

## MELBOURNE SYSTEM "AMAZING."

## Perth Superintendent's Impressions.

"Amazing" is the only word the Chief Traffic Superintendent of the Perth Tramways (Mr. H. Ritchie) thinks appropriate to describe the organisation and equipment of the Melbourne Tramways Board. It is the intention of the West Australian Government to separate the tramways from the railways, and to appoint a Tramways Board and give it the task of modernising the Perth system. The comprehensive report prepared for the Government by the Per. Way Engineer of the Melbourne Tramways (Mr. H. H. Bell, Junr.) is now under consideration by Cabinet, which thought it well that Mr. Ritchie should be sent to Melbourne to study at first hand the methods which have proved so efficient and successful.

Mr. Ritchie spent nearly a fortnight acquainting himself with all the administrative and maintenance practices of the Board, and gave particular attention to the details of through routing and the training of tram and bus drivers, with the object of applying the knowledge to the reorganisation of the Perth undertaking. "This is my first visit to Melbourne," Mr. Ritchie said before leaving, "and I can only say that while I have long known by repute of the leadership and enterprise of the Tramways Board, I have found the whole undertaking and its working simply amazing. The ease and speed with which the trams dealt with the huge football crowds, the convenience provided by through re-routing, the meticulous maintenance schedules which results in the trams and buses presenting such an attractive appearance, the facilities provided for the training of drivers and which sends them out armed with both theoretical and practical knowledge, and the well-equipped workshops and garages, astounded me and gave me much valu-

able information which I am confident I shall be able to apply to the great benefit of the Perth system."

## WINNIPEG'S TRANSPORT GROWTH.

The growth of Winnipeg's transport system in seven years is illustrated by the following tables:—

	1939	1945
Tram Passengers .....	33,103,397	60,108,825
Motorbus .....	9,744,391	28,681,475
Trolleybus .....	1,733,523	9,657,927

The Winnipeg Electric Company has 215 trams and 30 trolleybuses, while there are 26 motorbus routes. There is a flat fare of 10 cents, with tickets available in books of 20 for 1½ dollars.

## STANDING PASSENGERS.

Bus and coach crews and the members of the maintenance staff of the London Transport Executive—the successors of the London Passenger Transport Board—have got their Sunday pay increased from time and a quarter to time and a half, the rate our men enjoyed for almost a generation until increased 19 months ago to double time.

Following upon that increase, the Minister of Transport has been asked to permit the number of standing passengers in public service vehicles to be altered from five to eight during permitted hours—the peaks—as a gesture by the Transport and General Workers' Union to co-operate in improving the services!

The crews and staff have also agreed to work unscheduled overtime, when required, to cover sporting, social and other special events.

## Tramway Topics

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## STIRRING UP STRIFE.

## Association Leaders Once More On The Job.

Emerging from that seclusion forced upon them by the disastrous non-success of their leadership in the January strike, the State President and State Secretary of the A. T. and M. O. Employees' Association assisted for the occasion by the State President and State Secretary of the A.R.U., have issued a leaflet, the statements in the opening paragraph of which 95 per cent. of the employees of the Tramways Board will know to be untrue.

"The tramways strike on the 40-hour 5-day week issue was engineered by the Tramways Board at the instigation of the Hollway-McDonald Government of Big Business men," they aver.

In actual fact, the 40-hour 5-day week agitation was put under weigh by the Association when the Cain Government was in office, and it was intimated by the Chairman of the Board (Mr. H. H. Bell) then that, in conformity with the judgment of the Court, which provided in awarding the 40-hour week that until ordered otherwise existing practices for the working week would be continued, work on the rosters for a week of 40 hours spread over six days was in progress. Mr. Bell added that these would be ready for January 4, and immediately thereafter rosters for a 40-hour 5-day week would be commenced.

Not once but repeatedly, both when Mr. Cain was Premier and when he had been succeeded by Mr.

Hollway, the Chairman reiterated that statement, ending always with the plea to the Association to work the 6-day rosters until the 5-day rosters could be compiled and examined by the Association's officials. "It might be," he said, "that after three months' trial of the 6-day tables, and after comparing them with the 5-day rosters, that we would find it would be better for both the Board and the Association to have a 5-day week." That statement was first made in October, with the Cain Government functioning, so the assertion that a non-existent Hollway-McDonald Government engineered the strike can only be a fiction born of warped and malicious minds.

To take the story a bit further, mention can be made of the fact that on the 2nd January the Board "offered to compile 5-day week rosters within three months and to submit them immediately on completion to a conference with Association officials." ("The Age," 3/1/48). An extraordinary way of "engineering" a strike, surely. The Hollway-McDonald Government was brought into the matter on the same day (2/1/48) through the officials of the Association waiting upon the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Kennedy), by whom they were assured, according to the report in "The Age," "that tram men would be given a 5-day roster within two or three months"—again an offer which is the direct antithesis of engineering a strike and one which was practically identical with Mr. O'Shea's stipulation of the 22nd December ("The Age," 23/12/47), a 5-day week "within two or three months."



Far from engineering the strike, then, it is plain to all who can read that it was actually the Hollway-McDonald Government which, through the Minister of Public Works, offered the Association, without any contact either with the Board or the Arbitration Court (although the latter is the only body with the necessary power to give the requisite order) to give the 5-day week within the period specified by Mr. O'Shea.

Why, then, the strike? Let Mr. O'Shea answer the question. He was good enough to do so in "The Herald" of the 3rd January. "Letters from all depots," he said, "proved that all tramwaymen wanted to work under the old roster conditions, with penalty rates for the sixth day, until the Board compiled a 5-day roster." (The italics are ours). What Mr. O'Shea had omitted, doubtless inadvertently, to mention was that these so-called "spontaneous" letters and resolutions had all been framed on the one model drawn up in an office in Elizabeth Street, and that the minds of his members at the various depots had been inflamed by stories of the hardships they were going to endure with the 6-day rosters—statements which owed all they contained to malicious imagination, a fact which became apparent when the traffic staff commenced to work them and found that they were the best set of tables they had ever been called upon to operate.

If confirmation as to the origin and cause of the strike is desired, then the judgment of the Conciliation Commissioner (Mr. Blackburn, V.C.) can be quoted. "The ridiculous position, therefore," he said, "is that the Board desires to adhere to and endeavour strictly to comply with the order of the Full Court obtained on the action of the employees, but one group of the employees, who obtained that order, now reject it except on their own conditions as to its incidence. Having obtained an order for a 40-hour week, they now strike for the right to have a 44-hour week with its consequent overtime."

It is abundantly plain who engineered the strike. Not the Board, not the Hollway-McDonald Government, but the Communists who, chagrined because the Government and the Board had accepted Mr. O'Shea's stipulation of the 22nd December, and determined to have a trial of strength, induced by bare-faced misrepresentations, thousands of decent

employees to refuse, as it was put by Kew, "under any conditions to work the proposed 6-day rosters."

NO PROFIT; NO SHARING.

Kansas City Public Service Company has a profit-sharing scheme; but for 1947 there was, alas! no profit and therefore there was no sharing. As certified by the public accountants, the operations for the year resulted:—

Traffic Revenue	12,477,956.72
Traffic Expenses	12,429,815.86
Balance	48,140.86
Other Income	25,690.08
	73,830.94
Fixed Charges (Interest, etc.)	188,767.36
Loss	114,936.42
Obsolescence & Depreciation	405,860.41
Total Loss for 1947	520,796.82

Still, Kansas should not be discouraged; Sydney's loss last year was over £600,000 (pounds, not dollars).

JUST WHY.

A pictorial poster has been used by the American Transit Association to explain to the public just why so many of the constituent members of the Association have found it necessary to increase the flat fare from 6 cents of 10 cents and over. Seated on a table, a charming young lady exhibits two sets of prices, those of 1941 with those now prevailing. They are most interesting.

	1941	1947
¼ lb. butter	14 cents.	24 cents.
Can beer	10 cents.	16 cents.
Pint milk	10 cents.	12 cents.
Bread	11 cents.	16 cents.
Local Transport	7 cents.	7½ cents.

That table of prices would have been still more illuminating had it included figures showing how the cost of providing transport had risen far higher than any of the other items. Our operating costs, for instance, rose from £1,701,794 in 1941 to £2,764,263 last year. From figures we have seen, we believe that generally the operating costs in the United States are much above that figure. Just recently we pointed out that in the case of one company, the rise in wages alone were greater than the net revenue of the concern for nine months.

THE 5-DAY WEEK.

Board's Estimate of Staff Required Was Too Conservative.

When the staff position was reviewed in October last in view of the coming of the 40-hour week in January, and the conviction that later in 1948 a 5-day week would be in operation, the conclusion was reached that 611 additional employees would be required. Certain members of the Tramways Association howled their derision. Being, of course, so much better informed than those officers responsible for the provision of the required man power, they did not hesitate to proclaim that the Board's estimate was a gross exaggeration, and that an extra 250 employees would be ample for all requirements. The actual position on the 29th May last is illuminating, as it shows not only how far those people were astray, but that the Board's calculation is actually much short of what is necessary. Here are the details:—

Traffic Staff in October, 1947	3,501
Traffic Staff at 29th May, 1948	4,002
Net gain	501
Week ending 29th May:	
No. of staff working 6 days	95
Assistants short	30
Total short of bare requirements	125

In addition, out of the 50 men whose applications for "long service leave"—to use the unfortunate phrase employed to describe what is actually recreational or recuperative leave—had been granted, only 16 had been able to get away, so that in point of fact we were really 159 short of the establishment required on that particular date.

Nor does the story end there. From September onwards the new members of the staff will begin to

qualify for leave. If all are, together with the older employees whose vacations will also be due then, to go off on their proper dates, with provision for those who take recuperative leave, and with reserves for those who may fall sick or have to absent themselves from duty for valid reasons, then the staff will, the Chairman believes, have to receive between the 29th May last and the end of September another 300 recruits, bring the total increase to 800 as compared with the original estimate of 611 and the Comrades' guess of 250.

SECTION FARES IN UNITED STATES.

Increases Fail to Produce Required Revenue.

Street transport concerns in the United States are beginning to recognise belatedly that the general increase in the flat fare to 10 cents., and even higher in some instances, is not going to produce the revenue necessary to meet the stiff rise in wage rates and the advancing costs of rolling stock and all other materials. In an article contributed more than a year ago to "Mass Transportation," Chicago, it was pointed out that the undertakings were ignoring the short-distance passenger and thereby depriving themselves of a large income, because while people might be prepared to pay 6 cents for a four-block journey, it was highly unlikely that they would continue their patronage with the fare raised to 10 cents. Melbourne's figures were quoted to show that the financial strength of the system comes from the short-haul passenger.

Whether that article had any influence on the fare outlook of managers is not known; but within the last nine months several cities and large towns have scrapped their flat fares, whose sole advantage seemed to us to lie in the direction of enabling the concerns to have one-man operation, and adopted the sectional—known as the zone in the States—fare system. Now the Capital Transit Company of Washington, D.C., shocked, doubtless, by an award which gave the employees wage increases which amounted to more than the net revenue of the concern for nine months, has filed an application with the Public Service Commission for authority to establish 1½-mile 5-cent fare zones in place of the 10-cent. fare.



While for 1947 the operating revenue of the company dropped 94,870 dollars below that for 1946, the operating expenses soared by 2,300,893 dollars, the result for the year being a loss of 90,631 dollars as compared with a profit of 914,528 dollars for the previous year. Due almost wholly to the higher wages, the operating costs per tram mile rose steeply from 33.21 cents. to 52.38 cents., an increase of no less than 60 per cent.

The parlous state of the industry as a whole can be seen when it is stated that the operating costs alone of the members of the American Transit Association amounted in 1947 to 89.7 per cent. of the revenues, or 17½ per cent. higher than the Melbourne figure. The 10.3 per cent. is not sufficient to cover all the other charges, interest, depreciation, and so on, so there is little wonder that most of the undertakings are running "in the red."

#### TRAMS AT £5,500 EACH.

Sheffield Corporation, which remains indifferent to the opinion of Mr. John Buchan, of Melbourne, that trolleybuses are the thing for street transport—probably because they have seen them in the neighbouring city of Bradford for the last 37 years without being able to see any advantage in their use—has secured the permission of the Ministry of Transport to raise a loan of over £200,000 for the purchase of 35 new trams.

That works out at about £5,500 each, at which price it compares with the cost of our S.W.6. Sydney's new trams will run to over £8,100 each; but then they are to be built by outside contractors.

#### "THE UNFINISHED DANCE."

When in Perth recently, our Per. Way Engineer was amused with the following paragraph in the "Daily News":—

"Wobbling its old hips, swaying its shoulders and leaping skittishly, the little Hay Street tram hurried along like some inebriate jitterbug late for a downtown honky-tonk appointment. Behind it came a motorist keeping an alert eye on this exuberant

fandango, for it seemed to him that at any moment the tram might decide to do the Dying Swan and collapse gracefully across the track. But the tram went right on with its act. Switching from rumba to conga, it then tried out a few Lambeth Walk steps, toyed for a while with the idea of ballet, settled down at last to enjoy itself with Booms-a-daisy. The car driver, feeling a bit dizzy, decided to pass this irresponsible monster, and as he did so saw the poster it carried: 'It's colossal' (or something), 'The Unfinished Dance'!"

#### THANKS FROM BRISTOL.

Several of the employees at our Central Bus Garage, together with the office staff, have been sending food parcels to the employees of the Bristol Tramways. One of the many letters received by Asst. D. M. Taylor came last month from Mr. T. W. H. Gailey, who as a member of the R.A.F. spent a week in Melbourne in 1945 while on his way to his Pacific station. "Certainly," he writes, "of all the many places I saw during the war, Melbourne is one of my happiest memories, and a place where I was treated most hospitably by everyone I met."

Talking of the parcel he had received, Mr. Gailey says:—"It is a really excellent choice, containing all the things we can no longer get over here, and both my wife and I are delighted with it and very much touched by the generous thoughts of our bus friends in Melbourne. My young daughter was as pleased as we were—perhaps not so much for the contents of the parcel as for the Australian 5/- stamp on the outside of it!"

#### INTERESTED IN MELBOURNE'S TRAMS.

It is remarkable how interested the people of other countries are in our undertaking. Scarcely a week passes but some transport enthusiast in Britain, the United States, Russia, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, New Zealand or Canada writes asking for details of our system, our maintenance practice, our methods of fare collection, wages and penalty rates, and so on. One curious individual

from Omaha compiled a list of 36 questions, while one of the letters received last month read as follows (it is set out exactly as typed by the Duisburg correspondent):—

To  
Melbourne and Metropolitan  
Tramways Board,  
616 Little Collins Street,  
Melbourne, C.I.

Dear Sirs!

*I am enthusiast of traffic, special Transit-Traffic, and have had a collection of this kind, which has been destroyed by influence of war. Now, I would like to re-establish a new one, and therefore, I take the liberty to beg you for some*

*Advertisements*

*of your famous transit-system. In chief I take an interest in*

*Pictures or Photographs of  
STREET-CARS and Trackless Trolley-Coaches  
also Elevated-Cars  
Schemes of lines etc.*

*It would be a great pleasure to me, to have soon a sending from you.*

*Many thanks in anticipation, I am,*

*Yours respectfully.*

We like that phrase, "destroyed by influence of war." It may be said to indicate tactfully the operations of the young gentlemen of the R.A.F. which reduced Duisburg to large heaps of rubble.

#### ADELAIDE'S DEFICIT £93,748.

Despite increases in all forms of fares and the withdrawal of the yearly all-services tickets, the Municipal Tramways Trust, Adelaide, finished the year which ended on the 31st January last with a deficit of £93,748, as compared with a loss of £41,284 for the previous year. Nor are the prospects for the current year any more comforting, for it is pointed out in the annual report that from February 1 to May 13 "additional costs, mainly increased wages granted under awards of the Court,

aggregate over £80,000 per annum."

It may interest our readers if the main figures in the report are contrasted with our own:—

	Adelaide	Melbourne
Traffic Revenue	£1,318,941	£3,847,644
Working Expenses	1,141,212	2,764,203
Renewals Reserve	101,897	395,000
Loan Sinking Fund	34,150	72,755
Op. expenses to revenue	85.671%	71.434%
Op. expenses per mile	24.746d.	22.480d.

While passengers carried decreased by 1,576,874, the revenue was £34,398 greater. Shortages of both labour and materials again restricted progressive activities. Orders placed two years ago for rails and poles, for instance, are still unfulfilled, while the accumulation of maintenance work will take more than 12 months to overtake when materials do come to hand.

What between the strike and the cost of the 40-hour week from January 17, plus the additional expense of the 5-day week from April 25, Melbourne will also, as the Chairman has indicated, have to record a loss this year.

#### A DEFICIT — AND A FIRE.

Thanks to an award during the year which added £156,000 to the wages bill, Glasgow's Transport Department for the year which ended on the 31st May last had an estimated loss of £134,000.

As if that were not enough, £50,000 damage was caused when a fire destroyed or badly damaged 12 trams in the Newlands Depot.

#### UP THEY GO!

Following the examples of Sydney and Adelaide, the fares in Brisbane have been increased by 1d. per trip. The rise applies also to weekly and concession tickets. In the first four weeks of the new fares revenue increased by £22,430.



**7,000,000 PASSENGERS A DAY.****Moscow's Huge Transport System.**

Trams, autobuses, trolleybuses and the underground—each of the first three types being given traffic routes for which they are best suited, with the trams sharing with the underground in the mass traffic movement—deal daily with 7,000,000 passengers in Moscow.

There are 350 miles of tram tracks, and extensions totalling another 50 miles are under construction. A look at the latest type of tram shows that the Soviet designers got their inspiration of it from the P.C.C. trams of the United States. Externally, at all events, the car is almost an exact replica of the P.C.C.

Seated for 34 passengers and with standing room for 26, the Diesel-electric autobuses are 32 ft. long, 8 ft. wide and 9 ft. 6 ins. high. Gear changing and breaking are done by two right-foot pedals, thus leaving the driver's hands free for steering. All doors are pneumatically operated, and the single entrance is at the front. There are now 64 urban bus routes totalling 625 miles, and if the present 5-year plan is completed according to schedule at the end of 1950 there will then be over 100 routes covering 1,185 miles.

The first of the new design in trolleybuses was put into service in September last year, and is a vehicle with a body constructed as closely as possible in the lines of the city's comfortable tram. There are large four-sectioned pneumatically-controlled doors, footboards electrically lit at night, 40 plush upholstered seats, room for 25 standees, and 14 lamps with frosted glass shades. It is hoped within the next three years all the old models will be replaced by this new bus, known as the MTB-82.

Throughout Russia generally, according to official information supplied by the Academy of Municipal Economy, the aim of the five-year plan is to provide tramway services for all cities with populations of 50,000 and over, with either autobuses or trolleybus fleets for the smaller cities and large towns. To

do so, 22,000 autobuses are being built, fitted with both electric motors and Diesel engines to enable them to run by electricity where there is a trolleybus service or by the Diesel engine where there is no such facility.

**NO TROLLEYBUSES, THANK YOU!**

While the trams of Brussels made a profit of 4,417,797 Belgian francs last year, the eight trolleybuses ran at a loss of 2,139,185 francs.

In its annual report, the Brussels Board estimated that if all the trams were replaced by trolleybuses, there would be an annual loss of 200,000,000 francs, assuming fares remained on their present scale. After considering motorbuses, it was resolved to continue with tram modernisation.

**THANKS TO THE TRAFFIC STAFF.**

Early this month the Chairman was gratified to receive two letters paying tribute to our traffic staff. The first was from His Honour the Chief Justice (Sir Edmund Herring, and the second came from the Rev. A. J. Martin on the instruction of His Grace the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne.

Sir Edmund assured Mr. Bell that the co-operation and spirit of service shown by the staff had done much to ensure the success of the inaugural celebrations on Empire Youth Sunday, and that he had been directed by His Excellency the Governor to return thanks to all who had assisted.

Through the Rev. Mr. Martin, Dr. Mannix expressed his deep appreciation of the generous co-operation of the Board in providing additional transport for the various functions during the Diocesan centenary, "a big job which was handled very efficiently."

**THE LATE INSPECTOR BOARDMAN.**

"But be he slow or be he fast,  
It is but Death who comes at last."

wrote Sir Walter Scott, and while it is easy to recognise the truth in the words it is not so easy to accept with fatalistic resignation death which comes as the result of a simple accident and which cuts a man off in his prime, as in the case of the late Inspector G. S. Boardman.

Probably one of the two best known Inspectors in the service, due to his position on the instructing staff for the last 26 years, during which period he passed out many thousands of conductors, and deservedly popular with all sections, Inspector Boardman combined geniality with efficiency and tact in a marked degree; he was as keen on his job as he was on his play, for he had similar zest for each. It is tragically said that he "heard the sunset gun too soon," and that a trifling mishap, as it was thought to be at first, while on annual leave, should have culminated in his untimely passing. The day before he died he completed 37 years of loyal and efficient service.

**24,000 IRREGULARITIES.**

During the period between the 7th June, 1947, and the 29th May last, the trips checked numbered 175,160. Out of that total, 24,094 irregularities were reported, these including:—

Fares Uncollected	6,980
Passengers Over-riding	9,424
Journal irregularities	4,355
Ticket Irregularities	1,272
Miscellaneous	2,063
	<hr/> 24,094

As the trips checked were only a fraction of the whole, a little exercise in arithmetic, on the basis that each uncollected fare and passenger over-riding means a loss of but 2d., will indicate how costly these irregularities are to the revenue of the Board.

**SOUTH LONDON TRAMS.**

Suggested 18 months ago, and hailed with such joy by bus advocates, though not by the people most directly concerned, that South London tram conversion continues to fade into the far distance.

The latest development is that the London Transport Executive has decided to renew this summer 15 miles of the tracks, and the work is now in progress.

**APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS.**

The under-noted appointments and promotions are published for information:—

J. C. W. Clark, Plant Attendant, Victoria Parade; D. A. Dimond, Wages Clerk, H.O.; G. T. Gazeley, Depot Foreman, Coburg; E. G. E. Stephens, Relief Depot Foreman, Glenhuntingly; and J. Hague, Storeman, Central Bus Garage.

**RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES.**

Since our last issue, the under-noted retiring gratuities have been passed by the Board:—

Drvr. H. B. Ward, resigned, £70; Drvr. C. B. Mather (61), 26 years' service, medically unfit, £382; Senr. Rev. Clerk E. I. Bell (65), 40 years, £955; Drvr. R. T. Hede (53), 27 years, resigned, £65; L.-H. Electrical Fitter J. Holmes (65), 24 years, £709; Drvr. A. G. Duckmanton, resigned, £94; Curator R. T. Hjorth (65), 13 years, £494; Con. A. D. Dart (46), resigned, £80; and Waggon Driver N. W. Fyfe (60), Returned Soldier, 27 years, £610.

Death gratuities to the respective next of kin have been made in relation to: Blacksmith J. S. McManus (58), 21 years, £343; Drvr. W. J. Reeves (64), 27 years, £380; Inspector N. R. Hamilton (60), 42 years, £756; and Scrubber Car Operator W. A. Allan (55), 24 years, £360.