



ELECTRIC RAILROADERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

Grand Central Terminal

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To All E.R.A. Members:--

Back again and so much news on hand that there is no logical place to start. I'll take the items as they come to the top of the heap.

RAPID TRANSIT EXTENSIONS--December 1984 must have set a record for openings of rapid transit extensions. My mention of them must be brief because only one was covered in the NY papers and we have no correspondents in the other cities.

BOSTON--On December 8, 1984, the T opened the Red Line extension from Harvard Square to Davis Square. There is an intermediate station at Porter Square. This new piece is in Cambridge. Work continues on the line which should reach Alewife Parkway before too long. The Red Line is the one that once was called the Cambridge-Dorchester Tunnel; that's back before it got out to Ammont and Quincy.

WASHINGTON--about a week after that, WMATA opened the balance (?) of its Red Line. No specifics here, just that much from a friend who heard of it.

ATLANTA--December 15th saw MARTA open two extensions of its North-South line. At the north, it was lengthened from Arts Center to Brookhaven and at the south from West End to Lakewood-Fort McPherson. The nine-mile addition almost triples the course of the North-South line which is now 14 miles long ---three miles longer than the East-West line. There are now 25 stations in use. Managers hope to complete the line south to the airport by 1988. That will make another extension of about four miles.

MIAMI--December 18th was the day our papers said METRODADE would open the rest of its first line. That's the long section from downtown Miami way out to the west side.

LET-DOWN in New York--Back in the 60's, during the magnificent reign of Chairman Rona, the MTA decided to build grand things. (Remember that Second Avenue subway???) He decreed construction of a two-level, four-track tunnel under the East River between Queens and 63d St., Manhattan, passing under Roosevelt Island (ex-Welfare Island, nee Blackwells Island).

The two lower tracks were to get the Long Island RR to a new east side terminal, somewhere around Third Avenue & 47th St., Manhattan. The Feds took one look at that one and said "NO!" They pointed to the obvious, the under-utilized Grand Central Terminal and said there was no need for a new one. Whether coincidental or consequential, your reporter knoweth not, but MTA lost interest in the LIRR thing about that time.

A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN 1934
DEVOTED TO THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALL TYPES OF ELECTRIC RAILWAYS
PUBLISHERS OF HEADLIGHTS, THE MAGAZINE OF ELECTRIC RAILWAYS

It plodded along with the tunnel, however, and until a year or so ago still talked big words about a superfast express subway line that would be sort of on the LIRR right of way and would be parallel to and relieve the Queens Blvd. subway. Money talks, of course, and the small amounts available in the treasury of a gradually dying city only whispered. So, no marvel of speed, etc., for central Queens. What to do?

Much argument. Some pols thought use of the LIRR's old Montauk line would be just the thing---the freight could move at night and the couple of daily diesel-powered commuter trains could run on the main line. The folks along the line fought that and seem to have kioled it. They live in nice quiet areas and they'd like to keep them that way---which they wouldn't if there was a one-fare subway ride into Manhattan.

More arqing and posturing and vapping and grunting and groaning. On December 14th last, the mountain delivered its mouse. MTA voted to tie the tunnel's rapid transit tracks to the local tracks of the Queens Blvd. line. It will do this between Queens Plaza and the 36th St. station. Apparently, this will be served by something called a "K" route---presumably from the 6th Avenue line, in Manhattan, to central Queens. Local, all stops and slow. No mention of the possible use for the other, west, lead from the 63d St. tunnel to the old BMT Broadway subway. It's likely to remain idle.

The "G" Brooklyn-Queens Crosstown line will be truncated and end at Court Square station, a stop below Queens Plaza. A 300' walkway would connect Court Square to the 21st St.-Ely Ave station of the "E" add "F" lines. (In 300' you can get mugged two or three times daily.) What earthily use the "G" then will be, I can't guess. We know it never should have been built; it was one of Red Mike Hylan's brainstorms 60 years ago.

The new connection will be 520 feet long and cost \$222,000,000 or \$426,923.07 a foot. Talk about waste! No man living can predict when this project will be done.

It so happens that the 63d St. tunnel is about 700 feet north of and parallel to the 60th St. tunnel. That's the one used by "N" and "RR" trains. These come up through mid-Manhattan in the old BMT Broadway subway. Not long after the big war, in the '50s, the city built a connection between the 60th St. tunnel and the Queens Blvd. local tracks. The "N" trains use it. They use it Monday through Friday, daytime only. The Management always has insisted that there is no need for night or weekend service yet here they are planning what is essentially a duplicate of what they call a marginal service.

GOOD NEWS for us old crocks---until now, city residents 65 and older (who work less than 20 hours a week) have been able to ride the local transit system for half fare. You have had to get a special ID card from the City of NY. Now MTA will be making the privilege available to anyone that age. No date set for the change, though.

R.I.P.

With the death of Stan Hauck on January 5th, E.R.A. lost another old-time member. Stan joined in Dec/35 and had membership No. 330. Stan had some fabulous trolley models and liked to display them in operation at shows and meets in New England.

MOON MADNESS, or The Fifty Grand Fanny Frolic at the TA---Remember the TA ordering up a couple of hundred R-62 cars for the IRT lines? They told Kawasaki to mold the seats to conform to the contours of the human rump. Each bench has hollows in it that theoretically will accommodate your behind ---and yours---and yours---and yours. Trouble is the dimples in the seats are based on Japanese butts and not the vastly bigger, extra large economy size New York buns. Passengers cried that the spaces are too small.

So-o-o-o, the TA commissions a \$50,000 study to determine if the spaces are indeed too narrow for N.Y. fundamentals. City Council Member Carol Greitzer blasted the TA on that one, calling it a "Tush Tally" and a waste of money. She told the papers she'd taken a tape measure and measured 12 ladies and 11 men and that it was clear the allotted space was too little. If the TA's designers, engineers or whatever were observant, they'd know that the town has a really grand assortment of steatopygian wonders. We knew that at the TA 20 years ago; we got irate letters from those who wanted us to label seats as being for seven or eight people. Reggie Welch, who designed GOOD cars for the TA before his retirement, patiently explained that the seat benches come in standard widths but the passengers' derrieres don't.

Still, isn't it nice to see what your federal tax dollars will buy? If you folks stopped paying income taxes, this big mechanical worm would shut down. At the current TA scale, fifty grand will pay for one survey chief ---and no staff at all.

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BIG SPENDERS, N.Y. Style---In 1984, the TA gave a \$400,000 contract to London Transport "for design consulting on the rehabilitation of subway repair shops and barns." It includes \$27,000 in vacation travel expenses for families of consultants. For further details, see Pg 24, NY Times, 1/12/85. See what your federal tax dollars are buying???

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BUFFALO---Last spring, I reported briefly on allegations of poor work on the tunnel. Since then, Gordon J. Thompson, E.R.A. member in that city, sent me valuable comments and news.

I gather that the charges of inferior work on the tunnel came from the state administration in Albany. The fuss created was enough to drive out of office the then Executive Director of the Niagara Frontier TA. This effect may have seemed desirable to Governor Cuomo if not especially so to anyone else. The successor to the man who left then had the job of persuading the Buffalo people that the subway is really safe.

Federal investigation determined that the tunnel is OK. Full operation should begin in April. Whether this will be delayed as a result of the vendetta, I don't know.

As of mid-October, four cars were running on the Surface section and carrying 4500 riders in the four hours of service. Things look good.

Question: will Buffalo need a snow plow or sweeper for that surface section? Buffalo's noted for snow; my relatives there used to tell me the town had two seasons---winter and the Fourth of July.

Thanks to Mr. Thompson for the straight story.

PHILADELPHIA---The Mayor's office announced a plan to make a reserved track light rail line of Route 60, Allegheny Ave. The idea is quite ambitious. Car tracks would be set off from the rest of the roadway by curbs. Traffic lights would be set to give preference to trolleys. All track would be new and new cars also are in the plan. Total cost would approach \$60 million and the City of Philadelphia will seek federal help.

Since the announcement came from the City and not from SEPTA, I conclude it has the City's backing. SEPTA's sentiments are unknown to me. In recent years, various buffs have claimed the operating management is hostile to the very idea of trolleys despite acquisition of new cars for the Subway-Surface routes in West Philadelphia.

MEXICO CITY---Late news is that the managers of the transit system have decided to build two new trolley lines. As I understand it, the cost of building more subway lines (there are six) has become forbidding. The new lines would run from the southerly end of Route 2. One would be a crosstown operation that would connect with Route 3.

BERLIN TRANSPORT sells picture post cards of old trolleys and subway cars, T-shirts, uniform buttons, etc. For more information write to Berliner Verkehrs-Betriebe, Potsdamer Str. 188, D1000 Berlin 30, Germany and ask for the BVG-Artikel Preisliste. I have one of the subway T-shirts. It has a picture of a car called the "Tuneleule" (Tunnel Owl).

DETROIT's people mover is in bad trouble according to an article in the paper in NY. Poor construction has sent costs over the moon and the project is eating up money they had thought to use for some sort of real rail service. Too bad.

Member Ed Ridolph sent me an interesting letter. He told me that the west end of the Miami "L" is in the Miami Springs area, somewhat west of OpaLocka which I had mentioned as end of the line. He also mentions that Miami used storage battery street cars in the early days. They bought some of the Central of Florida cars from Daytona after that one gave up.

And Gordon J. Parker, of San Rafael, sent me particulars of another storage battery line, this one in Burlingame, Calif. Appropriately, it was called the Burlingame Ry. Co. It was 8850 feet long. Built 1913; shut down 1917. It had on single truck car built by Federal Storage Battery Co.

NEW YORK;- FEDS: SUBWAY FIRE RISK UNACCEPTABLE, said the brassy headline on the front page of one local paper the morning of Dec. 18th. Two other papers used the story as the big front page news that day. I happened this way---

On Dec. 11th, 38 safety investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board set out to have a look into New York's mechanical lower alimentary canal, its veritable colon, the one and only subway system. Within 48 hours, they had a chance to watch their choice of 28 fires, 16 on the 12th alone. That was a mite above average although there had been over 5000 (count 'em---f-i-v-e t-h-o-u-s-a-n-d) fires in 1984 up to that time. That is somewhat above 100 a week.

On Tuesday, the 18th, the Feds initial statement appeared, promising a full report presently. Meanwhile, they said that if one subway track were federal property, they'd order it closed as unsafe. They found this south of DeKalb Avenue, Brooklyn, through which funnel the Brighton, Sea Beach, West End and Fort Hamilton trains. (Sea Beach and West End expresses now run at

ITALY---The city government of Bologna plan a light rail system of three lines.

RIO de JANEIRO---The head of the Metro is looking for \$US 500 million to build a new line through the southern suburbs, including the beaches at Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon. Considering the extent to which banks in the U.S.A. and elsewhere already are overextended in Brazil, his chances seem poor. ---I just learned that the light rail line in Rio, Line 2, is partly fitted with third rail and partly with overhead trolley line.

WHO HAS A PICTURE of the NYCTA R-62 Bombardier car on test in Canada with a pantagraph on it? (On the car; not on Canada.)

VALENCIA, SPAIN is to get new light rail cars for the suburban trolley lines. They will be much like the new cars in Utrecht, Netherlands, but will be made in Spain under license.

BOSTON---has ordered 56 cars for the Red Line. The contract is with the U.S. subsidiary of Canada's UTDC.

MILAN, ITALY---The two existing underground lines are to be joined by a third. The Red and Green lines together add up to about 30 miles of line with 60 stations. The Yellow line now being built will have 14 stations in ten miles. It will have catenary with 1500 V DC. This lends itself to easy surface extensions in the suburbs.

FRENCH LIGHT RAIL---You probably know that Nantes, in western France, is the first French city bringing back trolleys. It has 20 articulated cars on order. Now Grenoble, down near the Alps, is to get 21 cars of substantially the same design but with low floors to ease entry to handicapped folks. Its line will be about 5½ Mi. long with 20 stations.

IT SHOULD BE WELCOME NEWS that the E.R.A. Nominating Committee this year is composed of members not involved in the management of headquarters. They are Jim Boylan, of Pennsylvania, Karl Groh of New York and John Swindler, of Pennsylvania. To me, it's good to see lads from outside the New York area taking part in running things. Get your suggestions in to these men; tell them your ideas on who you think the officers should be. You can write to them at HQ if you don't have their private addresses. John Swindler, of course, is Headlights editor and can be reached at the Headlights address.

MADRID---was taking delivery of new cars last year. 25 two-car sets for the Metro.

NEW BULLET TRAINS---This year, Japanese National Railways will take delivery of a prototype 16-car train, first of a fleet for the Tokaido and Sanyo lines. Top speed will be 230 Km/hr, up from 210 achieved by the present cars. In mph, those figures are 142.6 and 130.2). Two cars in each set will be double-deckers with buffet and dining downstairs and first class observation lounges above. Incidentally, we usually refer to these as Shinkansen trains. That actually works out this way: shin=new, kan=trunk, sen=line, or new trunk line.

MONTEREY, MEXICO---A Canadian group is said to be working on plans for a metro. No particulars as to style.

BOOK---Usually I do not mention rail books other than those about electrically operated lines. However, one of our members has a nice new one on the market. It's by Seth Bramson and its title is "SPEEDWAY TO SUNSHINE". It's all about the Florida East Coast Ry. You can get it from your regular dealer or direct from the author. Write to Seth H. Bramson, 330 NE 96th St., Miami Shores, Florida 33138. Seth also buys and sells railroad and trolley material---lanterns, signs, timetables, the works.

HEADLIGHTS---Maybe before this, maybe with this, maybe after this, you will get the January-February 1984 issue. At Page 6, please correct the picture captions. The upper picture, of the 135th St. yard, is of New York Rys. but the New York & Harlem RR never was a subsidiary of New York Rys. It was owned by the New York Central and at the time of the picture had sold its 4th & Madison line to NY Rys. in anticipation of conversion to motor bus operation. The lower picture shows car 535, a home-made NY Rys. convertible---not a box car---coming up out of the Park Avenue tunnel.

TORONTO---ordered 126 subway cars (type H-6) and 52 articulated LRV's. Total price--\$286 million.

TRONDHEIM, NORWAY --is taking delivery of 11 cars from Linke-Hofmann-Busch.

SOUTH AFRICA---SA Rys. ordered 50 electric locos from GEC.

ITALY---two local railways, the Modena-Sassuolo and Benevento-Naples, are getting snappy looking new electric trains.

VIENNA---has two new metro lines under construction.

HONG KONG's 7½ mi. island line should open about the middle of the year.

CALCUTTA's metro opened to public service on last October 24th. Track is Indian broad gauge; power is 750V DC.

CAIRO, EGYPT is studying a second metro line. The first should open in 1986 although I don't think cars have been ordered yet.

SHANGHAI is getting ready to build two metro lines. About 18 miles.

All of which just about uses up the available space for this letter. There are lots more things going on that should be mentioned but.....

Francis J. Goldsmith, Jr.
Headquarters Reporter