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THE TRANSIT STORY

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
FOR THE EMPLOYEES
OF THE
LOS ANGELES TRANSIT LINES

SEPTEMBER, 1954

SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES

The 1954 amendments to the Social Security Act affect nine out of ten people in the United States who work for others, or for themselves. The new amendments will cause some 10 million more persons to begin to earn Federal Old Age and survivors insurance protection (better known as Social Security).

Beginning January 1, 1955 the total annual earnings base upon which Old Age Social Security payroll tax computations are made will be increased to \$42.00 from the present \$36.00. The rates of contribution remain at 2% each for employer and employee through 1959.

For the year 1953, the Company contributed \$164,613.64, as its portion of social security for the employees of Los Angeles Transit Lines.

On September 1, 1954 benefits were increased for both those who are already
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PARRYING THE "WHY DONCHAS"

Rate hearing season is also "Why doncha" time.

"Why doncha do this?" and "Why doncha do that?" We hear it on all sides and we parry these questions with sensible answers.

The usual one we hear is this: "Everytime your fare is raised you lose customers, so why doncha lower the fare and get more customers?"

The answer, of course, is that this experiment, which has an irresistible appeal to people without experience in the transit industry, has been tried many times by many companies and the results indicate that no substantial increase in the number of passengers occurs when fares are lowered.

We once had a weekly pass that enabled the passenger to ride at a reduce fare and it was discontinued because only a small minority made use of the pass, although all operators had to be supplied with pass books to service them.

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RATE CASE HIGHLIGHTS

This is the time of year, which, since the beginning of the upward spiral of costs for goods and services of all sorts, has become known as "Rate Hearing Time." It's the period when we present to the State Public Utilities Commission for their careful consideration our case at an open hearing and hope that this body may act quickly upon our application for fare adjustments. These adjustments have always been forced by increased costs.

And when one considers the overall picture, increases in costs amounts to nothing more in the long run than the devaluation of the dollar, because when an increase is established on one commodity or service, it is not long before other services and commodities must have increases to reach the new economic level.

During the recent hearings before the Public Utilities Commission, considerable emphasis was placed upon the school fare increase which the company seeks. Although it costs as much, if not more, to haul a school child as it does an adult,

a practice was established many years ago to allow children special reduced rates. Naturally, these rates meant that the transit companies took a loss on all school fares—the greater the number of children, the larger the loss. This loss, in turn, was passed on and paid by other transit patrons of the transit companies. Because all fares are stabilized by regulation, it is unavoidable that when one group of riders is permitted to ride at a rate less than the cost for providing the service, the remaining riders necessarily pay a somewhat higher fare. When the whole thing began most everyone rode public transit, so a portion of the loss on the school child's fare was sort of a tax on nearly everyone.

The transit industry recognizes the fact that it is desirable to extend to students the advantages of a reduced rate and the rate requested, if allowed by the commission, would still be only two-thirds of the adult fare. Some day the public may come to realize the basic unfairness of a system which places upon the shoulders of transit riders alone the burden of making up the difference between reduced rate student fares and the actual cost of providing the service. Until that day arrives, transit riders will have to pay the full cost of carrying everyone's children at reduced rates, while the rest of the community, including the wealthy who have plenty of automobiles in the family, carry none of this burden.

CITIZENS WANT BUSES

At the outset of the rate case the Commission on its own initiative consolidated hearings on the company's application for fare adjustments with a separate application to convert lines 7, 8, 5, F and 9 and portions of the W line from rails to busses and the 41 line from busses to trolley coaches.

We are pleased to note that not one single objection was raised to the substitution of motor coaches for the old high body type vehicle on these affected lines.

Leading citizens representing Chambers
(Continued on Page 4)

Changes To Overhead

The City of Los Angeles is widening Sixth Street on the north and south side between Central Avenue and Alameda Street. This widening necessitated the Los Angeles Transit Lines setting eight poles and removing ten poles and transferring all of the feeder cable out of our Central Substation from the old poles to the new poles; also transferring span attachments for our overhead facilities. This work has been started and should be completed in approximately two weeks.

In this widening project it calls for a new driveway at the entrance of our Division No. 1 trolley coach yard. It was necessary to install a temporary spur in the overhead to facilitate moving the coaches over the driveway, under construction, into Division No. 1 Yards.

The City is cooperating in the procedure of the work in order that we will not have a delay in coach operation at any time.

Parrying the "Why Donchas"

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We should also like to answer this "Why doncha" with the fact that most of the patrons who leave our service do it to travel in their own cars, which means they pay a much higher price for transportation.

Our fare is still well below the rate for one hour's parking in a downtown lot.

Recently we've heard a lot of "Why doncha get merchants to validate transit fares just as they validate parking tickets?"

The answer to that question is that your company has made a determined effort for years to persuade merchants to offer to transit patrons the same courtesy they extend to shoppers who travel by automobile. The latter are given free parking, the former should get a comparable courtesy in the form of a transit token.

Some merchants and one theatre have tried this, with good results. Many others are reluctant to embark upon the program because they see in it only an additional expense and fail to see the additional business that might be attracted or they do not understand that the free parking policy encourages traffic jams that keep business away from their doors.

No merchant ever sold anything to an automobile.

FUNNY ONES, TOO

Course we get some funny "Why donchas".

"Why doncha put in Television? Why doncha put on a floor show in the back of every bus? Why doncha put in radios? Why doncha have coffee machines on the vehicles?"

Everyone you meet seems to have different ideas about solving the transit ills.

We even had a cure for the traffic congestion. One well-meaning person asked, "Why doncha use thinner buses, then there would be more room for more automobiles on the street."

Then, of course, there are a lot of people who suggest that we give away popcorn—stating that popcorn is the thing that saved the motion picture industry.

We can just imagine a patron boarding a bus. He pays his fare in a special machine which shoots out a bag of popcorn, with a pinch of salt and a small carton of imitation butter. He then asks directions, "How far to the City Hall."

"Two bags full," replies the operator.

Which means he has to pay another fare to get the second bag full. Not a bad idea—not a bad idea.

We're mighty glad people are thinking about solutions for the transit problems, for the transit problem is a community problem and it will take the efforts of everyone to solve it.

HE'S AFTER MORE . . .



Erich Knut Dalholm, Division Four, won a Savings Bond by suggesting how to change corner fender without taking off bumper. During the war when rubber was hard to get, Erich designed a door treadle of steel. He expects to win more awards as he has trained himself to be on the lookout for better ways of doing a mechanical job.

SHORT CIRCUITS THAT HURT

As most everyone knows, a short circuit can cause an infinite variety of trouble. Many homes have been burned to the ground because some would-be electrician has replaced a burned fuse with a copper penny, continuing the trouble that the burned fuse warned about.

Street car operators of H-4 type vehicles often encounter a situation, which, if not properly handled, creates a type of short circuiting that becomes most dangerous and costly.

Nearly everyone is familiar with the fact that it takes two wires to cause an electric light to burn—the positive and negative—the hot wire and the ground wire. It's the action of these two joining in a light bulb which causes the filaments to burn.

The streetcar has only a positive or hot wire overhead, the rails furnish the ground or negative wire. The danger, the flash and short-circuit comes when these two get together.

The trolley coach operates on rubber, so two wires and two trolley poles become necessary to afford the power to the vehicle—the positive or hot wire and the negative or ground wire.

There are times when a streetcar stops in such a position that the trolley of the car is directly beneath a crossing negative trolley coach wire. Naturally, there is no power in this negative wire and the streetcar cannot proceed.

If the operator of the car alights and puts up his front trolley before the rear trolley, under the negative wire, is pulled down, he causes one of the most serious

short circuits—a short circuit which might easily result in severe injury.

Almost invariably when this happens—the short circuit established from the positive streetcar contact to the negative coach contact—the overhead construction is burned down at one or more places in the vicinity.

Benjamin Franklin is said to have discovered the fact that lightning is composed mainly of electricity by tying a wire to a kite during a thunderstorm. We don't know how many volts he received from that test but we do know that short circuiting a streetcar can be as dangerous to an operator as if he stood on the tracks and tossed a wire over a streetcar trolley.

Like the penny in the fuse box, there is no percentage in taking a chance. The only sure way to act in such a situation is to first pull down the rear trolley to break the negative contact, then place the front trolley in position, move the car forward a few feet for clearance, pull down the front trolley pole, put up the rear trolley pole and proceed.

A good rule of thumb to remember, when operating a street car, is that you make sure that you have only one trolley pole in contact with the overhead at a time.

No Super Speed

The New York State Thruway's tentative speed limit should be lowered to 50 miles an hour and adequately enforced by a strong police detachment "before hordes of speeders turn the Thruway into another super-highway scarred by super-accidents," says Thomas N. Boate, accident prevention department manager of the Association of Casualty and Surety Companies.

What our country needs the most today is a moral re-awakening and vigorous moral re-armament—U. S. Senator Margaret Chase Smith.

BOND IN THE POCKET . . .

Harley R. Miller, Automotive, South Park, added some guides to the spring in the bypass water relief valve and earned a Savings Bond.



SAFETY COMES HIGH

Among the many duties of the Safety Department is one of subrogating claims wherein automobile drivers damage company property and the damages amount to \$25.00 or more. The company feels it is only fair for other people to pay for damages to company equipment when they are at fault. They most certainly expect reimbursement when the company is found to be at fault.

When the Safety Department receives an operator's accident report, seven different items are noted. These items are used for analytical purposes in order to supply certain company representatives with proper reports showing the trend of our accident prevention program. The Senior Clerk then sets aside certain accident reports wherein he feels the accident might have been caused by the other party's negligence. These are placed in "Collect" files.

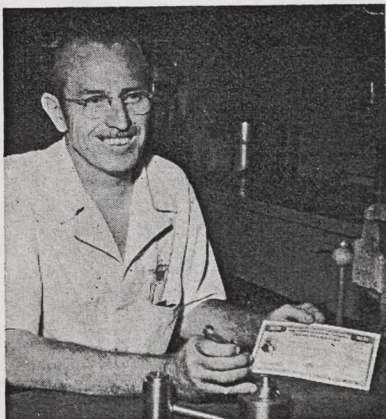
Once each month the Safety Department reviews these cases in the files of our insurance carrier. If their files clearly indicate that the other party was at fault collection procedures are set up. Care is taken to make certain that any attempt on the part of the Safety Department to collect for the damages done will not jeopardize any action which might be set up by our insurance carrier.

Two releases are sent to the Insurance carrier. When one copy of this form is returned the file is then given a "Collect" number. A letter and an itemized statement of damages is sent to the individual involved. In many instances, the individual will inform us that they have property damage and public liability with certain insurance carriers. In this event, the insurance carrier involved is notified.

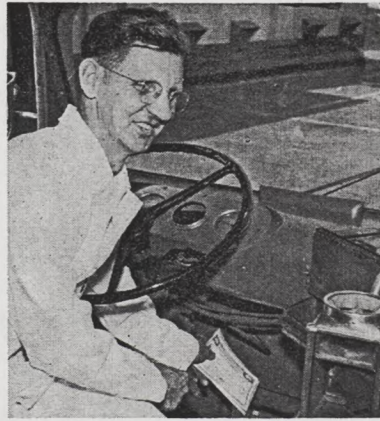
Many times we find the story regarding an accident given by the other party to his or her insurance carrier, does not agree

GADGETEER . . .

Francis A. Frazier, South Park, suggested a gadget with which steel balls in Central Valve Stems on P.C.C. cars could be reseated.



DOOR TO SUCCESS . . .



Frode Knudsen, Division 5, figured out an improvement in repairing ventilator doors in front of coaches and found it paid off.

with our operator's version. It is then necessary to contact any and all witnesses. In a number of cases, we have found it necessary to cancel our "Collect" file, causing the company to lose large amounts of money because the bus or streetcar operator failed to take time out to get some names and addresses of his passengers. Likewise, in a number of other cases, we have actually been forced to cancel our claim because an operator failed to get the proper license plate number on the other party's vehicle.

The license plate is important because many times the other automobile driver will give a fictitious name and address.

It would be of great assistance if all operators would get as many passengers as possible to sign the courtesy cards at the time of the accident. When the operator picks up these courtesy cards, he should be sure and check them for legibility.

When asking an automobile driver for his name and address, a quick glance at the certificate of registration may help prove or disprove if the name and address is correct. When taking the license number from the vehicle involved, take a moment to check it for the second time. In the event it is an out-of-state license, please list the year and the state of issuance on the accident report. If possible, ask the party involved if they are insured, and if so, learn the name of the insurance company.

Bones: "You're a swindler. When you sold me this farm, you said I could grow nuts on it!"

Jones: "You misunderstood me. I said 'go.'"

Flo: "Is everything shut up for the night?"

Moe: "Everything but you, darling."

LATE HOURS

Late hours are becoming very common with some of our Way and Structures Department employees, but they are not being spent in a continuous round of dining, dancing, and entertainment. When these people reach home in the wee small hours of the morning they are not coming in from a spree, but from a hard night's work.

Track reconstruction in the downtown area can only be done at night due to traffic conditions and this results in a good many of our employees having to work the night shift. At the present time, a major job involving changing rail is being done on West 7th Street and will be in progress for some time. Additional work is planned for 7th and Broadway, and crews will probably be in the downtown area until November 15. On this date all excavation work except emergency jobs must be discontinued in the Central Traffic area and in other congested locations where Christmas shopping causes a heavy influx of traffic. This City Ordinance applies not only to Los Angeles Transit Lines work, but to everyone.

Very likely most of our employees on the night shift will be very happy to see November 15 arrive so they can readjust their living habits back to normal. In the meantime, do not assume when you see some of them looking rather pale and hollow-eyed that they are burning the candle at both ends.

IT'S THE ADDED EXTRAS

It's that added extra that counts! A woman shopper, reports Tide, said that she always went to a super market for her Friday order which was not the most convenient for a reason she thought childish but still was good and sufficient for her. "I go there instead of the other one," she said, "because the checker always says to me 'Have a nice week end.'" A salesman spoke of staying at a rather run-down old hotel in a certain city. "No, I don't do it for the sake of the swindle sheet," he declared. "I could well put up at any of the better hotels. It's just that in this place the clerk remembers me, the waiters remember me and when I go into the bar for a before-dinner cocktail the bartender always acts as if he'd missed me and was glad to see me back."

Business, being extremely practical, is learning that the laws laid down by Jesus Christ form the best code for successful trade. It would probably be true to say that Christianity has made greater strides in business in the past fifty years than in any other field, including the church.

KNOW YOUR COMPANY

SPAN WIRE DECORATIONS

Be it the March of Dimes, the Sportsman's Show, the Sheriff's Rodeo, Legion Fireworks Spectacle or the Christmas Season promotions our trolley span wires are utilized to promote and publicize these events to all who pass beneath. The banners and flags hanging from the trolley span wires add a certain pageantry, or Mardi Gras, atmosphere to any event and these banners carrying colorful ads of various descriptions have proved very beneficial to various places of business and organizations.

There are several decorating companies in the city who handle this type of decoration. They have their own tower to hang banners or Christmas lights. The usual procedure is for a firm or organization wishing to hang banners to contact one of these decorating companies who will set the price for the particular job. The banner hanging in the center of the span wire carries the advertising or promotion copy while those on the outside of the trolley wire are not permitted to show any advertising. These usually are a part of the overall decoration.

There are certain city regulations as to the type of advertising which may or may not be used. A permit must be obtained from the City before decorations can be hung and arrangements also must be made with our Electrical Department for the use of our spans and poles. A regular rental and inspection fee has been established for all types of decorations or advertising banners.

During the holiday season various merchant associations arrange to hang decorative lighted garlands through their business districts. Before these decorations can be installed, the decorating company must submit plans of the installation to our company and also to the Public Utilities Commission for joint approval. They then contact electric companies for power to light up the Christmas lights.

ODDS AND ENDS

Politician: "My boy said he would like a job in your department."

Department Head: "What can he do?"

Politician: "Nothing."

Department Head: "Good! That simplifies matters. We won't have to break him in."

Christianity is the good man's text; his life, the illustration.—J. P. Thompson.

"When a girl strokes a man's forehead, you can bet she's after his scalp."—Virginia Gibson.

RATE CASE HIGHLIGHTS

(Continued from Page 1)

of Commerce, Business Men's Clubs and Civic groups took the witness chair to testify in favor of bus substitution for cars on these lines. Some of the groups presented resolutions passed by their boards and some presented letters requesting the change.

From their testimony it was evident that there is a great demand for the more modern type of transit service. We would like to thank the following civic minded citizens for taking their own time to present their community's feeling at the hearing.

Harris Holcombs

Monte Vista Business Men's Association

Mr. Holcombs stated that the elimination of the "W" car line on Monte Vista would help speed traffic and aid in the growth of that business community.

James Raimey, President, York Blvd. Chamber of Commerce.

Cecil Fletcher, Vice President, York Blvd. Chamber of Commerce.

These gentlemen detailed the traffic hazard at York Blvd. and Avenue 50, due to the fact that the street car terminal is in the center of the street. This Chamber has worked long and hard for bus substitution.

Orel Karnes, President, Eagle Rock Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Karnes touched upon the need for modern vehicles in the heart of Eagle Rock.

William MacElroy, President, Eagle Rock Realty Board.

MacElroy brought his own map to detail the situation on Eagle Rock Boulevard. Lee Sida, Realtor.

Mr. Sida reported to the Commission the results of a personal survey among business men along Cypress Avenue and Verdugo Road who all want bus service.

Ellery McClung, South Side Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. McClung presented a Resolution of this Chamber urging bus substitution

as quickly as possible. This Chamber represents many business men's groups from the southwest section of the city.

E. Messner, 54th and Crenshaw Merchants Association, urged the conversion.

There were also representatives of the Cities of Inglewood and Hawthorne present to add their views.

The City Council of Inglewood had previously voted to acquire the rights-of-way when they would be abandoned because of the conversion.

Most of the other groups had previously written to the proper civic bodies requesting that the city and county take steps to acquire these rights-of-way for street widening, or general beautification, when they are abandoned.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(Continued from Page 1)

retired and those who will retire in the future. For those now on the benefit rolls the primary maximum monthly insurance is increased from \$85 to \$98.50. For those who qualify for retirement benefits in the future, under the new provisions of the law, the maximum primary monthly benefit is \$108.50.

Another new feature provides for a "drop-out" of up to four years in computing the average monthly wage. This change provides that persons now covered can drop any four or fewer years, past or future in which their earnings were lowest, if they have six quarters of coverage after June, 1953. According to our interpretation it would seem that those employees retiring after September 1, 1954 would be eligible to apply this "drop-out" provision. Thus, in arriving at the average monthly earnings, they could eliminate any year up to four years in which their earnings were so low that it reduced their average monthly earnings. As an example: An employee may have had an extended illness which necessitated him losing a lot of time during the year. This would naturally bring down his earnings for that year.



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