

Tramway Topics

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS.

Recent appointments and promotions—Official and Clerical Staff—are:—

F. J. Hutchison, Victoria Parade, Sub-Foreman; J. N. Cavanagh, Head Office, Conductor-Instructor; W. Ellis, Wattle Park, Curator; K. F. Lynch, Preston Workshops, Storeman (on probation).

TRAINER DRIVERS.

Good Results Are Expected From New System.

Advertised throughout the service, the notice calling for applications for Trainer Drivers has brought a very large response, and the task of selection will therefore take a few weeks. In the near future, however, all the Depots, with the exception of Footscray (two), will have four permanent Trainer Drivers.

This departure, together with the new training syllabus, is the fruit of investigations and discussions over the last 18 months between the Chairman and his chief Traffic officers, and proceeded from the conviction that 99 per cent. of our driving difficulties were the result of inexperience. Under the new training syllabus, the trainee will have 96 hours' platform training under the one instructor, as against 72 hours, an alteration which should be of great benefit to the student and which should produce satisfactory results. Immediately after he qualifies, the trainee will be allotted three weeks' continuous driving—all Depot Masters will be instructed to adhere rigidly to this order, as continuity is the essential part of the plan—during which period he will come under the direct observation of his local Road Inspector on six occasions. For the following 23 weeks of his probationary period he will be reported on 12 times by the Inspector. From this careful nursing and from the 18 reports in six months, then, it should be known beyond doubt whether the trainee has the temperament and has acquired the qualifications necessary for good and safe driving.

The extended period of training, tuition by the one instructor throughout the training period, careful nursing and follow-up during the six months' probation—all these things combined will, it is expected confidently, eliminate a very high percentage of those accidents which have been so costly to, and wasteful of, our rolling stock.

RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES.

During the last month, the undernoted retiring gratuities have been approved by the Board:—

Elec. Fitter S. Thomas (65), 23 years' service, £688; Special Ganger F. A. Croxford (65), 28 years, £645;

Con. A. R. Prince (65), 36 years, £676; Shed Lab. E. N. Parsonage (61), Ret. Sol., 29 years, £528; Drvr. W. C. Newman (65), 29 years, £610; Tradesman W. G. Trafford (56), 31 years, med. unfit, £410; Drvr. L. H. Hellings (56), 30 years, med. unfit, £447; Con. L. Williams (46), 24 years, resigned, £95.

Death gratuities to the respective next of kin have been paid in relation to:—Track Repairer F. A. Rielly (60), 27 years' service, £302; Drvr. L. G. Alexander (58), 25 years, £367.

THE RAILWAY TRAMS.

Alternatives Before the Sandringham City Council

Transport people generally were surprised when they learned that the Minister of Transport (Colonel W. S. Kent Hughes, M.V.O., M.C., M.L.A.) had advised the Sandringham City Council that three proposals relating to the future of the Sandringham-Black Rock tramway would be considered, viz.:—

- (1) Replacement by buses, as suggested by the Railway Commissioners;
- (2) Purchase by the Council; and
- (3) Purchase by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board of both the Black Rock line and the St. Kilda-Brighton Beach route on the basis of present assets, the Board to re-construct both routes at its own expense, with provision for through routing between the two lines.

Since then the Board has been invited by the Railway Commissioners to express its views on the latter proposal, and will in due course do so.

DISASTER TO LIVERPOOL TRAMS.

No fewer than 69 trams, most of them of the latest type, belonging to the Liverpool Corporation Transport Department, were destroyed recently by fire at the Green Land Depot.

There were 80 trams in the depot when one burst into flames. Only 11 had been run out of danger when a derailment occurred which blocked effectively the exit for the others.

MONTE VIDEO TRAMS PURCHASED

Approval of the purchase of the British-owned Sociedad Comercial de Montevideo tramway undertaking at the price fixed when the agreement was signed last February, 11,700,000 Uruguayan pesos (£1,814,000), plus about 2,800,000 pesos (434,000) for other items, has been given by the Uruguayan Senate.

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FROM PRETORIA.

Transport Expert Praises Melbourne's Trams.

Mr. F. W. Pettifer, Asst.-Manager of the Pretoria Corporation Transport Department, is spending a few months in Australia on a mixed holiday-business tour, and in due course on his eastward journey he reached Melbourne and enjoyed thoroughly a "busman's vacation" by spending the best part of a fortnight inspecting and studying our system and our methods. An efficient, up-to-date money-making tramway system was something new in Mr. Pettifer's experience, and so he was more than curious to find out just exactly what it is that makes it tick so prosperously.

Pretoria's last trams, old, out-of-date, went in 1939, and trolleybuses took their place. We did not suggest that a judicious use of the amount of money which went ultimately into the purchase of such vehicles would, over the years, have maintained the tramway undertaking in good order and even supplied it with modern vehicles; but we did ask what the result of the conversion had been. "I think we would go back to-morrow to trams if we could get trams as good as you have here," Mr. Pettifer said. "Our trolleybuses gave us plenty headaches last year when the main streets had to be sealed off during the Royal visit, and the buses had to be towed by tractors to the feeder routes."

"My impression of your system?" Mr. Pettifer went on; "well, it is, as I see it, one of extreme efficiency in all departments, and one which is well adapted to the traffic needs of the area it serves. Another feature is this—I have found the people whom I have met very transport conscious, and most anxious to know what a visiting transport man, whom they think must know much more about the transport business than some layman who has made

a hurried trip overseas, thinks about the tram system of their city as against other places which have a mixture of trams and buses or even buses alone. My reply, in particular, is that in my opinion trams are easily the best medium for Melbourne, and, in general, that the type of transport to be adopted by any particular city should be that which is best suited to its own needs and to its physical characteristics, and should not be governed in the slightest by any vehicle preference shown elsewhere.

"There is to me no substance in the argument that the trams take up a lot of the street and hold up the smooth, even flow of traffic generally. On the contrary, I think they preserve that flow by compelling traffic to keep to well-defined lines. We in South Africa have found that despite the vaunted flexibility of the Diesel bus, street traffic conditions are not improved by their use. I shudder to think what Swanston Street would be like if you attempted to handle the abnormal heavy traffic at present dealt with so expeditiously and efficiently by the trams with buses of either the Diesel or trolley type. The moment you throw large numbers of buses—and bear in mind that it takes from two to three buses to do the work of one tram—on to the streets you add to the difficulties of traffic flow, and these are increased again by the kerb-side parking of private motor cars. The extent of the parking permitted in such main thoroughfares as Chapel Street, High Street (St. Kilda), Sydney Road and parts of Glenferrie Road and Burke Road astounded me. I have gleaned much interesting and valuable information, and I am most grateful to all those who have given so much of their time to me."

To prevent us becoming too self-satisfied, however, and too pleased over the tributes paid to our system, let it be recorded that one named H. Dudley

Ingram disagrees with Mr. Pettifer. It is true that in the world of transport Mr. Ingram is unknown; but "as a student" he has weighed us in the balance and found us wanting—he has, in fact, "formed the opinion that the Melbourne tramways are inefficient."

BUSES WITH SLIDING DOORS.

Approval has been given by the Board for the construction of single-seater bus bodies which will have the permitted maximum length of 33 feet, will have 41 seats instead of 31, and will have a crush-load capacity of 80 as compared with the 60 in the bodies of the OPS1 buses now under construction at our Preston Workshops and in Sydney.

Eight of the latter—the first of the 40 from Sydney—are now in service. Loading and unloading has been facilitated by the provision of two sliding doors, operated by vacuum engines controlled by the driver, who can open or close either or both by simply touching a switch.

P.C.C. TRAMS.

In the 25 largest cities of the United States and Canada, more than 4,000 P.C.C. trams are now in service—quite an imposing total when it is remembered that they were introduced only 12 years ago and that production was interfered with by the war. Orders for 600 more have been accepted, while negotiations for the purchase of more than 500 are, it is stated by the Transit Research Corporation of New York, in progress.

P.C.C. trams are now being constructed under license by the A.C.E.C. for tramway systems in Belgium, Holland, France and Luxemburg. Italy, Spain and Portugal are also using this tram, which has been copied in Russia, as we told the other month.

TRAMS OF THE FUTURE.

Glasgow's General Manager Outlines a Transport Plan.

Those people who are forever with a magnificent disregard for truth telling us that the largest cities all over the world are replacing their trams with buses—the allegation is always general, never particular—will be horrified with the brilliant, illuminating report which the General Manager of the Glasgow Corporation Transport Department (Mr. E. R. L. Fitzpayne) has prepared and presented to the Transport Committee on the future develop-

ment of public passenger transport facilities in that city.

It is, naturally, with a scheme of the magnitude envisaged by the author, embracing the combined operation of railways, tramways, buses and underground, a very long range plan indeed; and it is highly unlikely that even were a beginning to be made to-morrow that those responsible for the work will live to see its completion. Perhaps such a comprehensive plan will never be adopted; that will, we suppose, depend upon the fate of the undertaking when the intentions of the British Transport Commission in relation to Glasgow and similar municipal transport concerns are made known. Leaving that aspect aside, Mr. Fitzpayne urges the early construction of a number of rapid transit electric street railways, burrowing underground as they approach the city centre and connected by interchange stations with selected suburban lines of the British Railways, which would be electrified to bring them into harmony with the general plan.

Of course buses come into the scheme, and Mr. Fitzpayne leaves the question as to whether they should be Diesel or trolleybuses to the future. He proposes to use them on what he terms feeder, local, ring and radial services, purposes for which they are suited admirably. So far as the underground is concerned, the small gauge compared with the standard railway gauge, the small diameter of the tunnels and the sharp radii of the curves make it impracticable to include it as an integral part of the scheme. Mr. Fitzpayne, however, proposes the construction of another underground which would link up with both the street and electric lines.

A number of plates makes it easy to follow the text of the author's plan. In one he shows the tram routes he has selected for the development he describes, in a second the proposed new electric railways, in a third the suggested new surface and underground railways in relation to the contemplated new arterial and sub-arterial roads with the proposed bus routes avoiding the congested inner city area.

"Glasgow for many years," Mr. Fitzpayne concludes, "has depended on its tramway system, which is still regarded with pride by the citizens. This system has efficiently and cheaply met the problem of mass transportation, and it cannot be thrown aside lightly unless there is something better to take its place. Its main disadvantages are its contribution to street congestion—often exaggerated—and the loading and unloading of passengers some distance from the pavements. These weaknesses are overcome by the scheme outlined in this report, in which an electric system is described possessing all the advantages of tramways and none of the disadvantages."

NEW TRAMS IN ROME.

Twenty of the new streamlined bogie trams ordered early last year by the Rome Municipal Tramways are now in service, and the remainder are following at the rate of two per month.

Eighteen metres long, the trams are seated for 32 passengers, with ample standing room for another 100.

CLEARING UP THE PARKING PROBLEM.

Fifty-seven downtown merchants have made a deal with the Sacramento City Lines in an effort to clear up the business district parking problem and ease morning and evening traffic congestion, reports "Mass Transportation."

Drivers furnish pink token exchange tickets to passengers on request between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The tickets are exchanged for bus fare tokens at the participating stores. The shoppers can only get a ticket en route downtown. At each store where she, or he, buys goods to the value of one dollar two bus token tickets are given, and so the trip to and from the city is paid for.

Store proprietors say that the plan, which is to operate for a trial period of two months, has been well received.

FANTASTIC FIGURES.

Self-Appointed "Expert" Confutes Himself.

It was Job who wished in a moment of bitterness that his adversary had written a book; the general idea, presumably, being that if the gentleman had done so he would have laid himself open to a devastating rejoinder. In the case of Mr. T. G. Paterson, who at the moment of writing was President of the National Safety Council—he changes his jobs so frequently that it might well happen that he is something else by the time these lines are in print—and his tram statistics, it is not necessary to indulge in such a wish; just let him alone to write a few letters to the Press or make a couple of statements and he is obliging enough to "make hay" of his own figures and demonstrate that their only basis is his vivid imagination.

A few samples are both amusing and interesting. In "The Argus" of the 31st August, 1946, he set out the total number of trams in the world for two years as follows:—

Year	No. of Trams
1907	65,000
1941	25,000

Mr. Peter Duckett, Caulfield, rejoined promptly

that the total given for 1941 was actually 2,000 less than the number in the United States alone. Having to his dismay, after frantic research in the Public Library, confirmed that statement, Mr. Paterson discreetly ceased to mention these totals and concentrated on the generalisation that trams had been vanishing from the world at the rate of 1,000 a year for the past 40 years.

You see the hash that still made of his figures? Forty thousand from 65,000 still left but 25,000 in the world, although at the date of his letter there were 26,680 being operated by the members of the American Transit Association.

Most of us had forgotten those stupid figures until Mr. Paterson burst into song again in "The Argus" of the 28th July last. This time he asserted that in the last 20 years trams had been vanishing at the rate of 2,500 a year, so that if we combine his statement of 1946 with that for July we can get this nice little table:—

1,000 per year 1907-27	20,000
2,500 per year 1927-47	50,000
	70,000

With joyous abandon, it will be seen, Mr. Paterson destroyed 5,000 more trams than, according to himself, were in existence in 1907. And there are still a few score thousand running in every country in the world with, possibly, the exception of Patagonia. How many there are we confess frankly we don't know; nor does anybody else, for that matter, for the simple reason that no figures have been available for Russia, Japan and Germany for nearly 10 years.

Mr. Paterson gave another example of his irresponsible methods of conducting a controversy when, in reply to the Chairman's observation that Mr. Paterson's accident figures were as inaccurate as his tram statistics in 1946, he retorted that his figures had been based on extracts from the Transit Fact Book of 1947. Clever, clever Mr. Paterson! His gifts in August, 1946, were such that he could peer into the future and quote from a book which was not published until eight months later (April, 1947) and which contained figures which were not completed until four months after he had made his assertions, for the book was "the annual summary of basic data and trends in the Transit industry of the United States" for the year which ended on the 30th December, 1946.

No wonder one commentator dubbed his figures "fantastic."