



# Rider's Reader



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## THEN and NOW

### INFLATION AT A GLANCE

Commodity	August 1939	August 1951	Percent Increase
*Sirloin Steak, per pound	\$.16	\$1.09	581.3%
*Coffee, per pound	.17½	.89	408.57%
*Fresh Milk, per quart	.08	.22	175.0%
<b>Local Adult Transit Fares:</b>			
Chicago Surface Lines	.07	.17	142.86%
Chicago Rapid Transit	.10	.18	80.0%
<i>*Food prices obtained from newspaper advertisements.</i>			

**"COFFEE—19c A POUND"** . . . that offer, recently made by a big Chicago department store chain, caused near riots as budget-conscious housewives clamored to take advantage of a rare bargain in this year 1951. The price prevailed for just one day as the company sought to focus attention on the 68th anniversary of its founding.



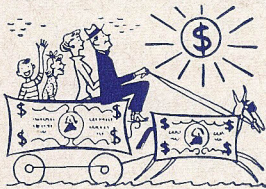
**NOT SO MANY YEARS AGO** . . . in 1939, for example, the same ad would scarcely have caused a ripple among even the most discriminating shoppers . . . for coffee was

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a 17½¢ item at most stores! During that same year Mother was serving pork tenderloin (16½¢ a pound), bacon (21¢ a pound), eggs (21¢ a dozen), sugar (10 pounds for 42¢) and fresh butter (25¢ a pound).

**JUNIOR AND POP** managed to keep that well trimmed look with haircuts at 50¢ and 75¢ . . . and heating the old homestead was less of a problem with a ton of Pocahontas egg coal available at \$8.85.

**THE FAMILY CHARIOT**, vintage '39, rolled off the dealer's floor for about \$900, boasting radio, heater, and a sporty metal tire cover on the rear. A gallon of your favorite gasoline cost 16¢ (with premiums, too) and, if your battery passed out, \$6 would put you back on the road again. The great majority of Chicagoans had not yet become "motorists" and were riding streetcars at a 7¢ fare and rapid transit trains for 10¢.

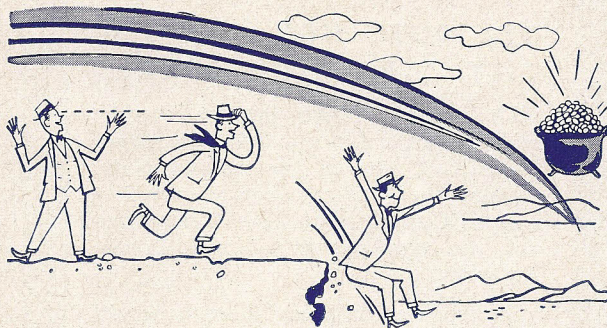


**WERE THOSE "THE GOOD OLD DAYS?"** Perhaps. But, then as now, income provided the other side of the story. The family man of 1939 was meeting his bills out of substantially smaller paychecks.

**TODAY'S BREADWINNER** needs every penny of his larger income to buy for his family the same blend of coffee at 89¢ a pound, the same quality eggs at 65¢ a dozen, butter (no better) at 69¢ a pound, pork tenderloin (no tenderer) at 99¢ a pound, and sugar (no sweeter) at 5 pounds for 45¢. His hair is probably thinner than it was 12 years ago, but the grooming fee is up to \$1.35, and \$1.50 on Saturdays. Pocahontas egg coal at \$19.90 per ton swells his winter heating tariff. He spends \$2,000 for a new, fully equipped "small" car, feeds it with 27¢-a-gallon gasoline, bucks heavy traffic congestion and pays substantial fees to park it. When the battery fails, the family budget is hit for about \$15 to provide a replacement.

**TRANSIT VEHICLES DON'T NEED HAIRCUTS**, or bacon and eggs, it's true. But the price of tires, motor fuels, rails, ties, trolley wire, paint, batteries, seat coverings, replacement parts, lubricants, and the many other items required to keep them in service, has skyrocketed on the crest of 1951's national inflationary spiral. So that the transit employe, like any other worker, may support his family in such an economy, basic hourly rates have risen to \$1.77 (Aug. 1, 1951) for a bus operator, as compared with 88¢ an hour in 1939.

## THERE IS NO MAGIC POT OF GOLD . . .



unfortunately, from which CTA may draw funds to sustain its operations. Nor are there any benevolent vendors who will supply CTA with needed materials at 1939 prices. The money to provide citywide transit service, to meet financial obligations, and to insure replacement of vehicles as part of a realistic modernization program, must come from the revenues derived from the operation of transit service. The law which created CTA leaves no alternative. Chicago's present cost of living index is the highest in history. The cost of providing transit service in Chicago, despite the inauguration of substantial operating economies, is obviously affected by that factor. It's as simple as that.

**MUCH HAS BEEN SAID** in recent weeks about transit fares. CTA sincerely regrets the necessity of increased rates, just as do suppliers of other essential services and commodities, but it, too, is powerless against inflationary pressures. However, in the light of current price trends, transit fares are still among Chicago's best bargains.

### 15 CENT FARE IN CITY OF 12,887

Arkansas City, Kan.—The Arkansas City Transit Company has boosted single bus fares from 12 cents to 15 cents straight and children's fares from eight to ten cents. Officials of the company said increased operating costs over the past year made the hike necessary.

## **CTA DOES NOT CONTROL CITY "TRACTION FUNDS"**

CTA employes have protested recent headlines in a Chicago daily newspaper which have created the erroneous impression that staff members of the City Council Committee on Local Transportation are employes of Chicago Transit Authority.

In response to requests "to set the record straight," here are the facts: The "Traction Funds" are completely under the jurisdiction of the City of Chicago. The employes referred to in the articles have no connection with the Chicago Transit Authority. **CTA HAS NO CONTROL OVER THEM, THE SALARIES THEY RECEIVE, NOR THE FUND FROM WHICH THEY ARE PAID.**

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### **WINNING FRIENDS FOR CHICAGO**

EARLY IN July Chicago played host to the national convention of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Like all organizations coming to the Windy City on such occasions, delegations of Elks from many states asked for advance supplies of CTA transit maps.

Indicating how this CTA service helps build good will for Chicago is a typical letter received from H. E. Tice, chairman of the Georgia Elks Convention Committee:

"We received the folder maps of CTA lines and heard quite a few of our Georgia folks say how easy it was to get around in Chicago with them. The maps were at the hotel on my arrival, June 28. Thanks again."

Chicagoans, too, find CTA route maps and SEE CHICAGO folders helpful in planning carefree, economical leisure time trips close to home. New 1951 issues of these popular pamphlets are now available for the asking. Just write CTA, Room 1226, 79 W. Monroe St., Chicago, or phone DEarborn 2-6100 and copies of either or both will be mailed to you promptly.