



"Rest-and-be-Thankful,"

Mount Riddell Road,

Healesville, 29th Novr., 1959

My dear Peter,

Of course I know I should have written you long ago ; but I have just about one hundred and one excuses for not having done so,

the chief being poor health. After a series of annoying attacks, Louie decided we must dodge at least part of the cold wet, so off we

went to Mildura, where we enjoyed ourselves very much, sampling the free samples of the Mildara Winery with all the enthusiasm that may

be expected from a Scotsman in such circumstances. I did not get the benefit I had expected, and after another series of small attacks

went down to a really serious one in the middle of last month, from the effects of which I am still suffering. When it started I was

quite sure the time had come for me to hand in my dinner pail, and that I would not see sunset glow. However, I rallied, and after three

days the ~~doctor~~ doctor expressed the cautious opinion that I "would do." The next day he took a cardiograph, and he was satisfied with

the story it told him. I had, however, to remain in bed until the end of the following week, after which I might try getting up for 30

minutes on condition that I would get back ~~to~~ bed pronto if I felt tired before the end of that period. Now I am getting up for lunch

and staying up until 9 o'clock or so. I have been for several outings in the car in the afternoons, but Louie has done all the

driving. So you will see I am getting on and have no desire to adopt the words of the Psalmist, "Oh that I might recover my

strength ere I pass ~~away~~ ^{hence} and be no more."

Louie put in 6 entries to the Hort. Society's show, and was 50 per cent successful, she got three 1st's. Great grandpapa fixed

the date of the show 50 years ago, the first Saturday after the Melbourne Cup. Nowadays, that misses the best of the Spring blooms

by at least three weeks ; but do you think I can get the members to alter it ? Not on your life. None of them knew Great grandpapa,

but they revere his memory and so the show must be the second Satdy of November. In an endeavour to cheat the calendar, we tied all the

best of our rose buds and irises in brown paper bags days before the show, but when the great day came they--the blooms, I mean--were all

too full, and so we had to turn sorrowfully away. A fortnight before the show, I had on one day no fewer than 86 roses blooming, and

Lou's irises were a delight. At this moment she is, despite the appalling humidity, which is just about making me a cot case, busy

This letter to be retained in Volume of "Tramway Topics". See footnote at end of letter.

2 ~~Saturday~~

dividing and planting dahlias. To balance up things, our autumn show is at least a fortnight too early, thanks once again to the evil influence of Great grandpapa. Of course you can plant dahlias at times which will ensure you flowers when you want them ; but personally I don't see a scrap of sense in planting dahlias, a distinctive autumn flower, so that they will flower in the middle of summer. When we have such an abundance of summer flowers, why rob autumn of blooms which brighten an otherwise melancholy period of the year ?

I should have gone for a medical examination on Friday but had to postpone it through my doctor having had to go to Epworth because of neglect of the advice tendered to him by that eminent practitioner, Prof. L. E. Russell. Isn't it extraordinary how doctors are so prolific in advice but won't take it themselves, even when a casual glance into the mirror tells them that the advice is based on sound premises ?

But enough of myself. How are you and Patricia faring both in health and in business ? Well, we hope, and particularly well enough that you can spare time for a week-end up here in what Mr. Risson calls my mountain eerie. You could be ~~up~~ here in time for lunch on Saturday, and by leaving at 7.30 ~~you~~ ^{on Monday morning} you could be down in ample time for the 9 o'clock opening of The Model Dockyard. Meantime, until we here from you, and with love to you both,

Yours ever,



The late Lewis Ernest Russell was Public Relations Officer of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board, Editor of "Tramway Topics" and a much loved friend of the Ducketts,

Peter W. Duckett
June, 1996.

TRAMWAY TOPICS

The Official Bulletin of The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board

Volume 1

October, 1941

Number 1

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD - From the Chairman

This Bulletin, which we hope to issue periodically, is a recognition of the fact that we are all, no matter what position we occupy, but parts of a large organisation which deals with the transport of more than 800,000 people daily, and that the more we know of each other the more interesting shall we find the job.

The measure of success to be attained depends largely upon you all as individuals. Obviously it would be easy for the Publicity Officer to fill the allotted space with matters relating to transport generally; but our idea is to make this Bulletin a family affair, in which you will find not only official information but personal and individual items which will supply that intimate, human touch which means so much to us all in our daily lives.

H. H. BELL,
Chairman.

WOMEN AS ASSISTANT CONDUCTORS

Extraordinary public interest was taken by the public in the announcement by the Chairman that the employment of women as assistant conductors on the trams and buses within the city had been decided upon by the Board. The intimation that the first class had started training was responsible for a positive invasion of Head Office by Press photographers, while the appearance of the assistants in their neat nigger brown uniforms, was regarded favourably by the public, who remembered probably that the new employees are the wives of men on active service abroad and have taken this means of keeping their homes together until their husbands' return. So successful has the innovation been that the Chairman has decided to extend the scheme through the inclusion of the buses thus relieving male assistants for duty elsewhere. Eventually it is hoped to increase the number of ladies to 110.

It should be emphasised here that the women assistant conductors are receiving precisely the same pay and conditions as male assistant conductors.

THE BLACK-OUT - The Board's Appreciation

At the meeting of the Board on the 2nd inst., much favourable and laudatory comment was passed on the complete success of the recent black-out so far as this organisation is concerned, and a

resolution was adopted asking me to convey the thanks and congratulations of the Board to the staff for the manner in which all co-operated to make our side of the demonstration 100 per cent. efficient.

I do so now with much pleasure, and I add an expression of my own appreciation over what was accomplished.

Those who spent so much time and thought, and went to so much trouble, and those who carried out the plans so skilfully and completely, will, I am certain, be glad to learn that their efforts were praised whole-heartedly to me by the Chairman of the State Emergency Council (Sir John Harris), and the Chief Commissioner of Police (Mr. Duncan).

Where all did so well, it is perhaps invidious to particularise, but I cannot refrain from commending specially the work of our drivers and conductors under conditions which were alike novel and dangerous for transport operation.

H. H. Bell,
Chairman.

NEWS FROM YOU IS WANTED

Personal items, and paragraphs relating to all social and philanthropic movements at the various Depots, are invited, and will be welcomed warmly. Forward these to the Publicity Officer, Head Office.

Brief letters raising points for discussion or making suggestions for the improvement of the service, will be appreciated also. Address such communications The Chairman, Head Office.

WHAT? NO MORE BUSES?

"The Export Trader," a paper devoted to the motor, motor cycle and cycle export trade of Britain, has small comfort to offer those transport undertakings in the Dominions and Colonies which have for nearly 18 months been waiting on the arrival of bus chassis from England.

"Dealers in all parts of the world who handle British cars and passenger and commercial vehicles and their customers who buy them," it is said in an editorial in the June issue, "should not jump to the conclusion that there will be no more new vehicles available until the end of the war. The position is that plans which were made 12 months ago for the vehicle side of the automobile industry have had to be modified considerably in the light of recent experience, and for a time at least the steady flow of cars and passenger and commercial vehicles for overseas customers which has continued without interruption since the war started has had to be interrupted, and some time may elapse before it is resumed."

That statement, which is similar to the information supplied to the Chairman some months ago by a large British motor firm, unhappily means that for months to come our bus fleet cannot be increased by the importation of the large order we placed in the autumn of last year.

Since the above was written, the Ministry of Supply in Britain has intimated to the Municipal Transport Association that it is prepared to permit the manufacture of 1,600 double-deck buses between now and the end of 1942 to meet all requirements in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Up to the end of this year, the allocation is 400; to the 30th June next, 500; to the end of December next year, 700.

A FUTILE RESOLUTION

Some resolutions adopted at meetings are amazing in their general futility. Into that category comes one from The Nicholson Street Depot, the members of which placed on record their alarm over the alleged non-co-operation of some of the Board's officers in preventing the dangerous over-loading of buses, and called on the Executive to protest to the Board with the view to having all of the officers of the Board instructed not to allow more than the specified number of passengers to stand on the rear platforms.

The answer to the resolution is easy: all officers are instructed to that effect, just as are all conductors. If, therefore, the desire is to blame some one for the extraordinary preference exhibited by so many male passengers to stand on the rear platforms of the buses, it is surely logical to point out that a conductor is on his bus all the time, in contradistinction to an officer who merely sees it at some intersection, and to ask what does he do about it? How many conductors even go the small length of asking the people to move inside? How many have ever been known to insist on extra standees leaving the platforms? The conductors at Nicholson St. know the answers better than anybody. Why, then, blame "some officers" for not doing something which they, as conductors in charge fail to do themselves?

SOMETHING LIKE "STAGGERING"

Because, like ourselves, the hours in the administrative offices of the Railways, the State Electricity Commission, the Board of Works and certain other Departments have been changed so as to provide for earlier starting and finishing, the erroneous description of "staggering" has been applied to the change. Actually, of course, "staggering" is unknown in Melbourne, for the term means the spreading of a large number of employees over regularly spaced starting and finishing hours. At one very large work on the outside of Birmingham, for instance, the day employees start at 6, 6.30, 7 and 7.30 a.m., and finish at corresponding intervals in the afternoon.

The result has been that the Transport Department has been able to deal with 5,000 persons every half hour with buses, and yet have the vehicles available for service in the normal a.m. business rush to the city. Similarly, after dealing with those workers in the afternoon, the buses have been ready to deal with the p.m. peak from the city.

The "Transit Journal" for June tells the story of the biggest experiment in "staggering" so far put into practice. On the 31st March, 80,000 of the 160,000 employees of Washington's biggest employer, the Federal Government, began going to their jobs on shifts carefully staggered as to starting and finishing times over a period of one and three quarter hours. This drastic change was carried out on the order of President Roosevelt, and was ordered primarily because of the sudden, sharp and continuing influx of defence workers had made an already bad traffic situation quite intolerable. What happened is something like a miracle. The figures tell the story. In the week before staggering, the Capital Transit Company carried 4,038,625 passengers. The first week of staggering saw the passengers increase to 4,298,693, while the average for the next six weeks was 4,334,943. Through those staggered shifts the Company was able to run 3.5 per cent. additional miles, carry 7 per cent. more passengers and earn 4.7 per cent. extra revenue.

The Chairman is convinced that similar benefits, leading, it is important to note, to greater comfort for our conductors and passengers alike, would follow the adoption of staggering by our large industrial establishments.

WINDSCREEN WIPERS

The Malvern Depot wants to have the delay over the fitting of windscreen wipers explained!

A contract for the supply of 1,340 wipers - the latest and most successful type on the market - was placed in June, 1940. Unfortunately, the ship carrying the wipers to Australia suffered from enemy action, with the result that the whole consignment was lost. Inevitably a good few weeks elapsed before the fact became known and before the manufactures concerned could start on the making of the order anew. When the wipers will arrive is not known but the assurance can be given that as soon as they come to hand they will be fitted at once to the trams.

Tramway Topics

The Official Bulletin of The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board

Volume 1

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Number 2

TO THE STAFF

Christmas Gift of £15,000 From the Board

So that it might show in some tangible fashion its appreciation of the loyal and efficient service rendered by the officers and staff generally during the year, the Board at its last meeting decided to mark the Christmas season with a gift of £3 to each adult employee (including those with the Forces and the wives of those serving overseas) and £1 to each minor, the sole qualification being 12 months' service. Those with less than that period in the employment of the Board will receive proportionate amounts.

In authorizing this announcement, our Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) alluded to the great gratification felt by the members of the Board and himself that the financial position of the undertaking enabled the Board to make this gesture of goodwill and appreciation to the whole staff. "It is the hope of my colleagues and myself," he added, "that the spirit which has been the mainspring behind this gift will be understood and appreciated by the staff, and that the present friendly relations existing between us as employers and employed will be maintained cordially throughout 1942. It gives me very much pleasure to wish you all a Merry and Happy Christmas when it comes, and prosperity and health in the New Year."

The monetary value of the gift, it may be added, is approximately £15,000.

TO OUR COLLEAGUES ON SERVICE OVERSEAS

The following is a copy of the letter which our Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) has addressed to every employee of the Board who is at present serving in the Navy, or with the A.I.F. or R.A.A.F. overseas: "Recent talks I have heard broadcast, and interviews with various of those who have returned from service overseas, have been alike in one respect—

they have emphasised the uplifting value of letters from home. With Christmas approaching, therefore, it occurred to me that you might care to hear from me as the head of the organisation to which you belong in civilian life.

"My message to you is a very simple one—it is to assure you that you are in our thoughts constantly, to convey to you our warmest wishes for Christmas, to tell you that we are intensely proud of you at home or the part Australians have played so conspicuously so far in the war on the sea, under the sea, on the land and in the air, and to express the heartfelt hope that some time in the coming year victory will crown all your efforts and so enable us to welcome you home again.

"My colleagues and I have been delighted to hear from so many of you in such appreciative terms of our action in crediting you week by week with War Savings Certificates up to the 30th June last. I can assure you that it was a very real pleasure to us to be able to make provision to that extent for you against the day of your return, and it is our hope that that nest egg will be of substantial benefit to you when you resume home life.

"We would like you to regard those Certificates, as well as the increase in the scale of Retiring and other gratuities, as the earnest of our admiration for the part you are taking in the defence of your Homeland and of the Empire, and it is from our hearts that we wish you the best of luck and a safe and speedy return."

CONDUCTRESSES—LONDON AND MELBOURNE

A correspondent desires to know if there are any differences in the pay and conditions of our conductresses as compared with those in London.

"Quite a few," as the old song has it. In Melbourne the week is one of 44 hours as against 48 in London. Although the ladies here on our single deck buses are now working the shifts throughout the day the

same as the men whom they have replaced, there is, apart from that, no Sunday work for them in Melbourne, whereas in London they work round the clock, some shifts beginning at 1 a.m., while the wage in Melbourne is £4/18/- for 44 hours as compared with the commencing wage in London of £3/16/6 for a week of 48 hours. In London, also, the ladies are in charge of the vehicles, so that the discrepancy in the wages when contrasted with the Melbourne rates is all the greater.

Incidentally, London prefers candidates who have been either shop assistants or waitresses, and who have thus been accustomed to being on their feet during their working day.

THE MECHANICAL ENERGY OF PETROL

Many of us run—or at least used to do so before rationing started—cars or motor cycles, and doubtless on occasion were inclined to stretch the truth a little when stating the mileage obtained per gallon of fuel from our own pet vehicle. But even our best imaginative efforts in that direction fall short lamentably of the actual mechanical energy which is said to be latent in petrol. Says Dr. O. W. Wilkes, an outstanding authority on fuels:—

"There is conclusive thermodynamic evidence that the actual mechanical energy contained in a gallon of petrol is equivalent to 99,000,000 ft. lb. Translated into more concrete terms, this means that one gallon, if all its potential power could be utilised, would drive an average automobile 450 miles."

Do not let us be greedy; if the good Doctor can only show us how, we shall be content with the odd 50 m.p.g.!

ST. KILDA RUNNING TIME

An allegation has been made that the running time on the St. Kilda Beach run has been lessened, and that more compulsory stops have made the task of keeping to time more difficult of recent years.

The truth is that the present running time has been in operation since October, 1930, and includes the ample allowance of 8 minutes in peak from the terminus to St. Kilda Junction, 7 minutes in slack, with 12 minutes from the Junction to Flinders Street. As for compulsory stops, these have remained unaltered since 1934.

WOMEN IN TRANSPORT IN BRITAIN

An impressive and stirring picture of the great part which our colleagues on the staffs of the British municipal transport undertakings are taking in the war effort is gained from a table published in the July issue of "The Transport World."

The Forces have taken 15,000 men, the Home Guard 11,000, and Civil Defence, 2,000. To make good in part the loss of manpower, more than

10,000 women, mostly conductresses, have been engaged, Birmingham having no fewer than 2,524 in service.

Large as they are, those figures are incomplete, quite a number of returns not having been received in time for publication.

THOSE "DISAPPEARING" TRAMS

When it is remembered that in the United States one individual in six owns a motor car, the fact that the vast bulk of passengers on the street transport systems are carried on trams becomes truly extraordinary. Issue by issue, it is proposed to set out for your information brief particulars showing the percentages carried by the various vehicles.

San Francisco, because it corresponds so closely from the standpoint of population served to that of Melbourne, can start the series.

Electric and cable trams carry 93.83 per cent.

Motor buses and coaches carry 6.17 per cent.

When next somebody tries to tell you that trams are "everywhere disappearing" just mention quietly San Francisco.

TRAMS V. TRAINS

What the Melbourne Figures Reveal

While there can be no direct comparison seeing that the suburban electric trains serve a far larger area and consequently a much greater population than the vehicles of the Tramways Board, it is nevertheless interesting to note that for the year which ended on the 30th June last the miles run and passengers carried by the two systems were as follows:—

	Miles	Passengers
Trams and Buses—	26,839,814	233,080,369
Electric Suburban Trains—	7,674,054	149,651,756

On a daily (including Sunday) basis, those figures mean that the trams and buses throughout the year dealt with 654,000 passengers per day, the suburban trains with 420,000 per day. Since the financial year commenced on the 1st July last, the daily average excluding Sundays, has been over 800,000 passengers per day.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS

Kew Running Shed.—Grateful for your appreciative letter and compliments.

Driver, Camberwell.—Thanks for your suggestion, which has been investigated. You will realise that if it were adopted we would require to do something similar for 14 other routes, which would mean an enormous addition to the mileage without any corresponding benefit to the revenue.

Conductor, Malvern.—Obliged to you for your suggestion. As drafted the notice is too long. If something more concise could be composed it might be effective, though probably a quietly insistent and courteous request from the conductor would be best in the end.

"STAGGERING" IN LONDON

The first comprehensive scheme for "staggering" working hours in the London area has just been put into operation by the London and South-Eastern Regional Board, on which are representatives of all the Government Departments concerned, employers, employees, and trade union and transport undertakings. Over 700 factories are involved, and the scheme provides for a uniform flow of traffic to and from the area at 15-minute intervals.

That the scheme will benefit all concerned is shown by the fact that the preliminary investigation demonstrated that in one half-hour in one factory area 8,815 workers arrived, in the succeeding half-hour, 22, and in the third half hour, 1,200. All personal discomfort arising from congested conditions, and the needless strain on transport, has now been eliminated.

AN ANALYST—BUT NO ANALYSIS
The Voluntary Payments by the Board

In an endeavour to minimise, or detract from, the facts stated in our paragraph, "From the Board—To You," the President of the M.T. & M.O. Employees' Association (Mr. J. L. Cousland) indulges in the "Tramway Record" in what he euphemistically describes as "an analysis of the facts which . . . should be sufficient to convince members of the accuracy or otherwise of the statements." But, apart from his imaginative efforts to explain why the Board voluntarily reduced the hours to 44 per week, and voluntarily offered a war loading of 4/6 per week (which, incidentally, was accepted gratefully), Mr. Cousland was careful not to give any analysis of our figures showing what the Board *did* give to its employees. So that there may be no mistake, we repeat in tabular form the figures for the year which ended on the 30th June last:—

Sick Pay	£5,860	7	0
Benefit Society Subsidy	7,721	8	1
Christmas Bonus	4,742	10	0
Retiring and Death Gratuities and Compassionate Allowances	12,000	0	0
War Savings Certificates for Employees Serving Overseas	9,000	0	0

In addition, the War Loadings in a full year will cost more than £60,000.

In relation to hours, Mr. Cousland's recital would not be recognised as factual by any impartial observer. Hours are fixed by the Arbitration Court, not by the Board, and it was the Court which in

1939 decreed an 88-hour fortnight. On the Association undertaking not to press a claim for increased wages for bus operators for a year, the Board in its turn refrained from asking the Court to grant relief from certain onerous clauses of the award. Some months later, the Board demonstrated once again that it is more than willing to improve conditions for its employees by offering a week of 44 hours at a cost to itself of something like £60,000 per annum, the only small stipulation attached to the proposal being that the Association should refrain from making any suggestions for alterations in conditions for two years. The Association accepted the offer with remarkable speed; but it has not seen fit to honour its share of the arrangement, for scarcely a month has gone by without some request being put forward for alterations—each one small, perhaps, but nevertheless an alteration. Mr. Cousland himself has sponsored several of those requests, and on each occasion has been reminded by the Chairman of the existing arrangement. It seems a pity that Mr. Cousland's effusive expressions of gratitude to the Board for what it has done are so markedly at variance with his statements in the "Record."

The present Board came into office in 1936. A comparison of the amount paid in wages and salaries for the year which ended on the 30th June, 1936, and those paid for the year which ended on the 30th June last, will be as interesting to all the employees as it will be informative for Mr. Cousland. Here it is:—

Year	Wages and Salaries	Number of Employees
1936	£1,045,762	4,711
1941	1,425,205	5,198
	£379,443	487

That increase of £379,443, dissected, gives the approximate increase under the various headings, as follows:—

Increase in number of employees	£82,000
3/- per week granted by Board	28,000
6/- Basic Wage adjustment	76,000
Cost of living adjustments	166,000
F.T.O.A. increases	18,000
All War Loadings	9,000
	£379,000

The War Loadings were in existence for but six weeks of the year, and are therefore small. This year, however, under that heading, the Board will pay £60,000, so that, assuming no further alteration takes place between now and the end of the year, the Board's liability in respect to salaries and wages for the current year will be no less than approximately £430,000 greater than in 1936.

TRAMWAY EMPLOYEES' COMFORTS FUND

It will be interesting for the staff generally to know that up to the time of going to press 122 par-

cels have been sent to our colleagues serving with the Forces. The A.I.F. parcels include a pullover, long and short socks, scarf, cap, mittens, toothbrush, face cloth, talc, and 1 doz. chewing gum. For the Navy, the parcels consist of a long-sleeved polo neck pullover, spiral stockings, socks, scarf, soap, dentrifice, face cloth, talc, toothbrush and gum; while those for the Air Force include a pullover, neck muff, scarf, socks, soap, dentrifice, face cloth, talc, toothbrush and gum. For the Committee, the Hon. Secretary (Miss Watt) returns thanks to the male members of the staff whose contributions have helped the Committee to include the articles other than woollens.

With regret it has been learned that Airman E. P. Jackson, who was mentioned with distinction some time ago, is now missing. It is hoped that better news will be heard about him soon, a remark which is applicable also to Sig. A. Kellett, also reported missing. Driver T. A. B. Young and Private J. E. Anderson, after service abroad and treatment in Heidelberg Hospital, are, it is good to know, back fit on the job again. Here is the latest letter from abroad:—

"Dear Miss Watt,

"Just a few lines to thank you and your Tramway Comforts Fund workers for your most wonderful parcel, and the good work you are all doing. I received your parcel dated 31/7/41 on the 13/10/41, and they fit me grand. They are just the goods we want over here now, as the weather is on the change. My deep appreciation for your good work and splendid gift."

Spr. G. L. Withers.

From Malaya, W. Ross writes in interesting fashion of the jungle and rubber plantations, and concludes: "Give my very kind regards to all the members of the T.E.C.F., members of the Head Office, and any of the boys from the Essendon Depot. Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

During the last four weeks, the staff has been increased by 64, four have died, while 30 have resigned or retired.

Retiring allowances have been granted as under: Driver J. W. Morgan, who retired on the 19th September, aged 60½ years, 26½ years service, £243; Metal Machinist R. F. Lawrence, Preston Workshops, who retired on the 18th October, aged 65 years, 16 years' service, £323/4/-; Conductor A. G. F. Dummelow, retired on account of ill-health, aged 60½ years, 31 years service, £273.

Under the Death Gratuity provisions, the widow of the late Conductor F. G. Braden (aged 52 years,

30½ years' service), received £204/15/-; the widow of the late Overseer J. L. McLean (aged 60 years, 34½ years' service), received £395/4/-; the widow of the late Paying Cashier D. Ross (aged 51 years, 22 years' service), £341/5/-.

Compassionate allowances in cases not covered by the regulations amounted to £150.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Adopting the practice observed last year, the Board has decided that the Preston Workshops and Miscellaneous Staff, who are entitled to receive six days leave per annum, shall be granted a total of 9 days leave. Where at all practicable, such leave will be granted in conjunction with the forthcoming Christmas and New Year holidays. This concession, it should be noted, must not be taken as a precedent for future years.

THANKS FROM THE A.I.F.

Letters are now arriving from those of our employees who are on active service with the Navy, the A.I.F., or the Air Force in appreciation of the action of the Board in placing to their credit War Savings Certificates for their use when they return home. A typical letter is as follows:—

VX26380,
A.I.F., Abroad,
12th July, 1941.

The Chairman,
Melbourne Tramways Board,
Australia.

Dear Sir,

I wish to acknowledge your very kind letter which I received a couple of days ago in reference to your very nice gesture by making available War Savings Certificates to your employees who are on active service when we return to our native land and to the Board's service. I am sure that every man will appreciate just as much as I do what you are doing for us.

Although I have not seen any action to date, I do not think it will be far off when the Japanese make their next move.

Hoping to be with you all again in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

R. J. CHISHOLM.

(Attached to the Brunswick Depot as a conductor, Pte. Chisholm joined the A.I.F. on the 16th June, 1940.)

Tramway Topics

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THE BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT

From the strictly impartial point of review, the summary of the annual report of the Board compiled by the President of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association (Mr. J. L. Cousland) is scarcely all that it might be.

"It is interesting to note," remarks Mr. Cousland, "how the actual surplus is dealt with," thereby suggesting that the surplus shown in the accounts—certified correct by the auditors as well as by the State Auditor-General—was other than set out in the report. Mr. Cousland forgets, or more probably refrains from, mentioning that the surplus of any concern is merely that which remains after all liabilities and provision for future contingencies have been discharged. It is foolish to describe a particular sum as profit, or a surplus, when various liabilities remain to be deducted.

In the case of the Board, the surplus on operation is subjected to deductions, all, including the payment of interest on borrowed capital and certain other charges, expressly provided for by the Tramways Act. It is true that it is absurd that tramway finances alone out of all the forms of transport should have to pay for the upkeep of the Fire Brigades Board and the Infectious Diseases Hospital; but again that it can be remembered that if the Board were a Company trading for profit the provision for Income Tax would swallow up much more than that now given to the Brigade and the Hospital. Payment of the interest on money borrowed is inescapable, while, in addition to being ordinary, prudent business practice, reserve funds, out of which comes the money to replace and maintain such vanishing assets as plant, machinery, trams, buses, tracks, overhead, buildings, etc., must be built up and kept at a satisfactory level. Even in regard to Reserves the Board is not a free agent, as the Act provides that the sum set aside annually must not be less than 4 nor more than 6 per cent. of

the capital value of the undertaking. As the Board itself carries much of its fire risk, and all its public risk, insurance, these funds naturally have to be such that they will provide cover for the risks involved.

When amounts under those headings, and the necessary contributions to loan redemption and sinking funds, have been deducted, the £760,803 available for appropriation after the operation expenses have been paid has dwindled to £1,674, which is actually, with all deference to Mr. Cousland, the surplus for the year.

Incidentally, it is regrettable that there should have arisen a difference of opinion between Mr. Cousland and the State Auditor-General. Mr. Cousland asserts that the capital cost of the undertaking was increased by £93,111/17/5; the figure certified by the Auditor-General is £85,112. It is highly probable that the Auditor-General is right, and that Mr. Cousland is wrong. Anyway, what is a mere £7,999/17/5 between friends?

MEMORIES ARE SHORT

Board's Promise to Those in the Forces

It is extraordinary how short memories are even in matters of vital concern. It is equally extraordinary how a few loquacious persons can persuade several hundred others without thought to come to a decision to ask the Board to do precisely what the Board did so far back as the 14th September, 1939, on its own volition.

Reference is being made to the sparsely attended meeting of the members of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association held on the 23rd November, and in particular to the decision to ask the Board to guarantee the re-instatement, without loss of seniority, of all employees who have enlisted with the fighting services.

As indicated in the first paragraph, the Board passed a resolution on the subject on the 14th September, 1939, the exact wording being:—

"Resolved that in view of the Declaration of War against Germany, employees of more than three months service who enlist or are called up for Naval, Military or Air Force duty be given an assurance that they will be reinstated without loss of seniority at the conclusion of such service, provided they are physically capable of carrying out their duties, and that all their existing rights and privileges will be preserved, including their claims to promotion to vacancies which may occur during their absence, and that service with the Forces shall be regarded as continuous service with the Board."

That resolution, it will be noted, is all embracing, covering as it does guarantees in regard to employment, seniority, promotion and privileges, and it is rather astonishing that neither the President nor officials, to whom it is known, did not remind the members of its existence.

FOOD FOR RUSSIA WEEK

The Board has given a donation of 25 guineas to the Food for Russia Week.

CONDUCTOR'S SUGGESTION RECOGNISED

During the black-out test, Conductor L. Grigg, Hawthorn, got the idea of a small light which would illuminate the interior of his bag and so facilitate change operations in addition to preventing mistakes. Carrying out his notion, he submitted the device to the Board which, recognising the practical value of the proposal should black-outs ever become necessary, approved of the suggestion, and rewarded Conductor Grigg with a cheque for £5/5/-.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Driver, Camberwell.—Many thanks. We trust that your opinions are held by the bulk of the staff at Camberwell.

Conductor, Hanna Street.—It is regrettable, no doubt, that work is made more difficult by the foolish questions of foolish people; but what can be done about it? Console yourself with the reflection that mankind in the mass is stupid.

Driver, Hanna Street.—Our Chairman is of the opinion that the route you refer to would be worked more economically with buses. It would never, however, be very profitable, as the short-haul traffic is negligible, and for the greater part of the day the route is "dead."

Conductor, Hawthorn.—Thanks for your suggestion. The matter was considered some weeks ago, when it was decided to do nothing this Christmas. Your letter has been filed for reference when the subject comes up for discussion in November, 1942.

THE LATE DR. W. KENT HUGHES

There is a sense of personal loss in the passing of our Medical Officer (Dr. W. Kent Hughes). "Our little lives are rounded by a sleep," and it is comforting to reflect that for him a life much beyond the allotted span and one much more useful than most ended in just such a manner.

Under an exterior which was at times stern, occasionally abrupt and at all times decisive, he hid a real sympathy for those who went to him in genuine trouble in his professional capacity, while his work during his long years as a Councillor of Melbourne was of productive and lasting good to the community.

MOTOR JOURNAL'S PRAISE Wants Board As Transport Authority

In an appreciative review of the Board's undertaking for the year which ended on the 30th June last, "The Australian Motorist" comments on the impression that the State Government has plans for making "metropolitan transport a part of a State-wide transport control plan under a new Government Board," and proceeds:

"The difference between the local traffic of Walpeup and Greater Melbourne is merely one of population, and both are in reality of purely local interest. It seems, therefore, that the needs will be best met by the State Government leaving the local traffic to the people of Walpeup and Greater Melbourne respectively; and the only logical plan is to place all passenger transport in the metropolitan area in the hands of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board."

The proposal made by the "Australian Motorist" is almost identical with that put forward on several occasions during the last five years by our Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell), the important difference being that the Board desires the control of street transport only within the metropolitan area; it has not the slightest wish to be saddled with the responsibility of the suburban electric railways in a fashion similar to that of the practice in London and Berlin.

So far as the "State-wide transport control plan" is concerned, the "Australian Motorist" seems to be perturbed unnecessarily; it should remember that this suggestion, or some similar variant of the Ministry of Transport idea, has been promised annually for the last 17 years.

SEATING IN SINGLE DECKERS British Regulations Relaxed

Vehicle shortage, combined with the necessity of providing adequate transport for war workers in particular, has compelled the Ministry of War Transport in Britain to abandon the strict regulations re-

garding the permitted number of standing passengers in single-deck buses. An order has therefore been issued authorising the Regional Transport Commissioner to permit single-deck buses engaged on specific services to carry standing passengers up to the total number for which seating accommodation is provided.

So that advantage can be taken of this order, single-deck, 32-seater buses have had their transverse seats removed, longitudinal seats being installed instead. Buses with such seats are now permitted to carry 64 passengers—a concession which is being found of great value where factory services with high peak loads are concerned.

THE SW 6 TRAMS

Twenty-four of the SW 6 type trams (sliding doors, turn-over seats) are now in traffic, while other nine are in various stages of construction.

TRANSPORT IN NEW ORLEANS

Trams, motor and trolley buses serve a population of 500,000 in New Orleans, the great Metropolis of the Southern States. Last year, 75,629,838 passengers were dealt with, of which 55,710,639 (73.7 per cent.) were carried on the trams, 18,879,864 (24.9 per cent.) on the motor buses, and 1,039,335 (1.4 per cent.) on the trolley buses.

COMMENDATION FOR A CONDUCTOR

Mrs. Mark M. Marks, 10 Martin Street, Brighton, telephoned an eloquent appreciation of Conductor No. 646 on the 18th November:—

"I would very much like to tell your Chairman of an incident of which I was a witness and which reflected the utmost credit on Conductor No. 646. I was on a tram coming from St. Kilda when an old lady collapsed and had to be carried into the Prince Henry Hospital. The Conductor was simply marvellous; I have never seen any one so kind and courteous in my life, or one who was so anxious to render all the assistance within his power. It is a joy to travel on a tram with such a conductor, and I am sure that your Chairman will be pleased to hear of this, as all on the tram were delighted with the conduct of the Conductor."

The Conductor in question is Mr. J. M. Hayes, who joined the service on the 1st October last.

FITTING THE PUNISHMENT TO THE CRIME

Not always do the hoodlums who assault our conductors and damage wilfully the property of the Board escape salutary punishment. At the Carlton Court, on the 24th November, for instance, Stephen O'Leary, Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, was fined £10

with £1/16/- costs, in default two months imprisonment, for having assaulted the conductor of a tram in Lygon Street, and fined 10/- with £2 costs, for having evaded payment of his fare. A fine of 10/- with £2/4/- costs and £3 for the broken windows of a bus, in default 14 days in prison, was meted out to Ronald Croker, Broadmeadows Camp, with another fine of 10/- plus £1/1/- costs, for having evaded payment of his fare.

BOARD'S GIFT APPRECIATED

On the 20th November last, at a gathering of the employees representative of all sections of the Preston Workshops, the undernoted resolution was adopted unanimously:—

"The Board's employees at the Preston Workshops desire to express their sincere appreciation of the Board's gesture of goodwill in making available to them a bonus of £3 in the Christmas pay; and in tendering their thanks all join in wishing the Chairman and Members of the Board a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

TRAMWAYS COMFORTS FUND

During November, three large grey blankets were distributed to the next-of-kin for dispatch to tramwaymen who are prisoners of war. The recipients will be Privates C. F. Woodhouse and J. Power, in Italy; and Driver V. S. Williams, in Germany. The Board has been good enough to place at the disposal of the Fund certain monies which will be used at intervals for this purpose.

Camberwell Tramways Social Club ran a dance which yielded £10/1/1 for the Fund. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board Horticultural Society, disbanded for a time, has generously donated the cash in the bank to the Fund. Grateful appreciation to both these Club's is expressed.

Below is one of the latest letters received from abroad by the Hon. Secretary (Miss Watt):—

"I received the parcel that you sent me and appreciate the gifts very much. The garments fit me very well, especially the jumper, which will be very handy during the winter over here. The mittens are very welcome when it is cold and one is driving, particularly in Syria, where our unit is at present. We have had some snow. You will have to excuse this writing, as at present I am in hospital, but I will be out very soon. Thanking you and all who contribute to the Tramways Comforts Fund once again. I am, yours sincerely,

Roy Ellery.

RETIRED FROM THE SERVICE

Since our last issue, the following have retired from the service, and have received the gratuities payable under the Board's scheme:—

Conductor D. White, aged 62, 39 years' service, £275/12/-; Conductor J. C. Bryan, aged 49, 21 years' service, £206/14/- (ill health); Conductor E. C. Phillips, 65 years, 40 years' service, £413/8/-; and Driver E. J. Hicks, 62 years, 30 years' service, £275/12/-.

DEATH GRATUITY

A tragic accident resulted in the death of Depot Foreman S. M. Lawry, who was 54 years of age, and had served the Board for 27 years. The maximum gratuity under the regulations, £292/10/- has been paid to his widow.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The 25th anniversary dinner of the Hawthorn and Camberwell Electric Tramways Club at Wattle Park Chalet was a most enjoyable function. The President (Mr. M. MacRae) presided, and the Board was represented by Mr. J. V. O'Connor. In addition to those gentlemen, toasts were proposed and responses made by Messrs. W. Simpson, McCutcheon, and J. Draper. Songs were given by Messrs. J. Broadbent and F. H. Sutcliffe, and harmonies by Messrs. Ted Nelson and T. Lockhead.

THOSE SUBSTITUTE FUELS

As the Board is now operating more than 200 buses the question of fuel is important, particularly as any extension of the war to nearer our shores would have a vital effect on our supplies. During recent months there have been many references in the Press to substitute fuels. It may, therefore, be of interest to many to just see what is meant by the phrase. Substitute fuels, meaning thereby fuels which in an emergency can take the place of petrol or Diesel oil, can be grouped into two classes. The first class consists of such liquids as benzol, alcohol, and petrol derived from either the distillation of shale or coal. From the Australian point of view, petrol from shale is the only one of that class which will be able to give us a fraction of our needs; petrol from coal offers so many difficulties and involves the erection of so much plant that even if it were decided to proceed it is highly likely that the war would be over long before a single gallon was produced.

The second class consists of the gaseous fuels produced from such substance as charcoal, wood, coke or peat, and town gas, either natural or compressed. Speaking generally, producer gas is not

one gas but three, and of the three only two are combustible in an internal combustion engine. All three are manufactured at different temperatures, three gases are combined, therefore, the charge is but 66 per cent. effective. That means a loss of power, naturally, but before the gas can be used it must be cleaned, and its temperature must be reduced to correspond as nearly as possible with the outside atmosphere. It is in those two directions that a further loss of power occurs. Eventually when cooled and cleaned you have a gas which under the most favourable conditions will give not more than 60 per cent. of the power derived from an equivalent charge of petrol gas. In actual practice 60 per cent. is reached but rarely, and the technical expert in charge of the transport of one of the largest industrial concerns in the world informed the Liverpool branch of the Institute of Transport recently that it was not uncommon to get but 25 per cent.

During the last two years much has been written on this subject of producer gas. It has been held up to the public as the solution of Australia's petrol supply problem. The fact that it is quite impossible to convert sufficient vehicles in time to make any substantial contribution to the saving of petrol has either been concealed or perhaps has not been appreciated by certain of the writers. That this is so will be evident when it is stated that today there are in Australia only between 4,000 and 5,000 vehicles and stationary plants fitted with gas producers, and that the petrol so saved does not represent 1 per cent. of Australia's annual petrol consumption.

In Britain, gas producers were produced early in the war. They found no enthusiastic users, and now it can be doubted if there are 100 in operation. Much more use is being made of coal gas. All that is required for its use is a special carburettor and either cylinders or a bag for carrying the gas. If cylinders are used, the extra weight is a handicap, but the gas carried is sufficient for only 28 miles running, as compared with 18 or 20 from the gas in a bag. The filling of the bag takes up to 20 minutes, which is a drawback if an operator is using buses in city traffic. Compressed coal gas would doubtless have made greater strides but for the difficulty in procuring the necessary compressors and storage cylinders. In Britain there were but two firms manufacturing compressors of the size required, and their total output was reserved for the Government.

So far as we are concerned, tests with a bus converted to operation on compressed gas were satisfactory so far as they went. When the large compressor now being constructed is delivered, with the necessary bottles for the storage of the gas, the Board will be able to test the efficacy of the system in traffic.

Tramway Topics

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RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES

They Are a Right—Not a Charity

In some quarters, the Board's scheme of retiring and death gratuities, which has now been in operation for six months, does not seem to be understood properly. There has been a suggestion, indeed, that those gratuities are not so much a right as an *ex gratia* gesture of the Board, and it has been hinted also that there is a degree of uncertainty as to the amount payable.

Both the suggestion and the hint are absurd. As a perusal of the Regulations will show, each individual member of the staff automatically acquires certain rights immediately 10 years' service has been completed. There need not be the slightest dubiety over this; the phrasing in the Regulations is mandatory, the essential words being "shall be entitled."

Moreover, the stipulation regarding the age, 55 years, has been abolished. Under the old Regulations, a death gratuity was payable only after the age of 55 years. Under the new Regulations, the widow of an employee who dies at, say, the age of 28, and who has been with the Board for 12 years, may receive a gratuity calculated at the rate of a fortnight's wages for each complete year of service. The maximum payable under this part is 39 weeks' salary or wages. If death occurs at 60 years or over, the maximum payable goes up to 52 weeks. If, therefore, any employee, momentarily depressed as he contemplates his 40th birthday, wonders how his widow would fare over the gratuity in the event of his death, all that he need do is a simple arithmetical calculation—19 completed years with the Board represents 38 weeks' wages, and at £7 per week, the gratuity payable is £266. For an employee of 60 years, with 26 years' service, and drawing £7 a week, the death gratuity would amount to £364.

So far as the retiring gratuity is concerned, Clause 2 of the Regulations reads:—

"Every employee of the Board on attaining the age of 65 years who has or shall have had not less than 10 years' continuous service in connection with the Board's undertaking, shall upon retirement be entitled to a gratuity equivalent to FOUR WEEKS' SALARY OR WAGES FOR EACH COMPLETE YEAR OF SERVICE, but not exceeding an amount equivalent to 78 weeks' salary or wages."

If the employee cares to retire at 60 years of age, then the maximum payable is a year's salary or wages, while below the age of 60 years the maximum is 39 weeks, provided, of course, that he is certified by the Board's medical officer that he is incapacitated for further tramway service.

From what has been written, it will be realised that the fear that those retiring and death gratuities constitute something which is "somewhat akin to charity," to use the phrase employed by the President of the M.T. & M.O. Employees' Association (Mr. J. L. Cousland), has no foundation in fact; on the contrary, they are really part of the conditions of service.

Another important feature is that those gratuities are personal and inalienable by charge, mortgage, execution under judgment, insolvency or other voluntary or involuntary disposition. In other words, neither the death nor the retiring gratuity can be touched except by those entitled to them.

RECRUITS FOR THE BOARD'S SERVICE

The extent to which the Board's staff is changing almost from day to day will be evident when it is recorded that since our last issue 46 new names have appeared on the list of employees. These have been placed as noted below:—

Traffic: Hazel M. Beck, Vera E. Bremner, Aimee B. Conway, Lilian J. Dunstan, Ann G. R. Greenall,

Doris M. King, Daphne A. Leslie, Effie H. Pearson, Ann Veronica Singleton, Nellie L. Stewart, Teresa Amarant, Sheila E. Baker, Betty M. Chatfield, Edna L. Grehan, Ethel A. Jensen, Sylvia A. Watt, Roderick J. Balshaw, Thomas M. Coen, William L. Golding, Raymond J. T. Harry, Bruce S. Johnson, Thomas F. O'Donnell, Sidney J. G. Skinner, Warrack Tichelmann, Eric L. Waller, Edward B. Radcliffe, James H. White, Jack D. Carrington, Ronald E. Franklin, Ronald H. Howarth, William Stone, John H. Becetti, Alexander Herbert, Robert A. Hollway, James MacDonald, Donald H. Rodda, Patrick Southern and Alan Watts.

Secretary's Department: Jean Forsyth, Florence Wright, Nancy E. Holmes, George R. Love, John J. Hackett.

Bus Branch: William J. Brown.

Building Branch: Betty M. Kewley.

RESIGNED FROM THE SERVICE

During the same period, 60 employees have resigned, 49 of whom were in the Traffic Department, three each in the Bus, Electric Running Shed and Permanent Way Branches, and one from the Secretary's Department.

INCREASE IN WAR LOADING

At its meeting on the 22nd inst., the Board decided to increase the war loading by 1/6 per week up to a maximum of 6/- per week, with increases of 1/- for women and 6d. for juniors.

This action on the part of the Board will make the war loadings more uniform. The result will be that all adult male employees now receiving a loading of 5/- per week under their particular awards will go up to 6/-, while those receiving 4/6 per week, or less, will get the additional 1/6.

It is estimated that in a full year this, the latest proof of the interest of the Board in the staff, will cost approximately £17,000.

With the additional H.C.L. 1/-, the wages costs will rise this year for those two items above, by £30,000.

THE P.C.C. TRAM

One of those enthusiastic youngsters who regard transport as a hobby and are insatiable in their demands for details arrived at the Head Office the other day requesting urgently a look at the sample tram which, he had been informed, had been imported from the United States, and whose three brakes, two of which are worked by a foot pedal, he appeared to regard with the greatest affection. More in sorrow than in anger he was told that the

sample Presidents' Conference Committee tram was still in the United States, had, indeed, never been ordered through circumstances beyond the control of the Board, and that there was not the faintest prospect of that vehicle, which has revolutionised street transport wherever it has been introduced in the States, coming to Australia until after the war.

Since their introduction in 1937, the P.C.C. trams have achieved a wonderful success, their silence, speed, capacity and economy all combining to make them popular with passengers and operators alike. The Pittsburg Railways recently placed an order for another 100, which will bring the fleet up to 401; other cities have given repeat orders varying from 20 to 100. When those orders will be fulfilled is another matter now that war needs have priority. Meantime, to mention only a few, Philadelphia has 260, Toronto 250, Washington 232, Baltimore 200, Brooklyn 100, Los Angeles 95 and Chicago 283.

AIR RAID SHELTERS

For the protection of the Board's employees, the Permanent Way Branch is excavating slit trenches at the Preston Workshops yard, the Carlton substation, Victoria Parade, the Royal Park meal room, and at the Coburg, Brunswick, Essendon, Glenhuntly, Hawthorn and Malvern Depots. All the trenches are being laid out on a zig-zag course, and are to the A.R.P. standard design.

The Architect's Branch has prepared plans and secured materials for surface shelters at those depots where it is impracticable to dig trenches or use the repair pits. Those shelters are being erected at the Central and Port Melbourne bus garages, Hanna Street Depot and storeyard, and the Victoria Parade yard.

At the Kew, Camberwell and Footscray Depots, plans have been prepared for the decking over of the pits and erecting brick blast walls.

The Board's A.R.P. booklet is now ready. The staff should read this carefully. Suggestions for improvements will be welcomed.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF THE BOARD

One of the last acts of the State Executive Council before the old year expired was to re-appoint the members of the Board (Sir Stephen Morell, Mr. J. V. O'Connor, Mr. W. J. McGrath, Mr. A. McK. Hislop, Cr. Burnett Gray and Cr. W. K. Park) for a further term of three years.

At its last meeting in 1941, all the members took advantage of the opportunity afforded through the passing of the resolution of thanks to the staff for its highly efficient work throughout the year to compliment the Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) on his extremely capable administration of the undertaking. Mr. Bell acknowledged gratefully the whole-hearted

co-operation he had received from the members and the executive officers in the many difficult matters that had to be faced during the twelve months.

VOLUNTARY AUXILIARY CONDUCTORS

In order to reduce the serious over-crowding of trams and buses, the Birmingham Corporation Transport Department is evolving a scheme for the engagement of voluntary auxiliary conductors. The idea is that they will assist the paid conductors and conductresses by taking charge of the platform and controlling loading and unloading. They are to be on duty during peak hours, and one of their responsibilities will be to signal drivers when to start. They will also keep an eye on, now, those few persons who try to dodge out of the queue in order to board vehicles out of their turn, and just as if that isn't enough they will have to call out stopping places as well as the destinations, particularly during the blackout periods.

Remembering what happens with the Melbourne passengers every peak hour, and the frenzied and inconsiderate rushing and jostling, our conductors will not have the slightest difficulty in thinking up much more agreeable forms of voluntary service than that proposed for some gentlemen of Birmingham.

TRANSPORT IN THE U.S.S.R.

Russia has figured so largely in our daily news for so many months now that some brief particulars of her transport systems cannot fail to be interesting to ourselves as members of the staff of the Board. Based on what now appears to be inaccurate information, there was an idea 10 years or so ago that in the event of war, transport would be the weakest link in the Soviet organisation. Now, after the events of the last seven weeks, it is obvious that only superb transport organisation could have sustained the Russian armies in their various offensives.

But we are concerned more with ordinary passenger traffic than with military transport, and in this connection it has to be noted that local transport facilities were increasing rapidly previous to the outbreak of war. Take Moscow, for instance. In 1934, that city had but 33 trolley buses and 364 motor omnibuses to supplement the trams, and all had to serve a population of 3,500,000. Five years later the population had approached the 4,000,000 mark, and there were 500 trolley buses and 1,200 motor buses, while the tramway, trolley and motor bus routes had increased from 600 to 1,000 miles. In that year, 1939, the passengers carried numbered 2,600,000,000 and another 40,000,000 was added in 1940. The latest tram put into service was designed somewhat on the lines of the P.C.C. vehicle, among its features being pneumatically-operated central entrance

doors, and front exit doors, electric heating specially designed to operate in the extreme cold of winter, and a system of electric ventilation for the summer. Seating 54 passengers, the car has a speed of 37 m.p.h. In addition to those tram and bus services, there is an excellent underground railway, built on the model of the London Underground, and it is interesting to recall that London transport engineers went to Moscow on the invitation of the Moscow Soviet Council to give assistance and advice in the construction of the lines. In 1940, the lines dealt with 375,000,000 passengers as compared with the 128,000,000 for the first year of operation in 1937.

While the tendency in the last few years so far as Moscow is concerned has been to develop the outer suburbs by motor and trolley buses, tramway routes in other cities have been extended rapidly. In 1937, there were 76 towns operating tramway systems, with a total double-track mileage of 3,893 kilometres. In the whole country the number of tramcars in commission was 9,822, while the total number of passengers carried was 5,425,000,000.

THE LATE MR. C. P. HOWIESON

That the spiritual and moral forces of a man's nature can, and do, conquer the purely physical and material was never better illustrated than in the person of Mr. C. P. Howieson (known affectionately to us all at Head Office as "Skipper"), who, to the grief of all who knew him, passed away suddenly on the 10th inst., after an illness of less than two days. Joining the service in March, 1920, Mr. Howieson, despite cruel physical disabilities, not only proved himself the brightest and most efficient of colleagues, but one whose cheery and wholesome outlook on life was an inspiring force to all brought into intimate contact with him. With joy he came to his work in the morning; with regret he left it and those with whom he was so happy, at night; he got much from life because he gave much. It would be easy to imagine him quoting:—

"Oh, Death! thou poor and disappointed thing—
Strike if thou wilt; strike breast and brow,
For I have lived: and thou canst rob me now
Only of some long life that ne'er has been.
The life that I have lived, so full, so keen,
Is mine! I hold it firm beneath thy blow,
And, dying, take it with me where I go!"

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL TRAMWAYS

Like ourselves, the Brisbane City tramway undertaking had a successful year, the traffic revenue increasing by £60,542 to the new high record of £903,507. Passengers carried numbered 99,632,453 as compared with 93,430,881 in 1939-40, while the mileage went up to 8,664,545 as against 8,164,288.

While the total revenue increased by £62,400 to £931,770, the report chronicles the surprising fact that "this figure has been considerably enhanced by the inclusion of interest from sinking fund investments amounting to £18,607." This is an extraordinary procedure, as the universal practice is to credit the interest derived from sinking fund investments to that fund, and so help to build it up against the day when the loan will mature. As £2,000,000 of the Brisbane tramway's indebtedness is owed in London, and as the sinking fund amounts only to £485,951, it follows that if the Council exercised its option to repay that sum in 1944 that the sinking fund would cover only a little more than the cost of exchange.

**ENLISTING WITHOUT LEAVE OF ABSENCE
The Chairman's Promise**

It has been asked why the resolution of the Board guaranteeing the jobs and seniority and other privileges of those employees who have been given leave of absence while members of the Services does not "include those men who terminated their service with the Board because they were not allowed to enlist while still in the Board's employ."

The last 13 words of that sentence constitute what may now be appropriately described as a hoary-whiskered fiction. No man, as the Chairman has explained repeatedly in the Press, was ever refused permission to enlist. A certain number of men were asked to defer doing so for a week or two until suitable substitutes for them could be found. The majority agreed to do so, but some got tired waiting, resigned, and joined up before receiving leave of absence. So far as those men are concerned, the Chairman has viewed their precipitate action with sympathy, and has promised that if they desire to return to the Board's service after the war is over that their applications for re-employment will be given every consideration.

On the other hand, there are a good few others who simply resigned without giving any reason, or without even applying for leave of absence, and in such cases the Board has naturally no means of knowing whether they left the tramways to join the Forces, the Munitions Department, or some other job which might at the moment have had for them "all the brave music of a distant drum." Obviously the Board cannot accept any responsibility for men who in such circumstances walk away from their jobs, in some instances actually without any notice at all, or make any promise regarding their employment if they, at some future date, find that their desire to re-enter the ranks of tramwaymen is even more ardent than the wish they had to leave.

ACCOMMODATION FOR CONDUCTRESSES

With the decision (actually on the express wish of the Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' As-

sociation; our Chairman did not care for the idea) to extend the employment of conductresses to such electric depots where space is available for their accommodation, the necessary work of equipping rooms with sinks, draining boards, water, tables, and so on has proceeded apace. The removal of the printing department to Preston gave accommodation for 50 at the Head Office, while at five depots the work of converting certain space for the exclusive use of the conductresses has been completed, or will be finished in the near future. Details are as follow:—

Brunswick.—A vacant shop belonging to the Board has been fitted up as a complete mess room, with accommodation for 20 conductresses.

Kew.—By taking over the Alexander Cameron Memorial Hall, installing a scullery with hot water, a messroom has been provided which will enable 20 conductresses to have their meals in comfort.

Hanna Street.—The offices of the Southern District Traffic Superintendent have been transferred to Malvern Depot, and are being converted into a messroom capable of giving facilities to 40 conductresses.

Hawthorn.—With alterations proceeding to the clothing factory, it has been easy to enlarge the existing messroom used by those employees so as to provide room for 20 conductresses in addition to the clothing factory staff.

Malvern.—The spare room on the first floor is to be given to 20 conductresses, and the work of conversion and fitting up will be completed next month.

RETIRED FROM THE SERVICE

Since our last issue, the following have retired from the service and have received the gratuities applicable in their particular cases:—

Conductor F. C. Monk (unfit for further duty after discharge from military service), 19 years' service, £201/8/-. Track Repairer H. G. Jones, 65 years, 21 years' service, £390. Sub-Foreman W. Pinder, 67 years of age, 24 years' service, £546. Tradesman N. J. Hocking, 65 years of age, 23 years' service, £460/4/-. Car Cleaner W. J. Graham, 65 years of age, 45 years' service, £378/6/-. Driver D. B. Jordan (medically unfit for further duty) 20 years' service, £206/14/-.

DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE

The staff at the Hawthorn Depot is mourning the death, arising from injuries sustained while on active service with the A.I.F. abroad, of Conductor G. H. Axton. Forty-four years of age, the late Conductor Axton had a good service record extending over 22 years, and his early and unfortunate demise is deeply regretted. The full gratuity of £206/14/- has been paid to Mrs. Axton, who has been assured of the sympathy of the Board and the staff in her bereavement.

Tramway Topics

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Number 5

**THE BOARD'S SURPLUS
The Actual Position Detailed**

Unless with the object of stirring up bad feeling, it is difficult to imagine what purpose is served by the Propaganda Committee of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association stating in the "Tramway Record" of February 6 that "the Board's surplus over operating expenses last year was £1,071,077," without detailing the many other expenses which have to be met before a true picture of the financial state of the undertaking can be obtained.

With the remaining words of the sentence added, "surely we who produce this surplus are entitled to first consideration," it is plain that the meaning sought to be conveyed is that the surplus over operating expenses is clear profit, and that that surplus is available for distribution in the shape of increased wages, and so on. Parenthetically, the arrogant assumption that it is the members of the A.T. & M.O.E.A. alone who "produce this surplus" would be laughable were it not so supremely ridiculous. A score of different trades and occupations must all play a part before trams and buses can function, and without the services of skilled tradesmen and others the vehicles could not remain on the streets one hour.

Necessarily the distinction between what are termed "operating expenses" and "general expenses" is at times rather fine; in fact, the average individual not versed in the niceties of accounting might well be pardoned if he thought that interest on the capital raised in order that the undertaking might be started is as much an operating expense as the wages of the bus and tram drivers. However, briefly, wages, salaries, lighting, uniforms, maintenance of rolling stock, permanent way, electrical equipment, power, insurances and printing are set down as operating expenses. Last year these came to £1,701,794, and the balance of revenue left after those charges had been met was £1,071,077

But of course the Board's expenses and liabilities did not end with the operating charges. The interest on the loan liability of £4,554,652 had to be met, the Consolidated Revenue of the State had to be enriched by almost £109,000, the statutory contributions to the Renewals Reserve Fund in accordance with the Tramways Act had to be made, municipal and other rates had to be paid, sick pay, and death, retiring and compassionate allowances had to be deducted, the Employees' Benefit Society had to be subsidised, the balance at the credit of the Public Risk and Fire Insurance Funds had to be maintained, and the Loan Redemption and Sinking Funds had to receive their due. What all these things involved will be readily realised when they are set out in detail as follows:—

Interest (and other charges such as Rates, Benefit Society and Sick Pay, Nat. Roads Fund, Exchange, etc.)	£312,255
Renewals Reserve	475,543
Bus Maintenance Reserve	14,000
Fire Insurance Reserve	50,000
Public Risk Insurance Reserve	10,000
Loan Redemption	75,493
Loan Sinking Funds	25,125
Payment to Consolidated Revenue of State	108,968
	£1,071,384

After crediting the loss on the North Balwyn extension (paid by the Camberwell Council) the year's surplus, as certified by the State Auditor-General, and the independent accountants (Messrs. H. Rodda and R. J. Burns), who carry on a continuous audit, was not the £1,071,077 mentioned so gladly by the Propaganda Committee, but £1,674.

The items set out above in tabular form ought to be self-explanatory even to those unfamiliar with balance sheets. No one, surely, will dispute the statement that the unpaid portion of the capital in-

vested in the undertaking earns, and is entitled to, interest, just as the individual's account in the Savings Bank is credited with interest. Before arriving at the profit, all business people act with prudence and forethought by setting aside a certain sum to provide for depreciation and plant renewals, and in the case of the Board the Tramways Act lays it down that this sum must not be less than 4, nor greater than 6 per cent. of the certified capital value of the undertaking. There is no escape, either, because they also are provided for by the Act, from the payments to the Consolidated Revenue of the State, nor from the necessity to put aside monies for the redemption of loans and for Loan Sinking Funds, while the allocation to the Bus Maintenance Reserve has been rendered necessary by the strain to which those vehicles are being subjected by continuous heavy traffic. By carrying the greater portion of the fire risk, and by taking all the public risk for third-party claims arising out of accidents, the Board saves the heavy premiums it would pay otherwise to insurance companies.

From what has been written, it will be seen that the Propaganda Committee's suggestion that there is a surplus of more than £1,000,000 out of which members of the A.T. & M.O.E.A. "are entitled to first consideration" is the "baseless fabric of a vision," divorced utterly from the realities of the financial position of the Board. The attempt to misrepresent those realities would be less inexcusable if the Board since it took office in 1936 had shown itself harsh, or even unsympathetic, in its dealings with its employees. On the contrary, the Board has throughout steadily, consistently and voluntarily improved wages and liberalised conditions whenever the opportunity to do so presented itself. Just this month it has given one more proof of its goodwill by making the C.O.L. allowance applicable to all those receiving £400 a year and over. There is every reason, then, to assume that in the future it will continue its policy in this connection so far as it can consistent with the financial resources at its command.

GLASGOW PAYS OFF ITS DEBT

The Transport Committee of the Glasgow Corporation has decided to repay the whole of its capital debt of £4,408,540 from the surplus at the credit of its Depreciation and Renewals Fund, which stands at £5,120,246. The result of this decision is that the whole municipal transport undertaking, trams, buses and the underground, valued at more than £10,000,000, becomes a free asset of the city's Common Good Fund.

The undertaking was last free of debt in 1917, since then large capital expenditure has been incurred in tramway extensions and in the purchase of the present large bus fleet.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Extension to All Over £400 a Year

With the ever-increasing adjustments in the cost of living, the position was reached some time ago that the salaries of officers receiving below £400 a year were, through that allowance, actually totalling amounts in excess of those given to officers on higher classifications doing more responsible work.

Desirous of ending the anomalies so created, and bearing in mind that the greatly-increased scale of taxation is falling heavily on such officers, and particularly those in receipt of £500 a year and over, the Board at its first meeting this month resolved to extend the C.O.L. adjustments to all officers receiving £400 a year and over.

Those affected appreciate keenly the Board's thought and consideration in this matter.

THAT RETIRING GRATUITY

The Answer to a Correspondent's Query

Arising out of the detailed explanation given in our last issue of the Regulations which govern the Retiring and Death Gratuities, "R.D.," Hanna Street, writes:—

"On reading the January issue of 'Tramway Topics,' my eye was arrested immediately by the large printing of the words, FOUR WEEKS SALARY OR WAGES FOR EACH COMPLETE YEAR OF SERVICE, and great and unalloyed was my pleasure. Then! I spied something about 'not exceeding 78 weeks,' and the pleasure was tinged with wonder, and I am still wondering, though in quite a friendly manner.

"If a man joining the Board's service at 40, and retiring at 65, receives 78 week's pay for 25 years' service, why does a man joining at 15 and retiring at 65 receive the same gratuity for 50 years' service?

"Both men are fortunate, but if the 50-year fellow were only presented with a long-service medal or something, it would help to restore my sense of proportion."

The answer to "R.D.'s" query is obvious, and is indeed stated by himself. Both men receive 78 week's pay because that is the maximum sum permissible under the Regulations. Previous to the 1st July last, the maximum payable, outside the official and clerical staff, was 52 weeks. "R.D.'s" pleasure should be increased when he contemplates that marked advance, particularly if he reflects that the gratuity will come to him without one penny of contribution from himself. "In this respect," commented one prominent official of the A.T. & M.O. Employees' Association, on being shown the letter, "the Board's plan is far better than the average superannuation scheme, with its weekly drain on the pay envelope, and is a long, long way in advance of what any other employer does for the worker."

So, in the words of the hymn, R.D., "count your blessings, count them one by one," and be thankful that you are in a service which yields a full pay envelope week in, week out, throughout the years, and at the end of your active business life, rewards you with 18 month's pay.

AN ENTHUSIASTIC HOBBYIST

Reference was made in the January issue to the number of people, several of them youngsters still at school, who make a hobby of collecting transport data. As an instance of the keen observation displayed, a recent letter may be quoted. "Why," asked this particular boy, who has a miniature tramway system in full operation in his back yard, "have the Timken roller bearings been removed from No. 850?"

The Rolling Stock Engineer laughed when this query was submitted to him. "I wonder," he said, "how many people even in the Department noticed that?"

The answer is that when worn-out wheels were removed, the Timken rolling bearings were taken out, and the trial on such bearings suspended for the time being.

It was this boy, also, who arrived one day towards the end of the school vacation with a large map of the Board's system. Not only were all the tramway and bus routes shown, but every stop, cut-off and cut-on, were indicated. He had spent, to him, a completely enjoyable holiday by going over the whole system and collecting the necessary data.

PRODUCER-GAS VEHICLES IN SWEDEN

Thanks to its abundant supplies of wood, which makes charcoal of the highest grade, Sweden has led always in the introduction and operation of producer-gas vehicles. Issued in November last, an official return shows that the number continues to increase, although perhaps not so rapidly as before. In the first half of September, for instance, the number put on the road was 1,304 as compared with 1,329 for the first half of August. Of the September total, 813 were private cars, 463 were lorries, and 28 were buses. On September 15, the total registered was 67,697—more thousands than Britain has hundreds—comprising 37,638 commercial vehicles, 26,421 private cars and 3,638 buses.

AMAZING BUS POSITION

The Chairman's Criticism Leads to Disclosures

When you come to think of it, it is really astonishing to find how many people succumb to the temptation of seeing their names in the newspapers by agreeing readily to be interviewed and giving utterance to statements on matters about which they know nothing, or upon which they are imperfectly informed. The recent disclosures over the condition

of many private buses in Melbourne is a case in point.

In December last, the Federal Government intimated that buses would be made available to the Board through the Emergency Transport Board for the purpose of supplying transport to the large number of munition workers who were then using their own cars in going to and from their employment. Each owner was receiving a petrol allowance in consideration of carrying fellow workers, and the idea of making buses available to the Board was the saving of the petrol being used by those car owners. In due course 32 buses were submitted for examination by the technical officers of the Board. Speaking generally, the condition of the buses varied from fair to almost the last stage of decrepitude; indeed, one broke down hopelessly after being rejected and had to be towed back to the Central Garage by one of the Board's vehicles. Eventually, it was decided to acquire 12, but before the deals were concluded the Government stepped in and ordered the buses to be released.

The examination of the buses having revealed so many faults, our Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) felt it his duty to direct attention to their deficiencies, and urged on the City Council an immediate official inspection in the interests of the public. He pointed out that some of the 20 which had been rejected were in such a broken-down state that they would be unable to carry a heavy load even on such a short distance as that between Footscray and the City.

The Secretary of the Metropolitan Omnibus Proprietors' Association (Mr. Gray) criticised generally the statements of the Chairman, who, retorted effectively by quoting the long list of faults, serious and minor, found by the Board's officers. On the publication of that list, Mr. Gray apparently thought that it would be discreet to be silent.

Not so the Town Clerk (Mr. Wootton) who blithely entered the ring and informed the public that the Chairman was more concerned with squeaky doors than unsafe brakes or steering. He should have remembered the wisdom in the Spanish proverb, "a shut mouth catches no flies." He caught a very large fly, and the City Chambers resounded with laughter when the rejoinder of the Chairman, "Mr. Wootton has so little knowledge of the activities of one of his departments that he is not even aware modern buses have no doors," was read. The Chairman added that if Mr. Wootton desired further evidence of the utter inadequacy of the inspection of the buses by the City Council, the detailed reports on the buses were open for his inspection. So that was that, and it was Mr. Wootton's turn to retire from the fray.

He was replaced by the Chairman of the Council's Licensed Vehicles Committee (Cr. E. L. Jones) who announced that the buses were "thoroughly roadworthy" and "in perfect mechanical order."

Neither the views of their Chairman nor their Clerk satisfied the Committee, who instructed the Inspector of Licensed Vehicles (Mr. W. A. Hollingsworth) to present a report to the next meeting of the Committee. When delivered on the 4th February, the Committee learned the precise worth of the statements by Cr. Jones and Mr. Wootton, for they were informed by their own official that of the 20 buses rejected by the Board only one had, previous to Mr. Bell's criticisms, been submitted for inspection and had been re-licensed for 1942! Of the remainder, three had since the raising of the subject had repairs and adjustments carried out and had been re-licensed; four had been re-inspected but had not been passed because the repairs were unsatisfactory; two had not been re-submitted for inspection as the repairs and renovations ordered had not been completed; while 10 had not been re-submitted for inspection.

There was an extraordinary sequel. On the 5th February "The Herald" stated that certain of those rejected buses were, although unlicensed, still on the streets, and this amazing fact was confirmed by Mr. Wootton the following day, who placed the number at "about 20." He went on to give the assurance that "none is in a dangerous condition," a peculiar statement in the light of the fact that not 24 hours previously his own inspector had reported that out of the 20 buses rejected by the Board only four had been re-licensed, four had been re-examined but not passed for re-licensing because the repairs done were not satisfactory, two were under repair, while the remaining 10 had not been re-submitted for inspection. Mr. Wootton even added that "notice had been served on the owners to affect certain repairs and renewals, and, as is usual, the licence was withheld pending completion of the order."

These statements were made by Mr. Wootton on Friday, the 6th February. There must have been feverish activity over the week-end, for on Tuesday, the 10th February, Mr. Wootton burst into song again and generously contradicted himself and informed the public "that not a single one of the buses rejected by the Board was running unlicensed today!" Whom are we to believe—the Mr. Wootton of Friday, or the Mr. Wootton of Tuesday?

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

Since our last issue, changes in the staff, mostly on the Traffic side, have been numerous, 78 having entered the service while 86 have left. Regarding the latter, there were two deaths, while the remainder comprised 72 from Traffic, 5 from the Secretary's Department, 3 from Perm. Way, 2 from Preston Workshops, and 1 each from the Distribution and Building branches.

Of the 78 new members of the service, 58 joined Traffic, and of these 49 were ladies; 9 joined the

Bus Department, 5 each the Secretary's and Perm. Way Departments, and 1 Preston Workshops.

RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES

During January and this month four members of the Traffic staff retired.

Certified as permanently unfit, Conductor T. M. Williams, 62 years, 34 years' service, received the maximum gratuity under the Regulations, £275/12/-.

Driver Henry Price, 65 years, 28 years' service, collected the maximum gratuity in his case of £413/8/-.

Driver Henry Rooks, 49 years, 22 years' service, certified as permanently unfit, received the maximum of 39 weeks wages, £206/14/-.

Driver Nicol Thomson, 60 years, 22 years' service, was eligible for 44 weeks' wages, and received £233/4/-.

Driver J. F. Holliday, 55 years, 27 years' service, died on the 26th January last. Mrs. Holliday has been paid the full gratuity of £206/14/-.

TRAMWAY EMPLOYEES' COMFORTS FUND

Proof that our men serving with the Forces abroad have not forgotten their former job is contained in extracts from a letter received from VX24342, A. J. Mackenzie:—

"Only a short note to let you know that I received a parcel from you and the girls. Thanks a million for it and the thoughts behind it. Everything in it was swell, and so useful. I met another Trammie over here, A. Kilpatrick, from my old depot, Hanna Street, and he was quite well. He had been right through Libya, Greece and Syria, and never a scratch at all. Over here at present it's freezing cold, and I wear the woollens you sent, even in bed. I see by the papers that the lady conductresses are doing a pretty good job. One of these days we will all be back on the road again, and won't there be some tales told in the mess rooms! You would have laughed to hear Kil and I talking—we were naming all the streets and fares on the different routes and trying to catch each other."

VX15745 W/O. W. Dunwoodie, writes that for Christmas dinner he ordered for his men: Tomato soup, turkey, pork, cabbages, potatoes, Christmas puddings and cakes, nuts, dates, mince pies, beer, lemonade and cigarettes!

Parcels are being sent steadily to the men abroad. To augment the funds, a theatre night will be held early next month at His Majesty's Theatre ("Lilac Time"), while later in the month Miss Joan Maddison will make her home available for a card party.

On behalf of the Fund, the Hon. Secretary (Miss G. Watt) thanks the Traffic officers (Victoria Parade) and the Ticket Examiners for their donations. Their addition to the ranks of weekly male contributors is appreciated greatly.

A BELATED ANNOUNCEMENT - How C. O. L. Was Extended

It was strange to read in "The Age" of the 27th February the announcement by the Secretary of the Federated Tramway Officers' Association that the Board had "agreed to extend to officers receiving £400 a year and over the periodical cost-of-living adjustments." Inasmuch as the decision had been made by the Board on the 5th February, while those concerned received the first payment on the 12th February, the intimation by Mr. Cuff was rather an anti-climax.

Moreover, the Board acted entirely on its own volition, without any hint from the Association or interested party, being animated solely by the desire to abolish the anomalies which had arisen over the rule that the C.O.L. adjustments should not apply to officers receiving £400 a year and over. When the fact that under that rule, and through the allowance, various officers were receiving more money than their seniors, came under the notice of the Chairman, he acted promptly, and the Board at once adopted his suggestion that the rule should be abolished.

Some people were misled by Mr. Cuff's statement that "there is an immediate rise of £28/12/- per annum", actually expecting to receive that amount in a lump sum. The present C.O.L. allowance is 11/- per week, and so is at the rate of £28/12/- a year; three months hence it may be back to 10/- or 9/-, though, of course, there is always the possibility that it may be higher.

ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS - Reluctance to Publish Corrections

In the days of responsible journalism, it was the excellent practice of newspapers to verify statements made by correspondents before giving publicity; but when papers "written by office boys for office boys," in the biting phrase of the late Marquis of Salisbury, began to appear, that practice was more or less scrapped, the theory, apparently, being that the contradiction of the untrue assertion would be just as interesting as the original mis-statement.

During recent months, the Board has had to complain of several instances of this sort of thing, and not always have the offending papers given the contradiction by the Chairman publicity similar to that enjoyed by the inaccurate paragraph or letter. There was,

for instance, the ridiculous story by "The Argus" about a conductor who, when tendered £1 for a 3d. fare, produced a bank packet of 3d. pieces and counted out 79 of them into the reluctant hand of the passenger. It was the same paper, too, which reported that an unfortunate barman had been killed by a tram, although the police report showed that he had been knocked down by a motor car; and earlier chronicled that an Essendon accident had been caused by the failure of the brakes. As a matter of fact, that particular accident was caused by an intoxicated passenger, who dragged the conductor with him as he lurched out of the entrance, while two passengers, in their anxiety to see what happened, overbalanced and landed on the roadway also. The brakes never came into the matter at all, as the tram was only a little more than its own length from a compulsory stop. In two of those instances, the contradiction by the Chairman were not published.

A correspondent wrote to "The Herald" commenting on the so-called menace of the 200-ft. high smoke stack of the old cable tramway power house in Market Street, South Melbourne, and the inference that the Board was negligent in such a matter was allowed to pass, although a minute spent in a telephone call to the Head Office would have procured the information that the building had been sold to a South Australian firm so long ago as August, 1937. In this case, "The Herald" made the position clear the following day.

SUGGESTION REWARDED

The notification by the Chairman in our first issue that he was ready to receive and consider suggestions for the improvement of the services and equipment continues to provoke a gratifying response.

Naturally, and this applies particularly to the running of the services, not all the ideas have been practicable, but several good suggestions have been received and acted upon, and those concerned have received cheques in recognition of their interest.

One recent letter came from the Malvern Depot, and the suggestions made, and the manner in which they were detailed, showed that the writer had given the various subjects considerable thought before committing his ideas to paper.

The Chairman took the trouble to inform his correspondent just why the suggestions relating to the Victoria Street shunt and Bundy clocks were considered impracticable; but thanked him for his proposal that point bars can be made more economically out of half inch piping. That idea was being adopted, and he ended by remarking that he had pleasure in enclosing a cheque for £2/2/- in recognition of the suggestion.

GLASGOW'S TRANSPORT FLEET

The paragraph relating to the Transport Department of the Glasgow Corporation in the last issue inspired an Essendon conductor to ask for particulars regarding the composition of the undertaking's fleet of vehicles. On the 30th June last, Glasgow had: 1,206 trams (including 17 single-deckers); 587 buses (all oil-engined and all double-deckers with the exception of 25), and 50 underground electric cars.

A further query relating to revenue last year cannot be answered, as the publication of the annual reports of transport undertakings in Great Britain has been prohibited. For the previous year, however, The Department showed a deficit of £90,703, of which £4,269 was attributed to the trams, £13,969 to the underground, and £72,465 to the buses. The latter have cost the Department a mint of money, while the underground never paid when owned and operated privately. After closing down it stood derelict for a few years. After being acquired by the Department, the underground was electrified, and the annual deficit has been reduced substantially from £50,000 in 1936.

SHOPPERS BARRED FROM BUSES

In Middlesbrough, as in Melbourne, appeals to shoppers to finish their business early and so leave the evening peak buses free for workers failed. So the Middlesbrough Transport Committee is trying out a little enforced pedestrianism on those people who could quite easily travel outside the rush hours. Between 4.30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and between noon and 1 p.m. on Saturdays, the inspectors are authorised to give priority to workers who are identified by their works cards.

AN IMAGINATIVE EFFORT FROM SYDNEY

Rumour, as has been said, travels fast. In a recent issue, occasion was taken in replying to a correspondent to contradict the impression that the Board had imported a model of the P.C.C. tram from the United States. Now, per medium of "Mass Transportation", Chicago, it is learnt that this imaginative story originated from Sydney, was sent to the "Modern Tramway", London, and then reprinted by "Mass Transportation". Here is the extract:-

"It will be remembered some time ago that it was arranged for a P.C.C. car to be shipped to Australia for experimental use on the Melbourne system. We now learn from a Sydney correspondent that this car is at present languishing in a shed on the wharf, as the Government is demanding £2,000 in customs duty before it can be placed in service! Comment is superfluous, we think!"

There is not a single word of truth in that paragraph. No arrangements were ever made to ship a P.C.C. tram to Melbourne. The Board was anxious to import one to serve as a model for the construction of the type at Preston Workshops, but before placing an order asked the Federal Government to waive the customs duty, estimated at £3,469, and so follow the precedent established when the Department of Road Transport and Tramways in New South Wales imported a complete trolley bus free of duty. The then Minister of Customs in the Menzies Government refused. Other efforts were being made to get that decision reversed when the outbreak of war necessitated the conservation of dollar exchange, and caused the postponement of the plan until after the war.

KILLED IN ACTION

Mrs. B.T. Breen has been notified that her son, O/Sig. A.J. Breen, has been killed in action.

Previous to joining the Royal Australian Navy in September, 1939, O/Sig. Breen was employed by the Board for 15 months as a conductor, his depot being Hanna Street.

Mrs. Breen has been assured by the Chairman of the sympathy of of the Board and himself in her bereavement. The War Savings Certificates made available by the Board, and of the face value of £92, have been sent to Mrs. Breen.

"STAGGERED" HOURS - What Is Being Done in Britain and U. S.

Beyond the microscopical contribution by the theatres, there is still no attempt on the part of the authorities in Melbourne to plan a comprehensive system of "staggering" of hours in large industrial establishments. That means discomfort and inconvenience on the trams, buses and trains, and the uneconomic use of transport vehicles.

In London, no fewer than 500,000 workers were "staggered" at the end of December last, the plan in all its details having been worked out harmoniously between the Regional District officers of the Ministry of Transport, the Trade Unions concerned, and the London Passenger Transport Board. Under the plan, there is not only a greater service through the "peaks" being spread over a longer time but a far more comfortable service for all concerned.

"Transit Speeds Defence" is the slogan which has inspired the introduction of staggering in various cities in the United States. In Washington, a wave of the Presidential hand staggered the hours of 80,000 Government employees, and the result has been a gain in efficiency all round.

Seattle, which has experienced during the last year a mushroom-like growth owing to the setting up of the big Boeing aircraft firm, and other defence works, following a survey of the working hours of factories conducted by the Chamber of Commerce, arranged

for alterations in the hours of 12,000 employees.

Chicago, with its population of 4,500,000, found it necessary to draw up a sectional plan for each square mile of the big industrial north-west district, with a leaving time for each section spaced at 10-minute intervals from 3.30 to 5 p.m., and factories and business houses co-operated by adopting these times for their employees to finish work. With the operation of the 8-hour day, this relieved the morning peak also, since employees started their work at correspondingly "staggered" times.

WOMEN AS BUS DRIVERS

Contrary to the opinion held by some people, the traffic staff does not contain any great reservoir of men trained and ready to act as bus drivers. That is the explanation of the decision to engage women in that capacity. While the applications from women who would like to drive buses now number well over 100, it does not follow that the majority will eventually don the uniform of the Board. The regulation regarding the minimum weight (10 st.) and the height (5ft. 5in.) will automatically reduce the list of applicants. All the applicants possess driver's licenses, and a few have had some experience as transport drivers in the country. The first batch of accepted candidates commenced training this week.

It will be of interest to state what happened when the Board, by notices posted at all the depots, called for applications for bus drivers on the 12th January last. In all, 74 applications were received, of which 4 were useless as the men concerned were not qualified motor car drivers, 2 were withdrawn by the men themselves while 2 preferred to accept appointment as electric tram drivers. That left 66 and these were dealt with as follows:-

Approved and passed as bus drivers.....	29
Not yet trained but approved.....	1
Waiting test.....	1
Waiting medical examination.....	1
Medically unfit.....	13
Rejected after test.....	14
Rejected, passed test but failed in training.....	5
Rejected as unsuitable (departmental).....	2

ITEMS

There are now more than 10,000 women employed in the various departments of the London Passenger Transport Board.

A tip for tram and bus passengers in the existing brown-out conditions in Melbourne: "Look out before stepping out."

"Skip-stops" is the name given by Americans to provisional tram and bus stops. Their general abolition throughout the States is

being urged as one method of achieving faster running and less traffic congestion.

"We have gone past my sister's house" vociferously complained a lady in a London bus; "ain't you supposed to call out stops?" "Blimey, lady," said the conductor, "who do you want for tuppence? Quentin Reynolds?"

Carlisle and Kilmarnock are the latest towns in Britain to adopt the queue system, to which all prospective bus passengers must conform.

A new charcoal production plant erected by the Swedish Co-operative Wholesale Society in Lapland consumes about 100,000 cubic metres of birch a year. In addition to charcoal, it is estimated that 1,800 tons of tar, 500 tons of raw spirit, and large quantities of acetic acid, enough to provide 500 tons of acetone, will be produced.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

There have been many changes in the staff during recent weeks, no fewer than 165 having joined the service within the last five weeks. Of those, 109 are in Traffic, 22 in the bus Department, 13 in the Secretary's Department, 11 at Preston Workshops, 5 in the Permanent Way, 3 in the Electrical Running Sheds and 2 in the Building Branch.

Departures number 57 during the same period, of whom 37 belonged to Traffic, 5 to the Bus Department, 5 to the Secretary's Office, 4 to the Permanent Way, 3 to the Building Branch, and 1 each to the Workshops, Steam Power and Distribution.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"Curious," Brunswick.- It is apparent that you have not yet grasped the meaning of the simple regulation. Not being 60 years of age, the maximum death allowance in the suppositious case quoted by you would be one of 39 weeks' wages. Over 60 years the maximum would go up to 52 weeks. At the corresponding date last year, there would have been no gratuity at all for the widow - merely a compassionate allowance. In your stated case, 18 years' service means an allowance of 36 weeks' wages to the widow, which would result in her receiving £178/4/-. Contrast that with a compassionate allowance of, perhaps, £50 under the old plan and you will see how the Board has liberalised the scheme.

NEW RECTIFIER SUBSTATION - Board Takes 9 Per Cent of S.E.C. Output

From an electrical point of view, the Board's tramway system is one of the largest in the world through the extent of the area covered. While the Distribution staff is well aware of the fact, it will interest the staffs of the other departments to know that the Board takes annually 9 per cent of the output of the State Electricity Commission. Of the 21 sub-stations now in existence, 18 are automatic, while 9 are under supervisory control.

A number of unusual features is included in the new rectifier substation being erected to feed the extended and new routes in the Maribyrnong area. Of reinforced concrete, the building has no windows, while the machine room is ventilated by pressure fans discharging into a basement through an air filter, the air passing up through the two rectifier units through a hole in the floor. This method, it is expected, will prevent any trouble due to dust collecting in the control device. A compartment separate from the machine room, and open at both ends for ventilation, houses the transformers.

There are two 600-kW. glass bulb rectifier units, each of four bulbs with a rating of 150-kW. per bulb. The rectifiers have thermal protection which operates to cut off the equipment should the temperature rise to a dangerous value. A special feature of the thermal relays is that they carry the load current continuously and are cooled by the bulb ventilating fans. In the event of any fan failure, they automatically close down the complete circuit. Control is automatic both for the main equipment and ventilation, and it is worthy of note that it has been designed by the Distribution officers of the Board and built by the substation staff.

Provision has been made for supervisory control from the main control room, and here again the equipment was designed and built by the Board's staff, and is similar to that which has been in service for some time in the automatic substations on the system. While the rectifier equipment is being supplied by a British firm, the transformers are of Australian manufacture.

PRODUCER-GAS - Result of a British Experiment

Operating with its subsidiaries over much of England, Thomas Tilling Ltd. is one of the largest road transport concern in the United Kingdom. There was, consequently, much interest taken by transport operators in the announcement more than a year ago that all the vehicles in one of the firms small depots had been converted to producer-gas, and there was considerable speculation as to how the experiment would result. During the year, the vehicles in a second small depot were converted also. Between the two, the company was able to ascertain the exact total cost of operation, and it is thus able to make a true comparison with petrol and diesel oil.

At the annual general meeting in February last, the Chairman intimated, as was known would be the case, a loss of power, but added that no difficulty had been found in maintaining the ordinary time-tables. When times were again normal, however, it might be found desirable to design a special engine and chassis for producer-gas; indeed, the subject was already being investigated.

One of the major difficulties at the outset of the experiment had been that of filtration. Thanks to their chief engineer, a suitable filter had been evolved, the filtering medium being water. The fitting of that specially-designed filter, with the addition of the arrangements for more efficient upper cylinder lubrication, had reduced the cylinder wear for the vehicles fitted with gas-producers to a figure comparable with petrol-engined vehicles.

Improvement in results had been gradual, and it can be taken that the improvements were the direct results of those innovations made to the original units by this enormously wealthy concern, whose liability for excess profits tax alone last year was over £4,000,000. With anthracite at 85/-per ton, the fuel cost worked out at a figure lower than that for petrol, and to a lesser extent than that for diesel oil, but when certain additional expenses inevitable to the running of producer-gas equipped buses, such as re-fuelling and attending to the cleaning of the hopper and filter, were taken into consideration, it was found that the total running costs were higher than those for diesel oil although still lower than those for petrol.

The most intriguing part of the Chairman's statement is that which recognises the necessity for an engine and chassis designed specially for the use of producer-gas. That is the logical development, especially when it is remembered that the present practice is merely a make-shift expedient, and one which can have no permanent value, designed to tide over a particular emergency.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

In five weeks 162 persons joined the staff while 61 left. Traffic absorbed no fewer than 147 of the arrivals, and was responsible for 44 of the departures. The Bus Branch took in 10 and lost 3, while the Secretary's Department absorbed 9 and parted company with 2.

Tramway Topics

The Official Bulletin of The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board

Volume 1

April, 1942

Number 7

GREETINGS FROM ABROAD

Chairman's Message Appreciated

Within recent weeks the Chairman has been more than pleased to receive letters from members of the staff who were abroad when they got his Christmas letter. Excerpts from several of the letters are appended:—

Sergt. J. F. Cuttriss: Your Christmas letter was much appreciated. As you state, the receipt of letters from home is very cheering, and I am indeed glad to know that the employees of the Board are not forgotten while they are away. The kindness of the Board in crediting me with War Savings Certificates is very encouraging, and I thank you, and through you the other members of the Board, for the thoughtfulness displayed. I am hopeful that there will be no necessity for such another letter to be sent next Christmas.

L./Corpl. Harding: It is a great comfort to us over here to know that our employers are still thinking of our comfort and welfare. It gives us courage to carry on with the job we set out to do, and we are hoping that it will be brought to a conclusion in the not too distant future. I express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the great interest that your Board is taking in looking after our welfare by providing such a magnificent nest-egg for us on our return.

Gunner L. I. Owens: Your Christmas message is deeply appreciated, combined as it is with the generosity of the Board in allocating War Savings Certificates to ensure our financial status on our return to civilian life.

Gunner M. Mackinnon: I thank you ever so much for all your kindness and good wishes. My wife has asked me also to thank you for the Christmas box of £3. Your kindness to me and mine in the past makes me feel so proud to be associated with so fine a concern as the Melbourne Tramways Board.

It must be a great satisfaction to you to know how much we enjoy receiving letters from you.

Driver E. S. Brown: Your letter cheered me immensely, as also did the Board's fine gesture in setting aside War Savings Certificates against our return. During my visits to various places this side of the world I have taken a great interest in the various forms of transport, and I am convinced that our Melbourne services are the equal of any in the world. I have come safely through the Libyan, Greece and Crete campaigns under the command of a member of your staff, Captain Frank Wood, who is very well liked by the boys of this battery.

PREPARING A ROSTER

What the Task Involves

There was a conference in the Board-room. As usual, nowadays, the subject was transport for munition plants. Two large roster sheets, something like 4 ft. x 2 ft. each, covered with columns containing thousands of figures, lay on the table. Patiently it was explained just exactly what was involved for "only three or four extra buses." The representative of one concern listened intently, stared beligerently at the sheets, and then remarked, "But I still don't see why you cannot put in any extra buses any time you like!" Well, the gentleman's difficulty is common to something like 95 per cent. of the people who presume to talk about transport without knowing anything about it, and recalls the story of one exasperated tramwayman many years ago. "Melbourne," he said, bitterly, after one deputation had withdrawn, "is a city of 700,000 people, 690,000 of whom are transport experts. The odd 10,000 are merely the unfortunate persons whose life work it is to run the trams and railways."

Roster making is highly specialised work. To explain the making of a roster in full detail would take up the whole of this issue and still leave something for the next. It may, however, be worth while

to attempt to sketch as briefly as possible just what is involved in the preparation of the time tables. First of all the staff of the Roster Department must approach the problem presented by a particular line bearing in mind the conditions prescribed by the Arbitration Court in the Tramways Award:—

- (a) 40 minutes minimum meal relief.
- (b) Period of work must not exceed 5 hours 15 minutes without a meal relief.
- (c) All men must have at least 10 hours off duty between shifts.
- (d) Alternate a.m. and p.m. shifts.
- (e) One day off each week.
- (f) Shifts to finish in order of starting, and vice versa.
- (g) Alternate straight and broken shifts.

Let it now be assumed that the line for which a roster is being prepared is a new one, and that the district through which it runs has been investigated thoroughly by the Special, Checking and Traffic staffs, who have placed at the service of the roster clerks figures showing the estimated patronage based on population statistics, shopping centres to be served, and other revenue-producing channels such as factories, schools, churches, theatres and other places of amusement, football grounds and so on.

Armed with this information, the good roster clerk can tell almost at a glance the extent of the service required, and sets about the drawing-up of his table in such a way that the trams will be spaced evenly and scheduled to be where they are required at the proper time. When that has been done, the crews required to man the service are allotted their respective tasks, and naturally the table must show just where and when meal reliefs come on duty, while provision is made also for emergency and holiday relief crews.

If the line reaches a point where it joins another route and so forms a combined service to the city, the trams are, if practicable, tabled to each destination alternatively so as to give equality of service to the passengers on each route. That, of course, is not done always, at the start of the new line, anyway, for in all probability it has been put down to serve a locality which is in the process of development. In that event the service is adjusted periodically in harmony with the traffic demand, and eventually both lines have similar services. An illustration of this point can be found in the Burwood and Wattle Park services. Auxiliary services operating en route to points nearer the city have to be timed to provide an even service of through cars—which is yet another complication in the task of compiling the roster—while whenever possible the schedule must be arranged for connections to be made with intersecting services at main junctions.

What the gentleman quoted in the first paragraph did not appreciate will be evident from this brief re-

sume—that the placing of extra vehicles on any one route involves not only the alteration of the table on that route but consequential changes on all the other tables with which that particular run is associated.

CONDUCTRESSES APPRECIATED

The Chairman has been pleased to receive the following letter from a member of the staff of the Service Police Headquarters, R.A.A.F., Melbourne:—

"As one of the original members of the R.A.A.F. Service Police at Headquarters, and a member of the Special Duty Section, and one who uses the trams and buses daily throughout the city and suburbs, may I be permitted to express my appreciation of the efficiency and courtesy of the conductresses engaged in your transport services?"

"Under various conditions, at times very trying, for the general public is very exacting, those women perform with the greatest efficiency. I notice that you suggest an "Efficiency Girl No. 1" competition. I think that such a scheme would be excellent, and would undoubtedly gain wide support, yielding a large sum for Red Cross or other war funds. Might I offer the suggestion that the competition be in two divisions—trams and buses? I consider it is harder to give efficiency and courtesy on one of those services than on the other.

"Wishing the proposed scheme every success, and awaiting news of the announcement of its inception, when I shall be pleased to contribute."

"STAGGERED" HOURS

Opinion in the United States

During the last three years the Chairman has advocated repeatedly that there should be a comprehensive and well-planned programme of "staggered" hours in large industrial establishments, the idea being to spread the traffic peaks and so ensure the best possible use of all tramway and railway rolling stock. In a recent issue, "Mass Transportation," a widely-read transport journal published in Chicago, puts the case in favour of such a proposal. It said:—

"Previous to the treachery at Pearl Harbour on December 7, the matter of staggered hours was in the category of a desirable move which would probably help the defence programme. Many mass transportation operators felt that it was a mutually beneficial move that should be adopted voluntarily by industry and business. Few, however, considered it a "must." Now that war is here and there exists the extreme necessity of speeding production to unheard-of peaks, the advantage of staggered hours naturally develops into a "must" of prime importance.

"Lest some groups get the impression that staggered hours are exclusively for the benefit of the transit companies, it might be well to call attention to the fact that as a wartime measure in co-operation with the Transit Controller in Canada, the Sun Life Assurance Company of Toronto has taken the lead in the movement toward staggered hours by announcing that the majority of their 2,000 employees will start and quit work one hour earlier.

"In an effort to broaden the move, the Mayor of Toronto has appealed also to leading business men to use their influence in furthering a system of staggered hours, feeling that workers will naturally be benefitted most from the consequent relief of traffic congestion.

"With the stepping-up of production for an all-out war, and the necessity of developing intense speed in all war activities, the matter of local transportation and the problem of traffic congestion cease to be matters of toleration and instead become problems for arbitrary solution by someone in authority, who will be guided by the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number.

"In other words, the circumstances call for the establishment of staggered hours by governmental authority now rather than wait development by the slow process of education and voluntary adoption by industry and business. A few authorities can be convinced of the emergencies created by a shortage of transit equipment and the increasing traffic congestion, much easier and quicker than the situation can be explained to industry, business and the public by means of education and publicity.

"In Canada, the Co-ordinator of Transport, being a former mass transportation official, is in a position to thoroughly understand the situation. One of his early endeavours following his appointment was to push the establishment of staggered hours for business and industry. City officials have aided the move in many instances.

"In the matter of relief of traffic congestion, and the benefitting of workers in industry and business, the matter of staggered hours should immediately become a function of the authorities. As a war measure which can be easily and immediately put into effect without cost, it is one of the problems which should be given the undivided attention of someone in authority with the idea of establishing it instanter."

WORLD'S ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Eight fuels for internal combustion transport engines different from those derived from crude petroleum are in use throughout the world, points out a writer in the "Commercial Motor," but of those eight alternatives only two are in use in Britain—producer gas and town gas. If by that is meant in use commercially, the statement is probably cor-

rect; but in the wider sense a third, petrol from coal, must be added, inasmuch as the I.C.I. has for a few years now been supplying both the Navy and R.A.F. with petrol distilled from coal. Here are the eight fuels, and against each is shown its approximate percentage of the total:—

1. Natural gasoline	60.0 per cent.
2. Petrol from coal	15.0 "
3. Petrol from shale oil	0.5 "
4. Benzole	9.0 "
5. Alcohol	7.0 "
6. Liquefied gases	6.5 "
7. Methane	0.1 "
8. Producer gas	0.2 "

When the war commenced, 30 countries were producing these alternative fuels to the extent of 100,000,000 barrels, of 32 gallons per barrel, annually. Of that total, the United States were responsible for over 50 per cent. in addition to its ordinary production of fuels from crude petroleum. Germany took second place with 20 per cent., thanks to the strenuous efforts made to speed up the production of petrol from coal. Notwithstanding her enormous coal deposit reserves, Britain's share was but 6 per cent., and then followed, with none over 3 per cent., Japan, France, Canada, Estonia, Russia, Peru, Mexico, Iran, Venezuela, and nine other countries with less than 1 per cent. each.

As will be seen from the above table, natural gas, wet and dry, the word dry being used to indicate gas which contains less than 1 gallon of petrol per 1,000 c.f., forms 60 per cent. of all the alternative fuels, and 80 per cent. of that is of U.S. origin, Canada coming second, though its percentage is only 5. Natural gas is practically unknown in Britain and Australia. The second alternative, petrol from coal, has been referred to, while the third is benzole, a constituent of town gas and coke-oven gas. As a motor fuel, benzole is of high octane value, and is commonly mixed with petrol to reduce the knock tendencies of the latter. Another valuable property is that it acts as a blending agent for alcohol and petrol; it permits much higher percentages of alcohol to be added to petrol without the danger of separating out which would occur otherwise. Germany leads in the production of benzole, with the United States second and Britain just behind.

In alcohol production, Japan led France and Germany, while Britain was fourth, the other countries in order being Italy, Australia, Sweden, New Zealand, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Chili and India. Some months ago it was reported here that plans were being made to increase the production of alcohol from about 4,000,000 gallons annually, to between 50,000,000 and 60,000,000 gallons, the alcohol to be blended in a 1 to 5 ratio with petrol. During the last year Australia has seen the beginning of the production of petrol from shale. Labour troubles have,

however, thrown the schedule out of gear, and at the moment the volume of production is far below what it could be. The petrol content of Australian shale is far higher than that of the shale of any other country. It is stated that Australian shale yields 100 gallons of petrol per ton, as compared with 50 in Estonia, 25 in Scotland and France, and 14 in Manchuria. The authorities have, therefore, every incentive to develop the production of this fuel to the uttermost.

NEW LINE TO MARIBYRNONG

Good Progress Means Early Opening

Improved travelling facilities for the staffs of the various munition-making establishments in the Maribyrnong area will be available on the 24th May by the opening of the line now being constructed along the Maribyrnong and Ascot Vale roads.

Since work was commenced on the 9th March, good progress has been made. Interested observers in the locality have been heard commenting upon the methodical and steady growth of the line, but few can have realised just how much the progress depended upon the co-operation between the men and the staffs of the various departments concerned.

First of all the surveyors got busy, and from their detailed surveys of the route the plans for the curves, junctions and cross sections were prepared. Some idea of the work involved will be gathered when it is stated that alterations had to be made to water and gas mains, duplicate mains had to be laid, sewer and telephone manholes had to be removed and rebuilt, high tension cables had to be protected, while the bridge over the railway line had to be strengthened so that it might be able to carry the tramway traffic.

So far as the actual track is concerned, the excavation work alone involved the removal of 6,500 tons with a power shovel and the use of manual labour to the extent of 57,000 man-hours. These and the other track operations absorbed one-third of the total cost of the job, the remaining two-thirds being expended on materials. The weight of the latter reached the astonishing figure of 7,300 tons, including 100 tons of special work, 16 tons of overhead poles, 2 tons of trolley wire and 1 ton of span wire. The time spent on the various operations is shown in the following table:—

Excavation	23 per cent.
Drains and ashes	9 "
Laying track	23 "
Lifting and packing	13 "
Ballasting and boxing in	17 "
Paving	3 "
Laying special work	12 "

When the new line is opened, the Chairman plans to use the buses made available through the running of the trams to augment the bus services now in operation.

RETIRING GRATUITIES

Since our last issue, five members of the staff have retired. They have received, with the good wishes of the Board, the gratuities as detailed below:

Track Repairer S. Dawson (65), 30 years' service, £393/18/-.

Inspector A. King (60), resigned on account of ill-health, 28 years' service, £366/12/-.

Conductor C. W. Smith (45), resigned on account of ill-health, 26 years' service, £208/13/-.

Messenger S. Fisher (61), 38 years' service, retired through being medically unfit, £254/16/-.

Bodymaker J. A. Shakespeare (66), 28 years' service, £464/2/- (Mr. Shakespeare died a few days after his retirement, and the gratuity was paid to Mrs. Shakespeare).

CHANGES IN STAFF

During the last few weeks, 82 of the staff have left, while 135 have joined the service. Included in the departures were 55 from Traffic, 7 from Preston Workshops, 6 from the Bus Branch, 5 from Permanent Way, 4 from the Building Branch, 2 from the Secretary's Department, and 1 each from the Electric Running Sheds, Distribution and Steam Power. The recruits include 93 to Traffic, 19 to Preston Workshops, 8 to the Secretary's, 6 to the Bus, 5 to the Permanent Way, 3 to Building and 1 to the Electric Running Sheds.

AIR RAID SIGNAL

One of several suggestions received recently related to the air raid signal, and came from a Malvern conductor, his idea being that as it is impossible to hear the warning while the tram is in motion the Carlton Control should switch on and off the power a couple of times as an indication to the crews that the air raid warning has been given.

In thanking the conductor for the suggestion, the Chairman pointed out that the idea is impracticable owing to the characteristics of feeder switch equipment. Such a signal would require 40 seconds between the opening of the feeders, and thus would be precisely the same as the behaviour due to a faulty car. As failure of supply from the S.E.C. causes frequently interruptions to trolley wire supply of from one to three minutes, the cutting off of the power for such small intervals could not be relied on as an air raid signal.

PRE-PAID TICKETS OF ALL VALUES - Some of the Practical Difficulties

Probably in no other field of human effort does the desire on the part of amateurs to interfere present such an irresistible temptation as the transport industry. It is extraordinary the people one meets day by day who, not even successful in their own sphere of activity, nevertheless feel certain beyond any peradventure that if only they could be placed in control of the trams, or trains, then all would be perfect, and the public would have to find something else to growl about. This obsession is all the more remarkable when those whose job it is remember the complex nature of the industry, of the problems, financial and operating, involved in excessive "peaks" of the difficulties encountered in framing schedules within the framework of awards which will at one and the same time obviate any undue strain on the staff and yet be economical in operation, of even the vast amount of organisation necessary in dealing systematically and efficiently with the thousand and one articles which come under the heading of stores and which are of the value of £142,000 on any one day.

Recently our amateur transport experts have been quite busy writing to the Press - one would have thought that the most appropriate person to receive such letters would have been the Chairman; but no, the itch for publicity must be satisfied - suggesting pre-paid tickets of all values. The writers of those letters have not the faintest idea of what the adoption of the suggestion would mean, so perhaps an examination of the ticket system would not be out of place.

An analysis of that system shows that pre-paid tickets are now being sold in the values of 1d., 2d. and 3d., the 1d. ticket being confined to the city proper, while the 2d. and 3d. tickets are available over the whole system and, with the exception of but 3 per cent., are purchased by large firms for the use of their employees while travelling on business. Now note that if the 2d. and 3d. tickets were issued and used by the public generally, and if the system of pre-paid tickets was extended so as to apply to fares of all denominations, the unfortunate conductors would have to carry, in addition to his bag, ticket wallet, journal cover, ticket punch, punch and ticket tin, anything from 100 to 150 sheets of these tickets.

There is even more to it than that, of course. When the conductor was being outfitted on going on duty, all those strips of tickets would have to be checked, causing all the men concerned, conductors and ticket clerks, to spend much more time at the counter. Additional ticket clerks would certainly be required. At the other

end of the day would come the counting and cancellation of the tickets. At present, approximately 20,000,000 pre-paid tickets are collected annually, and six girls at the Head Office are engaged fully all day in counting them. Assume that the trams and buses dealt with 320,000,000 passengers next year, and that half of that number purchased pre-paid tickets, there would thus be 160,000,000 tickets to count instead of the present 20,000,000 which would mean the employment of 42 additional girls and 20 additional revenue clerks.

Allied with the suggestion of pre-paid tickets of all values is the proposal that the tickets should be issued at a discount, say 10 per cent., in order to "encourage travel." As all available rolling stock is already running to capacity throughout the day, why the Board should seek to secure more passengers for less money is a minor mystery which the letter-to-the-editor gentlemen do not condescend to explain. Taking the proposal as it stands, however, let it be assumed that the 10 per cent. reduction in the price of the tickets would lead to a 5 per cent. reduction in revenue, there would be an annual loss to the Board of the substantial sum of £170,000. Add £9,000 as the cost of the tickets, and £14,000 for the additional girls and revenue clerks, and the total loss of revenue and increase in cost of operation would come to £193,000 per annum.

From this summarised view of the position, it is obvious that the disadvantages inherent in the mass issue of pre-paid tickets far outweighs any problematical slight advantage which might be gained by departing from the present ticket system.

MODERN LIGHTING INSTALLATIONS

The Board's Electrical Engineers were early in recognising the advantages of the electric discharge type of lamp for industrial lighting purposes. These lamps emit between two and three times as much light as can be obtained from incandescent filament lamps of equal wattage, and the colour and quality of their light is of material "seeing" advantage in the great majority of industrial lighting applications where colour discrimination is important.

As soon as mercury vapour discharge lamps and their associated equipment were available commercially in Victoria, our engineers illuminated the Brunswick Depot yard with this type of lighting. That was in 1936. The following year this lighting was installed indoors for general illumination of the Port Melbourne Bus Garage, then being built. As both these installations proved highly successful, the installation of discharge lighting in the Central Bus Garage as each section of the building was completed was the natural corollary. The Lighting and Power Branch is now completing the work of providing this lighting in the latest extension at the

Central Bus Garage.

It is interesting to note that in the Clock Repair Workshop at the Central Garage, where neither straight mercury discharge nor straight incandescent lighting would be entirely suitable for the fine work to be done, the engineers have provided artificial light of colour and quality very similar to daylight by installing lighting units which incorporate both mercury discharge lamps and incandescent lamps arranged in suitable wattage proportions.

When the installation has been completed in the Central Garage extension there will be 120 mercury vapour discharge lamps in use in the premises of the Board.

HIRE RATES FOR BUSES

In Great Britain there are what is known as mutual aid schemes, under which in the event of an emergency certain vehicles of one transport operator can be hired by another either by the day or by long term hire. Contrasting the rates which have been agreed upon with those which the Board towards the end of last year was prepared to pay private operators in Melbourne, when the need for additional buses for munition services was acute, it is found that there is a marked variation. While the Board offered from £6 to £10 per week according to the seating capacity, being responsible also for all proper maintenance, the British agreements provide for but £24 per calendar month for single deck buses, £25 for double-deck buses, and an additional 10/- per seat per month for buses having more than 56 seats. The maximum would thus be £32, as the largest buses are seated for 70, whereas under the Board's offer the private operators of Melbourne would have received more than £44 per month net.

THOSE SPORTS SPECIALS

"Many exist to trouble me; many there are who rise up against me," wrote the Psalmist, and doubtless on occasion the Chairman feels disposed to quote the words. His recent experience after getting 5/- each to all those who work race and football specials over their rostered time must have made him wonder whether it was worth while to think and plan for the betterment of the traffic staff. Sympathising with those whose leisure hours are cut into by being called on to work extra trips either before their normal turn of duty begins or after it ends, the Chairman thought of the measure of compensation and proposed to his colleagues on the Board that those concerned should have 5/- in addition to the customary penalty rates for calls-back and calls-forward. That motion was assented to at once, and the Secretary of the Employees' Association was notified the same evening, while an announcement appeared in the Press the following day.

It is more than probable that those who sacrificed 10/6 for the time involved forgot, or perhaps did not think, that the one and inevitable result would be to throw an added strain on their comrades operating the normal tables during the afternoon. That was precisely what happened. The usual services, plus specials from other depots, got the loading, and the crowds were taken to and from the races and football.

GAS COMPRESSION STATION

As generally known, ordinary town gas can be used as a substitute fuel in place of petrol for driving the internal combustion engines of motor cars. As the fuel tank on a bus or commercial lorry is of no use, the gas is compressed in steel cylinders to the high pressure of 3,000 lbs., or even more, per square inch, the cylinders being carried slung beneath the chassis. For the purpose of compressing the gas, the Board has practically completed the erection of a gas compression station at Clifton Hill where, oddly enough, the power necessary to compress the gas is obtained from electricity.

In this installation, the Lighting and Power Branch has installed two electric motors, one of 100 h.p., which drives the gas compressor, and one of 10 h.p. which drives the pump to circulate water for cooling the compressor, as considerable heat is generated in the process of compression. Despite their size, either motor can be started or stopped by simply pressing a button.

An interesting feature of the electric installation is that several safeguards, or electrical interlocks, have been provided. For instance, these interlocks make it impossible to start or run the compressor motor unless (a) the motor which drives the cooling water pump is running; (b) the pressure of gas in the supply main is up to a predetermined value. If the pressure in the steel bottles which contain the compressed gas should rise above a fixed limit, an electrical device will stop the compressor motor automatically. Whenever an electrical safeguard operates, it causes a corresponding signal lamp to light up so that the plant attendant is informed of what has happened immediately.

To guard against any possibility of an explosion by a mixture of gas and air being ignited through a defective electric bulb or socket, special flame-proof electric lighting units have been installed in the compressor and gas seal rooms.

Tramway Topics

The Official Bulletin of The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board

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Number 9

£17,648 FOR OUR SAILORS, SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN.

The Board's Splendid Gift

Up to the 30th June, 1941, employees of the Board who had served some portion of their time in the Navy, A.I.F., and R.A.A.F. overseas had been credited with War Savings Certificates at a cost of £9,274, the amounts varying in individual cases from £2 to £96. The employees concerned numbered 228. Of that number, three lost their lives, and their Certificates were handed over to their next of kin, while seven men who were discharged received their accumulated Certificates when they resumed work with the Board.

When the Board came to examine the position with the view of minimising the financial sacrifice being made by most of the employees now with the Forces, it was realised at once that the entry of Japan into the war, making Australia virtually a war area, had altered the line of demarcation between those who had enlisted for service abroad on the one hand, and those who had been called up, or who had joined specifically for, service within the territories of the Commonwealth, on the other. With men of the A.M.F. just as likely to see active service as those of the A.I.F. who have returned from the Middle East, it was felt that the only possible method of distributing the Certificates would be to make all alike, the sole distinction being that the members of the A.M.F. would participate from the 1st January last, while the Naval, A.I.F. and Air members would be credited with Certificates from the 1st July, 1941.

In all, 650 employees were involved, and the cost to the Board was £17,648. On the 30th June last, some men had as much as £148 in Certificates at their credit. With deferred pay, and the gratuity which will be presented by a grateful country, added, it means that the Board's employees who return to tramway work when peace reigns once more will do so very sound financially.

SCRAP METAL FROM STREETS Chicago Plan to Save Tyre Wear

Solomon gave it as his considered opinion that there is nothing new under the sun. Perhaps the remark applied to his age and cannot be given a modern application. Today, it is difficult to pick up a technical magazine devoted to the transport industry and not discover something new. Both in Australia and in the United States people are being exhorted to watch the tyre wear on their vehicles. To that end, and remembering how the pieces of scrap metal which are to be found in greater or less quantities on practically every paved surface are exceptionally injurious to tyres and are particularly hard on bus tyres, the Chicago Surface Lines has equipped one of its 26-passenger buses with a bus-width magnet bar suspended in front of the rear axle so as to hang 2 inches above the pavement. Energised by a set of batteries carried inside the bus, this bar magnet picks up hairpins, paper clips, nails, tacks, spikes, broken bolts, nuts and even segments of sharp tool instruments and broken metal parts.

Quite apart from the saving effected through the extension of the life of tyres, there is the tangible result of the recovery of usable metal, not such a negligible factor as one might suppose. For instance, in a trip of 158 miles, this magnet picked up no less than 1,200 lbs. of scrap metal! On one particular route serving a busy industrial district, the magnet got metal at the rate of 20 lbs. per mile.

RECORDS, RECORDS EVERYWHERE Features of Last Year's Operations

By running 2,848,551 additional miles and carrying 61,949,135 more passengers, the Board's trams and buses for the year which ended on the 30th June last earned £3,424,466, which was £661,459 above the record figure established the previous year.

The new high levels thus established are, of course, abnormal, indicative merely of the extraordinary growth of war time industries and of the consequent employment of many thousands of persons many of whom have come from districts far outside the metropolitan area. In two areas alone, for instance, the trams and buses transport daily more thousands than they did hundreds three years ago. It is doubtful if there are many people in Melbourne who would reply "True" to the statement that our trams and buses carry 115,000,000 more passengers than the State railways, and exceed the railway passenger mileage by almost 18,500,000 miles, yet here are the comparative figures:—

Trams and Buses		Railways
188 double, 7 single	Miles of Route	4,746
29,688,365	Mileage run (pass.)	11,193,831
£3,424,466	Passenger Revenue	£6,298,527
295,029,504	Passengers (State)	180,981,900

Power consumption figures are interesting. During the year the Board purchased 75,650,460 a.c. units at a cost of £220,834. When it is mentioned that it takes slightly more than one farthing to start a tram and to accelerate to 25 m.p.h., it will be realised that the reduction in the number of provisional stops will result in the saving of a few thousands of pounds, apart from the lessening of the strain and stress on the crews and the equipment of the trams and buses. There was a sub station efficiency of 90.94 per cent., while the car miles lost through S.E.C. power failures, sub-station and overhead faults came to but five.

With the tram building programme at our workshops slowed up through Defence Department contracts and new buses unobtainable, and with the tram, bus, truck and overhead overhaul and maintenance programme far behind schedule, depreciation proceeded throughout the year at a rate which caused the Board serious concern. Obviously the normal allowance for depreciation in peace time was totally inadequate for the abnormal conditions of war. Recognising that if adequate reserves were not built up during those war years of plenty it would be faced when peace came with an enormous bill for new trams and buses and track and overhead renewals which would necessitate borrowing, the Board decided to ask the Government to amend the Tramways Act so as to give the necessary authority to set aside up to 9 per cent of the capital value of the undertaking to the Renewals Reserve Fund instead of 6 per cent. Recognising the prudent forethought behind the proposal, the Government introduced an amending Bill. During its progress through the Council and the Assembly every speaker practically paid tribute to the Board and its staff for the manner in which the service is conducted and run—tributes which are as gratifying to the

Board as they must be to the staff. For the duration of the war, therefore, and for one year thereafter, the larger contributions to the Renewals Reserve Fund will accumulate—they will be invested in the War Loans—and will when peace returns constitute a fund which will be sufficient to finance the building of new trams, the purchase of new buses, the re-construction of the track, the renewal of overhead and the taking up of the old cable lines with the consequent restoration of the streets. Incidentally the old cable rails now lying in 14 miles of roadway weigh 5,000 tons.

Under this amendment the Board has been able to appropriate £736,076 to the Renewals Reserve Fund as compared with £475,543 the previous year. When that had been done, there remained a surplus of £50,000, the whole of which has been distributed among the 30 municipalities referred to in Section 76 of the Tramways Act. Each of the 20 councils in whose areas the tram and bus mileage exceeded 250,000 received £2,250, while the four municipalities with a less mileage and the six with none divided the remaining £5,000 on a population and valuation basis.

BUS QUEUES ENFORCED

With the entry into force of the Regulation of Traffic (Formation of Queues) Order, 1942, by the Minister of War Transport in Great Britain, the rule, which was in operation in several cities through municipal by-law, that people waiting at a stopping place, stand or terminus for a tram, bus or trolley-bus, must form a queue not more than two abreast as soon as six or more are waiting, was applied to the whole country. Intending passengers must keep their places in the queue, while an appropriate penalty is provided for those who attempt to board a vehicle out of turn.

With an ingrained sense of discipline and good order, it is easy to imagine the people of Britain obeying the order in phlegmatic calm; but to try to visualise such a happening in Melbourne is the equivalent of believing in the age of miracles.

PRODUCER GAS

Vehicle Designed Specially For Its Use

In the June issue, it was mentioned that the Chairman of Thomas Tilling Ltd., the largest road transport concern in the world, had expressed the opinion that producer gas would never be satisfactory until a chassis and engine had been designed specially for its use. Sir Frederick Heaton went on to say that the company's engineers were working on the problem. Apparently they have worked to some purpose, for towards the end of May the Minister of War Transport (Lord Leathers) inspected a vehicle

designed specially for producer gas operation within the scope of the Ministry's regulations for self-contained producer-gas vehicles. The chief engineer of the company is the designer of the producer outfit and of the water-washer equipment by which the gas is filtered, and he is also the originator of upper cylinder lubrication and anthracite activation, to which so much of the success of the Tilling experiment with buses was due. The Tilling experiments and tests have extended over four years at a cost which only a company of the financial size of Tillings could stand.

Several of the improvements are the direct result of the experience of a year in operating eight service buses, and all are an indication of the expenses which arise, even when vehicles are subjected to a strict maintenance and inspection routine, through the rapid deterioration of the producer-gas equipment. It was found, for instance, that cooler boxes burned out within a year, while water filters went just over that period before serious corrosion set in. In the cooler boxes, plate of a heavier section is now being used, while for the filters zinc strips have been incorporated to prolong their life. An inclined tuyere with a firebox of heat-resisting steel and the bolting on of fire doors and hopper lids are other innovations in the design.

Twenty of the buses based on the eastern area of the London Passenger Transport Board have been converted to the Tilling equipment and are now in service. It is calculated that on an annual mileage of 50,000, approximately 8,750 gallons of fuel will be saved per bus per annum.

SUGGESTIONS REWARDED

As their receipt postulates interest in the undertaking which employs them, the Chairman continues to be gratified by suggestions for improvements from members of the staff. Naturally, many an idea seemingly feasible in theory succumbs to the test of practicability; but two suggestions recently were adopted and rewarded with cheques, together with letters conveying the appreciation of the Chairman.

Mr. E. Blatchford, of the Roster Department, produced an excellent idea in connection with the window blinds for the "brown-out," while Ganger Drinnan, of the Per. Way Branch, made a cheap, simple and effective shield for hurricane lamps—200 of these are used on permanent way works—which secured the approval of the police.

BUSES ARE HARD-WORKED IN SCOTLAND

Speaking at a press conference held in Edinburgh,

the Scottish Regional Transport Commissioner said that before the war there were in Scotland about 45,000 goods vehicles in operation, while today there were approximately 36,000. There were 6,000 buses pre-war, while now there were between 5,200 and 5,300.

Despite the reduction in numbers, these buses were carrying between 25 and 30 per cent. more people, and the average journey taken per passenger was longer, while the fuel consumption was down by about 15 per cent. To add to the problem, the peak figures were more pronounced, and they had been unable to secure a staggering of hours of work to anything like the extent they had hoped.

"STAGGERED" HOURS

How the System Works in London

In a recent issue, some details were given of the "staggering" of hours in industrial London, and it was mentioned that there are now more than half a million workers concerned. As the subject is of general as well as of particular interest to us all in view of the fact that schemes similar to those adopted in London would benefit workers and tram crews alike here in Melbourne, no excuse is necessary for publishing additional information on the subject.

There is nothing haphazard about the planning of those "staggered" hours. Before a single scheme was put into force all the statistical data necessary had been collected, and the information available was handed to local bodies set up in each important industrial district. Thirty-five such bodies are now functioning, their sole aim being the consideration of the traffic problems peculiar to each district. A typical group organisation consists of the leader, a representative from each factory, officials of the trade unions concerned, factory inspectors, and the local officers of the London Passenger Transport Board.

Twenty-two "staggered" hours schemes are in operation. Without exception, all have resulted in less waiting, less congestion, speedier journeys, greater safety and comfort, and therefore, of course, less fatigue. Instead of everybody crowding the trains, buses and trams in order to "clock in" at 8, work is so arranged that part of the staff arrive at 7, 7.15, 7.30, 7.45, 8, 8.15 and 8.45 without loss in output and efficiency. As the length of the shifts has remained unchanged, the spread of demand for seats in the morning is repeated in the evening, thus improving conditions at both ends of the day, and at the same time easing the task of transport operators. The figures which follow graphically portray the help afforded by staggering in the case of a group of factories in East London:—

	No. of Workers Arriving	
	Old Rate	New Rate
7.00 a.m.	302	302
7.15 a.m.	—	3,000
7.30 a.m.	5,514	2,514
7.45 a.m.	56	3,556
8.00 a.m.	6,337	2,067
8.15 a.m.	—	870
8.45 a.m.	900	900

Incidentally, "Modern Transport" remarks in recording those figures, that apart from improving travel facilities, the meetings between transport executives, factory managements and trade unions have produced other useful results... Suggestions regarding the services have been made and adopted, and assurances given that in future working hours will not be changed suddenly without consulting the transport officials first.

BUT THE IDEA WAS REWARDED!

Recently there was a growl from Essendon that no official recognition had been taken of the device of Conductor R. Howling for the illumination of the cash bag by a small electric torch and battery.

This idea originated with Mr. L. H. Grigg, then a conductor at Hawthorn, and was submitted by him to the Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) so far back as October, 1941. On the following 20th November, Mr. Grigg, who resigned on the 30th December, was rewarded with a cheque for £5/5/-.

A SEATLESS TRAM

As a war time measure, a seatless tram to hold 100 standing passengers is being tried out in Santiago, Chile.

We can well imagine those unfortunates who live in the vicinity of St. Kilda Road commenting sourly that so far as they are concerned the seatless tram arrived in Melbourne long, long ago!

TRUTH IN TRANSPORT

How Delusions Are Perpetuated

The ease with which a falsehood, repeated sufficiently loudly and often, can come to be accepted as truth is well exemplified in certain oft-repeated assertions by writers on transport history. In some cases, an early historian made an assumption on insufficient data, and later writers, lacking either the energy or the opportunity to make original researches and so verify the statement, repeated the error, while in others the real facts have been dis-

torted deliberately for commercial purposes.

Into the former category falls the alleged illustration of Train's tramway of 1861 at the Marble Arch, London, showing a double-deck tram. Actually this picture was merely the illustration which Train had used to decorate the card of invitation to the banquet he gave to celebrate the inauguration of his Birkenhead tramway on the 30th August of the previous year! It was the fanciful picture of a hope which was never realised to the full. The Marble Arch line was opened on the 23rd March, 1861, and its single-deck car was duly sketched in the "Illustrated London News." Yet just five years ago no less distinguished a newspaper than "The Times" reproduced Train's imaginative drawing as the actual Marble Arch vehicle, while more recently a technical journal, which ought to have known better, repeated the mistake.

At the Birkenhead function, Train claimed that his Birkenhead line was the first street railway in Europe. The extraordinary thing was that his word was accepted as gospel, although the Liverpool dock tramway just a few miles away had been opened a year earlier. Train's assertion was even more absurd from the European point of view, for a horse tramway ran through the streets of Vienna as early as 1840, while an omnibus on flanged wheels and rails appeared in Paris in 1853. The tramway from the Louvre to Versailles was inaugurated on the 1st November, 1856, years before Train with his "go-getter" methods crossed the Atlantic to build the Birkenhead line. There was even in 1857 the grandiose Central London tramway scheme, which was, however, soon abandoned.

Incidentally, the Versailles line was converted into steam in 1896, and electrified in 1906. It was the last east-west tram route to be changed into bus operation, the date being the 13th August, 1934, and therefore its overall life was 78 years, or nine months longer than the Birkenhead system, which was closed finally as a tramway on the 17th July, 1937.

WOMEN IN TRANSPORT

At the end of June last, more than one-third of the conductors employed by the London Passenger Transport Board were women, the totals in the various sections being:—

	Men	Women
Central Buses	7,237	3,046
Trams and Trolley Buses	3,645	1,921
Country Buses	371	1,842

Tramway Topics

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CHRISTMAS AND 1943

A Message from the Chairman

Once again it is my privilege to convey to the Staff on behalf of the Board and myself good wishes for Christmas and 1943.

The year which will end so soon has been one of strain for us all. Leisure has been difficult to get: opportunities for relaxation and recreation have been few. But, speaking generally, we have carried on, recognising that anything we have had to put up with is as nothing compared to what has been endured so cheerfully and so pluckily by those members of the Staff who have given an added lustre to the name of Australia by their deeds on the desert of Libya and in the jungles of New Guinea.

And we have done a good job. Our vehicles ran just on 3,000,000 more miles than last year, and we carried 62,000,000 additional passengers. Our revenue reached a new high record, and out of each £1 earned, 8/1, or 44.445 per cent., went to the Staff. We put 23 per cent. into Reserve Funds, so that when the war ends we shall have, without borrowing, ample funds to tackle our arrears of maintenance and renewals, to take up the old cable rails and restore the streets, and to replace depreciated rolling stock and so ensure profitable employment during the post-war period when conditions may be difficult.

It is not to be expected that the traffic demands of the Metropolis during 1943 will be any easier to meet than they have been during 1942; but I am certain that we shall all try our best to give the service demanded of us by the public, remembering that by conveying people to work swiftly and safely we are doing our very necessary share in the national war effort.

The best of luck to you all.

H. H. BELL,
Chairman.

THE GIFT TO THE STATE'S REVENUE

Although there is now no payment to the Consolidated Revenue of the State for the Licensing Fund, the annual contribution in respect of the payments to the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and the Infectious Diseases Hospital show no sign of lessening; on the contrary they continue to advance.

For the current year, the gift to the State will be £119,443, an increase of £4015 compared with 1941-42, and so is mounting steadily to the record set up in 1938, £125,700. As the last-mentioned total included £22,238 for the Licensing Fund, it follows that this year's payment for the Fire Brigade and the Hospital is £16,081 greater than in 1938.

ALL ARE NOW INSURED

Under the Workers' Compensation (Amendment) Act, No. 4814, the powers of the State Accident Insurance Office were extended to cover officers and employees of Government Departments and Public Bodies whose earnings exceed £400 per annum against personal injury arising out of their employment.

The Board has taken advantage of this amendment, with the result that six manual workers and 335 non-manual workers not hitherto covered by the Workers' Compensation Insurance are now insured against accident arising out of their employment.

INSPECTOR MIDWINTER RETIRES

Early this month, after more than 30 years' service in the undertaking, Inspector Midwinter retired on reaching the age of 65 years.

Inspector Midwinter has been a popular and an efficient officer, and all join in expressing the hope that many years of pleasureable leisure are in front of him. To their thanks for his loyal service and good wishes for his future, the Board added a retiring gratuity cheque for £569.

COSTLY BUS SERVICES

Commonwealth Contribution Desired

When the Board responded to the appeals for more and still more transport to the munition plants, it did so knowing well that the situations of those establishments, far from busy routes where short-haul traffic is appreciable outside the "peaks," would make profitable running impossible. It is a characteristic of this traffic that peaks of extreme violence alternate with hours of deadly dullness; so much so that any private citizen with business at "The Bend," for instance, is apt to imagine when he boards one of our buses that he has engaged a large vehicle for his own personal use! Frequently the driver has not even the consolation of a single passenger.

The anticipation that a loss would be suffered has been more than fulfilled, for the Chairman has revealed that for the year which ended on the 30th June last the debit on those bus services was no less than £40,000. While anxious to do everything possible to provide a transport service which will assist the output of munitions, the Board believes that the loss of such a large sum is not one which it can reasonably be expected to meet, more especially when it is remembered that the peak conditions are resulting in depreciation at a rate which will soon wipe out many of the buses as effective units, and that at a time when replacements will be difficult to procure.

With these facts in mind, the Board has now decided to request the Commonwealth Government to consider making some contribution towards the heavy costs of the services.

OUR CLOTHING WORKROOM

A Successful Achievement

When shortly before the war the Commonwealth Clothing Factory was compelled to refuse further orders from the Board for uniforms, and when contracts placed privately were a source of considerable worry and dissatisfaction, it was decided, not without some misgiving, to inaugurate a clothing workroom for ourselves.

After the initial teething troubles inevitable to such a departure had been overcome, the factory, established in the Hawthorn Depot, began to function with ever-increasing smoothness, efficiency and economy; in fact, the savings achieved in production costs as compared with the prices which would have had to be paid outside were nothing short of amazing, and made one wonder why private firms in the clothing trade had "passed up" such a lucrative piece of business.

Last year—meaning the year which ended on the 30th June last—owing to the employment of con-

ductresses, the number of garments made in the workroom increased to a total of 8,167. Our designs for the uniforms and coats of the conductresses provoked comment everywhere, and the illustrations published in the daily and the weekly pictorial Press were so attractive that, on request, we supplied samples to the Brisbane Tramways Department, the Adelaide Municipal Tramways Trust, the Postmaster-General's Department, the South Australian Railways, the State Electricity Commission, the Victorian Railways, the Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply of Western Australia, and the Victorian Police.

Included in that total of 8,167 are 2,763 pairs of trousers, 2,175 coats for drivers and conductors, 958 khaki coats, 645 coats and skirts, 362 overcoats, 290 overcoats for conductresses, 200 overalls, 197 linen blouses, 183 brown overcoats, 136 forage caps, and 100 pairs green trousers. The number of garments returned to the workroom for minor adjustments was but 3 per cent.

Anxious that the smart appearance of the ladies should be maintained, the Board has now made arrangements for the sale of an extra blouse at the price, including tax, of 14/3. Bought retail, the cost of the garment is 22/6, so the ladies are getting a bargain.

TRAMWAY TO THE AERODROME

In the near future it is expected that a beginning will be made with the construction of the new tramway to the Aerodrome, various arrangements with the Commonwealth Government having been completed.

Starting from the present terminus in Keilor Road at Birdwood Street, the line will run via Keilor Road, Matthews Avenue, Niddrie Street and Vaughan Street to the new entrance to the Aerodrome, a distance of approximately one and a half miles. With the exception of that portion in Keilor Road, the type of construction will be of the open ballast style.

In order that the line may be completed within five months of the start of construction, the Board is making application to the Allied Works Council for additional labour.

PAY DAY NEXT WEDNESDAY

With Christmas falling on a Friday, practically no time is left for that last-minute shopping inevitable when extra provision has to be made against closed shops during the holidays.

Instructions have been given, therefore, for all wages to be paid on Wednesday, 23rd inst., instead of on the Thursday.

FOR EMPLOYEES ON SERVICE

Series of Gifts from the Board

At its first meeting this month, the Board dealt generously with those members of the Staff who are on service with the Forces.

First of all, the Board took up the question of augmenting the service pay of those who are now with the Navy, the A.I.F., the R.A.A.F., and the C.M.F., and had much pleasure in resolving that for the year which will end on the 30th June, 1943, each man's account will be credited with the equivalent of one £1 War Savings Certificate per week from the 1st July last, or subsequent date of enlistment.

The Certificates, the cost of which during the year is expected to reach approximately £40,000, will be purchased by the Board and held for distribution on presentation of a satisfactory discharge from the Forces, provided, of course, that the employees return to the Board's service within one month of discharge or are certified as incapacitated for further duty with the undertaking. In the case of death on active service, the accumulated Certificates will be presented to the widow or dependants at the discretion of the Board.

The Hon. Secretary of the Tramways Employees Comforts Fund intimated that parcels of comforts have been forwarded to 172 employees. As, however, knitted goods are not now obtainable for parcels, the Committee felt that the only solution of the problem of giving some Christmas remembrance to the remaining 692 was to purchase Canteen Orders. The difficulty there was that the Committee had but £184 in hand. Would the Board help by giving a donation which would enable the Committee to send a 10/ Canteen Order to each man? The Board could, and would, and promptly passed a resolution agreeing to give a donation up to £200 for that purpose.

Finally, the Board, anxious to make an additional gesture of goodwill to the men with the Forces, decided that in respect of each employee who prior to the 1st August last was, and still is, on service, a Christmas gift of £2 be given.

As most of those serving are now far from Melbourne, it was directed that where possible the amount be paid direct to the wife or dependant of the employee on production of the allotment card, except in those cases where the wives are employed also by the Board. There the £2 will be credited to the account of the men concerned pending their return.

CHANGES AT HEAD OFFICE

So many and so frequent are the changes in the Staff at Head Office nowadays that old hands can be observed wandering around wondering obviously, as they see the new faces, if they are not in the wrong building.

Not a few of the changes have come about through marriage. In recent weeks Miss June Widows has left to be married, and will proceed in the near future with her husband to take up missionary work in Central Africa; Mrs Steel (Joyce Ross) has gone to another State to join her husband, who has returned after valiant service on a Sunderland flying boat and has been appointed an instructor in the R.A.A.F. Mrs J. E. Suckling (Joyce Stevens) has taken up residence at Mornington so as to be near her soldier husband; Miss B. Kewley was married on the 3rd inst. to A.C.1 L. S. Lister, while Miss V. Varcoe is now the wife of A.C.1 D. Baker-Smith.

EXPENSIVE TRANSGRESSIONS

Occasionally the transgressor against our laws finds his ways expensive. As the result of an incident on a Northcote bus, on the evening of the 3rd December, J. Griffiths, 20 Buller Street, Preston, appeared at the Northcote Police Court the following morning and was fined £2, or five days' imprisonment, for offensive behaviour; £5, or one month, for having resisted arrest, and £3, or seven days', for indecent language—just an even £10.

VEGETABLES FOR THE HOSPITALS

A New Use for Wattle Park

Early in the year the Chairman anticipated that vegetables would be both scarce and dear in the Spring, and, realising the handicap to which the hospitals would be subjected, he gave orders for the abandonment of the usual floral and planting programme at Wattle Park, the depleted staff to concentrate on the growing of vegetables.

On a quarter of an acre hundreds of cabbages, turnips and carrots flourished and were in due course distributed between the public hospitals, while from one-eighth of an acre there was recently harvested 22 cwt. of fine onions averaging just on 1 lb. each and the heaviest weighing 1 lb. 5½ oz. The Royal Melbourne, Alfred, Prince Henry and St. Vincent's received three bags each, while two bags were given to the Women's and Children's Hospitals.

In the nurseries, plants of the same vegetables are being propagated for seed, which will be distributed during the summer.

Appreciative letters from the various hospitals have been received by the Chairman.

THE MALVERN INCIDENT

A Vote for the Union Executive

Little appreciation of the difficulties being faced by their Executive and their officials was shown by those members of the Australian Tramway and Omnibus Employees' Association who decided on the 30th November to hold a "stop-work" meeting on the afternoon of the 5th inst. as a protest against the new roster to come into force on the 6th.

It was only after the most urgent representations and arguments that the Man-Power people agreed reluctantly to a week of 52 hours, and then they took a good deal of convincing before recognising that the peculiarities of the traffic demands are such that, in the case of the Malvern Depot, it was not practicable to get closer to 52 hours than the average time shown on the rosters, 47 hours 49 minutes.

Fortunately, the good sense of the bulk of the members at Malvern, shown by the secret ballot on the 4th, disposed of a threat which would have recoiled not only against those who made it but against all the employees in all depots. By this time it should be recognised that it is quite futile to "kick against the pricks"; it is better far to accept such arrangements as can be secured jointly by the Board and the Executive from the Man-Power Authorities, remembering that it is well "to agree with thine adversary quickly when he is in the way with thee, lest worst befall thee."

"AUSTERITY" BUS BODY

A Saving of £464 Achieved

Designed and built at our Workshops, the new "austerity" bus body was the subject of much favourable comment when inspected early this month by the Federal Minister of Transport (Mr Lawson), the Director-General of Transport (Sir Harold Clapp), and the Director of Road Transport (Mr Mountjoy), on the invitation of the Chairman of the Board (Mr Bell).

Hitherto the standard bus body cost £990 with cross seats. The general outline entailed much panel beating to form the curved dome at the rear and round the destination sign, all of which involved considerable labour and so added materially to the cost. When, due to the growth of munition-making establishments, bus bodies were required urgently, the only rapid way of dealing with the situation was to build a canvas-covered body of timber Masonite. That was but a temporary expedient, and it was recognised that the life of such bodies would be short. With the idea of getting a body which would still be fit for general service after the war is over, the Chairman ordered the designing of a body

which, while following the outline of the munition body, would be finished with steel panels. When completed, the design showed that all curves involving panel beating had been eliminated, that only two of the windows on each side are moveable and that the seats, while padded on springs, are of the longitudinal instead of the cross type.

With the body completely glazed over in green and cream, the whole result is most pleasing, while as the cost has been reduced to £527—a saving of £464 per body—the description of "austerity" is well deserved.

RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES

During recent weeks the Board has voted quite a number of gratuities. Those who have retired from the service either from reaching the age limit, through resignation, or from, unfortunately, bad health, are as under:—

C. A. B. Saunders, 45 years, 16 years' service, medically unfit, £171/4/.

Conductor H. S. Ryder, 62 years, 38 years' service, resigned, £291/4/.

Inspector John Davies, 61 years, 21 years' service, retired, £306/12/.

Driver R. Allen, 65 years, 21 years' service, £436/16/.

Driver F. B. Bengtsson, 60 years, 29½ years' service, £291/4/.

Mrs B. T. Ring, H.Q. Cleaning Staff, 68 years, 18½ years' service, £100.

Conductor W. H. Holmes, aged 53 years, 33 years' service, medically unfit, £218/8/.

Conductor G. H. Roach, 62 years, 27 years' service, £291/4/.

Storeman E. T. Newton, 65 years, 40 years' service, £499/4/.

Track Repairer W. Atkinson, 67 years, 43 years' service, £483/12/.

Conductor D. Muir, 49 years, 21 years' service, medically unfit, £224/5/.

Bodymaker A. J. L. Doubleday, 65 years, 20 years' service, £495/6/.

Death gratuities were voted as follows:—

Mrs G. E. Nicholls, widow of the late Driver Nicholls, 51 years, 17 years' service, £190/8/.

Mrs W. Kidd, widow of the late Welder Kidd, 50 years, 19 years' service, £207/2/.

Mrs B. A. Wylie, widow of the late Carpenter Wylie, 51 years, 25 years' service, £239/17/.

Mrs J. Henry, widow of the late Bodymaker Henry, 60 years, 34 years' service, £322/8/.

Mrs J. C. Fuller, widow of the late Car Painter Fuller, 59 years, 15 years' service, £181/10/.

Tramway Topics

The Official Bulletin of The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board

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UNPUNCTUALITY IS A VICE

Leading to Inconvenience and Loss

It is extraordinary how few women can be brought to realise the importance of punctuality. To be late for an appointment is, to say the least, rude; but to be late when you are the member of a transport organisation, the efficient working of which depends in the highest degree upon punctuality, is a vice which not only upsets carefully-compiled rosters but brings inconvenience, loss, delay and irritation to one's fellow workers and the public.

Unpunctuality is one of Australia's bad habits—nearly every function from a church service to a race at Flemington, from a private bridge evening to a Sunday School picnic, starts behind the set time—and in the last few months, so far as the Board's undertaking is concerned, the evil has grown enormously, resulting in a substantial loss of revenue as well as justifiable resentment on the part of those inconvenienced.

As an instance of what is happening daily, the case of one depot alone may be cited. On a recent Saturday no fewer than 30 employees were either so late for duty, or failed to report at all, that two City-St. Kilda Beach and seven Fitzroy trips had to be cancelled. With unpunctuality and absenteeism prevailing in the other depots, though not to the extent of that quoted, it can be realised easily how great is the loss and inconvenience entailed.

To deal with similar faults in England, the "Workers' Court" system has been established. In transport concerns, these courts are composed of representatives of the operating and running shed and garage employees, with a member of the official staff, and since their institution considerable improvement has been noticed, perhaps because these tribunals are more severe in the penalties they impose than Disciplinary Officers would dare be!

BUS PLATFORM ACCIDENTS

What An Officious Passenger Did

In the Court of Appeal, England, Lord Justice du Parcq expressed his desire for the passing of a bye-law making it an offence for any passenger to give the signal to start a bus or tram.

The case before the Court was one in which, while the conductress of a double-deck bus belonging to the South Lancashire Transport Co. was on the upper deck, a passenger rang the bell for the bus to stop. As it slowed up, he jumped off after giving two rings for the vehicle to proceed. A woman who had followed the man downstairs and wished to alight at the same stop, attempted to do so as the driver responded to the start signal. The woman fell and was injured before the conductress had had any opportunity to prevent the occurrence.

On her action for damages, Mr. Justice Wrottesley held that the conductress had been guilty of an error of judgment, and awarded the woman £150 damages. The Company appealed successfully. Lord Justice Mackinnon said that the appeal must be allowed, as the conductress could not have prevented the accident because the male passenger had rung the bell twice before she could stop him. Lord Justice Goddard agreed, and commented on the action of the "officious passenger."

While the accident was undoubtedly the result of the passenger usurping the function of the conductress, and incidentally was contributed to by the woman herself by breaking the bye-law prohibiting passengers leaving vehicles while they are still in motion, transport concerns all over the world invite trouble in this connection by acquiescing in, indeed encouraging, passengers to give the stop signal. If control over the vehicle is thus partially surrendered, it is but a step to lose all control through the action of officious people in giving the start signal. Logic-

ally, therefore, the better solution would be to abolish the instruction to the public, "To stop the bus pull the cord once," and frame a bye-law making it an offence for any passenger to interfere with either the stopping or the starting signals.

NEW BERLIN TRAM

One-Way Passenger Movement

An unusual type of tramcar has been introduced on the city network of Berlin. It has been designed to facilitate the one-way movement of passengers entering and leaving the tram. The entrance is on the rear platform, and persons reach the saloon by passing a booking window, behind which the conductor sits. They leave the tram through the central and front doors. An exception is made for passengers with heavy luggage or perambulators, who travel on the rear platform and may leave by the way they came. As the result of the new, distinctive color scheme which has been adopted, the Berlin public has named the tram "Apfelsinchen," which, freely translated, means "The Tangerine."

LEAVE FOR DAILY PAID EMPLOYEES

In reply to requests made recently by a deputation headed by the Assistant Secretary of the Trades Hall Council (Mr. F. Katz), the Board has replied:—

(1) That it is unable to vary the sick pay conditions requiring an employee to furnish a medical certificate for absence on sick leave for one day; and

(2) That the daily-paid employees in the electric running sheds, bus garages and the Permanent Way (approximately 80), who are ordinarily called upon to work on public holidays at time and a half rates, but who do not share Saturday afternoon or Sunday work, be granted 6 days' annual leave and one half-day's leave for each public holiday worked, in lieu of the existing conditions, 6 days' annual leave and one day's good conduct leave.

THE PUNISHMENT

A correspondent thinks one funny anecdote should be published in each issue, and suggests a start should be made with the following:—

"Mr. Rothschild and his son were waiting to get on a bus. When the vehicle arrived, with the loading platform as usual packed, the couple were elbowed aside forcibly by a powerful labourer, and the bus went on without them. 'Wasn't that man very rude, Daddy?' asked the son, 'Will God punish him?' 'God has already punished him,' said the father, piously, 'I have got his watch!'

It seems to us that there is a moral lurking somewhere in that story, if only we could get on to it.

WEEKLY — OR AT CHRISTMAS

The Question of the Bonus

Various correspondents in "The Tramway Record" have expressed disappointment over the non-arrival "of our Christmas bonus."

While the Chairman (Mr. H. H. Bell) is loathe to answer articles appearing in the Tramway Association's journal, he is so anxious that there should be no misunderstanding regarding this matter that he desires it to be known that the question of a bonus was occupying the minds of the members of the Board when the discussions over the proposed variation in the Tramways Award were proceeding eight months ago.

In June, the Board, determined that all employees should receive some share of the expanding revenue, came to the conclusion that a steady weekly increment would be preferable to a bonus at Christmas. In that belief, on the 2nd July, in Clause E of their communication to the President (Mr. Cousland) and the senior officers of the Association, the Board offered a bonus of 5/ per week to all adult male employees and conductresses "for the duration of the war," juniors and other female employees to receive 2/6 per week.

This offer of a weekly bonus, which was accepted gratefully, was made retrospective to the first pay period in June, so that during the last seven months of 1942 the adult staff received in the aggregate £7/10/ as compared with £3, the amount of the Christmas box given in 1941. In a full year the bonus will amount to £13, which is surely better than receiving £3 in a lump sum at Christmas. And it may be noted in passing that while all employees now serving in the Forces are being credited with a £1 War Savings Certificate each week, the Board added to this by voting a gift of £2 to each individual, the money being paid at Christmas to the wives or next-of-kin. Since the W.S.C. plan was put into operation, the Certificates handed either to the men themselves on leaving the Forces, or their next-of-kin, have in the 20 cases so far dealt with numbered:—55, 93, 48, 53, 52, 55, 92, 113, 54, 45; 55, 92, 106, 64, 19, 26, 26, 107, 108 and 33.

Including this weekly bonus, the cost to the Board of the different variations in the Award—reduction of meal relief spread, the standardisation of the signing-off time at 15 minutes, penalty rates for the spread of hours and extension of sick pay—will amount to approximately £100,000 in a full year, a sum which expresses with some emphasis the desire of the Chairman and his colleagues on the Board that the employees should receive a substantial

share of the increased revenue now being earned by the undertaking.

There is no point in the assertion by one correspondent that the payment to the Government of £115,000 (not £125,000, as stated erroneously) for the Fire Brigades Board and the Infectious Diseases Hospital made the case for a Christmas bonus "all the more acute," as that sum, in accordance with the Tramways Act, would have had to be paid whatever the state of the revenue or of the Board's general financial position.

THE COMFORTS FUND

Canteen Orders Acknowledged

The Hon. Secretary of the Comforts Fund (Miss G. Watt) reports that up to date 1032 Canteen Orders have been sent to 560 of the staff serving with the Forces. Those who had not previously received a parcel of comforts got two 5/ Orders each, while those who had received parcels had Orders for 2/. Hundreds of letters of thanks have come to hand from the men from all parts of Australia and from the various war zones. The extracts given below are typical:—

S/Sgt. K. Onley, Somewhere in Australia:—"I wish to express my sincere thanks to you and the members of the Employees' Comforts Fund for the Canteen Orders I received yesterday. 'I certainly made quick use of them by obtaining a pair of rubber boots, and tonight as I sit here in the mess, with perfectly dry feet, the first time for a considerable number of days, you can be sure that I am very grateful to you all. It is rather a strange story about these boots. Where we are stationed at the present time money is of very little use to us, and only on rare occasions do I draw money on pay days. It so happened that these particular rubber boots were made available in the canteen, when I was caught puzzling how I was going to get the funds to obtain them before the supply ran out. Then I received your letter, dashed off to buy them, and now I am the envy of all my cobbles and can walk about in a little comfort. I could write you pages of interesting reading of the places I have been in since I left Hanna Street Depot, but being in a forward area I am afraid I must limit my remarks for the time being to the fact that until you travel around this country of ours you don't realise what a wonderful heritage we have."

Pte. Fraser Donaldson:—"Yesterday I had quite a surprise when I received the letter and Canteen Orders from the Comforts Fund. For the past month I was 'up top,' and had a pretty torrid time. I spent Christmas in hospital, but am now back at the old address. We had neither cigarettes nor soap. On arriving back, naturally with no ready cash, I found

I could buy almost everything, so the Canteen Orders came in the nick of time. I did appreciate this gesture. Please give my thanks to all concerned in this effort of yours. Such a gift gives one a thrill, as it makes us realise that those at home are backing us up. I came back from the jungle rather a sorry sight, still fairly sick. I had tropical sores, and hadn't had a haircut for five weeks. I doubt if you would have recognised me. However, I am much better now and enjoying comparative comfort, which is quite a change, especially sleeping in dry blankets and having no mud or slush."

L.A.C. G. D. Williams, R.A.A.F.:—"It is with much pleasure that I write acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 7th December enclosing Canteen Orders. Although the gift is much appreciated, and will be put to full use, I really received more kick out of the thought that we, who have joined up and are away, have not been forgotten by our fellow workers. It gives one encouragement to go on and put everything into the effort of getting the best out of our planes to defeat the enemy so that we may return to the happy life we left. Please convey to your Committee the thanks that I feel for the work they are doing to show that we are remembered."

THAT MONEY-FROM-USED-TICKETS YARN EXPOSED

When some people get an idea into their heads, dynamite itself can scarcely effect its removal. In recent weeks a number of persons have been seized with the notion that a small fortune could be made yearly by recovering the tickets used on our trams and buses, and their conviction on the subject hardened when they read of the effusion of one incurable letter-to-the-editor addict that the Glasgow Corporation Transport Department realised "many thousands of pounds" each year from this source. Had any one of those pests taken the trouble of weighing 100 tickets it would have realised at once that the assertion was fantastic in its stupidity.

What is the truth about this money-from-used-tickets story? Could the Board make a lot of cash from their collection and sale? Does Glasgow make many thousands, or even £1000, yearly? The answer, as is said in the best Parliamentary circles, is in the negative. Glasgow uses approximately 70 tons of paper a year in tram and bus tickets. If every one were recovered, the Transport Department would be lucky if it made a net gain of £35.

Here in Melbourne, for the year 1941-42, we used something like 46 tons of paper. As the value of used tickets as scrap is £1 a ton, it follows that if we could recover each ticket issued we would, after paying for collection and baling, possibly add £30 to the Board's revenue.

It is not anticipated that even these hard facts will "kill" the story, for the inveterate letter-to-the-editor gentleman is irrepressible; knock him down over one thing and he will bob up the next week with something else—probably a letter telling the Board that it could make £50,000 or so by selling the cable rails still in certain streets. Now that we think of it, the resurrection of that yarn is almost overdue; it is three months since it had an airing!

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

During the last six weeks, 117 persons (of whom 103 were conductresses) joined the staff, and 58 (45 conductresses) left. The details are:—

Joined:—Traffic, 103; Secretary's, 7; Bus, 5; Permanent Way, 1; Distribution, 1.

Left:—Traffic, 45; Secretary's, 7; Bus, 2; Preston Workshops, 1; Building, 2; deceased, 1.

ITEMS FROM OUTSIDE

Despairing of getting buses from England, the Cape Electric Co., Ltd., has placed an order for 20 single-deck buses in the United States. For all the chance they have of getting that order fulfilled, they might just as well have placed it in Australia.

"Yes," said the London conductor, "the black-out's rough on us; people keep giving me two half-crowns for tuppence!" We know some conductors in a certain Australian city whose grouch it was when the brown-out was initiated that quite a few passengers passed up half-pennies under the "impression" that they were shillings!

General Motors (Switzerland) have developed an acetylene generating equipment for motor-cars, and are now able to convert seven motor-cars per day to the use of that gas, "which can give very good results, if strict attention is given to the service instructions." The qualification expressed in the last nine words of that sentence is significant.

A new charcoal production plant erected by the Swedish Wholesale Co-operative Society in Lapland is to consume 100,000 cubic metres of birch a year. In addition to charcoal, it is estimated that 1800 tons of tar, 500 tons of raw spirit, and large quantities of acetic acid, enough to produce 500 tons of acetone, will come from the plant.

THE ESSENDON EXTENSION Construction Well Up To Schedule

Although the work on the double-track extension of the Essendon line was started only on the 18th December, and was interrupted by the Christmas holidays, satisfactory progress has been made, and construction is so far well up to schedule.

On the south track in Keilor Road the excavation has been completed to the turn into Matthews Avenue, a length of 2125 feet. The sub drain and ash foundation has been laid for 2000 feet, the bottom ballast for 1950 feet, sleepers laid for 1900 feet, and the rails laid and welded for 900 feet. So far as the open ballast track is concerned, forming has been completed over 3400 feet on both tracks, and the ashes laid and rolled for 1900 feet. The bottom ballast has been laid for 1300 feet, while sleepers are already in position over 1000 feet.

In addition, provision against possible disturbance in the future has been made by placing storm pipes beneath the tracks, one being of 21 in. and other two of 36 in. each.

Although the extension is merely one and a half miles, it is interesting to place on record the fact that the materials to be used include 7000 sleepers, 30,000 feet of rails, 8000 feet of guard plate, 8000 tons of metal, and 4000 tons of ashes.

NORTH ESSENDON AUTOMATIC SUB-STATION

Owing to the impossibility of getting a satisfactory tender under present conditions, the work of erecting the automatic sub-station at North Essendon is being carried out by the Building Branch.

Designed to feed the Essendon line generally, and the extension to the aerodrome in particular, the station is being constructed of brick and concrete, and care has been taken to avoid the use as far as possible of vital materials needed for war work. Ninety per cent. of the steel required, for instance, has been obtained by using second-hand material in stock.

RETIRED FROM THE SERVICE

Since our last issue, retiring gratuities have been voted by the Board as follow:—

Driver H. P. Hardy, 65 years, 26 years' service, £448/10/.

Driver A. E. Higgins, 61 years, 25 years' service, resigned for health reasons, £287/10/.

Conductor G. K. J. Bolger, 54 years, medically unfit for further duty, 24 years' service, £224/5/.

Conductor J. R. McG. Akehurst, 58 years, 23 years' service, medically unfit for further duty, £224/5/; and

Conductor A. Ogden, 61 years, 37 years' service, resigned, £299.

Tramway Topics

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CONTROL ROOM

What It Is and How It Functions

It is safe to say that out of the 5000-odd employees of the Board, none but a microscopical fraction are aware of the existence of the Control Room, and fewer still know what it is and how it functions. The purpose of this short article, then, is to explain that department of the undertaking without which all other departments connected with traffic would fail.

Briefly, the Control Room operates continuously, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, supervising and co-ordinating the operations of the system, maintaining supply and arranging for the prompt rectification of all troubles connected with power. To carry out this work the Control Room is equipped with plans and data of a most comprehensive nature, direct telephonic communication with all essential services, supervisory equipment on all sub-stations (apparatus which keeps the staff visually and constantly informed of the condition of all plant in the 24 sub-stations supplying power to the feeder lines from which the trams operate), and wireless for calling overhead repair wagons when breakdowns occur.

Troubles on a system such as ours are naturally numerous and varied, and range from a damaged clock to a defective sub-station or feeder line. All matters handled by the Room are recorded for reference and co-ordination purposes, and some idea of the work handled by the Distribution Engineer and his staff will be gained when it is stated that logging in abstract form alone takes 1,500 to 1,600 log sheets per year, each sheet being considerably larger than foolscap size. Apart from routine matters and close and continuous co-operation with other public bodies connected with power supply,

the Control Room deals yearly with the checking and synchronisation of 26,000 machine and feeder operations, 260 emergency troubles in sub-stations, 300 accident and track blockages, 800 emergency troubles in the feeder line network, 130 emergency troubles on the Permanent Way, the tracing and removal from service of numerous defective cars, and a host of telephonic, lighting, building and miscellaneous troubles.

While travelling in comparative comfort, or operating a tram, during a storm, have you ever given a thought to the incessant struggle waged by Control to maintain supply and keep the system trouble free? Most will remember the violent storm which raged over the Metropolis on the evening of the 15th January two years ago, and will recall the almost continuous lightning display, the flooded streets and the spectacle afforded by stranded motor cars and people wading across Elizabeth Street. While several trams were held up by the flood waters, the services generally throughout the system were maintained, thanks to the efficient operating of Control. Between 8.40 p.m. and 2.3 a.m. the entries on the log numbered 58, and these dealt with 144 different items.

ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE

Regret Expressed for Precipitate Action

During recent months there has been some controversy over the position of those men who, becoming impatient when asked to wait for a time before receiving leave of absence so that they might join one or other of the Services, either resigned from the job or simply walked off without any more than casual notice. One in the former category has now written the Chairman as follows:—

"I was a conductor-driver, and was in the employ-

ment of the Board for nearly 10 years, during which time I was very happy and contented with my work and with those who were my officers. . . . I have been in the Air Force now for just about a year, and during the time I have been away I have been rather unhappy in the knowledge that I did not do to those who employed me as I should have done when I left. I want you to please accept my apology for having left so abruptly, and to believe me when I say that it was not because I was by any means discontented with those for whom I worked; in fact, I realise what it is to have genuine employers and I fully appreciate all the good you did me while in the service. The only reason I can truthfully say I had for leaving was that I was never a coward and had a wife and baby worth defending, and so after asking for permission to join and being refused I took the only alternative and left.

"Will you please overlook that which I did wrong? Also, if I am spared to come back and am fit, will you give me my job back? I am applying to be reinstated after the war. I express to you again my appreciation of all you have done for me in the past."

All such applications are being treated by the Chairman, in accordance with his promise, on their merits. In one case decided in the middle of January, and looking to the Tramway and Service records of the individual concerned, the man was re-employed after being discharged from the Army and given War Savings Certificates—one for each week of service, with a face value of £120. Another man received £43, and his job. The resolution passed by the Board on the subject reads:—

"Resolved that in respect of those employees who left the service without permission (either by resigning or being written off the books as 'absent without leave' to enlist for, and actually served on, active service, on receipt of their applications to re-enter the service, and subject to the presentation of satisfactory discharges from the Defence Forces, the Board will consider each man's case on its merits in regard to reinstatement and participation in War Savings Certificates."

PREPARING ROSTERS

What Changing Conditions Involve

Before the war our Roster Department drew up schedules for the trams and buses which in some cases remained unaltered for long periods, if it was found on checks that no adjustments of those particular services were necessary. War-time condi-

tions, with special tables for big munition-making centres superimposed upon ever-increasing traffic on all lines, has resulted in the rosters being in a constant state of flux, with the staff working long hours in the preparation of new schedules which are no sooner in operation than demands for still more service, make further changes imperative.

The work involved in re-casting the rosters affected by alterations to working conditions such as the introduction of the 44-hour week, the new agreement relating to the spread of hours, the 13-shift fortnight, and to a lesser extent alterations to meet the ever-changing transport needs of the Metropolis, may be judged from a few figures. Each roster includes a number of duties, and the total of these comprised in the rosters for but a single week is 4455, the details being:—

	Tram.	Bus.	Total.
Monday to Friday	1,309	570	1,879
Saturday	1,231	515	1,746
Sunday	583	247	830
	3,123	1,332	4,455

When a public holiday comes into any particular week, approximately 1,800 new schedules are required.

STRAIGHT STRETCHES OF TRACK

One of the seemingly ever-increasing number of people who study transport as a hobby wrote recently asking for details of all the long stretches of railway in the world, though why the query should have been addressed to us is puzzling; perhaps it is thought that the Tramways Board is omniscient! However, an article in "Modern Transport" provided the answer, which is now summarised for the benefit of those on the staff curious about such things.

Australia has the longest absolutely straight line of railway in the world—the 328 miles over the Nullabor Plain. The runner-up is the Buenos Ayres and Pacific Railway, which has no curve between Junin and Mackenna, a distance of 205 miles. Notwithstanding the injunction of the Czar Nicholas I. to lay a direct straight railway between Moscow and St. Petersburg, the 404 miles of what is now known as the October Railway cannot claim to more than a wavy straightness, and we have to go to Canada for the next longest stretch of actually straight line, the 57 miles between Camrose and Alliance, Alberta. Curiously enough, the longest stretch in the United States is but 28 miles between Durand and Grand Rapids, Michigan. In Great Britain the best is the line between Selby and Hull, 18 miles.

TRANSPORT IN LITERATURE

How Will It Figure In Years To Come?

How will transport—our modern transport by aeroplane, motor car, air-conditioned train, trans-continental parlor coaches as known in the United States, buses and electric trams—figure in the classical literature of future generations? The question is intriguing, for transport in itself as distinct from travel has always appealed to the man of letters. Dr. Johnson, for example, painted a delicious word picture of himself enjoying a ride across country in a carriage, accompanied by a pretty and agreeable young lady—a combination which, we have observed, has not lost any of its popularity during the passing years, even if the barouche or cabriolet has given place to a long-nosed super-sports car. There was the account of his journey throughout Scotland also, during which he discovered the surpassing merits of Scotch broth. "Sir," said Boswell, "I have not known you eat this soup before." "No, sir," said Johnson, as he disposed of his third plateful, "and I don't care how soon I eat it again!" Then there was Dickens, whose novels abound with descriptions of passenger transport in the early and middle nineteenth century, and whose American Notes tell us of railway and canal boat travel in that Continent. No other writer has given us such vivid pictures of the heyday of the stage coach and of the revolutionary transition from the coach to the railway in early Victorian England.

Of the later Victorian novelists, R. L. S. stood alone, probably because he liked travel for its own sake rather than travel in order to reach a particular destination. Poets, on the other hand, have not been quite happy in their references to transport. Harte's "What The Engine Said" is an interesting historical poem, and Tennyson in "Locksley Hall" foretold more than a century ago the wonders of civil and military aviation; but in the same poem he, under the impression that railway trains ran on grooved rails, cried sonorously, "Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change!" Which leaves us with the impression of our old planet swaying across space like some vast inter-stellar tram.

THANKS FROM THE R.S.L.

The Chairman has received the following letter from the Secretary of the R.S.S.L. (Mr. Chas. W. Joyce):—

"The Executive desires that I convey to you its appreciation of the very generous provisions the Board has made in the interests of those employees

who have enlisted or have been called up for service with the Fighting Forces.

"The provisions are indeed generous, and set an example to other public and semi-public bodies and private firms that should do much to encourage others to make reasonable provision for serving employees."

TRANSPORT EXPERIMENT

Glasgow's Diesels on Producer Gas

All experiments having for their object the efficient operation of passenger transport vehicles on producer gas have so far not met with the success desired; in fact, looking to the enormous expenditure incurred in the experiments, apart altogether from the cost of equipment and the rapid deterioration of the rear tyres, it appears that the saving of petrol effected is gained at a cost wholly out of proportion to the effort entailed. This conclusion is confirmed by what has happened in Glasgow.

For the greater part of last year the Transport Department of that city was engaged in trying to get diesel-engined buses to operate on producer gas. The original experiment was on a double-deck bus fitted with a Bellay producer unit, the diesel engine being converted from compression-ignition operation to spark ignition, the compression ratio being reduced from 15 to 1 to 8 to 1. After spending much time and labor over the matter, this expedient had to be abandoned. Ignition was the main trouble, caused by the failure of the sparking plug insulation as the result of the high compression ratio and the heat produced in the combustion chamber.

In an attempt to eliminate this and various other shortcomings, it was decided to go back to the diesel-ignition principle, and the engine was accordingly converted back to its original state, with the exception that the output of the fuel pump was reduced to a fraction of its former discharge, the object being to provide only sufficient injection to ensure ignition. The new parts required were a special induction manifold and special gas mixer and controls. Even with these and other alterations to the pump, it was found in actual service running that the fuel oil consumption worked out at between 20 and 30 m.p.g. plus 2.5 lbs. of anthracite per mile.

After all this the operation of the vehicle was but "fairly satisfactory," to quote the phrase used by the Department in detailing the experiment, and a second bus was converted, the producer in this case being trailer-mounted. In December last ex-

periments on both buses continued in the hope that means would be found to overcome backfiring in the silencer on the over-run. Some improvement was achieved when the governor from the fuel pump was removed altogether and alterations made to the system of mixed and pump control, and there was no excessive exhaust smoke. When the new controls were stabilised, the performance in service became satisfactory, although the fuel consumption was not quite so good as under the original arrangement, the average working out at .047 gal. per mile with anthracite at 1.6 lb. per mile.

When the letter containing the report of the Department, of which the above is a summary, left Glasgow, the experiments were continuing on one route with four vehicles.

RETIRING AND DEATH GRATUITIES

Since our last issue, retiring and death gratuities as undernoted have been voted by the Board:—

Conductor J. S. H. Cale, 60 years, 27 years' service, medically unfit, £299.

Driver G. W. Aldridge, 48 years, 26 years' service, medically unfit, £224/5/.

Senior Revenue Clerk W. H. Andrews, 65 years, 26 years' service, £624.

Watchman H. P. Jensen, 45 years, 25 years' service, medically unfit, £214/5/.

Steam Roller Driver H. W. Genn, 65 years, 21 years' service, £450/9/.

Electrical Mechanic A. T. Candy, 52 years, 22 years' service, permanently unfit, £243/15/.

Mrs. P. Hodgkins, widow of the late Conductor Hodgkins, 54 years, 30 years' service, £224/5/.

Mrs. W. Gilbert, widow of the late Watchman Gilbert, 57 years, 15 years' service, £183/7/6.

Mrs. J. A. Raeburn, widow of the late Conductor Raeburn, 60 years, 29 years' service, £299.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

During the last six weeks, 137 individuals joined the staff, of whom 91 went to Traffic, 29 to the Permanent Way, 11 to the Secretary, 3 to the Bus, 2 to Distribution, and 1 to the Workshops.

Eighty-one persons left, 55 from Traffic, 7 each from the Bus and Secretary, five died, and one each from the Workshops and the Electric Running Sheds.

LAMENT FROM A CONDUCTRESS

Invited to explain a shortage in her cash, a Malvern conductress furnished a report in rhyme. She wrote:—

Where, oh where, has my money gone?
For I've no home to spend it on;
I shake my bag,

I shake my head,
It makes me toss and turn in bed!
It's hard to say just where it goes,
I spend not on smokes or drink that flows.
When day is done I pay in my cash,
And out of the Depot I make a dash;
But sad to say the very next day
I find I'm short again!

THE ESSENDON EXTENSION

Splendid progress has been made on the Essendon extension, and it seems likely that the whole work will be completed well in advance of the scheduled time.

On the Keilor Road closed track, all the excavation work on the north line has been completed, while the sub-drains and ash foundation has been laid for 2,000 ft. and the bottom ballast for 1,160 ft. Rails and sleepers are in position for a length of 1,150 ft., and the rails welded for 600 ft. The curve into Matthews Avenue has been laid for 300 ft., and the cross-over at Birdwood Street completed.

All surface forming for the open track has been completed as well as the ash foundation and bottom ballast. Sleepers and rails have been laid for 2,750 ft. double track, and the rails fastened for 800 ft. Lifting and packing is finished for 2,600 ft. single track.

On the Distribution side, all the poles required have been erected, and the trolley wire has been run.

A WORD TO ABSENTEES

"... make this urgent appeal to you to make a special effort to have all cars and buses available on the road. You, as an individual, are necessary to keep things going. Therefore, do not absent yourself from duty. Do not arrive late for work. Do not run past intending passengers unless you have a full complement, because in all probability those intending passengers whom you leave standing at the stops are key men and women, apart from throwing extra work on your mates on the road."

From "the boss"? No! An extract from the leaflet issued by the Glasgow branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union to its members.

In the Sheriff Court, the dangers of lateness and absenteeism were emphasised in another way. Sheriff Macdiarmid, in fining six conductresses, said: "If this sort of thing continues I will treat women in the same way as men and send them to prison."

Tramway Topics

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SERIOUS BUS POSITION

Chairman's Warning to the Staff

After a conference with the officers concerned—the Rolling Stock Engineer, the Bus Engineer, the Assistant Bus Engineer, the Controller of Stores, and the Manager—in which every aspect of the position in relation to buses, spare parts, tyres and tubes was examined, the Chairman last month sent to each driver a personal letter appealing for care and co-operation in the use and upkeep of the vehicles.

In case there may be some lingering doubt as to the grave nature of the situation which confronts the Board in relation to buses, it may be as well here to emphasise that the Chairman in his letter was careful to put his points moderately. The fact of the matter is that when he wrote no fewer than 47 buses were out of action—one-sixth of our total fleet. Some of the vehicles were in for long overdue overhauls; but far too many were in off the roads because defects arising from ill-treatment and negligence had rendered them unserviceable, and, unfortunately, some of them are likely to be in the garage for an indefinite period because the spare parts required to make them useable are at the moment unobtainable.

So that other vehicles may be kept on the road, it has been found necessary to scarp several of the older buses and use the parts from them for repairs. Obviously that is a procedure which has most definite limitations, and therefore it becomes all the more essential for each driver to exercise the utmost care in the use of the bus entrusted to his charge. Personal interest in their buses, giving them the treatment they would extend to their own personal property, would go a long way to extend the effective life of the engine and the equipment

and would result also in far less damage to tyres and tubes. With time schedules ample, there is not the slightest excuse for driving at excessive speeds, rushing to a stop with full power only to be compelled to brake violently, and then striking the kerb with the tyres.

That the bus situation is so worrying is not due to any lack of foresight by the Board. Recognising that if the war continued for any length of time difficulty would be experienced in maintaining a bus fleet and in providing the necessary transport for the growing army of munition employees, 60 additional buses were ordered away back in the winter of 1940. Unfortunately, only five of that number were on the water when the British Government first stopped the export and then practically all manufacture of chassis except that required for the Services. Our own particular manufacturers changed over completely to the construction of quite a different type of vehicle to be used in a sphere which has no connection with street transport, while only the manufacture of but a small proportion of spares was permitted for home consumption and for export. As for tyres and tubes, Australia's supplies of raw rubber were drawn mainly from Malaya, and the seizure of that island stopped imports immediately.

It comes to this — the Board's bus services can be continued as at present only if every man concerned, drivers and mechanics particularly, give of their best at all times. The failure of either or both—lack of care in driving, the "good enough" attitude when it comes to repair or overhaul—will inevitably lead to the scrapping of more buses and a curtailment of services to the public with, naturally, a reduction in the number of drivers employed. Self-interest alone dictates the course which should be followed.