

operate where sufficient tram staff was not available. A full Sunday tram service requires a staff of 1,700 but only 1,000 are obtainable, and so for 10 weeks Sydney had been tramless on Sundays.

The "mass" meeting saw an attendance of 230, and of these 121 voted against the Executive's recommendation while 109 were in favour of it.

The Conciliation Commissioner then stepped in and ordered the men to work as rostered. Another "mass" meeting was held on the 1st October, and this time 493 turned up. Again the Executive's proposal that the men should work as ordered was rejected, the majority against on this occasion being 35. Two days later Sydney had its twelfth consecutive tramless Sunday.

The narrow majorities (12 and 35) by which the recommendation had been turned down by the "mass" meetings inspired the Executive to take a ballot vote on the 8th October. Even then not two-thirds of the members voted, the exact number being 3,777. By a majority of 779 the men resolved to "man the trams on Sunday to the full extent of the man-power available, and where man-power is not available, buses to run full alternative services."

What the public wanted to know when it was all over was why was it necessary to wait 12 weeks before ascertaining the views of the great mass of the members of the Union instead of permitting microscopical minorities to flout the judgment of the Executive.

A GRAND EFFORT BY PRESTON.

A Preston Workshops correspondent writes:—

"It may be of interest to you and also to other groups of tramway employees engaged in the movement to send food parcels to Britain to know that the Engineering Department has a weekly contributory scheme in operation. In the last 55 weeks £250 has been subscribed, and that sum has meant 331 parcels. Now, what about a little rivalry between Departments and Depots for the benefit of a very needy cause?"

AN ENGINEER'S TRIBUTE.

On the 10th October Sydney "Truth" published an article in which it analysed, and praised, the operations and results of the Melbourne Tramways Board, contrasted these with those of Sydney, and said:—If the State Government scrapped its outdated policy of re-placing trams with buses and took a leaf out of Melbourne's book it would soon make transport in Sydney a payable proposition. Modern and comfortable trams are the answer to the transport problem—not buses and higher fares as is proposed in Sydney." The article inspired

Mr. C. W. Keele, formerly Chief Civil Engineer of the N.S.W. Department of Road Transport and Tramways, to telegraph our Chairman in the terms given below:—

"Disclosure here your finances and policy of trams superceding buses contrasts greatly with our system. Congratulations on achievement. My experiences abroad reveal Melbourne's tramways the equal of the world's best."

WAS THE STREET QUIZ ON TRAMS FAKED?

"The Sun" never very scrupulous when dealing with trams, wasted a lot of space on the 14th October by publishing what it alleged was the result of a street "quiz" on trams, buses or trolleybuses for Bourke Street. At the corner of Russell and Bourke Street, it was stated, 12 people were questioned, and of these only one favoured trams, with six not interested.

The reporter worked in happy ignorance that his questioning was being noted by a member of the Board's staff and also a member of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association. Twenty people were approached, not 12 as stated by "The Sun," and the results were:—

Not interested 6,

Against trams 5.

In favour of trams 9.

Comment from us is unnecessary.

RETIRING GRATUITIES.

The under-noted retiring gratuities have been voted by the Board since our last issue:—

Drvr. F. L. Johnson (40), resigned, £81; Con. C. H. G. Turner (65), 43 years' service, £648; Depot Starter W. L. McLaren (61), 34 years, medically unfit, £584; Drvr. A. W. Gooch (48), 24 years, med. unfit, £357; M.O.'s Clerk R. E. Mellon (49), 24 years, resigned, £121; Med. Dept. Clerk L. S. Maynard (45), 14 years, resigned, £102; Con. E. J. Fox (61), 40 years, med. unfit, £417; Gardener D. B. Watson (53), 25 years, med. unfit, £356; Track Repairer G. Hayman (63), 22 years, med. unfit, £233; Con. L. W. Franzi (49), 24 years, med. unfit, £268; and Machine Shop Foreman H. R. S. Kohry (64), 26 years, £1,008.

APPOINTMENTS.

The following appointments are notified for information:—

M. F. McDermott, Per. Way, Special Ganger; A. W. Capp, H.O., clerk; R. G. Baker, H.O., Stores Clerk; and A. E. Villiers, H.O., Medical Officer's Clerk.

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

Tramway Topics

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MELBOURNE'S TRAM FARES.

Existing Levels to be Maintained.

Contract for Bourke Street Next Year.

With Sydney unable to meet in full its interest and sinking fund charges, with every other transport undertaking in the Commonwealth having increased its fares, and with passenger transport charges having increased all over the world from 25 up to as much as 110 per cent., the Melbourne Tramways Board, thanks to the imaginative foresight which resulted in the accumulation of most substantial reserves during the war years, and thanks also to the Board's firm and unwavering adherence to the belief that the tram is beyond question the vehicle for mass transport is alone in being able to announce that the present fare levels, which are actually less than they were 13 years ago through the adoption of the maximum fare of 6d., are to be maintained.

Transport fares are no inconsiderable item in the family budget, and therefore it was easy to appreciate the relief felt in many thousands of homes over the announcement, following as it did immediately the public had been shocked with the intimation of another substantial rise in the price of gas. As for the bus maniacs, they might reflect—even if reflection is strange to them—that had the Board yielded to their uninformed clamour and started to replace trams by buses fares would long ere this have bounded upwards. As a matter of sober and unchallengable fact, it has been the heavy losses incurred by the buses which has prevented the possibility of lower fares. Those losses, which have in the aggregate involved hundreds of thousands of pounds—the debit last year alone was £182,924—have had to be found by the successful and dependable tram.

In this connection, "Truth" earlier in the month dealt pointedly and drastically with the few people,

most of whom speak through their pockets, who yearn for buses. "Prattlers, town planning theorists, and world travellers," wrote "Truth," "who return home as world unravellers on any nominated subject, would bring quick chaos to the street transport system of Melbourne if their persistent and monotonous advocacy of the scrapping of trams and their replacement by buses gained ground. In their short-sighted and ill-informed clamour they would wreck one of the best-run tramway undertakings in the world, quoted overseas as a model in many respects, and replace it with a bus system which is uneconomical, incapable of moving vast crowds swiftly, a failure in Sydney, and already a failure where it has been tried in Melbourne.

"Only the obduracy of the Chairman of the Tramways Board (Mr. H. H. Bell) and expert Government advisers, who know more of the problem than the car-travelling critics, have saved Melbourne from the pipe-dreamers and prattlers so far. Their plans, indeed, to wipe out the expensive and inefficient buses in Bourke Street and to relay tram tracks, and to put down another lateral line in Latrobe Street, are to be highly commended. Plain facts are all that is needed to place beyond doubt the suitability of trams as the only sound system of street transport for Melbourne."

Since that quotation appeared the Board has decided to call for tenders for the Bourke Street line as soon as the huge specifications have been completed, and hopes that it will be able to place the contract soon after the Royal visit to Melbourne next year has concluded. An estimate prepared nearly five years ago showed that the work would cost something like £944,000. Since then, as we all know, wages and the cost of living allowance have alike soared to such a degree that the expense of the electrification cannot now be less than well over £1,000,000.

SYDNEY'S STREET TRANSPORT Goes Deeper Into The Financial Mire.

Fares To Be Higher.

With each passing year the Department of Road Transport and Tramways, N.S.W., sinks deeper into the financial mire. For the year which ended on the 30th June last the Department chronicled the record deficit of £675,890.

Thanks to the increased fares, the Sydney tram and bus services reports the Auditor-General (Mr. E. H. Swift), earned £1,598,625 more than in 1946-47, but against that large sum the operation, maintenance and administration charges increased by £1,616,011. At Newcastle, the revenue showed an advance of £149,952 while the charges went up by £150,076. The result was a deficiency of £601,657 for Sydney and a debit of £74,233 for Newcastle. (How very glad the Newcastle Corporation must be that it did not persist with the idea to purchase the worn-out system!)

"So straitened have the cash resources of both undertakings become," states Mr. Swift, "following a series of heavy losses, that neither was able to meet its full obligations for interest charges or to pay its sinking fund contribution. Since the close of the year advances have been made by the Treasurer to supplement the funds of the undertakings and enable them to meet current commitments."

Discussing this lamentable state of affairs, the "Sydney Morning Herald" expresses the opinion that "the core of the trouble is to be found in the policy of political meddling," and that the demoralisation in the undertaking "began in 1944-45 immediately after it had been brought under Ministerial control. Since then, discipline has become notoriously lax, service to the public has been bad, and costs have risen by leaps and bounds." According to the newspaper, higher costs might have been covered by increased revenues "had not the Government so readily lent itself to the union policy of wringing every possible concession out of a department which is no longer being run primarily for the benefit of the public. Mr. Swift notes, for example, that the cost of providing employees and their families with cheap railway fares now amounts to £124,000 compared with £60,000 in 1944-45."

Apparently the only expedient likely to be adopted is the futile one of increasing fares once more—futile because it will drive customers into procuring their own transport and because it leaves the various causes of the financial mess untouched. Anyway, the "Herald" reports that the Minister is asking the Government to raise all tram and bus

fares by 1d. a journey, exclusive of the first section, which was raised to 3d. more than 15 months ago, and to impose "penalty" fares for Sunday travel.

Still, there is one bright speck in the prevailing gloom—the "honesty" boxes, installed fully 12 months ago, have yielded £150! At this rate they will soon pay for their construction and installation.

SCIENTIST OR BAKER ?

From the financial point of view, is it better to be a baker or a scientist?

It looks as if the London Transport Executive favours the man of dough, for recently it called for applications for two positions. One of these invited applications from bakers who have a thorough knowledge of modern bakery plant and processes, and the other for a scientific assistant who must have a First or Second Class Honours degree in Physics or Engineering and whose duties would embrace the review, co-ordination and development of research and experimental work, much of it electrical.

For the baker, the salary offered is from £800 to £1,000; for the scientist, from £700 to £800.

TROLLEYBUSES OUT OF FAVOR.

Although the Melbourne Tramways Board is often advised by letter-to-the-editor gentlemen to "wake up" and put in trolleybuses, it is evident that the people who have them do not seem to regard them with any great favour. Before the war, for instance, Wolverhampton, the first all trolleybus city, decided that all future extensions to its transport system should be served by Diesel buses. Chesterfield went further and scrapped their installation, while London Transport, after proceeding quite a way in converting tram routes to trolleybus operation reversed that policy last year and decided to have Diesel buses.

Now, Darlington is considering a proposal to convert the municipal trolleybus undertaking to buses, being encouraged in this idea by the British Transport Commission, which has intimated that such a change-over would assist the Commission in introducing an area transport scheme.

Although there have been trolleybuses in Britain since 1912, they have made but little headway; in fact, if London Transport had not started using them the number of such vehicles to-day would not have exceeded greatly the total in existence 25 years ago, while coming nearer home, we have not seen any suggestion that the small installations in Sydney and Adelaide should be increased.

It is safe to say that if ever Sydney embarks upon a scheme of modernisation, the trolleybus routes will vanish.

LONDON'S POOR BUS FLEET.

So parlous is the state of the bus fleet of the London Transport Executive that the matter gave rise to a debate on the adjournment before the House of Commons rose for the summer recess.

In the course of his reply, which might well be studied by the leader writer of "The Sun," the Minister of Transport admitted that the net gain to the fleet in eight years had been but 320 buses whereas it ought to have been 3,800, and that of the 7,000 odd buses operating 3,500 were over 12 years and 1,800 over 16 years old!

Shortage of steel for local requirements due to the clamant necessity for exports is the explanation of the fact that London Transport cannot get the 1,000 buses it needs so urgently. Sir Wavell Wakefield, "as Chairman of the largest company in the country producing double-deck buses," advised the Minister to examine carefully the new British mineral wagon being produced in large numbers from mild steel. If it were re-designed in high tensile low alloy steel, he said, there would be a saving of from one to one and a quarter tons of steel per truck, and that saving could be allocated to bus production.

TRAM AND BUS FARES.

Inaccurate Assertion by Association's Secretary.

It is strange how frequently, though doubtless inadvertently, the Secretary of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association succeeds in misrepresenting the Board. The latest instance is contained in the current issue of the "Tramway Record." In an article on "Should Tram Fares be Raised?" he wrote:—

"Apparently the Board are (sic) not as sure now as they (sic) were in January, when they said it would be essential for a 1d. increase in fares because the employees won the 5-day week, but 9 months later they (sic) are still considering it, so apparently it is not so essential to-day as it appeared 9 months ago."

No one knows better than the Association's Secretary that neither in January, nor in any other month, did the Chairman, or the Board, make any such statement. The reply of the Chairman in January to statements in the Press that fares would be raised was the laconic remark that the subject "will be considered." On the 2nd April he intimated that the Board had had the matter under review and had resolved to postpone consideration until after the close of the financial year, "when

the actual cost of the 5-day 40-hour week would be known." Between that date in April and the 11th October when the Board met specially to consider the analysis of the year's operations and examine the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the current year, deciding finally to make recommendations to the Government, the only statement by Mr. Bell on the subject of fares was the description of "pure guesswork" applied to various reports on different dates in the Press. These varied from the forecast that fares were to be raised ½d., by 1d., that it would not be necessary to raise all fares as 1d. would yield £1,500,000, "more than twice as much as is needed." that it was doubtful whether fares would be increased, to lastly the forecast in "The Sun" that "fares are not likely to be increased."

As these three statements—the subject will be considered, consideration has been postponed, and pure guesswork—were the sole references made to the matter by the Chairman, it will be seen that the allegation that intimation had been made that a 1d. increase "would be essential" is just a rather stupid invention.

THE BAND AT WATTLE PARK.

Arrangements have been made for the Tramways Band to give recitals at Wattle Park on the under-noted dates:—

14th November, 12th December, 9th January, 6th February, 6th March, 3rd April—3 to 5 p.m. Just note those dates, and if you have an Inter-State visitor staying with you make a point of showing him, or her, the Park. A Perth gentleman after the lapse of 25 years spent a Sunday afternoon in the Park early this month and was good enough to telephone us his opinion, that the Park is now one of the most beautiful places he has seen in Australia.

MADRAS TRAMWAY DEAL.

Madras Municipal Corporation has decided to exercise its option and purchase the British-owned Madras Electric Tramways (1904), Limited.

The price, yet to be arranged, is payable in gold either in Madras or in London.

121 DECIDE FOR 6,000.

But a Ballot Vote Favors Sunday Trams.

Some weird things are done in Sydney. Towards the end of last month a "mass" meeting of the nearly 6,000 members of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association was called to consider a recommendation from the Executive that trams should be manned on Sundays, and that buses should