

# Transport Central



THE VANISHING  
TROLLEY COACH  
IN 1969

OPERATING PROPERTIES

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## COLUMN ONE

### "WE HAVEN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS"

*The Toronto Transit Commission had a go-go girl ride one of its buses all day recently in costume as a hostess to see if public transit could be made more "enticing"; no results have been announced as yet....Graffiti: "Dirty Train Stations Cause Terminal Diseases".*

*Tiger Paws is missing. He's the roundhouse cat at Burlington's 14th Street facility in Chicago. Recently, deciding to broaden his horizons, he clambered aboard a coupler between two CB&Q cab units and was discovered hours later looking like a huge snowball in Minneapolis. Escorted home in style, he was awarded a lifetime pass by Burlington president Quinn. Once again, however, he has disappeared, and a thorough search of the entire railway failed to disclose his whereabouts. One engineman hinted darkly that he'd been kidnapped. TC will stay on top of the story and report details as they occur.*

*If you're in the market for a genuine London taxi, just contact Adler Imports of Farmington, Michigan. A new shipment has just arrived, and they're priced to sell--only \$1595 puts you well ahead of the Joneses....While we're on the subject of The Other Side, it may be well to relate that another authentic London vehicle met with a minor mishap the other day in San Francisco. Seven British youths drove a double-decker for some 60,000 miles around the world, only to wind up in a collision with a Powell Street cable car. Fortunately for all, no one was hurt, and both vehicles only sustained minor injuries. The 'bus originally cost the intrepid adventurers \$35.*

Ken Hayes

I -- "LET'S HAVE SOME COOPERATION HERE"

Cooperation is the key to getting things done. This is true in any endeavor. Projects that get bogged down from lack of cooperation tend to rot rapidly. Take a hypothetical proposal to improve a city transit service: The present operator is up against the wall financially. He sees two ways out: a tax-supported system, or a fare increase. The city does not want the system, can't afford to support, or just simply doesn't want to help it—but it does demand the same or better service at the current fare. The public wants the same or better service at the same or lower rates. The city departments concerned with urban conditions (streets, planning and environment) want to see changes: less vehicle exhaust pollution and street congestion, better core transit service, better area-wide service. County, state and Federal agencies concerned with transportation (mainly roads) want to keep through routes clear, shifting as much of the burden as possible to the city streets. New roadways constructed with the objective of providing fast through or bypass travel become bogged down with rush hour commuters. Federal mass transportation agencies set up "projects" which are limited in applicability, limited in scope—just plain limited.

It is little wonder that improvement in mass transit comes too little, and often too late; that transit projects of a constructive nature follow the causes, rather than pacing them. An operator is concerned with at least four levels of government (city, county, state and federal departments and agencies) and also with the public. Each demands maximum attention for its own area of concern without regard for the needs of any other area. It is time—past time—for a coordinator; one who will act as a funnel for all agencies demanding the attention of the transit operator; one who can and will where necessary take the side of the operator and one who will answer to the public; one with initiative to start the ball rolling. This could be the public utility commission, but shouldn't be; state commissions are already concerned with regulation (and thus might be open to charges of conflict of interest) and already have a workload out of proportion to their budgets. The most economical and efficient route would be by local commission—at the city level—which would be empowered, chartered and authorized by state law, made up of an equal number of representatives of the local operator and of the city. By law, this agency would have the direct and full area-wide responsibility to plan, coordinate, investigate, and, most importantly, to ACT.

II -- "EXACT FARE: PROBLEM OR PANACEA?"

Violence in our modern world has pushed us ever closer to the so-called "cashless society" envisioned by the economists. Cashlessness is not confined to the world of checks, credit cards and the like, however. It is moving into a new sphere: public transport. Already, several score city transit operations utilize an exact fare system, no cash or other fare material being carried on the vehicle, and I would predict on the average of one additional conversion a month for the foreseeable future. Why?

Self-preservation is the answer. Bus drivers are not policemen: they don't wear guns; they aren't paid to deal with criminals; in many cities they cannot even enforce the "No Smoking" signs on their vehicles. Driving takes up all of their attention—or should. Therefore, if the criminal element cannot be removed, the incentive can—money.

What assurance is there that exact fare systems work? How much inconvenience will the rider put up with? That is precisely what the 40 or so operators using such a plan are finding out. In Oakland, AC Transit operates a typical system called "ready fare". Before go-

into effect, the new system was widely advertised for several weeks. Not only is a cash fare available (25¢, with zonal increments), but a token rate (5/\$1.00) along with a trans-bay tariff (single, round-trip and 20-ride tickets); a 15¢ school fare is also in effect.

On the institution of Ready Fare, additional classes of fare-payment tickets were created for convenience: 10 ride Youth Fare books at \$1.50, and 20 and 40 ride local zone fare books; all can be ordered by mail. If, by chance, you are caught on board a coach without one of these exact payments, you may deposit an excess amount in the fare box and receive a driver-validated ticket which functions as a refund coupon. After a week's processing time has elapsed, this coupon may be redeemed by mail or at ACT's Oakland office.

How does the system work? Fine, according to AC Transit officials. Thanks to much advance publicity work and to good rider and business community cooperation (tokens are sold at many stores and banks) the system went into effect without any loss of patronage. The only decrease was in robbery attempts—a loss than nobody mourns.

But to make such a system a success, these elements must be kept in mind:

- (1) Reasonable and convincing advertising and publicity.
- (2) At least two alternative payment methods: cash, tickets and/or tokens.
- (3) A way of obtaining overpayment refunds without undue hardship.
- (4) Commercial cooperation in ticket and token distribution.

If all of these rules are followed, there is no reason to fear loss of income from an exact fare system—that is, unless you are the robber.

### III -- "SMOG AND THE BUS OPERATOR"

The diesel engine produces one of the most offensive street conditions today: oily smog. True, the automobile, by sheer volume of numbers, produces more noxious gases in total volume. But, on a unit-for-unit basis, it is the bus that loses the contest. The argument "look how many more persons the bus holds" just isn't good enough. Smog is smog, an undesirable condition all around, especially in cities. Transit originated smog appears to stem from two causes: lack of manufacturer research on engine exhaust improvement, and poor maintenance on the part of the operator. In many cities, it doesn't take a very long period of driving behind a bus before your car is filled with smoke and malodorous fumes, a situation that hardly endears the transit operator to the public.

Trolley coach operation isn't the answer to the problem either. These vehicles are fine for well-established and unchanging routes, but today's population doesn't stay in one place. Overhead wire is expensive to install and remove, and it has no place on an experimental or marginal route, nor is it beautiful to look at—important in our "aesthetic society".

A few areas offer possible solutions, or at least better future prospects. One is the self-contained electric vehicle; one bus is already being introduced. Its main stumbling block is the cost/weight/efficiency trio; lead-acid batteries weigh in the tons; cadmium batteries are fiercely expensive, and all batteries presently lose in efficiency. Another prospect, the wondrous "fuel cell" has problems of generating capacity and reliability, to mention a few; the propane bus—widely hailed at first—also has its problems.

For the moment, until the next technological breakthrough, better engine maintenance is the best answer, along with a few sharp prods to the manufacturers. In the meantime we'll continue to live in the fog and fumes of our own creation.

## NEWSFRONT

- \* EXIT A LANDMARK
- \* A CONFLICT OF INTEREST
- \* SQUEEZING UNDER THE "L"

MOVING WESTWARD -- The Chicago Transit Authority has announced that the first of 1969's rapid transit extensions will go into service Tuesday, May 6. At 4:00 AM on that day, the first train will depart from the new Ashland station of the Englewood line, the new terminal facility of the \$6 million  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile extension. Three CTA bus routes will begin operations into the off-street bus loop on that day, while two others will serve the station from street loading zones. Also incorporated into the new facility is a Park'N'Ride lot for 250 autos; the Ashland station replaces an obsolete stop two blocks to the east that had no off-street passenger interchange accommodations and poor connections to the surface transit network.

METROPOLITAN REPORT -- The first of an order of 30 new CTA buses have arrived on the property and are due to go into service shortly. What makes this group of coaches unique is that they are the first 96" wide (narrow) units ever ordered by the Authority; all previous orders in the 21-plus years of CTA's existence have specified buses of 102" width. The narrow units are necessary because of restricted clearances underneath the elevated structure on the Lake Street route; a group of former Chicago Motor Coach Company 1947 vintage buses had been specifically retained pending delivery of the new coaches....The North Western has petitioned for permission to increase all suburban Chicago area fares by an average of 5%. Operating the world's largest unsubsidized commuter service, C&NW operations have been profitable for eight of the past 10 years....C&NW is also testing a new olive green uniform for conductors; the old blue rig goes back to the Civil War....Milwaukee Road and Burlington commuters will have five more minutes to catch their trains in the evening beginning this month. Construction is proceeding on plans to demolish Union Station's concourse building to replace it with an office high-rise, and the railroads are making the schedule changes to enable commuters to pick their way around the rubble. Incoming runs will arrive five minutes earlier also.

DOT DOLES -- The Department of Transportation has announced the following grants: to a Tulsa firm to search for better methods for soft ground tunneling; to Utica, New York, toward the purchase of 27 new 45-passenger buses for the Utica Transit Commission; a final payment to Little Rock for its 42-unit modernization program; to the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority to determine the best way to get Detroit inner-city residents to jobs in the suburbs, as well as to study ways to improve rail commuter service on the Penn Central and Grand Trunk; to the Chicago Department of Human Resources (in cooperation with HEW) to study the effects of reduced transit fares on the mobility of older people; a final payment to Springfield, Illinois toward the Mass Transit District's purchase of 20 new buses; and to California for repair and reconstruction of highways damaged by this year's floods.

SHORT HAULS -- A rare 40-passenger Marmon trolley coach unit, vintage 1948, has been preserved by a San Francisco group, which purchased it from the Municipal Railway....A bill to provide for public ownership of D.C. Transit has been introduced in Congress....The Fairmont Hi-Rail bus has now been tested in Cleveland (over the Shaker Rapid)....The last tube section of BART's new transbay tunnel has now been lowered into place, timed with news that Governor Reagan has signed into law a bill raising sales taxes as a means of solving the District's financial ills.

WHAT EVIL LURKS? -- Senator Gordon Allott (R-Colo) has suggested that the General Accounting Office investigate the policies of former Assistant Postmaster General William J. Hartigan that led to the almost total elimination of Railway Post Office cars. Senator Allott believes that Hartigan never satisfactorily explained this policy, and questions his present position as Vice President and General Manager of Sedalia-Marshall-Booneville Stage Lines, Inc., the largest air taxi mail carrier in the U.S. Allott also believes that a thorough GAO inquiry into Hartigan's affairs will raise questions of economies wrought from the changeover from rail to air transportation, the subsequent impact on bulk mail service, and certain internal organizational changes in the Post Office structure.

EXIT A LANDMARK -- A certain TC reader's protestations notwithstanding, C&O/B&O's Chicago Grand Central Station, opened in 1890 with its familiar old clocktower, will disappear from the city's skyline late this summer following management's announcement that the remaining trains (two B&O, one C&O) will be moved northward to North Western Station; offices and freight operations will go to other locations. The closing will free 45 acres of valuable land for more profitable non-railroad use. Part of the property immediately to the west of the venerable structure is in the path of the committed Franklin Street Connector expressway link....At the same time, Rock Island officials disclosed that they are negotiating with Chicago Union Station management to operate their 77 commuter and 6 long-haul trains into that facility, releasing an additional 46 acres of land for other usage. Chicago White Sox owner Arthur Allyn says his sports complex planned for air rights over Dearborn Station (also south of the Loop) is still in the works (TC 10 May 68) but is stalled by the current consolidations.

RAIL ROUNDUP -- Norfolk & Western has petitioned 15/25-16/26, the Powhatan Arrow, between Norfolk and Cincinnati for May 23; the petition also includes a "sweetener" proposing improvements to the remaining trains (3-4, the Pocahontas) including through diner-lounge service, dome coaches, reduced excursion fares, elimination of first-class fares, free meals for sleeping car passengers and economy meals for coach passengers....CB&Q 41-42, Omaha-Billings, continues to operate under court injunction while a question of "general transportation importance" is considered; the issue is over states' rights under Section 13a(1) of the ICC Act, which states that carrier actions against ICC orders become vitiated (invalidated) and revert to state regulation (in this particular case, Wyoming feels that the Q vitiated the ICC's order to run the train for one year beyond August 24, 1967, plus the 35 day effective date of that order, when they re-petitioned the trains last September 7)....Northern Pacific wants to discontinue 13/124-123/14, Fargo-Pembina (N.D.), and 57-58, Duluth-Staples via Superior (both RDC runs), for May 25; 13-14, Pembina-Winnipeg, operated by the Midland Railway of Manitoba will continue for the present.

AIR ACTION -- Pacific Southwest, the maverick airline of California, has dropped its tender offer for Western Air Lines....The CAB has reopened hearings on Howard Hughes' bid for control of Air West amid charges of financial hanky-panky made by Western....United is filing for higher fares, about a 3% hike, in the weeks to come....The CAB has approved a 5% boost in transatlantic fares (by removing the equivalent round-trip discount) to be effective until next March 31....The Hawaii awards have been postponed again, this time to June 6; the record has been reopened for "slighted" carriers to seek reconsideration....All air taxi operators must register with the CAB by July 1, and annually thereafter....TWA begins its transpacific flights August 1, forging the last link in its around-the-world chain....Aeroflot begins twice-weekly New York to Moscow service this month....North Central has applied for Cleveland/Detroit-Atlanta rights.