

Transport/Central

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Urban/Suburban

EPITAPH FOR A FRIEND I remember him well, sitting there in his comfortable office and remarking wonderingly in that colorful brogue about we three who had come 700 miles just to visit his city. I remember the note of genuine pride in his voice as he spoke of Atlanta Transit, and of the conversion program that was going to enable it to even better serve the community. I remember his warm show of hospitality, and the many mementos with which he literally loaded us down on that September day. I remember a kind, gentle, witty and colorful man with whom I had the great privilege of being able to spend a few brief moments. Robert L. Sommerville, president of the Atlanta Transit System, died March 30, and he will be mourned by many. The industry has lost one of its most articulate spokesmen, and I am proud to have called him a friend.

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ALL THE NEWS -- Maybe it's best to wait for the official word before committing words to paper. In last week's issue, T/C quoted some details about the Chicago Transit Authority's purchase of 176 new motor buses, and in the process managed to get the issue thoroughly muddled. To set the record straight (as some significant details were mis- or un-quoted), here are excerpts from the official CTA press release:

"The purchase of 176 buses from the Fxible Company of Loudonville, Ohio, for \$5,343,738 was approved April 4 by the Chicago Transit Board. Delivery is to start in September and be completed by the end of the year. The 50 passenger, diesel-fueled units will replace a like number of vehicles that are 18 to 20 years old (the remaining coaches in the 1400, 500 and 6500 series—a total of 74 units—plus selected coaches from the 5000 series. The 1400 and 6500 series are GMC TDH-4507s, the 500 series TDH-5502 and the 5000 series are Fageol-Twin 52-S-2-P coaches). 146 of the buses will be of the standard 102" width and 21 of these will have fiberglass seats (not the entire order, as we erroneously stated). The remaining 30 buses will be 96 inches wide to replace units on the Lake Street route that requires narrower buses because of the limited passing clearance between rapid transit columns. The bid from the Fxible Company was about \$200 lower per bus than that of the only other bidder, General Motors. As specified for all new CTA buses, all turn signals are designed to flash simultaneously when an operator activates a foot control switch for signalling police in emergency situations. The purchase of some buses with fiberglass seats is part of CTA's continuing program to test the public's reaction to this type of seat. They have contoured bucket seats and backs and are designed for comfort as well as durability. It is hoped that the use of fiberglass will help to alleviate the costs for repairing upholstered seats due to vandalism. Seat repairs amount to over \$100,000 annually for CTA."

DIAL-A-BUS -- A \$28,500 HUD grant will finance a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology of a new kind of door-to-door transportation system which would use computers for scheduling and routing transit vehicles. The Civil Engineering Systems Laboratory at MIT will conduct a six-month study simulating operation of a system for routing small transit vehicles by means of a digital computer. The HUD grant will be supplemented by \$1,500 contributed by MIT for a total project cost of \$30,000. According to Assistant Secretary Charles M. Haar, "Transportation planners envision a new kind of mass transportation that has been called the 'dial-a-bus' concept. Such a system would use advanced technology to provide public transportation with the flexibility, service and comfort of an automobile at a fare only slightly higher than the subway or bus. A passenger would telephone the computer for service, be picked up minutes later at his door and delivered, with other passengers, direct to his destination. The system's flexibility and low cost would result from the use of computers to coordinate service requests, vehicle location, travel time and destination. The computers would determine the best routes for speeding passengers to their destinations with minimum delay, thus permitting individualized service at group fares and lowered costs. This Computer Aided Routing System (CARS) is expected to provide practical transportation for low density neighborhoods which cannot be adequately served by existing transit systems."

ONCE OVER QUICKLY -- Taxiboat service on the Chicago River between the Wrigley Building dock at Michigan Avenue and the Riverside Plaza Building adjacent to the North Western Station at Madison Street will begin its sixth season April 15....Waukegan-North Chicago Transit is still operating its airport service between O'Hare and North Shore suburbs. A Lake County Circuit Court judge granted a temporary restraining order against Continental Air Transport (T/C - 3/29/68) April 5. Further legal moves are planned by both firms in the three-year-long struggle over rights to operate the route....DOT has asked research and development companies to submit proposals for a preliminary design study of a 300 mph tracked air cushion research vehicle and guideway. The project could lead to a high-speed ground passenger vehicle for intercity and airport access travel.

Interurban

TRAIN - OFF TIDBITS -- Oops! We were a bit premature in announcing the prospective death of Illinois Central's Mid-American (T/C - 4/5/68). Seems just the sleeper will be discontinued April 27 (see below). And, speaking of errors, we'd like to correct a misstatement T/C made 'way back in December (12/15/67). The Delaware & Hudson did not purchase the two MoPac dome cars with which to re-equip the Laurentian. D&H did, however, pick up the ex-Rio Grande diner lounge units....Seaboard Coast Line has discontinued #42-49 Rocky Mount-Wilmington, and would like to discontinue #3-4, Richmond-Atlanta....Santa Fe #13-14, Albuquerque-El Paso RDC runs came off after April 9; however, Chico has been ordered to reinstate #42-47, Williams Jct.-Phoenix (after previous permission to discontinue). The trains are running, but Sec 13a (2) petition has been filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission....In a similar case, the ICC will investigate Baltimore & Ohio #51-52, Washington-Cumberland, Md., even though the B&O does not have to run the trains during the hearings since the ICC did not serve a hearing notice before ten days prior to the termination date set for the runs....The Louisville & Nashville would like to discontinue the Hummingbird, #6-7, Cincinnati-New Orleans, effective May 8....GM&O stockholders voted overwhelmingly in favor of merger with the Illinois Central. IC stockholders vote May 15; the proposal then goes to the ICC....And hearings will begin April 29 on Rio Grande's proposal to abandon narrow gauge operations between Farmington, N. M., and Antonito, Colorado....A listing of passenger train discontinuance petitions for the first 3 months of 1968 will be presented in the April issue of our companion Transport magazine.

FINE PRINT -- The April Railway Guide is down to 960 pages....B&O/C&O is now giving complimentary, souvenir pillows to coach passengers on long-distance, overnight trains....The Milwaukee Road has switched tap-lounge service from #9 (the ex-Copper Country Limited) to #23, the 4:20 PM Chicago to Milwaukee departure which has been coach-only for several years....The Burlington has discontinued diner lounge service on #26-27, Kansas City-Omaha, and two flat-top coaches now form the Nebraska Zephyr-Quincy Local which debuted April 10....MoPac/T&P have discontinued all checked baggage and remains service on their passenger trains....and the IC will discontinue Pullman service Chicago-Sioux City April 27, St. Louis-New Orleans May 20, and coach sleeper service on the City of Miami to Tampa-Sarasota in late April or early May (a bus service from St. Petersburg is the replacement).

ON THE AIR SIDE -- TWA will start service to Colombo, Ceylon on April 29. This makes the "Up, Up and Away" airline the only one serving that country from the United States....On April 8 a British Overseas Airways Corporation Boeing 707, spewing wreckage and dropping an engine near famed Windsor Castle struggled to a flaming crash landing at London's Heathrow Airport. Luckily, at least 103 of the 115 persons aboard survived....Fare Facts: Eastern Airlines and Pan American World Airways have matched New York-San Juan (Puerto Rico) fare adjustments recently proposed by Trans Caribbean Airways....Pan American has filed new directional charter rates that will enable groups to travel round trip from London, Glasgow and Shannon to New York for \$124.16, \$115.40 and \$110.62 per passenger respectively. The fares are based on full occupancy of a 167 seat Boeing 707 jet.

MORE AIRLINE ACTION -- Pan American has been allocated 85 acres at the west end of Los Angeles International Airport for the construction of a \$60 million maintenance service base....Harrisburg has a new airport for commercial planes. Located eight miles east of the Pennsylvania state capitol, it was recently converted from a military field and is now known as Olmsted State Airport....An increasingly profitable sideline for most of the country's passenger airlines is the hauling of cargo, and everyone is getting into the act. American Airlines recently inaugurated "prime time" jet freighter service linking Dallas to both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts....United Air Lines (#1 in air freight) hopes to increase its daily ton-miles to 3½ million by December of this year. The additional lift will result from delivery of DC-8F jet freighters and Boeing 727-QC (Quick Change) units....Airlift International (now there's a catchy name) has received Civil Aeronautics Board authorization to continue operating five New York-Rome round trip cargo flights per week for Alitalia under a "wet Lease" agreement....Northwest Orient Airlines has contracted with Lockheed Aircraft Service to modify six of its Electra turboprop passenger aircraft to convertible cargo/passenger configuration.

THE AIRLINE OF THE STARS AIMS HIGH -- National Airlines is trying to live up to its name. The Miami-based carrier is seeking approval for route extensions that would make it a national airline in fact, serving the Windy City among other points. National's application seeks authority for service from New York and Washington to Omaha and Des Moines, and from Omaha and Des Moines to the West Coast. In the same application, National has also asked for Chicago to Omaha and Chicago to Des Moines authority. The airline earlier requested authority from Chicago to Gulf points, with the major terminal cities to be Houston and New Orleans. In that petition, National also asked to link Detroit and Cleveland with the Gulf cities. National presently serves primarily the Eastern seaboard, but also has service from Florida points to California, via Houston and New Orleans....President Johnson has approved the merger of Bonanza, Pacific and West Coast Airlines into a new carrier to be called Air West....Piedmont has begun new nonstop Louisville-Cincinnati service.

(In order to insure prompt delivery of this news issue, the April TRANSPORT magazine will be mailed separately, at third-class rates, early next week. Both TRANSPORT and its companion weekly TRANSPORT/CENTRAL are published by Transport Central, 416 North State, Chicago 60610. Annual subscriptions including both publications are available at \$6.00 from Transport Central.)