

New Increase In Trolley Fare Seems Certain

Temporary Hike Probable While PSC Probes Efficiency

By ROBERT BLOEM

An immediate increase in local bus and trolley fares for Indianapolis seems almost certain.

Tomorrow Indianapolis Railways, Inc., will renew its fight before the Public Service Commission for higher rates. At the same time the PSC will be pre-

(First of a Series of Articles on Railway Rate Case.)

paring for a full-dress investigation of the efficiency of the utility's operation.

But according to Indianapolis Railways figures, the transit operation now is losing nearly \$40,000 a month. Only last week the company reported to its stockholders a loss of more than \$211,000 for 1948.

In the face of these figures, there appears little chance of changing the cost of investigation to the company. Rate case observers believe that for the same reason the company will not be required to wait until the efficiency study is finished before getting financial relief.

Seek 2-for-25c Rate

When the hearings begin last January, are reopened tomorrow, it is believed likely Indianapolis Railways will ask that they be given the new higher fares until the study is finished. The new fare sought is 13 cents a ride, two rides for 25 cents.

Mr. Steckler will oppose a temporary increase of this size on grounds it is hard to reduce rates later. The commission has reduced rates before, however, and is expected to take the view that some sort of relief should be granted despite this contention.

The present rate case is the newest step in a hectic four years for both the company and for the PSC. Since September, 1945, when the first-rate change in 15 years was made the transit company has had three-rate increases and one rate reduction from the PSC.

Shows Operating Loss
In the past the rate fight has been based largely on losses which seemed likely. Now, for the first time, the utility shows an actual operating loss on its books—less money being taken in than is being paid out to operate the fare.

From the time Railways was reorganized in 1932 until the beginning of the almost continuous rate drive in 1945, fares in Indianapolis were 10 cents on motor buses, seven cents or four tokens for a quarter on streetcars and trackless trolleys, 2 cents for each transfer.

At that time fares were set the same for all vehicles—10 cents a single ride, eight tokens for 55 cents. Later they were cut back to 10 cents and four tokens for 25 cents. It took a bitter court battle in 1946 to get the token price boosted to three for 25 cents and not until the first of last year did he present fare of 10 cents straight with free transfers come in.

Since then, the company records show, the number of fares collected has dropped about 5 percent. Payrolls, subject to arbitration under the state Utilities Compulsory Arbitration act, have jumped by nearly half a million dollars. Other operation costs either are holding at a high level or still rising.

During the past year, company records show, more than \$1.6 million worth of new equipment has been added to the service. The company estimates that it needs half a million dollars more revenue than is in prospect for this year to break even, more than \$2 million additional revenue if it is to make what it calls "a fair return on the fair value of property used in providing transit service."

(TOMORROW: The efficiency study.)

Father Refuses Plea for 6 Cents; Boy Hangs Self

CINCINNATI, O., Apr. 23 (UPI)—Nine-year-old Ronnie Lee Cecil apparently had everything to live for—he was an honor student and had just been promised a job as a newsboy sometime in the future. But today he hanged himself with a necktie from the post of a double-decker bed in his home.

Ronnie's father, Malcolm Cecil, 62, found the boy. Police said his neck had been broken. They said there was a kitchen chair nearby, indicating the boy had stood on it while he placed the end of the necktie around the bed post.

RONNIE HAD gone to a newspaper office earlier and had been promised a newsboy job within a year or two. When he returned he asked his father, who operates a shoe repair shop in the front of his home, for a nickel and a penny. Mr. Cecil said he turned down the request.

A half hour later the father walked into the house and found his son's body.

"These kids see too many movies," the grief-stricken father said. "maybe he saw one with a hanging in it."

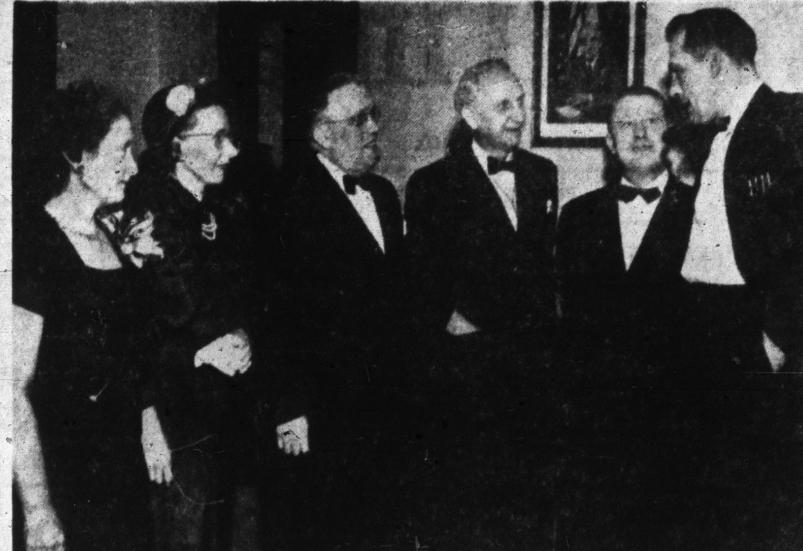
Senator Seeks Return Of Good Old Days

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Apr. 23 (UPI)—A cigar-chewing Democrat from Chicago wants Illinois to return to the old days of a saloon in every room.

State Senator Roland Libonati has introduced a bill in the legislature making it unlawful not to have cupboards in every room of every public building.

Sen. Libonati said spittoons promote public health and make a public health measure.

Prominent Democrats Attend Editors' Caucus



Ballistics Experts Study Garris Clue

Try to Link Parolee With Fatal Bullet

ATLANTA, Apr. 23 (UPI)—Atlanta ballistics experts, weary from a sleepless three-day grind, knocked off for a few hours sleep today before resuming their crime laboratory attempt to link a paroled North Carolina killer with the slaying of Metropolitan Opera tenor John Garris.

Dr. Herman Jones, Fulton County crime detector, spent nearly four hours this morning seeking similarity between the death bullet and test slug fired by a gun taken from Grover Togo Pulley, 45, paroled slayer of a policeman.

At noon he and his assistants quit for a few hours rest. It was the first Dr. Jones has had since he was called into the case after the body of the singer, neatly laid out, was found in a rain-soaked, littered downtown alley here last Thursday.

Be Back Tonight!

"I can't trust my eyes—any more," Jones said. "I've got to rest them and get a little sleep, but I'll be back tonight."

The bullet taken from the body was fixed in a comparison microscope, together with one of those fired with the nine-millimeter Belgian pistol taken from Pulley in Clinton, S. C.

He was arrested there Thursday, some 12 hours after Mr. Garris' body was found.

Every other course the police had followed, trailing the opera company to Memphis, Tenn., and Dallas, Tex., backtracking to Mr. Garris' intimates in New York and his acquaintances here, had ended in failure.

Pulley was considered a suspect because his pistol was loaded with steel-jacket slugs, similar to those which killed Mr. Garris. It is the American-type bullet recommended for use in the Belgian weapon.

Miss Rich said she first met Mr. Owen about five years ago at a cattle auction in California. She said he was "a very brilliant, very astute cattle man." Since then she saw him several times at other cattle sales.

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Irene Rich Reports She Spurned Slain Millionaire

Real Estate Man Shot in the Back

RIVERSIDE, Cal., Apr. 23 (UPI)—A gray-haired widow confessed today that she was driven to shoot fatally her millionaire employer, John E. Owen, 68, by her fear that he planned to kill her and wed Movie Actress Irene Rich, the sheriff's office revealed.

Mr. Owen, well-known real estate man, was slain by a single bullet in his back in his \$50,000 ranch house last night.

Mrs. Agnes Garnier, 53-year-old manager of his vast properties, admitted she fired the shot after an argument over his threats to leave her and marry the aging star, Deputy Sheriff M. L. Vivion said.

District Attorney William O. Mackey scoffed at the jealous rage motive, saying the shooting took place during an argument over Mr. Owen's drinking last night.

Commenting in New York on the report, Miss Rich said:

"That's so silly, I hardly knew the man."

Miss Rich, now 57, said that Owen, a "perfectly darling man," had proposed marriage to her, but he was "just carried away by the glamour of a New York actress" and she turned him down.

Miss Rich, star of the current Broadway success "As The Girls Go" said Mr. Owen had spoken of marriage, "but how could I take him seriously—he was a married man. No man has a right to ask a woman to marry him if he's married."

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Irene Rich

in and out of New York several times after that and always came by to take me out after the show. I must have gone out with him 15 or 20 times.

"You know how men are with New York actresses. He was a charming man and a gentleman, but he was a married man."

"It was never serious. We were certainly far from engaged—at least in my mind."

The district attorney's conflicting version of the motive was announced after a long conference with Mrs. Garnier. Mr. Mackey said she told him she protested to Mr. Owen about his drinking and when she went to his bedroom to help him into bed he became angry.

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