



Rider's Reader

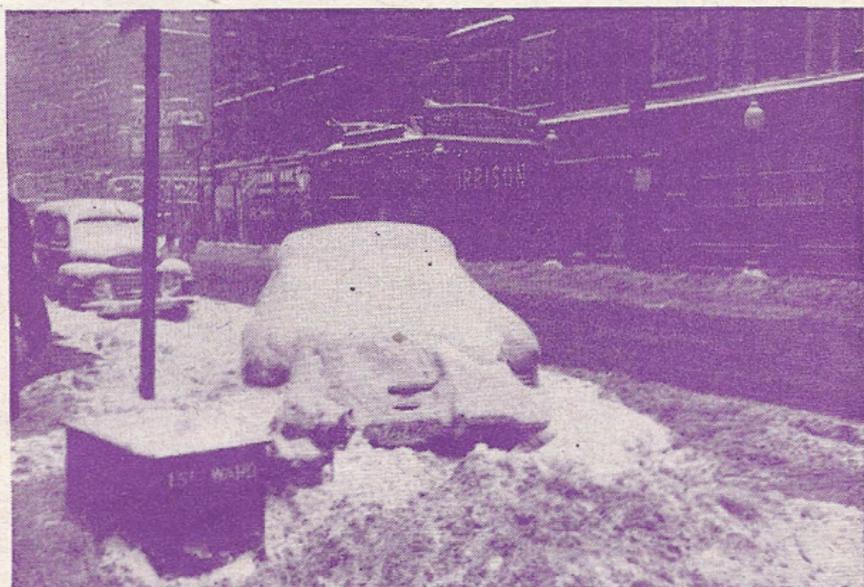


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Weather Delays Transit



PARKED AUTOMOBILES are barriers to free-flowing traffic, and to snow clearance.

IF NO MORE snow falls in Chicago this winter, Chicagoans will have no cause to complain. More snow fell during the months of November and December (34.1 inches) than normally falls during an entire winter. In addition, the average temperature in December was 19.4 degrees, which was 7.3 degrees below the normal December average—making it the coldest December in Chicago's recorded history.

Maintaining public transportation during a siege of bad weather is no easy job. During November and December the heavy burden was cast on the Chicago Transit Authority of clearing snow from local transit streets, carrying our regular passengers, carrying the extra passengers who would ordinarily drive their own cars, and at the same time combatting the effect of cold weather on our equipment.



TRAFFIC was diverted to local transit streets, but street space was reduced to approximately 50 per cent.

The Chicago Transit Authority operates 80 bus lines and 29 streetcar lines. During the last two months it was necessary to completely cover our 1500 miles of surface routes at least 11 different times with sand trucks and snow plows.

It is estimated that CTA snow removal costs in November amounted to about \$125,000. The December 6, 7 and 8 storm cost CTA another \$200,000 and by the end of December the snow removal costs for the two months totaled close to \$625,000.

Street Space Reduced

In clearing those streets used by CTA vehicles, not only was a service performed for local transit riders but it made these streets available to and heavily travelled by other types of traffic. This further complicated local transit problems.

Because of the snow piled at the curb the useable street width was reduced by as much as 50 per cent and this restricted space was greatly overloaded because of traffic diverted from the uncleaned streets.

In many instances, cars and buses had to be turned back short of their terminals to provide service in the opposite direction. Turnbacks are annoying to everyone, but there is no way of avoiding them when traffic delays cause gaps in service. The CTA must maintain service in both directions of a line.

Many of our "bad weather" riders ordinarily drive their cars. Peculiarly enough, although they consider the streets

impassable for their own driving, they expect the CTA to find a way through—and on time.

Even in good weather the operation of a public transit system is not easy. Chicago's traffic situation seriously impedes the movement of local transportation vehicles. Each year since 1945 there has been an increase of approximately 10 per cent in the number of passenger vehicles registered. The Cordon count data from 1946 through 1950 show a continuing increase in the number of private automobiles entering the central business district. Traffic on Chicago's streets is now at an all-time high. So is traffic congestion.

Traffic Controls Important

In face of this increased use of the streets by private automobiles and trucks, the importance of adequate traffic controls, parking restrictions, etc., cannot be over-emphasized.

The Chicago Transit Authority has little, if any, control over these traffic conditions. Fortunately, however, public officials and public spirited citizens are aroused to the situation. The City and civic leaders are now engaged in a comprehensive program of corrective action. The new traffic code is also an outstanding forward step.

Although use of private automobiles is at an all-time high, the great majority of Chicago's residents still depend upon local transit in getting about the city. Each weekday, the CTA has approximately 2,300,000 revenue passengers. Therefore it is essential to the economic welfare of the city and all of its residents that local transit be given opportunity, through the elimination of unwarranted and unnecessary traffic delays, to serve the public to the best of its ability.

It must be obvious to all local transit users that the CTA cannot maintain a high standard of service under existing street traffic conditions.

HEADLINE EVENTS served by CTA LINES

FLOWERS—Annual *Azalea and Camellia Show*, Garfield Park and Lincoln Park Conservatories. February 18—March 11.

HOCKEY—Chicago Blackhaws Home Games at Chicago Stadium, 1800 W. Madison St.

ICE SKATING—Indoor skating, Chicago Arena, 333 E. Erie St., Afternoons at 2:30, evenings at 8:30.

MUSIC—Chicago Symphony Orchestra "Pop" Concerts, every Wednesday. Tickets free at 111 W. Washington St.

THEATRE—"Abraham Lincoln's New Salem Days," Goodman Children's Theatre, Saturday and Sunday matinees. February 3—March 24.

WHO'S TO BLAME . . .

For Delays In Transit Service?

NEWS NOTE: During the week between Christmas and New Year's, normally a period of light traffic, the Chicago

Transit Authority reported over 1200 cases of stalled or double-parked autos and trucks blocking CTA service.

ON AN AVERAGE, CTA streetcars



buses and trolley buses operate about one and one-half minutes apart during the

rush hours. When a truck



or an automobile double-

parks or breaks down in front of a streetcar



or trolley-bus, it takes from five to ten minutes to clear the street

and restore service.



By that time several vehicles are lined

up behind the tie-up.



This means that there is no service on the street up ahead and

many people are waiting.



Because everyone wants to get on the first streetcar that comes along after the delay, that streetcar gets overloaded. Then,

because it must make more stops to take on people



and to let them off, the streetcars all have to go slower.



As a result they are

all late



in reaching the terminal and it is necessary to make turnbacks and cause further inconvenience to our riders.

And why? . . . All because a truck or an automobile double-parked, or broke down, in front of a streetcar or trolley bus.

Of course, motor buses are more flexible than streetcars or trolley buses. But the increased traffic on city streets (vehicle registrations are up 10% over last year) slows down even the buses. And even they can be tied up by accidents or double-parked cars which form traffic bottlenecks.