

THE ELEVATED NEWS

Issued Monthly by Chicago Elevated Railroads

LUKE GRANT, Editor

Room 1105, Edison Building

Volume VII

April 1921

 463

Number 5

The Importance of Electric Railways

FEW persons realize the importance of the electric railway in the everyday life of the nation. So accustomed have we grown to the use of the street car, elevated or interurban train that we hardly stop to think what it would mean were electric railways suddenly to cease operation.

Electric railways in the United States carry more than twelve times the number of passengers carried on steam railroads. The total number of passengers carried on electric railways is approximately fourteen billions a year. The average man and woman uses an electric railway of some kind more than 250 times every twelve months.

The investment in electric railways in the United States exceeds five billions of dollars and they give employment to more than 300,000 employes. If the rails of all the electric railways of the country were laid end to end they would reach four times around the world.

In spite of the importance of the industry and the absolute necessity of its maintenance for the comfort and convenience of the people, it came perilously near being wrecked during the war period, and is still far from being out of danger. At the present time about 17 per cent of the total electric railway mileage of the country is in the hands of receivers. The bankrupt companies own about 7,000 miles of railway, more than enough to lay a double track from New York to San

Francisco. They were forced into bankruptcy because of the lack of public interest in their maintenance.

When the seriousness of the situation was called to the attention of the former President of the United States by some of the members of his cabinet, he appointed a Commission to investigate the entire subject and submit a report with recommendations. The Commission found that the first thing essential to the continued operation of the roads was a restoration of their credit. The Commission said: "*The electric railway, furnishing transportation upon rails, is an essential public utility and should have the sympathetic understanding and co-operation of the public if it is to continue to perform a useful public service.*"

The Federal Commission in its report said that capital invested in electric railways, which were performing an essential public service, was entitled to a fair return. Many of the electric railways are not earning a fair return on the invested capital today, which is the reason why their impaired credit has not been restored.

Has it ever occurred to you how important the Elevated Railroads are in the daily life of Chicago? They operate 2,584 trains of 8,661 cars in each direction or a total of 5,168 trains of 17,322 cars every twenty-four hours. They carry more than a half-million passengers every day and they are dependable at all hours of the day and night. They give a safe, reliable public service, but they are not today earning a fair return to the owners of the properties.

The Illinois Public Utilities Commission, after months of investigation, found that the present value of the Elevated Railroads devoted to public use was \$86,250,000. Based on the earnings of the last three months the Elevated Railroads are not earning more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum on that valuation, although the Commission held they were entitled to earn $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Under the circumstances don't you think that any talk of "excessive profits" is pretty wide of the truth?

Please Keep Off Rear Platform

THE CHICAGO ELEVATED RAILROADS have established a record for the safe transportation of passengers, which stands unequalled by any railroad, steam or electric, in the world. In a period of over thirteen years, there has not been a single fatal accident to a passenger on a train, although the lines have carried during that time more than two and a quarter billions of persons.

This remarkable record for safety is not the result of luck. It is due to the high state of organization on the elevated lines, to careful and efficient operation and to the constant application of every known device and rule to safeguard passengers and employes. The Elevated Railroads are spending thousands of dollars every year on safety measures and they earnestly desire the co-operation of their employes and patrons, so that the good record may not be marred.

It has become very noticeable recently that passengers ride on the rear platform of trains, which is a dangerous practice. Signs are painted on doors stating that passengers are forbidden to ride on rear platforms, but many ignore the signs. When trains are loading at stations, especially in the evening rush hours, it frequently happens that some passenger already on the train and out on the rear platform in violation of the rules, will open the gates to admit others. Even the doors operated by compressed air, which are not as easily worked as the ordinary gate, are often opened by passengers. There is no trainman at the rear platform, which increases the danger to passengers attempting to board a train at the rear.

Collisions of any kind are extremely rare on the Elevated Railroads in this city. But they *might* occur here, as they sometimes do in other cities. At certain seasons of the year Chicago is accustomed to heavy fogs. While extra precautions are taken in foggy weather, there always is a possibility of one train running into the rear end of another train. It is just guarding against such possibilities that makes the Chicago Elevated Railroads the safest in the world and that is why the rules forbid passengers riding on the rear platform. Some day the unexpected might happen and a serious accident would

result, for there would be no means of escape for passengers crowded on a rear platform.

The safety committees on the Elevated Lines have been considering the advisability and practicability of locking the rear doors on all trains, but such a step would involve a very considerable initial expense and add to the cost of operation. If passengers would realize the danger in the practice and observe the rules of the company, it would not be necessary to think about locking the doors. Even locked doors would not be a complete safeguard, for there are some passengers who actually climb over the gates and they could do that with the doors locked.

It is to the interest of the patrons of the Elevated to co-operate with the management to avoid accidents. Avoid taking any chances which might result in your being hurt. The fact that you have taken a chance a hundred times and escaped is no guarantee that you will not get injured the next time you tempt fate. The old saying, "Better be safe than sorry," applies all the time. Please help us maintain the record for safe operation and keep off the rear platform of a train.

* * *

Sitting With Knees Crossed

IS THE HABIT of sitting in a crowded car with knees crossed and feet sticking out in the aisles growing in Chicago? Perhaps it is that the present style of dress worn by women makes the habit more noticeable. Whatever the reason there can be no doubt that the habit is a very common one. Neither is there any doubt that it constitutes an inconvenience to many passengers, not to say a nuisance.

Women are worse offenders than men in this respect. A patron of the Oak Park road came into the office of the editor of THE ELEVATED NEWS a few days ago and suggested that something be written about the nuisance of knees crossed in the cars. "I notice that the men are beginning to get the habit," said the man. The editor asked if men didn't always have the habit and if they weren't the worst offenders. "Not on the Oak Park line," said the visitor. "My observation is

that there are only a few men who cross their knees and that there are only a few women who do not." Not having any statistics on the subject, the editor had to accept the evidence presented.

Of course it is just a habit and the person who has fallen into it never gives a thought to the convenience of others in the car. Women especially should think about that phase of it, for they appreciate more than men what soiled skirts mean. In sticking their feet out in the aisle they cannot help soiling the dresses of other women who must go through the car in getting on and off.

A street or elevated car is a public conveyance and every passenger on it has equal rights with every other passenger. No passenger has a right to deliberately cause another passenger inconvenience or to, perhaps unwittingly, be the cause of an accident. Frequently a passenger stumbles over the feet that stick out in the aisles. Now the car aisles are intended to permit passengers to enter and leave the car and are in no sense show windows for the display of hosiery.

Please keep your feet on the floor and let the car aisles be used for the purpose they are intended.

* * *

IT'S NO LAUGHING MATTER

THE fiasco of municipal ownership and operation of the street car lines in Seattle is described by a local Walt Mason in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, addressed to the former owners of the lines, as follows:

"We're in an awful mess, alas! Remember back a year or two, we bought a street car line from you, your demonstrator failed to show us how to make the blamed thing go, and thus, although it gives us pain, we'll have to ship it back again. As David Harum might have said, 'The hoss is eating off his head.' You know we didn't want to buy, you dished us up

a pretty pie! You took us for the well-known hick, I guess we were—we bought the brick. You showed us figures you'd prepared, 'A child can run it,' you declared. 'You'll like your little plaything fine, just decorate the dotted line.' You let us heft your one-man cars and monkey with your nickel jars; you showed us how to throw the switch and said the line would make us rich. We'd also have a lot of fun, yes, anyone could make it run. You said, 'No hurry for the pay,' and so we bought it right away. And having bought we looked around and to our deep dismay we found by placing sleuths upon the trail, that we had spent a lot of kale. We had a jury probe the deal; we paid

three times too much we feel; and so your kiddy cars and track, we're wrapping up and shipping back. To own it wasn't any fun, it didn't leave us any one to roundly cuss when things went wrong; you see we cussed you boys so long it sort of left us in the air, we really were not treated fair. So take your car line we implore, so we can razz you boys once more."

Seattle is tired of the bargain it made, for it has found municipal operation unprofitable although the city raised the rate of fare from 5 to 10 cents.

ILLINOIS RANKS FIRST IN ELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT

ILLINOIS ranks first per inhabitant in the amount of money and development of its electric utilities, second in wealth and railway mileage, second in electric railway trackage and investment, second in telephone investment and development, and third in manufactures of the forty-eight states of the Union, according to the annual joint statement of the Illinois State Electric Association, Illinois Gas Association and Illinois Electric Railway Association just made public.

In 1905 the investment in electric, gas, electric railways and telephones in Illinois was but \$375,000,000, or about \$75 per inhabitant, this being sufficient to meet the public demand for service. On December 31, 1920, the investment was more than the staggering total of \$1,300,000,000 or \$192.20 per man, woman and child in the state. The demand for service has increased at such rapid rate that \$125,000,000 a year is now needed from investors for additional plants and equipment and the number of employes is in excess of

180,000, while owners of securities of the utilities number close to 450,000. These securities are owned by more individuals than any other group of investors, save those who purchased Liberty Bonds during the war period, and many insurance companies, banks, lodges and trust funds are also owners, giving indirect ownership to nine out of ten people. Statistics show that women hold one-third of the outstanding securities.

BIG GAS PLANT

THE new plant being erected by the Peoples Gas Light & Coke Company on the drainage canal west of Crawford avenue, will be the largest and most modern plant of its kind in the world. The gas plant covers 250 acres and when in operation it will consume 2,000 tons of coal a day and produce about 30,000,000 cubic feet of gas. It is expected the new plant will be in operation in September.

Got Their Money Back

The baby started crying at the theatre and an usher warned its parents that if they couldn't stop it they must get their money back and leave. The baby was silenced, but towards the end of the act the mother began to be bored. "Don't think much of this play after all," she said. "Wish we'd gone somewhere else."

"All right, Maria," whispered her husband. "Pinch the kid."

Pat was taking an examination for pound-master.

"What would you do for rabies?" he was asked.

"I wouldn't do nothin' for them," said Pat. "Thim's Jew praists."

OUR COURTESY COLUMN

Letters commending employes for special acts of courtesy and attention to passengers during the last month, are as follows:

Northwestern Trainman B. W. Foley, badge 1516, is commended for assisting a passenger in handling bundles and being otherwise courteous.

Metropolitan Conductor George Oliver, badge 4327, is commended for returning a hat bag that was lost on his train.

Oak Park Trainman L. B. Koster, badge 6208, is commended and thanked for turning in a purse which had been lost on his train.

Northwestern Conductor E. J. Schmidt, badge 804, is commended for preventing three rowdy newsboys on his train from occupying several seats with their newspapers.

Oak Park Trainman William Arder, badge 6142, is commended for his courtesy to passengers, for finding seats for elderly people, and for distinct enunciation of stations.

South Side Trainman Charles Wise, badge 2385, is commended for his courtesy and helpfulness.

Oak Park Trainmen G. C. Simpson, badge 6152, and H. Soellner, badge 6139, are commended for calling station names in a clear and distinct manner.

Northwestern Conductor C. J. Howard, badge 781, is commended for finding seats for standing passengers.

South Side Trainman William Hogan, badge 2610, is thanked and commended for lending additional carfare at Howard Street to a passenger.

Metropolitan Trainman W. E. Little, badge 4863, is commended for his courtesy and distinct enunciation of stations.

Northwestern Trainman J. C. Farley, badge 1615, is commended for helping a woman with two children off the train and carrying the baby carriage from the rear of his car to the station platform.

South Side Trainman W. Roberts, badge 2032, is commended for his distinct station announcements and for the attention he gives passengers to see that they are comfortable.

THINKS SERVICE GOOD

THAT one must go away from Chicago and try the local transportation service in some other city to make him realize how good his home city service is, was shown a few days ago in some remarks made by A. V. Mason, general superintendent of the Pittsburgh Terminal Warehouse and Transfer Company. Mr. Mason while in Chicago had occasion to use the elevated lines a good deal, and in talking with one of the trainmen, he said. "I doubt if half the people of Chicago realize how good the service is on your elevated lines. I have traveled far and wide and have never experienced anything to equal it. Your service is frequent, the cars clean and comfortable and the employes the most courteous and obliging I have ever met."

Some of our aldermen who visited other cities to inspect the local transportation lines think the same as Mr. Mason. Experience is a good teacher.

AGE OF CITIES

London is 1,950 years old; Paris, 1,560 years; Rome, 2,670 years; Berlin, 620 years; New York, 310 years, and Chicago, 84 years.

THE ROAD OF SERVICE

The cleanest, most convenient, most comfortable and most economical way to travel from Chicago to Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Waukegan and intermediate points is the electric way over the

North Shore Line

All-steel limited trains leave the elevated station at Adams and Wabash every hour on the even hour. Excellent dining car service at reasonable prices.

**Chicago, North Shore &
Milwaukee Railroad**