New Officers Elected to Head Transit Board; Directors Take Oath of Office

William H. Coburn, Jr., Berkeley attorney whose personal dedication to public transportation helped lead to the formation and operation of AC Transit, took office this month as president of the board of directors.

Coburn, vice president for the past two years, was named to the top post at the annual election, taking over the gavel from Col. Robert M. Copeland, who served as president since January, 1963.

Elected as vice president was another veteran board member and well-known Oakland businessman, John McDonnell, whose service with the district dates back to 1956.

Coburn, 39, of 1123 Hillview Rd., Berkeley, took over district leadership in a period which is expected to have vital significance in the future of AC Transit and its ability to serve the public.

During the year, the district expects to take part in a joint study to coordinate local bus service in the East Bay with the future rapid transit regional rail system, Coburn pointed out.

From this study, he said, is expected to come the pattern for fares, routing, combination of services and passenger and equipment plans which will affect many riders.

The district also, this year, will meet with representatives of the Carmen's Union, Division 192, to work out a new labor contract.

"We will have the responsibility of providing comparable wages for our employees, while maintaining the district's solvency and ability to pay its labor costs," Coburn said.

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The new president said he would continue to encourage efforts to reduce costs of service by increased efficiency, bringing faster and better bus service to the people and the areas where it is needed.

Similarly, he is dedicated to continuing the program of replacing older equipment with the latest in motor coach design.

Some small neighborhood lines finally are beginning to show growth, with the arrival of new equipment, Coburn declared. Other lines, however, where patronage has fallen off despite new buses and service revisions patterned to meet neighborhood needs, will have to be thoroughly examined, he added.

Preceding the election, Coburn was among three members of the board—re-elected to office last November—who were seated for new terms at brief swearing-in ceremonies.

Judge David Calfee of the Richmond Municipal Court, gave the oath of office to Coburn, as director of Ward I; William E. Berk of Richmond, director of Ward II; and Ray H. Rinehart of Piedmont, Director at Large.

Active in efforts to secure better local transportation, Coburn was elected to the board in 1958 after civic leaders persuaded him to run as representative of the ward which now includes Berkeley, Emeryville and West Oakland.

Among his many civic activities, Coburn has served as president of the Berkeley-Albany Bar Association; held a number of posts, including a directorship with the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, and is past president of Berkeley Exchange Club.

McDonnell, 57, of 5100 Cochrane Ave., Oakland, has been a board member since the district was formed.

Owner of McDonnell Nurseries, he is past president of the California Association of Nurserymen, the Northern Oakland Kiwanis Club, and Orinda Country Club; a past director of the Temescal Merchants Association, and director of the agriculture department, Laney Trade School.

Last of the district's gasoline powered motor coaches were put on "inactive" basis this month as another like number of 45-passenger buses went into operation on crosstown, neighborhood lines in Oakland, San Leandro and Hayward.

The new arrivals also made available a number of later model coaches for bridge service during peak hours, particularly on long runs, including Lines N, R and K, giving commuters the advantage of all-around better equipment.

With the shipment, the district could retire the final 26 gas-driven "Macks," which were being used for special service and on some neighborhood lines.

The "Macks," considered the "latest" in motor coach design when they were purchased in 1946-47 for use on the Bay Bridge, will be "mothballed" for emergency use until disposed of.

Fifteen of the new 51-passenger coaches were put into service on bus lines operating to East Oakland, including the 80's, 40's and 15's, while a like number of 45-passenger buses went into operation on crosstown, neighborhood lines in Oakland, San Leandro and Hayward.

As an unusual introduction for the new buses, maintenance department workers lined up the coaches in precise formation at the Seminary division yard to form a giant Christmas tree—symbolic of the district's $808,400 holiday "gift" to its passengers. The new Transit Liners enabled the district to retire the last of the gasoline-powered motor coaches and gave the system an all-diesel fleet.

Last of the district's gasoline powered motor coaches were put on "inactive" basis this month as another 30 new Transit Liners rolled into service on East Bay lines.

The latest shipment of new buses increased the district's fleet of streamlined coaches to 340—more than half of the property's entire fleet.

The 30 buses also gave passengers one of their costliest Christmas gifts—$808,400 worth of equipment to make riding faster and more comfortable.

With the shipment, the district could retire the final 26 gas-driven "Macks," which were being used for special service and on some neighborhood lines.

District Plans Transit Coordination Study,
Labor Talks during 'Year of Significance'

(Continued from Page 1)
Our 'Stockholders' Write...

AC Transit is proud to reprint below a few of the many letters of commendation received during the month—letters unsolicited from residents of the East Bay who are owners of the transit system. Letters were selected at random to represent the quality of courtesy, service and safety demonstrated by AC personnel in their most important relationship with our customers.

... I left a plaid silk shopping bag with new plastic rubbers and cough medicine on the bus... I reported it to lost and found and a lovely girl answered the phone and was so nice to me and said "your package is here, I have it"... I want to thank you and the young lady... she was lovely. I feel it's nice to report things like that to you...

Mrs. May Bankhead
Oakland

... the driver on the 59 Skyline and on the C bus (A. P. Gumataotao) in the afternoon is a very good driver... he is very jolly and always polite, no matter how rude and inconsiderate people are to him... he actually makes riding the bus fun...

Lynne McCarthy
Oakland

... I was between two coach stops on Foothill Blvd... trying desperately to reach the one nearest downtown Oakland. I am recovering from a broken leg... It is impossible for me to run. Your bus driver (H. D. Prevat) seeing my plight stopped his bus to allow me to get on. He was so pleasant and courteous that I decided to take a few minutes of my time to pay him a compliment...

Mrs. W. Potter
Oakland

I must tell you how grateful I am for your gracious help to me. I am a nurse without a car, so am a steady user of A.C. When I am sent to certain towns or parts of town, I call you and give you the address and you always guide me right to my destination. I can't begin to tell you how very grateful I am to you and your very courteous bus drivers...

Burnette Correa
Oakland

... It is not often that one finds friendliness, courtesy and thoughtfulness day after day in someone who is subjected to the moods of commuting men and women and the responsibility of safely negotiating a crowded freeway. (A. R. Blick)... has gone out of his way to pick up running late-comers or waited for them when weather was bad... it was the least I could do in letting AC Transit know what a truly conscientious and worthwhile man they have.

E. L. Webber
Hayward

... He (Joseph P. Jones) is a splendid, careful driver, who calls out the stops clearly and pleasantly, and signals the transfer points in advance, stating which buses are available at these points... His appearance is very attractive and his manners are polished and sincere.

Mrs. Frances Sullivan
Berkeley

Board Resolution Commends Outstanding Contributions of Retired Union Head

Personal dedication of Fred Vern Stambaugh to the cause of labor and to the development of public transportation and formation of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, was recognized by the board of directors this month in a resolution presented to him upon retirement.

Stambaugh retired Jan. 4 after serving 14 years as president of Carmen's Union, Division 192. The resolution cited his close identification with the transition from a privately-owned transit system to today's greatly expanded public utility; credited his work in drafting labor provisions of the transit district law, in working for adoption of necessary legislation, and in supporting bond campaigns and aiding passage of bond issues.

The action of the board also noted the retired president's participation in contract negotiations, characterized by "intelligent, fearless and intense efforts in bargaining for wages and working conditions" and by a high degree of "personal integrity, honesty and sincere concern for the present and future welfare of the union membership."

The resolution expressed the respect of the board for Stambaugh's devotion to the cause of labor, its appreciation for his efforts in behalf of the formation and development of the district and its warmest wishes for his continued health and happiness.

Elected to take over the post as head of the union was Louis V. Bailey.

40-Year Worker Leaves

Richard H. Lee, who put in over 40 years of service, retired on Jan. 1 from a transit career that included 10 years as a street car conductor and nearly 30 years as a bus operator, at Emeryville and Seminary divisions. Lee, who entered service on Sept. 8, 1924, makes his home at 1079 Oakes Blvd., San Leandro.
Death Takes Toll Among Former Workers

Deaths of a number of "old-timers" in the industry were reported this month, leaving a void on pension rolls.

Charles G. Weatherly, 85, who went to work in 1917 and spent 33 years as a draftsman in the engineering department, died on Nov. 4. He lived at 307 22nd St., Oakland, and was pensioned in 1950.

Richard H. Woolcock, 74, of 2032 100th Ave., Oakland, died on Dec. 8. He went to work as a street car operator in 1923, transferred to the motor coach division in 1935 and retired from driving in 1955.

James E. Prince, who died on Dec. 18, entered as an operator at Western Division in 1925 and worked as a receiver and dispatcher before taking his pension in 1962. He was 70 and lived at 6036 Harwood Ave., Oakland.

Henry Schopplein, born on New Year's Day in 1877, died Dec. 20, shortly before his 78th birthday. He went to work as an armature mechanic shortly after the 1906 earthquake and served as a car cleaner and watchman before his retirement in 1942. He lived at 941 39th St., Oakland.

Eugene McCarthy, nearly 72 when he died Dec. 19, went to work in 1914 as an operator on the street cars, switching to bus driving in 1933. Mr. McCarthy, who lived at 1632 27th Ave., Oakland, served as a ticket collector at the San Francisco terminal from 1949 until he was pensioned in 1958.

'Just a Little Dinner for Four'

Sweet music will tinkle happily for Louis O. Alward in his "round-the-world wanderings, along with the best wishes of fellow workers who gave him a surprise send-off party unique in district history.

The schedule expert, leaving after 39 years, had no inkling of any "schedule" like a retirement dinner until he walked into a downtown Oakland restaurant to take advantage of "free dinner tickets" arranged by George Reed, a friend who retired from the district 15 months ago.

Alward discovered, instead, that he was guest of honor at a party, which "snowballed" under direction of fellow workers George Harrison and Norman Williams into a gathering of 88 friends . . . the "finest surprise I ever had," in Alward's description.

He was presented with a transistor radio for his travels and with a guest book signed by over 150 fellow employees. A silver plaque fastened to the radio, records details of the presentation.

C. M. "Johnny" Walker, superintendent of the Transbay Transit Terminal, acted as master of ceremonies.

Alward plans to "vacation" at Palm Springs this month before starting around the world.

AC Transit held a near steady business level during November, recording a slight increase in passenger revenue and the number of riders carried as compared to the same month a year ago.

In keeping with a past pattern, the most notable increase was in commute book sales, with a total for November of $170,250, an 8.8 per cent increase over sales of $156,484 a year ago. The district's total passenger revenue was $1,015,855, a boost of 1 per cent over November, 1963. Of the total, transbay travel contributed $395,451, up 1.69 per cent, while East Bay revenue showed an increase of .64 per cent.

The number of riders carried on local and transbay lines totaled 4,268,803, an increase of 1.46 over a year ago. Transbay service showed a passenger boost of 3.43 per cent, with 892,672 riders. Local passengers reached 3,376,131, an increase of almost 1 per cent over the previous November.

The district operated 1,833,367 miles of scheduled service, a decrease of 1.5 per cent. Total income of $1,238,268 was sufficient to cover operational expenses of $1,036,836, down 1.1 per cent for the month, as well as equipment renewal and bond debt requirements.

Nationally, the transit industry indicated a passenger revenue decrease for the month of nearly 1 per cent.

Safety Record Attained by Seminary Drivers

Seminary Division operators had a safety record of 12,740 miles of service operation per accident during the previous month. The record topped the goal for each division of 12,450 miles per accident.
At an adjourned regular meeting Dec. 23, 1964, the Board of Directors:
- Authorized Treasurer-Controller to participate in regional conference of American Transit Association, on motion of Vice President Coburn.
- Established procedure for accumulating and disbursing funds relating to retirement annuity for General Manager, on motion of Vice President Coburn.
- Adopted resolution commending F. Vern Stambaugh, retiring president of Carmen's Union Division 192, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

At the regular meeting Jan. 13, 1965, the Board of Directors:
- Elected Director Coburn President of the Board and Director McDonnell Vice President of the Board, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized erection of a sign by Naegle Outdoor Advertising Company on district property at Yerba Buena Ave. and Adeline St., Emeryville, at a rental of $200 a year, on motion of Director Berk.
- Approved revised procedures of Bank of America for destroying redeemed coupons and bonds, on motion of Director Coburn.
- Agreed to jointly administer with Bay Area Rapid Transit District and City of San Francisco a project, financed in part by a Federal grant, to demonstrate effective methods of coordinating regional and local mass transit systems, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved retention of Mund, McLaughlin & Company for an evaluation of claims department operations, on motion of Director Coburn.
- Authorized General Manager to prepare specifications and advertise for bids for purchase of 30 new buses, on motion of Director Coburn.

Castro Valley Passenger Shelter Opened

Weather protection was welcomed by Castro Valley bus riders this month as the district opened its fourth neighborhood passenger shelter at Castro Valley Blvd. and Redwood Rd. The shelter serves patrons using transbay Line R service; Line 80 connecting Hayward, San Leandro and Oakland; and crosstown Line 91—Hayward-Castro Valley.