

The Jitney Turns Out a Transportation Cinderella

Kissed By Fair Prince, Public Approval, Ugly Duckling Becomes Queen of the Road—Popularity of Motor Bus Has Come With Speed of Tropical Storm—What is Future of Travel on Rubber Tires?

THE jitney has grown up. The ugly duckling of the transportation world has turned out a Cinderella. Kissed by the most beneficent of all fairy princes, Public Approval, the jitney has been transformed into the palace coach, and the electric and steam roads, like the elder sisters in the other fable, don't quite know what they are going to do about it.

A few short years ago the rubber-tired common carriers were a source of minor annoyance to an occasional street railway company. So minor that no one looked on them as common carriers. Today there is not a single railroad system on the continent in which executives are not growing grey around the temples studying ways and means of meeting bus and truck competition.

Buses and bus services cover the surfaced roads of the continent. In three years they have spread like a plague. They are to the rail carriers' traffic returns what the boll weevil is to the cotton plant, the Colorado beetle to the potato and the European corn borer to the hog belt.

Profit and loss statements that in a happier day appeared in black are being written more and more in red. In Ontario electric lines between Hamilton and Dundas, Ingersoll and Woodstock, Burlington and Oakville, have discontinued operations. Other railroads in the province are operating with decreased revenues of from 20 to 50 per cent. in a three-year period.

Nor is it only the rail carriers that are affected. Once profitable steamship lines such as those between Toronto and Hamilton and Toronto and the Niagara Peninsula are carrying but a fraction of the business they once did, and may be forced to curtail their services or abandon them altogether.

In the United States branch lines that a few years ago covered the country like chicken wire are being torn up or allowed to rust into dilapidation. The Boston and Maine has abandoned 1,600 out of 4,200 miles of track due to the competition of bus and truck services. "Five years ago the cities in which buses or coaches operated successfully could be counted on the thumbs of two hands. To-day there is not a city of importance on the continent in which buses are not operating either in direct competition to the street railways or as auxiliary or special services.

Wherever there is a good road, there also is a bus and truck service, whether it be between Hamilton and Toronto, New York and Philadelphia, or from Birdseye Centre to the nearest railroad station. A regular de luxe service is in operation between Washington and Montreal through the White Mountains, another between Washington and Florida. It is possible to travel from New York to Chicago by bus. The coming year will see continuous bus services in operation on all the provincial highways of Ontario. It will be possible to travel from Montreal to Detroit or from Niagara Falls to Muskoka in plate glass road Pullmans.

Bus Has Come to Stay

THERE are nine bus services operating on approved schedules and under provincial license out of Toronto, seven out of Hamilton, three from Kingston, and so on down the list of Ontario cities. All of these lines are constantly adding to and improving their equipment.

The bus has come to stay. If anyone had any doubts on the subject they should have been dispelled by the announcement of railroads at a recent convention when they told the waiting world that the bus was here to stay.

It has all happened with the rapidity of a tropical storm. This morning a cloud no bigger than a man's hand; now the deluge.

The evolution of the curb-to-curb and door-to-door carrier has been brought about by a series of accidental adaptations, in much the same manner as all other things evolve.

Twelve years ago an epidemic of street railway strikes forced the private automobile into public service. Rusty sided flivvers with automatic engines, catarrhal carburetors and engine fires survived the strikes and went on carrying passengers mainly because their owners had nothing else to do and liked motoring. If they could get paid for doing what they most wanted to do, they were sitting pretty.

Pioneers never get much credit while they are pioneering. They are only heroes to literature. The Mayflower sailed without a press photographer at the dock, the first covered wagon started soon after the mortgage was foreclosed on the old farm, and the U.E. Loyalists left the New England States without a damp eye to wish them God-speed.

Some day the Motor Bus Association should erect a tablet to the unknown jitney and its driver. It was he who demonstrated the revolutionary fact that the riding public, or enough of them to make it profitable, preferred being frozen in an automobile to being suffocated in a street car. There were other reasons, but the extremes will do.

With few modifications the jitney survived. Experts in other fields of transportation pointed out, just as some of them are still doing, that it was a novelty and the public would soon tire of it, and that it was a scatter-brained and irresponsible business anyway. They showed



that all the jitney drivers of that day kept no record of their costs, depreciation meant no more to them than sand to an Arab, and they all thought a sinking fund was something you broke a spring in.

Which was very true. Pioneers never keep costs. If they did there could be no pioneering. They are either so destitute that depreciation means nothing because life has already written them off and the only thing in the sinking fund is themselves, or they are having such a good time that costs don't mean very much as long as they can go on having a good time.

It is doubtful if the early jitneys paid, but none of their owners knew that until their cars wore out under them, and by that time enough other people had been convinced that they must pay to take over the struggle.

Public Like the Novelty

THEN it became evident that something must be evolved to carry more passengers than the touring car could accommodate, and the era of the high-pooped Spanish galleon bus was introduced. This adaptation of the hotel station bus looked to have all the security of tight rope walking and the comfort of the tumbrel. But the public persisted in riding in them. The novelty, if anything, grew worse. The business was still operated on the cash drawer system of accountancy. If there was money in the till they were making money, if there were bankruptcy proceedings you had lost it. It was simple, it was direct and it made the best of the business, and left the pioneers free to experiment with buses instead of the addition and multiplication tables.

During the war the motor vehicle proved its ability to transport men and materials. The close of the war saw a public that had been shaken to its very foundations by the events of the preceding four years. They were used to moving about, to going from one place to another rapidly. They had developed the habit of riding instead of walking because it was faster. A nervous public.

The disbanded armies threw hundreds of men into civil life who were used to an out-of-doors life and refused any other, and who had a little money coming to them. The bus business offered them an out-of-doors life with a chance of making money. It was only a chance and a gambler's chance at that, for at that time there had been a thousand failures to one success. Had its

worth been proven it would not have been possible for the returned man with a few hundred dollars to go into it. It would have already been exploited and capitalized.

It is incalculable to what extent the returned

man contributed to the development of motor transportation. Certainly without him and the creation of the restive public he served the stage of development reached at present would still lie in the future.

On the Station Platform

By W. L. EDMONDS

TOURISTS entraining at Souris, Prince Edward Island, the other day were witnesses of a scene that both excited their sympathy and turned their thoughts God-ward.

Lying upon an improvised stretcher, preparatory to being placed on board the outgoing train, was the pain-wracked body of a woman that had evidently long since passed the age of "three score and ten." Standing by in shirt sleeves, his bent and emaciated body leaning heavily upon a rubber-tipped walking-stick, was the aged husband—a pathetic figure. His wife was being conveyed to a hospital in Charlotte town, and he had hobbled with difficulty to the station platform for what, judging from the worried expression carried by his fallow features, he

feared might be the final farewell.

And just before the stretcher, with its aged occupant, was placed in one of the cars two black-robed sisters quietly approached, asked an attendant the nature of the illness, and then one of them, after gently stroking the brow of the patient, remarked with a sincerity that gripped the onlookers:

"The only thing we can do is to pray for you, and that we shall do."

"And me, too," another woman was heard to murmur, while one of the men in the group, in a voice that indicated he was feeling deeply, remarked:

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man (and woman, too) availeth much."

The end of the war also released huge industrial plants which had to search for new markets and new fields of exploitation. Without conscious direction, without anyone clearly foreseeing what was happening, bus men began to demand better vehicles and manufacturers began to provide better vehicles. Trucks were modified and improved, adaptations of old designs were brought out. In spite of the inadequacies and disabilities of its equipment, the business grew steadily with the betterment of roads until about three years ago modern coaches appeared with the wide tread, low centre of gravity, low body with doors extending to the running boards, individual seats, and continuous glass sides that are so common to-day.

It is since their introduction that the real development of bus transportation has taken place in America and their spread has been with the rapidity of a forest fire. The full significance of the revolution that is being effected in transportation methods can only be seen in the traffic and revenue returns of the existing carriers, the electric and steam roads, and in the pages of technical publications where reports of branch line and electric railway abandonments occupy columns in every issue.

Fast Motor Freight Service

ALONG with the growth of the passenger business of the bus has gone the handling of freight and express by truck.

Last week a Toronto manufacturer received a telephone call from a customer in Hamilton who wanted to place an order amounting to two tons of goods if he could be guaranteed delivery that afternoon. From the Toronto warehouse to the Hamilton place of business would normally have taken three days in freight, or, with the best of luck in placing the material at the freight sheds, two days. A trucking firm was telephoned, they called for the goods at 11 in the morning, and by 3 o'clock had delivered them in Hamilton.

A householder moving from one city to another can make arrangements with moving companies to have his goods packed one afternoon and delivered at his new residence in Detroit, say, the following morning at very nearly the same rate as he would be charged from freight shed to freight shed, and in the latter case delivery might take from one to two weeks.

Department stores that were once heavy

shippers of package freight in car load lots for distribution at nearby cities have developed their own trucking fleets. They have to have trucks to get the goods to the freight sheds; why not have them take the load the whole distance? Industries with factories outside big cities and warehouses in them do their own hauling in place of using the railroads.

In the States the railroads are meeting competition by going off the rails and on to the roads. The Boston and Maine has established bus and truck routes throughout Massachusetts, the New York, New Haven and Hartford have founded a million-dollar subsidiary for handling bus and truck business, the Great Northern has asked for 1,300 miles of road route monopoly in Minnesota, the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific are going into bus routes in California.

In most states the control of bus traffic on the public highways is passing out of the hands of road authorities into those of the railway boards such as the Ontario Railway and Municipal in this province. From the free and open field enjoyed up to a year ago bus transportation is passing into a condition of close regulation and legislation. More and more are the existing common carriers such as railroads and street railways absorbing the independent operators and making the motor vehicle a co-ordinated service with their existing lines, using it only where its economic worth is proven.

Will It Solve Toronto's Problem?

IN Ontario the transformation has already taken place with one street railway. The Toronto Transportation Commission was one of the first managements to use buses for supplementary services. It was fortunate that it should have been called a transportation commission and not a street railway company when the municipality took over the franchise. It made possible a wider point of view and allowed experimentation where other companies faced with the same problems were hampered by a traditional outlook.

In Toronto are demonstrated all the uses to which the bus and coach may be put in conjunction with street railways. They are used on the outskirts of the city to serve districts where it would not be profitable to lay tracks, as in Rosedale and High Park, and in the new Hill route an effort is being made to compete with the privately owned automobile by special and very luxurious service. If coach service of this kind should prove generally successful it would go a long way to solve the problem arising from traffic congestion in restricted business districts.

But the railroads in Canada have as yet made no effort to leave the rails or go out on to the highways for business. Like the American roads, they are feeling the competition of the bus and truck keenly and suffering a loss of short-haul business. The Canadian Pacific, through a subsidiary corporation, operate one line of buses between Preston and Galt which is believed to have been very successful. Both railroads have been collecting data and studying it closely for some time, and it is probable that both the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific will make early announcements concerning their plans for retaining one of the profitable phases of their business.

Competent observers predict that within a very few years the romantic buccaneering days of the bus will have passed, and it will have been co-ordinated with the existing carriers in the general scheme of passenger movement and exchange of commodities.

In the meantime there seems to be a fly in the ointment of free and open competition between steam and gasoline. The railroad buys, builds and maintains its own right of way; the bus has no other expense than that of rolling stock. Both receive the same revenue per passenger mile. The bus is presented at no cost to itself beyond that of the taxes levied on any automobile, plus trifling mileage taxes, with a plant for which the railroad has to pay millions of dollars.

On the face of it this doesn't seem altogether right, and something will probably be done about it, although since the public pays at last for everything it may not be as important a consideration as it is made out to be.

A RECTANGULAR PUZZLE

FATHER O'LYNN'S gardener entered the village store, where Michael Cassidy sold anything from butter to braces.

"Well, Pat," cried Michael, who knew the gardener well, "and what may ye be wantin'?"

"It's his riverance, Mike," answered Patrick. "He wants a square of glass fourteen by twelve inches."

For some time a village storekeeper burrowed about amongst a miscellaneous assortment of glass, and then he leaned across the counter, shaking his head.

"Sorry, Pat," said he, "nothin' here fourteen by twelve, but I've a foine bit twelve by fourteen, if it's av any use to ye."

The gardener scratched his head and thought a little. Then, making up his mind on this abstruse problem which had just presented itself, remarked:

"Well, hand it over, Mike; perhaps his riverance won't be noticin' the difference."

HUMAN NATURE AT SEA

HIS poor mother, never having seen the sea, her eldest son decided to take her down in a charabanc one Sunday afternoon.

Eventually the happy day dawned, and together they set out for the seaside. They arrived just about lunch-time, and, having treated his mother to a splendid meal at the best hotel in the place, the son escorted her down to the pier. They stood on the end whilst the young man delightedly displayed the briny ocean.

Great breakers crashed on the beach, gulls flew hither and thither, whilst the sun glinted down on the white sails of sailing-boats, making them appear immaculate. A splendid wind, tearing the very breath of the sea itself, came blowing up from the south.

"There, mother," cried her son exuberantly, "there, that's the sea, the open sea. Now, tell me, what do you think of it?"

"Humph!" muttered the old lady. "I always thought it was bigger!"—Answers.

Slink, the Rat A Nursery Rhyme for War Babies

By Kim Beattie

THIS is the tale of a carrion rat. A gruesome, grizzly, slithering ghoul; Who lived "between" where Lone Death sat, Who died "prematurely" on the prow.

Snug in his sock-lined dead man's hat On the rims of War lived Slink the Rat; Curious, cunning, old, war-wise, Knowledge grim in his gleaming eyes.

He knew all the holes where rats could hide, He knew all the parts where rats had died, He shunned those parts which a wise rat shuns Where men went rattling with black, squat guns.

Strange things had he seen, at night, this Slink, Death, quiet, quick, on a crater brink; He knew that the rovers lived no code, A stab in the back seemed in the mode.

He had made men jump and backward roll, For he startled them on lone patrol, He knew they feared as an old rat knows, Huge he did loom going past their nose.

And watched he, the raiders, waiting, tense, The wire he'd tinkle to add suspense, He'd scurry and dash, quick flick their heels, Then squeal with glee as a pleased rat squeals.

But he had one friend, had Slink, abroad, Corporal "Doc," of a scouting squad, Who had winked at Slink with friendly eye When stilled while a rocket lit the sky;

And Slink from then guarded "Doc" with care, He'd hide each night in his stealthy lair,

Then welcome in sudden scuttling rush That froze "Doc's" blood in the clammy hush.

But he warned "Doc" once of lurking death When his busy nose caught Helme breath, For a hurried squeak came through the murk— That Boche, unwise, did no more night-work.

Then there came a night when schemers planned The doom of men in that doom-rife land; On a night so still, life seemed to wait And far grim guns did chant their hate.

When sentry nerves saw fear-wrought ghosts Prowling "between" with the "missing" hosts, The wily Hun 'neath an outpost digged, And a minor mine soon quickly rigged.

Under the lip of the line redoubt From where friend "Doc" came bellying out; Then one ran a wire that front along And Slink's curiosity waxed strong.

He puzzled on what that wire might mean 'Cross No Man's Land so snaky and lean, Pondered he on, what it might contain, He examined, he sniffed and sniffed again.

He started to gnaw and gnaw and chew, Ratlike, he sought to chew it through; Hard did he gnaw as a rodent gnaws, And never knew that he got applause.

From Corporal "Doc" awatching these deeds, Hunkering prone in the rank dead weeds; Staunch "Doc" whose heart as a rule held scorn Was cold with dread, for he could not warn.

And his pals the bombers soon were due To crowd that post, 'twas the rendezvous For the raid arranged to go at dawn, And so "Doc" worried and troubled on.

On worked the Hun in frenzied haste, And on gnawed Slink, distilling the taste; Till a cut-short squeak told "Doc" who'd lose, And a bright red spark fled up that fuse.

Woke the quiet with terrible roar, To kingdom come did the Teutons soar; White glared the night in a belching flame, Loud throbbed the front, and then louder came,

As guns pumped in with shattering crash And screamed and whipped with their bitter lash; Then slowed to burst and to search anew, Bewildered, ranging where Slink's mine blew.

Then "Doc," creeping in when panic stopped, Found that Slink the Rat was fatally shocked, Lying limp and still as a dead rat lies When his soul has gone to Rat Paradise.

And "Doc" laughed long and thought it sport That Slink the Rat should die a "short," Yet he thought his end an ill-paid lot, To save men's lives—then just lie and rot.

So, holding Slink, an aristocrat, Likely to challenge a pouncing cat, And wishing to honor poor Slink's name, Pay him homage, admitting his fame,

He did choose a strand of barb-wire near As a fitting No Man's Land rat's bier, So Slink could sway by his tail knotted tight, When the moaning winds crooned weird at night.