

Broadcast 3/9/28

Safety - speed if possible, but above all safety - has always been aimed at by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. And not only has it been aimed at, but every device and precaution and training possible has been put into operation to secure safety - safety for the Public which in turn means safety for the operating staff.

In a talk given by the Deputy Chairman of the Board (Mr. T. O'L. Reynolds), who is now President of the National Safety Council of Australia, in December last, Mr. Reynolds told you how each car is equipped with no fewer than three brakes - a hand brake, an air brake, and an electro-magnetic brake - the latter being used in cases of extreme emergency only. He described to you the rigid system of inspection and overhaul in force, so as to ensure that the equipment of the cars works at its maximum efficiency every day and all day. Finally, he directed your attention to the fact that in the last analysis the safety of all who use the streets of our city depends entirely upon the individual. The best constructed and maintained equipment is no use unless it is operated by men who know their work and, what is equally important, are in a condition physically to do that work. So, first of all, the men who are selected as drivers must be in good health before they are sent to the training school at Hawthorn. There they receive a thorough training in the operation of the cars. They have to learn, not only the why, but the wherefore; in other words, they are taught not merely to do certain actions which involve the starting, running and stopping of the cars, but they have to learn how these actions have been brought about. Only when they have demonstrated that they know these things are they allowed to take a car out. Not yet to drive passengers, however. With the chief instructor beside him, the embryo driver drives an empty car many miles before he is deemed efficient, and even then his first day or two on a car of his own is passed in the company of a skilled operator of years of experience. But although we have got the best cars, the finest equipment, and drivers meticulously trained, the human factor still remains. In this case it is the pedestrian, and particularly



the individual who dreamily saunters into the middle of traffic, utterly careless, seemingly, of his own life or of the <sup>nervous</sup> intense/and mental strain he makes others undergo. In this connection, there is the curious psychological fact that pedestrians take more risks with cable cars than with the electric cars. Before the electrification of Swanston Street it was alleged that the coming of the electric car would mean a huge increase in the accident rate. What happened? Swanston Street became one of the safe streets of the city. From 155 accidents in the last year of the cable cars the number dropped to 28. Over the whole metropolitan area last year 448 persons were knocked down by trams — an extraordinarily small number when you remember that the cars deal with over 600,000 passengers each day. In all these cases, without exception, the accident occurred because the pedestrian tried to go against the traffic and stepped in front of a car so quickly that the driver had no opportunity to bring his tram to a standstill. Only last week, hundreds of people saw an accident which terminated fatally, at the intersection of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets. Although the traffic was flowing east and west, an elderly man attempted to cross Bourke Street at an oblique angle from north to south. He got on the car rails just a few feet from a moving tram, and before the vehicle could be brought to a stop he had been run down, and suffered such injuries that he died a few minutes later in the Melbourne Hospital. For the sake of saving a trumpery number of seconds, that man threw away his life. In their own interests pedestrians should cross the streets at those intersections and places set apart for that purpose, and obey unquestioningly the direction of the traffic police and City <sup>Council</sup> officers. It is surely better to lose a tram — and in the peak hours that means only five minutes <sup>at the most</sup> — than your life or a leg. To young people, boys especially, I would give a word of warning as to the extremely dangerous practice of "whipping behind." You never know when you drop off behind what is approaching you, screened from your view by the tram. Don't tempt fate. All the fun you can ever get out of a stolen ride is not worth the loss of a foot or an arm. There are boys going about Melbourne today on crutches because they took the risk once too often. Tram passengers generally should observe the



rule never to attempt to alight from, or board, a moving tram. By doing so, you save only a fraction of a second and you risk an accident not only to yourself but to some bystander on a safety zone or stopping place. You don't get compensation for an accident which is due to your own thoughtless carelessness; but on the other hand, you may find yourself involved in an action for damages by some other person who has been injured as the result of your recklessness. If you want to get off at one of the provisional stopping places, you can give the requisite signal to the driver by pulling the left hand cord once, or you can request the conductor to perform that action for you. If you are prepared to obey a few don'ts, the street accident rate of Melbourne will very quickly decrease.

Here they are :-

Don't cross intersections against the flow of traffic.

Don't alight from a moving tram.

Don't attempt to board a tram in motion.

Don't appear suddenly from behind a moving tram without looking to your left.