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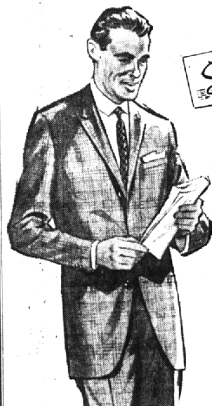
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MI 6-6474

**No Tears Shed
Over Those Poor
Parking Meters**

The number of two-hour parking meters will remain the same in the Merrill-Pierce parking lot, Birmingham city commission decided this week.

City officials had suggested that 50 of the poorest revenue-producing meters be changed to all-day parking. Merchant spokesmen felt present time limits should be maintained. Commissioners accepted the merchants' recommendation.

Steamer

(Continued from Page 1-A)

xious and confused brakeman. The conductor had signalled the train to start. The bewildered brakeman countermanded the conductor's order (a violation of rules) and pulled the emergency cord.

Birmingham Passenger Agent Harry Wichman, a veteran with the GTRR, was on the spot . . . but good.

HE HAD promised his 602 Birmingham ticket-holding friends there would be seats.

He had to eat the railroad's crow for more than a half hour while refunding money to more than 100 disgruntled Birmingham people.

The others didn't line up, probably will call for their money at a more convenient time.

WICHMAN WAS let down with a crash by his company.

"I was PROMISED there would be a seat for everyone I sold a ticket to," he explained.

"Otherwise, I wouldn't have promoted this last trip so," he explained.

HE SAID he was going to try to get the railroad to run another trip or two.

"I don't know whether they'll do it—but I'm going to try," he promised.

But to hundreds of bitterly disappointed rail fans, the edge has been taken off. Nine of the 23 coaches on that second section were to be kept empty till they reached Birmingham.

INSTEAD, they were filled from stops at Detroit, Milwaukee Junction, or Royal Oak.

One of those who didn't get to make the trip was Clifford Young, 1507 Humphrey, Birmingham, who was pensioned in 1951 after 27 years as a GTRR brakeman.

He said he had been talking with a Mexican couple who had come here from Tijuana, Mexico, to get pictures and take the ride.

"THERE WAS a man from San Francisco, another from San Diego, and a third from Los Angeles who told me they were here for this special occasion," Young added.

He didn't see whether any of those five got aboard.

Other hundreds of Birmingham people got what they came for. They lined the southbound platform to watch the two giant steam engines pull up the grade into Birmingham.

Many took pictures of the history-making moment. Dozens of the more adventurous got down on the tracks to get a more realistic or unobstructed picture.

WHAT COULD have been a million dollars worth of good publicity turned into a plugged nickel because of the lack of imagination of GTRR officials.

They should have realized that this ride must be confined to ticket-holders—or matters would get out of hand.

But no one was asked for a ticket upon boarding the train. And so it was too late when the coaches reached Royal Oak, Birmingham and Pontiac.

THE MOST irritating thing to those disappointed hundreds was to learn there was so much GTRR Top Brass aboard who apparently were unable—or unwilling—to prevent their "shining hour" from becoming corroded.

Sunday night in several hundred Birmingham area homes, parents tried to answer that plaintive question, "Daddy, why couldn't we get on that train?"

Mrs. Ralph G. Shea, 1767 Sheffield, Birmingham, was one of those who took the trip.

SHE, HER HUSBAND, four children, and nine neighbors had to share four seats.

"For while, my son, Mike, 7, rode in the luggage rack overhead—that was the only place for him," she said.

The train "crawled" through Pontiac, Fenton and Holly—and arrived at Durand at about 5 p.m. the time it was supposed to be back in Birmingham.

THOUSANDS of people lined the right-of-way to watch the last of the steamers.

Once in Durand, the men tried to get something for families to eat, said Mrs. Shea. "There was very little in Durand to feed us—everything was sold out in a few minutes—and it didn't go far among the thousands of hungry passengers."

"Those who had brought some food with them shared it with strangers as far as it would stretch," she said.

On the return trip, people in her car sang old favorites—primarily to keep the children interested.

THE TRAIN pulled into Birmingham about 8:30 p.m.—three hours later than scheduled.

"But everyone seemed to have a good time in spite of the handicaps," Mrs. Shea added.

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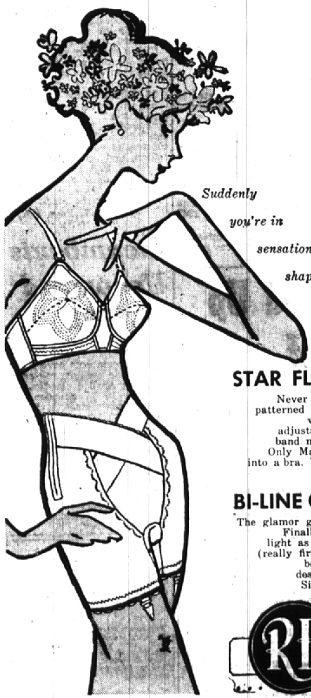
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