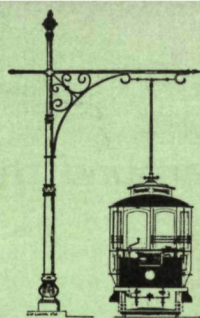


TROLLEY WIRE

Magazine of the
SOUTH PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY

Registered at the G.P.O., Sydney, for
transmission by post as a periodical.

TWENTY FIVE CENTS



JUNE 1968



around the depot....

The Chev truck (no. 3) has been restored to service. The truck had been out of action since having been worked upon by vandals last August.

On Sunday, 12th May, several members took our fire tender to its first fire; a small scrub fire near the Sutherland bypass road. The chief of the local bush fire brigade, which was also in attendance, commended our boys on the practical value of the fire fighting equipment.

As a result of a note to the Secretary early in April, four members went to Lugarno to salvage parts from the remains of Sydney C class tramcar 36. A number of parts suitable for assisting restoration of our C car 29 were the result. Our thanks go to a member of the public thoughtful enough to assist us in this way.

Recently, at Loftus, somebody said: "You know, what we need is a plough, or something...." and Hey, Presto! a plough - small but useful - arrived, through the courtesy of Peter Macdonald. Major works since undertaken have been the levelling of a site for the new pointwork construction, and digging out for a track extension out of depot Road B.

'Much Fun Was Had By All' Dept.... On Sunday, 14th April, a portable steam cleaner was borrowed from the National Park Bus Co. The cleaner functioned most of the day, starting on the motor casing of the dismantled motor from N728 and gradually working through the underframes and trucks of C290, 99u, 1111, 1740, 154 and 180.

On Saturday, 27th April, a small work force under the direction of Bob Cowing cut out the framing for the external walls of the workshop and mealroom. A concerted effort by members present the following day saw the walls erected and sheeted with iron — the first permanent section of the new depot walls.

CENTURY II Now available at bookshops or direct from the Museum. Send \$5.90 to:-

S.P.E.R.,
Box 103, P.O.,
Sutherland. 2232.

COVER PHOTO: Bound for Powell and Market Streets, San Francisco cable car 522 ascends the 1 in 5 grade of the Hyde St. line. The grade becomes level at each cross street, for descending cars necessitating the release of three separate brakes for a few feet followed by their reapplication.

TROLLEY WIRE

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NEW MEMBERS

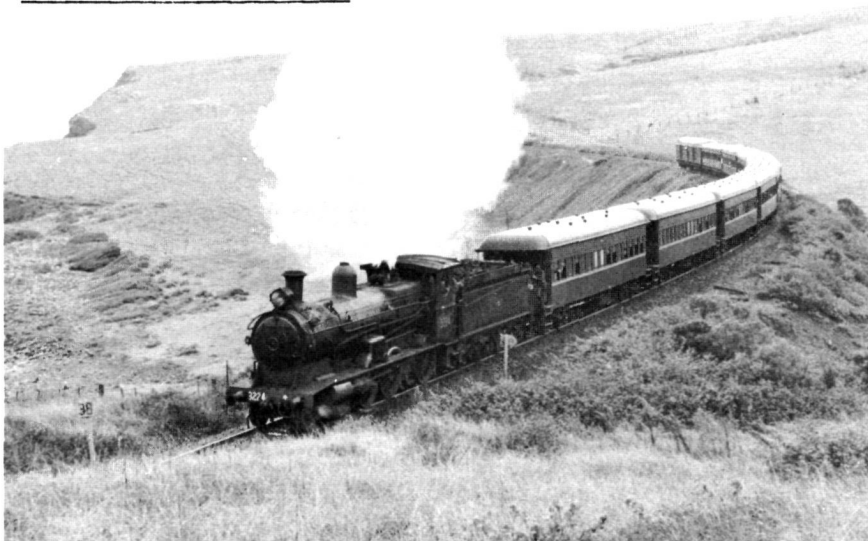
The Board and Shareholders welcome the following members to the Museum:-

Leslie Coghill	191
Dennis Mollet	192
Leonard Andrew	193

The circumstances of others seem good to us, while ours seem good to others.



The steam cleaner, ably assisted by Bill Parkinson, at work cleaning Brisbane type mud and grease from the bogie of 180.

STEAM ON THE ILLAWARRA

Saturday, 11th May was the date chosen for the Society's rail tour to Nowra, along a route now operated exclusively by diesel traction. Recreating a typical Illawarra train of the steam era, 32-class 4-6-0 3224 hauled an eight car LUB set and an EHO van, together with LFX 1776, the sole remaining trafficable "dogbox" (or to use its official title - "express lavatory"). From front buffer to rear no item of equipment was less than 60 years old.

Leaving Sydney at 7.35 am, a good run was made to Sutherland but only at the expense of excessive coal consumption by the locomotive, and the travelling inspector (Gil Bradshaw, of three 38's to Goulburn fame) stated his doubts that the round trip would be completed before the coal ran out. However, fast running for the following miles acted like a tonic for the veteran 4-6-0 and it gave an excellent performance for the remainder of the day.

Interest was added to the outing by the tabling of another special train to pass ours in the middle of a single line section. This problem was overcome by the remarkable expedient of accelerating our train to depart Nowra some 40 minutes early on the Up journey. The stay at Nowra was also notable for the fact that 3224 backed its train across the trestle at the southern end of the yard, to pose for photos of "the Up Bega passenger arriving at Nowra!"

The majority of the photos were planned for the

return journey and the first of these was marked by the sudden appearance of a rabbit which ran full tilt into the photo line, knocking itself out against Treasurer Laurie Gordon's legs. Laurie was only slightly less surprised than the rabbit. Three photos were held in the scenic Omega-Kiama- section where the line winds through hills with spectacular seascapes in the background and the only disappointment was rather bleak weather which was no help to the photographers. Photo stops continued as far as Unanderra North after which there was half an hour at Wollongong to fill 3224's tender with water and the passengers with coffee.

With SPER member Bob Gibson back on the footplate firing, the run home from Wollongong was performed in rapid style and our arrival back in Sydney after a very pleasant outing was virtually on time at 6.30 pm.

STOP PRESS!!!

The Museum has just received notification from the Brisbane City Council advising that the former single truck advertising car, number 71, has been donated to us. The car is expected to be in Sydney by the Queen's Birthday weekend. Full details next issue.

85 CUBS IN A C CAR?

A specially organised visit by cub packs from the Langlea Area of the St. George District to the Museum on Saturday, 20th April, was marked by rather unusual traffic conditions. The first trip was run in the L/P car with all seats taken and some standing passengers! The load consisted of 85 cubs and 12 adults - cubmasters and parents supervising the group. Two runs in the R car were necessary to give everyone a ride - and a seat. Then some devilment suggested to the crew to take the C car for a trip. Some ten minutes later C290 strained out of the depot yard with most of the 85 cubs and four cubmasters as well as two crew for a run to South terminus. The cubs were crammed into the saloon and spilling out onto the end platforms. A delay at the South terminus was explained when the driver was seen walking around the tram unable, for a time to get even a foothold.

After some squeezing and pushing 290 was at last able to get under way and crawled up to the Highway to discharge its load. A quick trip back to the depot to bring the remainder of the visitors to the highway, a cub "Thank You" for the crew, a departing bus and everything returned to normal. (Or did it? The C car will never quite be the same again. Just mention 'cubs' near it, and it could well blow its circuit breaker.)

PERTH

Weston Langford reports that Perth's last tram, E class 66, has been acquired by the Western Australian Division of the Australian Railway Historical Society. It is proposed to exhibit the car at their railway museum which is to be established at Bassendean.

66 has been on display in the South Perth Zoo since June, 1959. It was built by the Western Australian Government Railways in 1917 and was the last tram to run in the western capital. Following the closure of the Perth tramways, 66 saw eleven months of further use shunting cars awaiting scrapping.

BRISBANE

A delay in deliveries of new Leyland "Panther" buses from three body builders has halted further tramcar scrapping. However, the withdrawal of dropcentre cars from service will recommence once sufficient buses have been placed in service.

Due to the unusual political situation in Brisbane it is impossible to obtain any firm official statements on the fate of the tramway system. Union officials believe the Ashgrove, Grange and Stafford lines will be the first to close, in August, with the whole system being given over to bus operation by April, 1969.

It is now almost certain that tramtracks will not be included on the new Victoria Bridge which is expected to be completed by March, 1969. South side services will probably cease with the closure of the old structure as they will be severed from their northern termini as well as being denied access to the tramway workshops.

The training of new crews still continues and a crash training programme to overcome severe staff shortages saw new crews being trained over the Easter holiday period. New motormen still receive training on handbraked cars, although the preserved cars and the advertising cars are the only "winders" remaining. It is not unusual to see preserved dropcentre car 231 in training service and it has been reported that cars 65 and 136 have also been used at least once on training runs.

BALLARAT

The Victorian Transport Regulations Board conducted an enquiry into the public passenger transport facilities in Ballarat during April. The enquiry investigated tram and bus services in the area with a view to possible replacement of the tram services by buses.



On 4th May the Minister for Transport, Mr. M.A. Morris officially opened the electrification of the railway line from Liverpool to Campbelltown and Glenlee. The official party were conveyed from Sydney by a four car train (above). The public was able to sample the new service on the first revenue trip (below) for which special souvenir tickets were issued.

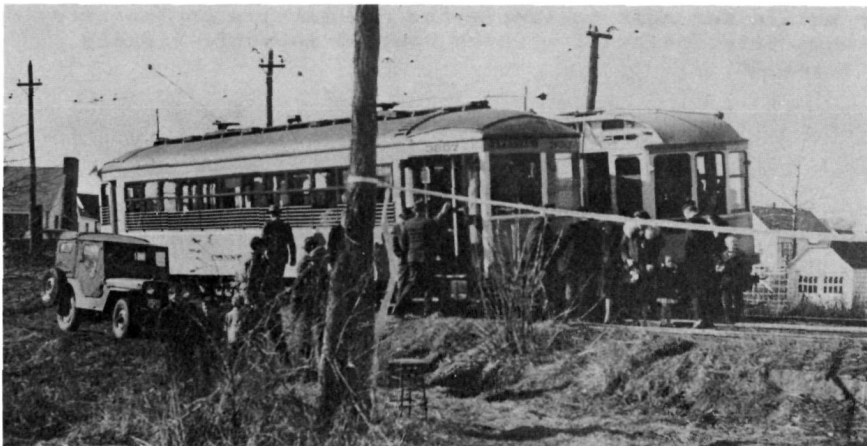


On 7th March, 1947, the Connecticut Company's "F" line from New Haven to Stony Creek saw the end of scheduled services. A few days later, on the 9th, three Connecticut Company cars made special runs over the line for the last time. The occasion was not a farewell, it was a ribbon breaking ceremony by the fledgling, 125 member Branford Electric Railway Association. The BERA had acquired title to the $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles of double track and overhead wire from the East Haven River to the edge of Short Beach on which to operate their five streetcars.

During 1948 the second track had to be lifted to meet urgent financial needs. However, on 4th July, 1953, Branford became the first trolley museum in the world to operate cars from a museum-owned power plant, beating their older sister, Seashore, by only five months.

Today, an improved financial position has enabled the museum to upgrade their line and rebuild the three 60 year old trestles along the line, one of which was so badly damaged by hurricanes during 1950 that no trolleys were permitted to operate over it.

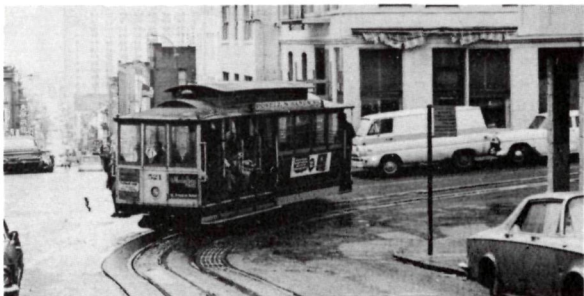
BERA's collection of cars has now risen to nearly eighty and includes the Connecticut Company's parlor car 500, the museum's most prized possession, and Birney 2350, both of which took part in the celebration on that historic day twentyone years ago.



Connecticut Company cars 3207 and 500 stand before the ribbon at East Haven on 9th March, 1947. Shortly after, 500 broke the tape to mark the start of the Branford Electric Railway's museum line.

Photo: Steve Maguire

HOLD ON FOR THE CURVE!



Impressions of San Francisco's Cable Cars By Dale Budd.

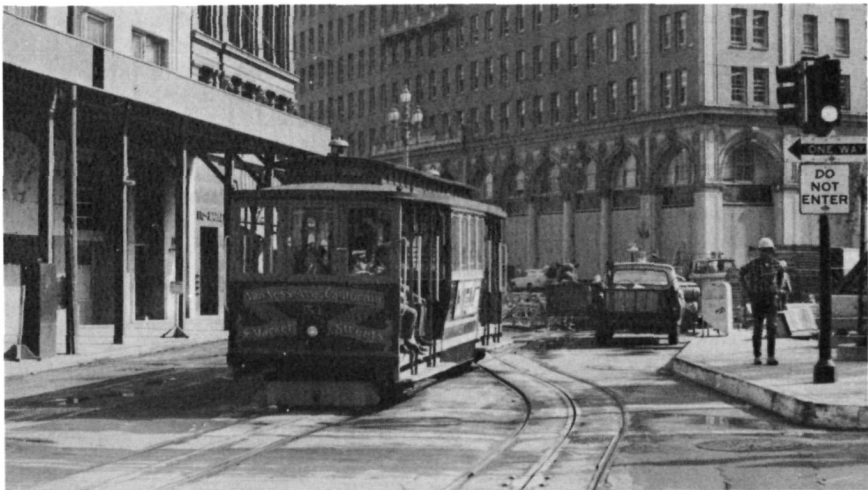
Qantas Flight 530 touches down at San Francisco airport at 5.30 pm. At 6.00 pm you set off on the 12 mile bus trip to the downtown airline terminal. At 6.45 pm you check in at your hotel and have a quick meal. At 7.30 pm you walk one block west to the corner of Sutter and Powell Streets, and a few moments later you are aboard car 506 of the San Francisco Municipal Railway. In just two hours you have covered the world's extremes in transportation: from a 550 mph Boeing 707-338C jet airliner to a nine mph San Francisco cable car.

The cable tramways constitute the Washington and Mason division of the San Francisco Municipal Railway (the "Muni" for short), the street transport segment of the Public Utilities Commission of San Francisco. The divisions are named after the location of their car barns: thus the cable car barn is at the corner of Washington and Mason Sts. The system, of 3' 6" gauge, is operated in two virtually independent sections: firstly the two Powell St. routes, one to the foot of Hyde Street and the other via Mason St. to the intersection of Bay and Taylor Sts. near Fisherman's Wharf; and secondly the California St. line, from Market St. to Van Ness Avenue. Route numbers, rarely used, are 59 for Powell & Mason, 60 for Powell & Hyde, and 61 for California Street cars.

The California St. line is a completely straight route $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long. It passes few points of interest and in many ways it is overshadowed by the Powell St. lines. A connection is made to the Hyde St. line to enable the cars to reach the car barn. Headways are much longer than the intensive Powell St. service, and the cars being double ended, there are no turntables to intrigue the tourist (or the railfans). California St. is quite wide so that the cars are almost unnoticed, whereas Powell St. is so narrow the cable cars seem to fill it, their bells demanding right of way from impudent motorists who dare to cross their tracks.



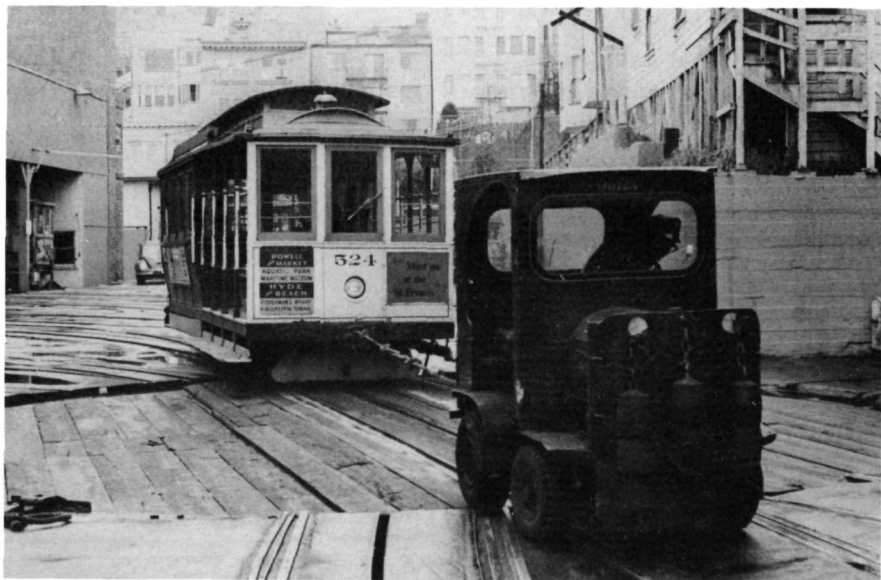
"1½ tracks" in Washington Street, with car 504 inbound from Mason Street, about to negotiate the crossover. There are several sections of 1½ tracks, apparently provided to suit the routing of the cables; in all cases the two cables run the same way so that the question of cars passing one another does not arise. The curved white line on the pavement indicates how far out the car will swing.



A California Street car waits to depart from the Market St. terminus, the roadworks in the background being part of BARTD tunnel construction under Market Street.

Some pleasant surprises await those who visit the car barn and powerhouse. Wide, red-carpeted stairs lead to an observation platform above the winding machinery, and 10¢ in a slot operates floodlights for photographers. Four cables are required for the system; each is $1\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter and is drawn by a 750 HP electric motor at 840 feet per min., or 9.55 mph.

Above the powerhouse the cars themselves are housed, on 12 tracks served by a turntable. Prominent signs welcome visitors to the car barn, in amazing contrast to the curt "No Trespassing" message familiar in Australia. Small tractors, painted in the California Street colours, push and pull the cars around the yard. There are 39 cars - 27 for Powell Street to cover a maximum evening peak requirement of 20, and 12 for California St. to cover a maximum need of 7. Lurking in the car barn is also car No. 19 of the Sacramento and Clay St. line, closed in February, 1942. The California Street cars are larger and newer (1907 vintage as against 1890) than those of the Powell St. lines, and it would seem sensible to transfer them to the more heavily trafficked route. The reason for not doing so is perhaps that despite their size, the California St. cars are 1000 lb lighter than those on Powell Street - under the extreme loadings on the Powell St. route they would probably not stand the strain.



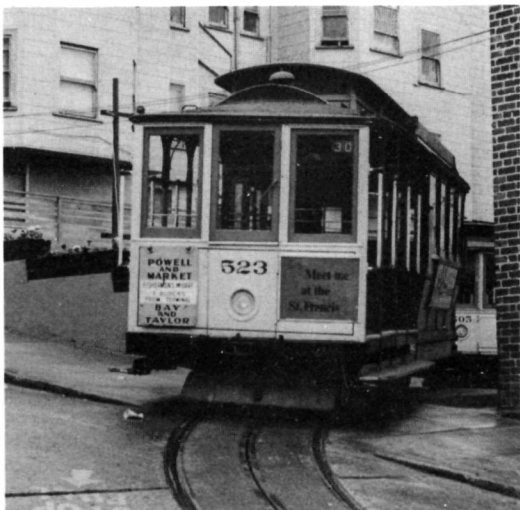
A diminutive tractor tows car 524 onto the turntable at the car barn. It is numbered, in true American workcar fashion "00123".

For the mathematically minded, the 3.28 mile round trip over the Mason St. line occupies 34 minutes; the Hyde St. route is a 4.2 mile return trip taking 41 minutes; while to go both ways along California Street takes 27 minutes to traverse 2.9 miles. The average schedule speed is 4.73 mph. The headways range from 5 minutes pm-peak on all three lines to 9 minutes night off-peak on Powell St. and 20 minutes night off-peak on California St.

No amount of prior study quite prepares you for the reality of the cable cars. Detailed and painstaking historical articles never mention the incessant rattle of the underground sheaves, which remind you of the existence of the trams even though there may not be a car in sight. Don't be fooled by ideas of trams gliding silently and



Changing a grip outside the carbarn. The defective grip is being lifted by a block and tackle before being swung out through the front door. The replacement grip is on the hand trolley at left. The changeover takes only a few minutes and if a car develops a fault in traffic, the grip is changed with the passengers aboard, rather than providing another car as a replacement. Note the ornamental gas lamp and street signs on the corner at left.

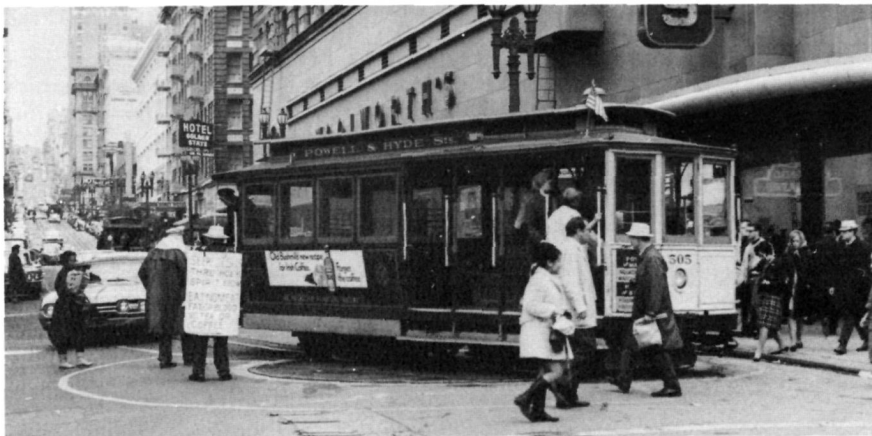


Car 523, about to take up running on the Mason St. line, edges its way out from the carbarn. The sign on the apron at left is a destination sign - it names the intersecting streets at the terminus at each end of the line.

smoothly along the streets -- they have rattles and other sounds which more than compensate for the lack of gear noise of electric cars, and smoothness occasionally gives way to rhythmic lurches when whip occurs in the cable.

To travel by cable car is to return to the world of the late 19th century. Motor vehicles are treated with disdain, almost as though they do not exist, as evidenced by placing stops in the middle of intersections, so blocking cross traffic. Battery-powered lights give meagre illumination for the cars' interiors and provide a glow in the headlamp reflector. Riding on the car your ears are deafened by bells. Warning of a car's approach to a busy intersection is given by repeated ringing of the melodious roof-mounted gong. Fares are rung up on large mechanical fare register mounted high on a bulkhead inside the car, and operable by the conductor from any point by a system of cranks and levers. The fare on the cable cars is 15¢ irrespective of distance travelled, and transfers are available to and from other Muni services. Yet another bell is sounded by the conductor when the car is ready to leave a stop.

Brakes are a vital feature of an operation where grades are as severe as 27%, or slightly steeper than 1 in 5. Taking for example the single ended Powell St. cars, there are four systems: wheel brakes on the front bogie, operated by the gripman through a pedal large enough for him to stand on with all his weight; wheel brakes on the rear bogie, operated by the conductor from an ordinary gooseneck on the back platform; track brakes with wooden shoes, operated by the gripman through a large lever along-



At the foot of Powell St., car 505 is turned preparatory to another outbound run on the Hyde St. line. The gentleman on the left with religious inclinations ("Eat no meat, fat or blood, no tea or coffee") evidently finds the terminus a fruitful place to seek supporters but unless he moves very shortly, he will be struck down by 505 in its circular motion. The American flag on the car roof is being flown to mark George Washington's Birthday, February 22nd.

side the grip lever; and an emergency brake, operated by the gripman through another lever which drives a wedge into the cable slot. Of course the cable itself provides a form of braking and on steep grades cars can be seen sliding downhill with wheel and track brakes full on, one or more axles locked and a strong smell of burning wood coming from the track brakes underneath the car. On descending grades, the conductor must stop collecting fares to operate the rear wheel brakes: as there are plenty of descending grades there are probably plenty of uncollected fares.

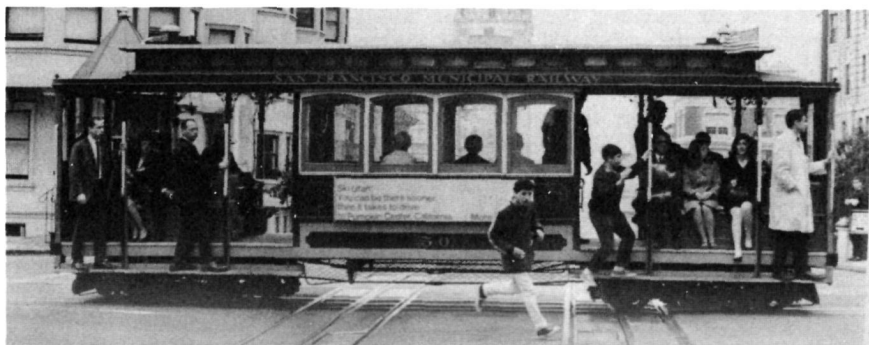
Curves are negotiated hanging onto the cable. Nine mph sounds slow for a curve until you see how sharp the curves are. "Hold on for the curve" calls the conductor, and all the footboard riders hang on a little tighter as the car swings violently through ninety degrees. Footboard riding is not confined to fit young men -- the aged and the infirm as well as children of both sexes, cling on to both sides while motor vehicles sweep by only inches away. Nowhere else are there trams where the passengers ride on the footboard while the conductor travels inside.

Powell Street cars are nearly always crowded; at 11 o'clock at night you can see cars loaded to the eaves. It is difficult to assess the proportion of tourists among

the passengers. They would definitely not constitute a majority, for the system is a vital public transport facility, but they are certainly noticeable. Tourists can be seen photographing the cars frequently and to stand in the middle of the street to take a photo does not raise an eyebrow.

The cable cars are regarded with interest and affection by San Franciscans, and provide some unusual names for city businesses. After buying your new suit at the Cable Car Tailors on Powell Street, you can dine in style on a Cable Car Steak. In 1964 the system was designated a Registered National Historic Landmark, although official enthusiasm for the cable cars makes preservation moves unnecessary.

And the future of the cable cars? In this, the 95th year of its operation, we find that of the Public Utilities Commission's planned bond issue, \$US 2.8 million is earmarked for the cable car system - to cover extension of the California Street line to Ferry Park, extension of the Mason St. line to Fisherman's Wharf, renewal of tracks in Powell St, restoration of the car barn and the construction of five new cars. The era of the cable car is certainly far from ended.



Car 50 on California St. reaches Powell Street, and some of the footboard riders are off and running before the car stops. Note the casual one-hand grip of the others as the car bounces across the intersecting tracks.



Left : To an Australian, this sign is an eyeopener.

BACK PAGE: H class cars at City Depot, Adelaide.

