Hensel to retire as General manager; new Transit chief sought

A nation-wide search for a new general manager was underway this month by directors of the District.

The survey was ordered after Kenneth F. Hensel, general manager for the past five years, announced his pending retirement. Hensel, 60, suggested June 30 as a leaving date, with assumption important district matters could be concluded by that time.

Board President John McDonnell and Past Presidents William H. Cogburn, Jr., and William J. Bettencourt, speaking in behalf of the Board, expressed regret at Hensel's decision and credited him with a major portion of the District's success.

McDonnell appointed Director William E. Berk as chairman of a committee to consider candidates for a new transit manager. Members include Bettencourt and Director E. Guy Warren.

In announcing his retirement, Hensel said he had no immediate plans for continuing in the industry. He admitted after 37 years in transportation, it might be difficult to completely divorce himself

(Continued on page 2)
Transit directors favor diesel fuel tax Exemption as aid to local taxpayers

Legislation, which would aid the District in retaining lowest possible fares and taxes—and relieve some of the burden placed on property owners—has the strong support of AC Transit.

The measure, under consideration by State Legislators, would exempt urban bus systems, including AC Transit, from paying diesel fuel taxes.

Passage of Assembly Bill No. 1028 would save the District an estimated $825,000 annually. Because it concerns tax on diesel fuel only, it would not affect money going to cities for local street improvements.

Aid to Public

A resolution, passed by the Board of Directors and transmitted to all legislators in the area served by the District, pointed out that the savings would greatly assist AC Transit—in the light of constantly increasing labor costs—in continuing its policy of keeping fares and taxes at the lowest possible level.

Granting of fuel tax exemption also would be in accordance with present efforts to relieve already overburdened local property taxpayers.

It was estimated the amount of the exemption is equivalent to a property tax of two cents per $100 of assessed valuation.

The loss to the State Motor Vehicle Tax Fund would be less than one-half of one percent—or about $2 million of the $560 million collected in gasoline and diesel taxes each year.

Nineteen other states in the United States, as well as the Federal government, already have granted such fuel tax relief to urban operators, R. E. Nisbet, attorney for the District, pointed out.

AC Transit has carried out its responsibilities in improving and building service and in purchasing and operating modern equipment, the resolution noted. AC Transit buses now carry over 52,000,000 passengers a year—an increase of 5,000,000 over the number carried in 1960. At the same time, every effort has been made to keep fares and taxes at the lowest possible level.

Transit Advantages

Encouragement and assistance to local mass transit systems results in more efficient use of street space than the private automobile, avoids contribution to pollution of air, and saves expenditure of millions of dollars that otherwise would be necessary for additional streets and parking facilities, Nisbet said.

Hensel cited for

(Continued from page 1)

from transit activities. He added he might, in the future, consider opportunities "of a less demanding nature."

Appointed general manager in April, 1962, Hensel is credited with implementing improvements which have given the District top billing among the best transit systems in the country.

In his retirement announcement, the general manager paid tribute to the Board, staff members and employees for outstanding loyalty and cooperation and said it was their work and support which enabled the District to tally a 10 percent growth in patronage since it began service in October, 1960.

Hensel started in the industry as a bus driver, working up through the ranks to executive status. He joined the District in 1960 and became acting general manager in February, 1962, after the death of John R. Worthington, first chief administrative officer. He was named chief operating executive six weeks later after 50 candidates had been screened.

FACE OF BROADWAY—Buses follow a zig-zag path at right, but generally keep to schedules despite subway construction. Coach above pulls away from temporary loading zone—one of major boarding points "displaced" by project.

Buses Prove Merit
On 'Obstacle Course'

AC Transit buses generally are able to maintain schedule, despite subway construction that has pitted, battered and changed the face of Broadway in downtown Oakland.

Bus transportation down the main street has become a zig-zag challenge, but District experience to date indicates that operations are proceeding remarkably well under the circumstances.

There was no question that work on Broadway—and similar construction by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District along Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley—was causing operational headaches.

But southbound buses generally are able to keep to schedules, except on heavy shopping days and during bad weather conditions.

Anticipating the inconvenience to passengers at loading areas, the District is attempting to make riding easier through the heart of the shopping area by having buses observe all stops. Previously, buses observed only certain stops, to provide a faster ride.

To offset construction slow-downs, the District has added an extra bus to the Oakland-Berkeley Express (No. 33) to help maintain schedules on the line.

An additional supervisor also has been assigned to the downtown area to keep the buses rolling. Traditionally, one man could handle the business district by "walking a beat." The job now has been boosted to two and more will occasionally assist if conditions demand.

During busy shopping days, more turnbacks are being ordered to keep lines on schedule—and to have buses at stops when passengers expect them.

Conditions have been as expected, with the squeezing of Broadway into three running lanes of traffic. However, when buses and cars are occasionally confined to only one or two lanes by heavy equipment, operational bus juggling is given an additional challenge.

Northbound buses, detoured to Franklin St., between 9th and 22nd Sts., are rolling smoothly and on schedule. Although riders are one block away from the core area—with added inconvenience because of necessary bus stop locations, cooperation and understanding on the public's part have been extremely high.
The project of linking 300 buses in a two-way radio network reached completion this month, giving District buses a new look and a new role.

With telephone-type radio equipment installed on the basic fleet, the District could expect to increase security for passengers and operators and to improve service for riders. The radio link also will be of special value in plans to coordinate AC Transit service with future rapid transit lines.

As the buses rolled with a “voice,” it was apparent that one of the main advantages would involve traffic conditions and the ability to quickly adjust operations to meet needs.

The long planned project included installation of two transmitters on Round Top mountain, two base station receivers on Grizzly Peak, and the setting up of a new control console at Central Dispatch at Emeryville Division.

The District’s previous station on Round Top also was moved to Emeryville and set up for standby purposes.

The Radio Corporation of America, as successful bidder, furnished equipment and handled installation of transmitters, receivers and the new console. District technicians installed the 300 mobile units in the buses.

The system also includes 30 mobile sets which can be transferred from one bus to another. Five hand-type portable transceivers were included for dispatching buses at the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco and for events involving special service.

Operators were trained in using the equipment with a “mock-up,” gaining practical experience ahead of time in how to operate the simple unit.

Drivers hear all calls, but only answer to “KMA 776” when call is for them.

A capital grant from the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency is initially covering half of the projected cost of $269,000 to activate the system.
Both passenger revenue and the number of riders carried on East Bay and transbay lines showed a healthy gain in February. Passenger revenue for the month reached $1,077,432, an increase of $58,586 or 5.75 percent over last year's total of $1,018,846. Of the amount, East Bay lines were up 3.17 percent and transbay service, 9.57 percent.

The number of riders carried by the District reached 4,073,900, an increase of 3.9 percent over the rider tally of 3,920,829 in February of 1966. Commute book sales also were up, with a total of $177,833 for the month, an increase of 4.6 percent over sales of $169,988 for last February.

The District operated 1,782,291 miles of service, an increase of 26,075 miles or 1.48 percent over year-ago mileage.

Total income of $1,400,221 was sufficient to cover all operational costs and bond debt requirements, but leaving a deficit in depreciation reserves of $14,272.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease of 0.19 percent.

New transbay revenue record—all ‘green’

AC Transit rolled into the “green” of a new transbay revenue record on March 17—St. Patrick’s Day—with a total of $21,989.03 collected on Bay Bridge lines. The previous high of $21,300 was collected last Nov. 18, the Friday before Thanksgiving.

The additional business on St. Patrick’s Day was attributed to students going home from University of California for Easter week and to a surge in midday shopping, with passengers lured to San Francisco stores for a sampling of Easter fashion values.

As Time . . .
And transit Roll by

New workers boost employment rolls

New District workers include:

General Office
Accounting: Elta E. Ball, Richmond, secretary.

Emeryville Division
Auto maintenance: Michael J. Bosco, Walter Sandoval, service employees.

Richmond Division
Auto maintenance: Edward Haubrich, Oakland; Samuel Léonis, Alameda; John Mestas, San Pablo, service employees.
Bus Operators: F. A. Thieme, Berkeley; G. R. Ewing, L. F. Aiello, B. J. Blackshear, of Richmond; H. R. Jones, R. B. Harris, of San Pablo.

Seminary Division

WAIT AT CITY HALL—The plaza was more luxuriant, perhaps, at old Oakland city hall around turn of century, but passengers waited on sidewalk—or in street. Now they have use of new shelter built by AC Transit and Downtown Property Owners Assn. It serves 3,000 bus passengers who daily use loading area for transbay and local service.
At an adjourned regular meeting Mar. 22, the Board of Directors:
• Authorized General Manager, Secretary, Public Information Manager, Treasurer-Controller and Purchases and Stores Manager to participate in regional conference of American Transit Association, on motion of Director Coburn.

At the regular meeting Apr. 12, the Board of Directors:
• Authorized Directors to represent District at regional conference of American Transit Association, on motion of Director Coburn
• Approved agreement with Radio Corporation of America in connection with installation of two-way radio system, and replacement purchase of four District autos, on motion of Director Rinehart.
• Approved, in principle, concept of proposed association of multi-county districts, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Approved contract renewal for school bus service in Sherwood Forest district, extension of Shop-a-Round Pass boundaries in downtown Oakland, and joint construction of proposed passenger shelter with East Bay Regional Park District, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Recommended highway program of the Alameda County Highway Advisory Committee for inclusion in the 1968-69 fiscal State highway budget, on motion of Director Coburn.

‘Shop-a-Round’ pass extended in Oakland

Virtually free bus riding already provided for downtown Oakland shoppers will be expanded May 1 when the District’s “Shop-a-Round” pass is extended to include Sears store on Telegraph Ave. at 27th St.

The store has been five blocks outside the northern “Shop-a-Round” pass boundary at Grand Ave. The pass, inaugurated two years ago, is used by 8,000 riders monthly. It provides unrestricted transfer privileges in specified areas, plus a return trip home, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., upon payment of one fare, within pass boundaries in business district.