

# Toronto streetcar returned home last Thursday



RESCUED FROM DEMOLITION in 1963 this old Peter Witt model streetcar was returned, last Thursday, to Toronto where, for 40 years it did service until its retirement in 1961. It was moved from the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Museum on the Guelph Line below Rockwood to the Hillcrest shops where it will receive minor restoration. It will be kept in the city as a museum piece and tour train during the summer months from May 24 to Thanksgiving.

Thursday was a special day for one vintage street car. It was transferred, via a large machinery float, from the old Rockwood railway station now situated at the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association (OERHA) museum, on the Guelph Line, to its former base, Toronto.

For 40 years the aged vehicle had done steady service in the city until its retirement in 1961. Built in 1912, the Peter Witt street car, named after its designer, was constructed by the Canadian Car and Foundry of Montreal. It was the first of a new series of 140 steel street cars made to replace the earlier wooden ones of the old Toronto Railway Company.

In '61 it was sent to a scrap merchant, destined to be cut into little pieces like all its contemporaries, with its steel slated for the Hamilton Steel Co., and wood parts for the dump, to be burned.

Rescued The OERHA rescued the vintage vehicle, purchasing it from the scrap merchant. It

was moved in 1963 to the Halton museum where it was kept in the car house, safe and dry. Today the street car is, reportedly, in excellent shape, only back in its home territory. It was trucked to the city on Thursday; moved from Rockwood station at 2 p.m. not to reach its final destination at the Hillcrest station at Bathurst St. and Davenport Rd. until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. There, it will receive minor restoration and be kept as a museum piece and tour train to take people through Toronto streets during summer months from May 24 until Thanksgiving.

The Toronto Transit Commission has been providing tours through the city for the past two years which have proved increasingly popular. The commission had been using two smaller replicas of the Peter Witt design, called "small Witts". They were ideal for daily summer tours. But, for weekends, two larger cars were required. Besides the Halton museum street car, one other was moved in

from Montreal for the Sunday service.

Bob Johns, president of the OERHA, says the Witt car was designed by Peter Witt of Cleveland. It was originally a two-man car with a seat for the conductor set near the centre doors. "There was a barrier in the middle," he said, "in front of the conductor. Passengers could move along the car and pay fees at the centre instead of doing so on entry into the streetcar." He explained that cars would pick up to a regular stop and passengers getting on could work their way down the car to pay their fee as they went through the train. He said the street cars provided fast passenger pick-up and delivery but that later, when costs went up, offsetting volume of pick-up and delivery, cars were changed to single-man operations.

Leased only

According to Bob Johns the car has only been leased to the Toronto Transit Commission with terms of the lease for only five years. He says,

in exchange for the car, the Toronto Transit Commission has donated quantities of fittings and rail switches in payment and that a restoration job will also be completed. He expects it will be brought back to the Rockwood Station centre when their plans for the museum have been completed.

The president says that, although the 1893 open-railway car is the favorite for visitors riding at the museum centre, the Witt model is favored by the true railway buffs. At the present, the OERHA have many plans meeting completion for the museum operation. He points out that once loops are in the Witt car will become a vital part of the centre.

According to Mr. Johns the Witt street cars are single-end ones and the cars used presently are double-end. Plans are that the OERHA track will have a loop at the Rockwood station building and another at the car house, with a single track in the middle, providing continuous ser-

vice for visitors. "With an assortment of cars to provide complete samples of electric railway operation," he said. The last weekend in October marked the final 74 runs of the electric radial cars. According to Association members there will be one finish-off day on Dec. 8. A Christmas bazaar is being planned by Association wives which will be held in the Rockwood station at the Halton Centre. Money raised will go towards the car house fund and three trolleys will be running providing free rides for everyone.

The president feels the bazaar should attract many visitors as there will be several items of interest on sale plus a children's fish pond. "The old gift shop will be the place for hot refreshments," says Mrs. Joan Johns who will assist. The members feel the day could provide an exciting time and one requiring butting up warmly with snow boots and mittens as many visitors will probably want to take a last snow hike around the station.

## Defend Manor

### Leave it alone it works well

Regional Treasurer Don Farmer was accused of wanting to build an empire when he told Halton Region's Community Services Committee he felt his department should assume responsibility for the general accounting and payroll functions at Halton Centennial Manor, the region's home for the aged in Milton.

Farmer pointed to Bill 151 which provides legislation allowing those functions to be assumed by the regional treasurer. Manor Administrator Stan Allen opposed the transfer in responsibility, pointing out this would make his task more cumbersome.

He recalled a time many years ago when those functions were conducted from the County Office. Allen explained the treasury people have their own work which receives a higher priority and the Manor work is done only when the other work is complete.

necessary reports couldn't be compiled in time. He told the committee he had a dedicated staff and noted treasury people couldn't be expected to work the same as his people do because they wouldn't be as close to the people.

Farmer and Allen had also discussed the possible takeover of the resident trust accounts as well, but Farmer had agreed not to recommend that takeover at this time.

Halton Hills Mayor Tom Hill expressed what seemed to be a consensus of opinion when he told Farmer to work at mastering what he already has on his plate and not to tamper with departments that were working smoothly. "Empires and more empires," the Halton Hills Mayor said.

Burlington Councillor Tom Sutherland was the only councillor who supported Farmer's recommendation. Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid supported Farmer's contention that the work should be centralized.

He said he'd investigate the problem further and bring in a new report after the committee rejected the recommendation.



### Pet of the week

TEACHIE is a learned toy poodle who maintains her interest in the adult section of the library. She gets colored ribbons in her hair and comes every day to the library with her owner, chief librarian Mrs. Isabel Watson. Kiltie Lane Teacher's Pet is her formal name.

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## Homeowners face land purchases

MPP Jim Snow was caught in the cross-fire Wednesday night as residents packed Boyne Community Centre to hear the fate of their homes and property as a result of the hydro transmission lines and two transformer stations to be built in this area.

At the request of Mayor Anne MacArthur the meeting was conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Government Services, the ministry responsible to hydro for the purchase of land here.

As MPP for Halton East and Minister of Government Services, Jim Snow was the target for angry and disillusioned residents. No matter how smoothly or concisely Herb Spence, a representative of the ministry's realty services branch, tried to outline the government's proposals for the acquisition of land, the residents repeatedly attacked Mr. Snow.

Referring to the contentious Parkway Belt legislation as "an embarrassment to me," MPP Snow fielded questions during the evening as to a fair settlement for land frozen since June, 1973 as a result of the proposed greenbelt area.

Landowners were told they have three options when approached within the next few weeks by a government property agent. They can sell out completely, sell only the property needed for the hydro right-of-way, or grant an easement.

The greatest concern by the residents was that they would not receive a fair appraisal for their land and also that because of the greenbelt legislation hanging in the balance, their property has remained in a state of suspended animation since June, 1973. Settlement for properties purchased would not be made by the government until May, 1975. This is interpreted by landowners as a two year freeze.



COUNCILLOR DON GORDON asks a home for a home and an acre for an acre for those whose property will be taken for the hydro lines and station soon to be under construction in Milton.

Boyne Community Centre was filled to overflowing Wednesday night as disillusioned landowners listened to the fate of their property.

Fourth option Milton Councillor Don Gordon suggested a fourth option of settlement. He would like the government to offer an acre for an acre and a home for a home. "You can't put a dollar value on our way of life," Gordon said. "When the province has just purchased over 2,000 acres of land-banking, surely they can find land and houses for these people."

Holdings suggested the land should be compensated for at current market value. He was countered by Snow who said the land today is not selling for more than it was in June 1973. Once again Mr. Snow was heckled by a disbelieving audience. "No one will get less than the value prior to the Parkway Belt," Snow explained. "It will be valued at the current value or the value of June 1973, whichever is the highest."

10 percent interest Councillor Jim Watson suggested a 10 percent interest be paid for each year the homeowner's land is held in limbo. "You are buying their

land as of June 1973 and not paying for it until 1975," he said. "Will you pay fair compensation for their land?" he asked.

In agreement with Watson's suggestion was Harold G. Shipp, president of the Shipp Corporation. "My property will not be affected by hydro so I come here with my powder dry," he explained. "I had property in the Parkway Belt appraised before June 1973 at \$6,000 per acre. After that date it was again appraised at \$1,000 per acre. This was directly due to the greenbelt legislation."

Mr. Shipp said this information was read into Han-

sard by Phil Givens early in February 1974 as his were the first appraisals to be done after the legislation.

A second meeting is to be held tonight in the Campbellville Lions Hall for landowners in the Nassagaweya and Esqueping areas. With the passing of the Niagara Escarpment Legislation last week, there is now the same restriction on these areas as are complained of in the Parkway Belt.

## Appraise properties

Evaluation of properties affected by the hydro line and station will be done by two appraisals. One is to be done by an appraiser from the Ministry of Government Services and the other by an independent appraiser. The independent appraiser is to be hired by the Ministry, last week's hydro meeting was told.

Homeowners will first be visited by a property agent representing the government. Survey crews will then enter the property.

Following the survey crews the appraisers will appear to do their evaluation. When the survey is completed the original property agent will begin negotiations with the homeowner sometime in December or early January.

Acquisitions will be completed by May, 1975.

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