspired "to acquire control of a substantial part of the local transportation companies in the United States," and to monopolise the supply to the transit lines of buses, petroleum products and tyres. A simultaneous civil suit has been filed by the anti-trust division of the Department of Justice asking for an injunction to stop the alleged practices.

In a public statement, Attorney-General Tom Clark remarked that the case is important because it involves matters upon which the public must face the costs and the elimination of the sale of supplies to local transportation companies controlled by the National City Lines—a banishment of normal competition. It is alleged, for instance, that the Los Angeles Transit Lines granted rights to Standard Oil to 50% of the petrol and Diesel oil sales for 10 years, and that the operating companies were not to purchase equipment other than that sold by the contributors to the financing.

Here the Chamber of Automotive Industries and the Australian Automobile Association can only conduct sporadic campaigns against trams, posing as the advocates of the best in transport, but really being animated all the time by consideration for the oil, tyre and bus interests. But their job in Melbourne is hard; instead of having a dilapidated company-owned concern to deal with as in the States, they have a publicly-owned undertaking which is the most prosperous of its kind in the world.

J. S. McClelland Pty. Ltd., 42-44 Lonsdale St., Melb.

Tramway Topics

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COMMENT FROM LONDON.

"Margin Many Managers Dream About."

"Fickle Things, Figures," is the heading in the May issue of "Bus and Coach," London, which introduces "some reflections inspired by the annual report of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board."

Being, naturally, a bus man, the writer is grieved and bewildered over our bus loss last year of £117,000, and regrets the fact that our buses have been kept going on the profits made by our trams. Unerringly, however, he sees that the weakness of our bus system is in the low average of passengers per vehicle mile, 8.925, and the excessive mileage in relation to the traffic handled. He would understand how both weaknesses are brought about if he could have a look at our Fisherman's Bend route, with its huge unproductive mileage, and he would realise how the loss is achieved if he could note the onerous charges which the buses, in common with the trams, have to bear and the severe conditions which hedge round and about the operation of the vehicles. It is certain that he would be horrified if told that the buses have to contribute, willy nilly, to the Infectious Diseases Hospital and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board.

These matters apart, the writer is filled with admiration for the results recorded by the Tramways Board. "Examination of the accounts," he says, "leaves no room for doubt that the undertaking is indeed in an extraordinarily strong position, and that its wealth is derived from its tramway system, which has an operating ratio of 59 per cent., with receipts at 34.433d. per car mile and expenses at 20.407d. That is the sort of margin many managers dream about but never expect to realise."

Those uninformed and unobservant people who return from a few hurried weeks overseas and bleat

about Melbourne's dear fares will not find their view confirmed by "Bus and Coach." While it may be thought that the average fare paid per passenger is very much higher at 2.776d. than in Britain, and that this denotes a high level of charges, the contributor records that Melbourne offers a ride of 0.917 miles on average for 1d., "which is much the same as in this country. From this one can deduce that the average distance per passenger journey is about three miles—a surprisingly high figure to those of us not familiar with local conditions."

The author concludes his remarks on the bus side of our undertaking with this sentence:—"By the very high standards of financial prudence adopted by the Melbourne Board, the buses may be shown as operating at a loss, but a less severe test of profitability would, of course, produce a more favourable impression."

SCALERS IN SYDNEY.

"816 Tram and Bus Scalers in Six Months," says a heading in the "Sydney Morning Herald."

Presumably the other 28,816,000 escaped.

Incidentally, the first Sunday "honesty" boxes were in operation the yield was exactly 5d.—yes, five pence!

BRISBANE BUS SERVICES.

All Privately-Operated Routes to be Acquired.

Brisbane City Council has decided unanimously to make application to the Commissioner for Transport to acquire, under the Transport Act passed last year, 20 privately-owned bus services operating from the suburbs to the city.

With the exception of the seaside and feeder services, which will be the subject of another applica-

tion later on, the decision embraces all the private suburban bus services entering the city. When granted, it will enable the efficiently-managed Transport Department under Mr. S. L. Quinn to plan comprehensive, co-ordinated services and eliminate unnecessary and wasteful duplication.

Sixty-seven buses are operated by the proprietors over the 20 routes affected by the application; but the Council does not mean to take over any more than 30, leaving 37 in the hands of their owners.

As Labour is in the minority in the Council, the decision has excited those people who worship at the shrine of private enterprise. But surely the street surface transport of a city is a proper communal activity equally with the supply of water, gas, electricity and sewage services. To permit private owners to compete with the community-owned transport system, in some cases duplicating and in others paralleling the services, as is done here in Melbourne, results simply in wasteful competition which in the end has to be paid for by the passengers in the shape of fares higher than they would otherwise be.

P.A.Y.E. TO GO.

After persisting for five years, despite the obvious drawbacks, with the pay-as-you-enter fare collection method, the Transport Department of Cardiff is reverting to the normal system.

The first trolleybus with the P.A.Y.E. equipment was put in service in March, 1942, and the system was extended gradually to all tram and trolley bus routes and to certain bus routes. It was hailed as a great success; but with the exception of London no other authority felt tempted to try the experiment, probably, as we wrote months ago, because it was recognised that while such a method might be successful in a large town such as Cardiff, the possibility of handling mass traffic with it in a large city was remote. London learned that after spending a good few thousand pounds fruitlessly on remodelling five trolley and petrol buses.

NEWCASTLE WANTS TO OWN THE TRAMS.

Newcastle City Council wants to take over the Government-owned tramway system, the immediate re-action to the substantial increase in fares put in force by the Department of Road Transport and Tramways.

If the Government agreed, the Council would replace the present obsolete L/P trams with modern corridor vehicles, which would be built in the State Dockyards, Newcastle.

DIESELS IN FAVOUR.

Before the war, the bus manufacturers of the United States built three petrol-engined buses to every one Diesel-engined. To-day, the ratio is 10 to 1 in favour of the Diesel. It is hoped to build 15,000 buses this year. The greatest number ever delivered in one year previous to the States entering the war was 4,700 in 1937.

In both Britain and the United States designers are trying to evolve a light Diesel engine suitable for private motor cars, so that it is quite on the cards that in a few years the petrol-burning engine will be a rarity on the roads.

THE LONG SERVICE RECORD.

Three employees of the Brunswick Electric Running Shed are leading, so far as the aggregate record of service is concerned, although two years short in the aggregate age record held by three Truck Shop men at Preston Workshops. Here are the Brunswick details:—H. Ross (62), pitman, service, 46 years; A. L. Turnbull (53), 37 years; W. A. Ash (63), 45 years. The present position therefore, is:—

	Agg. Age	Agg. Service
Revenue Clerks, Essendon	174	112
Truck Shop, Preston	180	123
Electric Shed, Brunswick	178	128
Any more claimants?		

FARES IN LONDON AND MELBOURNE.

In making fare contrasts between Melbourne and cities overseas most commentators forget—if, indeed, they ever take the trouble to find out—the importance of the length of the respective sections; in other words, just exactly what the passenger gets for his money. In London, for instance, the lowest fare is 1½d., for which the passenger can be transported for half a mile. In Melbourne, on the other hand, the section is one mile, for which the charge is 2d. From the details given below it will be seen that the Londoner pays much more than the Melbourne for his transport:—

	London	Melbourne
Length of Section	Half Mile	One Mile
Fare	1½d.	2d.
Three sections (1½ miles)	2½d.	(3 miles) 4d.
Seven sections (3½ miles)	3½d.	(7 miles) 6d.
Eight sections (4 miles)	4d.	(8 miles) 6d.

SOMETHING LIKE A DEFICIT.

Although the services operated by the City of Buenos Aires Transport Corporation carried, at

1,418,595,608, almost 70,000,000 more passengers than the previous year, the financial result for 1946 was a loss of 44,600,000 pesos as against the loss of 21,700,000 pesos in 1945. For the last eight years the aggregate loss is 150,000,000.

This hopeless state of affairs is due almost exclusively to the resolute opposition of the authorities to any increase in fares to offset the costs, which have been rising steadily year by year and are now over 200 per cent. above the 1938 level. In his report, the trustee for the debenture holders remarks that "the entire concern is moving definitely and inevitably to a state of total disintegration."

A REMARKABLE RECORD.

Highly satisfactory is the only way to describe the operation of the sub-station equipment during the year. Only 47 minutes were lost owing to faults, and that in turn resulted in a loss of 72 car miles out of a total of 22,494,656 miles run.

The total mileage lost through all faults in the distribution system was 305, which represents only .0000131 per cent. of the total.

We have not been able to trace anywhere anything approaching this remarkable record of efficiency.

GOLF AT WATTLE PARK.

Evidence of the extraordinary popularity of the sporting 9-hole golf course at Wattle Park is found in the fact that during the year 42,139 tickets were sold, the highest since the course was opened.

WORK OF TESTING DEPARTMENT.

During the year, the Testing Department increased its value to the Board by carrying out no fewer than 40,111 tests on equipment and materials, and furnished 1,756 reports. The details are as follows:—

	Physical	Chemical	Examina-tions	Reports
Bus Department	1,746	2,246	211	589
Distribution Department	22	46	75	10
Per. Way Dept.	279	173	210	128
Rolling Stock Dept.	12,600	843	14,055	852
Traffic Dept.	7,165	131	—	56
General	62	68	163	113

ACCIDENTS ARE EXPENSIVE.

And There Were 8,547 Last Year.

In previous paragraphs in these columns attention has been directed by the Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) to the necessity of exercising the greatest care so that accidents may be avoided, and it has been emphasised that the expense incurred does not end with the damage to the tram or bus concerned, the

consequent loss of revenue while the vehicle is out of commission, and the delay occasioned to the programme of rolling stock construction, but goes on to claims for damages, injuries and death.

Just what is involved in the latter will be evident when it is pointed out that for the year which ended on the 30th June last, the Board's vehicles were involved in 8,547 accidents. Most of these, it is fortunately true, were of a trivial character—damage to clothing, minor hurts got through falling, broken windows, and so on—but in others 33 people lost their lives. Six inquests have yet to be held, but in the others the Coroner's findings were—Accidental, 18; misadventure, 8; feloniously slain by unknown motorist, 1.

Arising out of the accidents, 1,043 claims for £69,315 for damages and compensation for death and injury were received, and by the end of the financial year £27,322 had been paid in settlement, while it is estimated that the claims still to be settled will involve a few more thousand pounds. Add to that total the loss of revenue when the rolling stock is being repaired, and the cost of the repairs, and the truth of the heading of this paragraph will be realised.

RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES.

During the last few weeks the Board has passed the undernoted retiring gratuities:—

Charman H. H. Ruddock, resigned, £72; Motor Mechanic J. G. Hughes, resigned, £71; Sub-Foreman R. Stanley (65), 39 years' service, £834; Con. B. Clifford (46), 16 years, £81; Dvr. W. C. Stevens (63), returned soldier, 27 years, £531; Con. L. A. D. Thomas, resigned, £75; Wheel Grinder A. G. Langdon (65), 43 years, £676; Cleaner J. Coates (65), 23 years, £530; Builder's Lab. M. E. Morgan, resigned, £54; Insp. F. E. Keane (57), 33 years, medically unfit, £548; Welder F. J. Burke, resigned, £91; Dvr. A. J. Waugh (65), 42 years, £625; Dvr. T. O. Irvine (66), 29 years, £498; Night Watchman A. A. Robertson (65), 26 years, £571; Bus Driver H. R. Semmens, resigned, £75; Dvr. J. B. Crabtree (65), 42 years, £625; Con. E. S. Brown, resigned, £65; Dvr. E. F. Livingstone (42), 20 years, medically unfit, £250; Builder's Lab. P. Tunnecliffe, resigned, £42; Con. W. J. M. Webb (65), 38 years, £600; Dvr. F. W. Beyrendt (48), 22 years, medically unfit, £275; Machinist J. G. McMaster (58), 22 years, medically unfit, £209; Elec. Mech. E. H. Chiarni (63), 43 years, £452; Dvr. J. T. Grimes (65), 41 years, £537; Mrs. A. Hinson (67), 21 years, £277; Draughtsman W. W. G. Fordham, resigned, £89; Asst. Scrubber Car Operator E. Lyall (65), 24 years, £500; Plumber H. A. Eddy, resigned, £71; Dvr. R. C. Mallows (55), 23 years, medically