PHOTO: COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DE MONTRÉAL

The Montreal Métro.

The potential passenger can dial 560, followed by the number of the bus stop, and a pleasant anonymous voice will tell him when the next bus is due to arrive at his stop.

The service was an immediate success; by February it was averaging 15,000 calls a day. It also had a positive effect on business; in four months the number of passengers climbed 3 per cent.

The system relies on a $560,000 computer network and was first tested in Mississauga, Ontario, six years ago. It will grow increasingly sophisticated. It is presently based on printed schedules adjusted by current information on traffic conditions, but in two years a radio network linking buses to the main computer will give phone callers arrival times accurate to thirty seconds. Guelph and Brantford are planning to introduce similar systems.

Dial-A-Bus

Six Canadian cities offer minibus services that pick up passengers at home and carry them to short-haul destinations.

The services in Calgary, Alberta; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Kingston, Ottawa-Carleton, Pickering and Stratford, all in Ontario, work like this:

A rider phones ahead of time, in some places an hour ahead, in some thirty minutes or less. The bus picks the passenger up on schedule and takes him to a regular transfer point or to a shopping plaza or other standard destination such as a church, school or medical centre.

Some systems take regular reservations, such as every workday morning at eight. Most of the buses carry seventeen passengers in a club car setting with room for ten standees.

Safety on the Subway

The Montreal and Toronto subways have carried billions of passengers without a fatal accident.

This fortunate fact reflects much planning.

Montreal, for example, has a complex network of safety devices:

- Permissible and actual speeds are shown on the motorman's control panel. If the actual exceeds the permissible, an alarm sounds and the driver can brake to reduce speed to the appropriate level in four seconds. If he fails to do so, an emergency braking system automatically halts the train.
- A radio-telephone system with battery backups connects the trainmen and supervisors to a Central Control, even during a power failure.
- Motormen can talk to passengers through a public address system and passengers can talk to motormen by depressing a button on an intercom.
- Each car has four emergency brake switches which can be pulled by passengers who feel it is necessary.
- Two doors on each side of each car can be opened by hand from inside. Diagrams on the wall show how. The doors can also be opened from without.
- There is a fireman's ax, a crowbar and a service key on each car under a double seat. A diagram tells how to get them out.
- Each car has two accessible fire extinguishers.
- Each car has four intake and three outtake fans in the roof.
- Each of the initial station platforms has one emergency niche and the newer ones have two. Each one contains an emergency power cutout, a powder-type fire extinguisher and a telephone connected to the system's communication Centre.
- In all extension stations there is an anti-suicide ditch between the rails, a greater than usual clearance between the bottom of the train and the floor.