SUBWAY CONTRACTS SOLEMNLY SIGNED

Cheers at the Ceremonial Function When McCall Gets Willcox to Attest.

PRAISE FOR McANENY, TOO

Compliments Also for Borough Presidents Miller and Cromwell—Shonts and Williams Shake Hands.

In the presence of nearly all the officials of the city and the companies who have taken part in the long-drawn-out Subway negotiations, the contracts and certificates binding the city and the Interborough and New York Municipal Railway Corporation, a subsidiary of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit, to an agreement for forty-nine years from Jan. 1, 1917, were signed yesterday. It took about three-quarters of an hour to transact the business, and by a happy thought Chairman McCall gave his predecessor, ex-Chairman William R. Willcox, an opportunity to sign the documents by asking him and Borough President McAneny to attest his signature.

The ceremony took place in the large assembly room of the Public Service Commission in the Tribune Building. General felicitations were in order, and President Shonts of the Interborough congratulated warmly President Williams of the Municipal Railway as soon as the latter had legally bound his company to the bargain. As Chairman McCall handed over to Mr. Shonts his copies of the contracts and certificates he "good-humoredly warned him that he would be on your neck all the time" is he did not live up to the agreement.

Even at the last moment there was delay. Some of the phraseology in the order of the commission approving the Interborough's new mortgage did not please counsel for that company, and the signing of contracts had to wait while Mr. Shonts and his lawyers worked the objection out.

At a semi-circular table at which the commission holds its important hearings Chairman McCall took his seat with ex-Chairman Willcox on his right and Borough President McAneny at his left. The others at the table were Commissioners Maltbie, Eustis Cram, and Williams, Borough Presidents Miller of the Bronx and Cromwell of Richmond, ex-Commissioner McCarrell, Alfred Craven, Chief Engineer; Travis H. Whitney, Secretary; Leroy T. Harkness, counsel, and James Blaine Walker, Assistant Secretary of the commission. Standing behind them with other officials and real estate men were Theodore P. Shonts, Frank Hedley, and H. M. Fisher of the Interborough, Col. Timothy S. Williams, Harry A. Bullock, and George D. Yeomans of the New York Municipal Railway, and ex-Commissioner E. M. Bassett, D. W. McWilliams of the Manhattan Railway and Corporation Counsel Archibald R. Watson.

Signed in Ceremonial Order.

Mr. Whitney announced that each company had filed as security for the faithful performance of the main contract securities to the value of $1,000,000, and had been guaranteed to a like sum by a surety corporation in addition. Mr. Whitney had read the certificate transmitting the contracts and certificates from the Board of Estimate to the commission with the approval attached, and then he announced::

"We may now proceed to the signing of the contracts and certificates."

Chairman McCall asked for the main contract with the New York Municipal Railway. It consisted of a volume of 220 pages of the finest parchment with a red cover and a seal attached with a red ribbon.

With a gold penholder and pen, which had been purchased by the officials of the Commission, Chairman McCall affixed his signature at exactly 12:09 o'clock. As he finished Mr. McCall announced:

"The Chairman has just signed the contract No. 4 between the City of New York by the Public Service Commission and the New York Municipal Railway Corporation and requests the Ex-Chairman to do him the honor of attesting his signature."

Chairman McCall spoke impressively, and as he referred to Mr. Willcox a burst of applause broke forth, in which Mr. McCall joined heartily. Mr. Willcox was visibly affected.

"I thank you, Mr. Chairman,' said he, as he took the pen from his successor. "It is what I consider one of the greatest honors of my life."

A similar compliment was paid to President McAneny, and then Mr. Whitney signed as secretary of the commission. As the first copies of the contract was signed by the representatives of the city Col. Williams, President, and Harry A. Bullock, Secretary of the New York Municipal Railway Corporation, took their seats at the stenographers' table beneath the Commissioner's dais. Col. Williams was smiling broadly, but Mr. Bullock looked as serious as usual.

Delivered With Due Form.

After the main Brooklyn contracts came the third tracking and elevated extension certificates of the Municipal Railway, and four copies of each of these documents had to be signed. Each of them was initialed by Leroy T. Harkness, counsel of the Commission, who had drawn them, and the signatures to each were witnessed by Howard A. Butler, assistant counsel to the Commission, acting as public notary.

Then the Brooklyn officials gave way to the Interborough. Mr. Shonts shaking the hand of Col. Williams warmly as he stepped back. The same ceremony was repeated with the Interborough agreements, the operating contract being bound in blue with a blue ribbon for its seal. It contained 253 pages. Theodore P. Shonts, President, and H. M. Fisher, Secretary, signed for the Interborough, and Frank Hedley was called upon to execute a trackage agreement on behalf of the Rapid Transit Subway Construction Company, and E. T. Jeffery and D. W. McWilliams the third tracking agreement for the Manhattan Railway Company. When the last signature was affixed at 12:55 o'clock, Chairman McCall began the ceremony of dividing the contracts. Summoning Col. Williams and handing him a great armful of elaborately bound volumes, he said:

"On behalf of the City of New York it is my great pleasure to hand you these contracts signed, executed, and now to be delivered. You take with you undoubtedly the best wishes of all the citizens of this city for a consummation of this contract. I have no doubt you will lend all your energies toward that conclusion.

"Thank you," said Col. Williams, staggering under the load.

As the Chairman handed the Interborough contracts to Mr. Shonts he said:

"I guess this is the only gift they have given you in this book form.

"I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Shonts.

With another inning for the photographers and a standing vote of thanks to Presidents McAneny, Miller, and Cromwell for their work as the Board of Estimate's Transit Committee the ceremony closed.

A $330,000,000 ENTERPRISE.

20 Miles for a Nickel—Nothing Like It, Says Shonts.

When Theodore P. Shonts, President of the Interborough, was asked yesterday afternoon for an expression of his views on the Subway contracts he said:

"It means that the citizens will get a twenty-mile ride for a nickel over any part of a system of sixty miles, costing $240,000,000, or $4,000,000 a mile. It means that they will get the longest ride under conditions of the greatest safety for the least money in the most expensive vehicle that the mind of man has ever conceived or the hand of man ever built."

Mr. Shonts was speaking only of the Interborough system, and if he had taken in the New York Municipal Railway Corporation's lines as well he could have said that there would be in the completed dual system 629.7 miles of single track and that the total cost of the new work would be about $330,000,000. This is not only by far the largest undertaking ever entered upon by any city, but is surpassed by only one in modern times. The Panama Canal will, it is estimated, cost about $400,000,000, but even its superiority as an enterprise is held by the commission to be apparent rather than real. Its cost is reckoned on day labor, not on contract work, and the problems it presents are not nearly so complex and diversified, it is said, as those of subway building.

In laying out the dual system the city has utilized the two great rapid transit companies in Manhattan and Brooklyn in having each cover a larger territory and adding a branch. Thus not only will the "H" of the main line of the Interborough be completed, but it will also extend its Atlantic Avenue line along the Eastern Parkway and Livonia Avenue, and in addition to strengthening greatly the facilities the B. R. T. has up to now given in South Brooklyn and the Eastern District, it has granted it the Broadway, Seventh Avenue, and loop line in Manhattan.

Quick Improvements for Bronx.

The Interborough system will in the near future provide a complete north and south line for Manhattan both on the east and west sides. They will be connected at Forty-second Street by the shuttle service between Times Square and the Grand Central Station, and will afford a very much improved service to both the Bronx and the financial district downtown.

At present the Bronx has only the Third Avenue elevated line and the West Farms Subway; in a few months it will have not only an extension of the Third Avenue elevated along Webster Avenue and of the West Farms Subway along the White Plains Road, but also the Jerome Avenue elevated line, starting from the northern end of the Lexington Avenue subway at about Franz Sigel Park, and running north as far as Woodlawn Road, and the Southern Boulevard-Westchester Avenue line to Pelham Bay Park, which will break off from the Lexington Avenue line at East 138th Street. Then a connection is to be constructed between the present Ninth Avenue elevated at West 162d Street and the new Jerome Avenue line, and there is to be a completion of the third-tracking of the Second, Third, and Ninth Avenue lines.

Important as the new system will be to the Bronx, it will make quite as much difference to the financial district. No longer will all east of Wall Street be cut off from rapid transit facilities to the upper west side. The new Seventh Avenue line, which will send one branch to the Battery, will send another east at Park Place by City Hall Park and Beekman Street to William Street. In spite of the opposition of the property owners in this neighborhood, it will run down that thoroughfare and will turn east again in Old Slip. There it will go under the East River to Clark Street, Brooklyn, and, after serving the Heights section, will connect with the Eastern Parkway line, with its terminus at New Lots Road, and its Nostrand Avenue branch.

In Queens and Brooklyn.

To all this must be added the Steinway Tunnel branch of the Interborough. This abortive piece of engineering is to be put into shape for use in the very near future, and will be carried eventually across Forty-second Street to a terminus in Times Square. In Queens it will be extended by an elevated line across the Sunnyside Yards of the Long Island Railway to the Queensboro Bridge Plaza, from which will be built immediately elevated lines along Debevoise Avenue to Ditmas Avenue, Astoria, and along the Queens Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue to Sycamore Avenue, Corona. It has been suggested that this last branch be built as soon as possible on to Flushing.

Not less remarkable is the new Municipal Railway Corporation's projected development Brooklyn is already covered by a close network of elevated lines, and now Manhattan is to be invaded at three points. The main Manhattan line granted to the Brooklyn company is along Broadway and Seventh Avenue. It is approached from the south by the Montague Street tunnel under the East River, which is connected with both the Fourth Avenue Brooklyn Subway and the Brighton Beach line. This tunnel lands in Manhattan at Whitehall Street, and thence a line is to be built under Morris Street and Church Street as far north as Vesey Street.

Cutting under a corner of old St. Paul's Churchyard and the Astor House it will reach Broadway, and will then run straight up that great thoroughfare to Times Square. Here it is hoped a great station will be constructed for the joint use of the Interborough, Municipal Railway Corporation, and any other lines which may centre here, and from this point the Brooklyn Subway will be diverted into Seventh Avenue. It will reach Fifty-ninth Street, and turning east there will connect with the Queensboro Bridge.

Since trackage rights have been conceded by the Interborough to the New York Municipal Railway Corporation's lines over the Astoria and Corona elevated lines in Queens, it will be possible for a denizen of Brighton Beach desirous of visiting one of these places to reach it by a somewhat devious route for a single nickel.

With this line belonging to a Brooklyn company running through the heart of Manhattan a great change may be expected in the tides of travel. It is likely that the Manhattan Bridge will challenge the supremacy of the Brooklyn Bridge. The Brighton Beach line is to be carried along the Flatbush Avenue Extension over the bridge into Canal Street as far as Broadway. Here connection will be made with the Broadway line. Moreover, transfers will be granted from this line to the Loop Subway line, which is not only to be put to work at last, but also is to be extended. At present it starts from the Williamsburg Bridge and runs south under Centre Street to the Brooklyn Bridge. Now it is to be continued down Nassau and Broad Streets till it makes a connection with the Broadway line as it turns east to get to the Whitehall Street tunnel. Thus, with one transfer at Canal and Centre Streets, Brooklyn folk will reach the very heart of the financial district.

The third point of the Brooklyn invasion of Manhattan is at Fourteenth Street, and by this the highly important Eastern District of Brooklyn will be tapped. From the Broadway Subway at Fourteenth Street will start a branch running under the East River to North Seventh Street, Brooklyn, and thence zigzagging as an elevated by Metropolitan, Bushwick, Johnson, and Wyckoff Avenues to meet the present Broadway line.

Some of the existing B. R. T. elevated lines are to be extended and third-tracked and in South Brooklyn, particularly, there is to be a vast development. The Fourth Avenue line is already completed, as far as Forty-third Street, and construction to Eighty-sixth Street is under way. This has a peculiar importance for Staten Island, as from Sixty-seventh Street it is hoped some day to construct a tunnel under the Narrows to St. George and Stapleton. Then the New Utrecht Avenue, the Sea Beach, and the Culver lines to Coney Island are to be elevated from their present street grade and a great terminal is to be erected at that resort to care for the additional thousands that the promised five-cent fare is expected to bring.

Finally, in the centre of Brooklyn the present City Line is to be carried along Liberty Avenue to Lefferts Avenue, the Cypress Hills line is to be extended along Jamaica and Fulton Avenues to Grand Avenue, and the Myrtle Avenue line to the Lutheran Cemetery.

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