

OPEN NEW SUBWAY LINES TO TRAFFIC; CALLED A TRIUMPH

Great H System Put in Operation Marks an Era in Railroad Construction.

NO HITCH IN THE PLANS

But Public Gropes Blindly to Find the Way in Maze of New Stations.

THOUSANDS GO ASTRAY

Leaders in City's Life Hail Accomplishment of Great Task at Meeting at the Astor.

Amid scenes that will stand out in the memories of those who witnessed them as among the most striking in the city's history, the subway lines traversing each side of this borough and forming the new "H" system were put in operation last night. At 8:43 o'clock George H. Pegram, Chief Engineer of the Interborough, and Daniel L. Turner, Chief Engineer of the Public Service Commission, drove two silver spikes through the rails of the southbound express track at the diagonal station at Forty-Second Street and Park Avenue, marking the completion of an engineering feat compared by some of those with long memories to the task accomplished when the ~~the~~ in railroads of the country changed to the present standard gauge in a single day.

Following the completion of the southbound track, a ten-car special train, crowded to the doors with guests representing the leaders in the city's life, and driven by Mayor Hylan as motorman, left the diagonal station for a trip over the lines. This train went to the Battery on the old subway tracks and then returned to Times Square by the Seventh Avenue route. For three hours after this train departed, trains were run only on the express tracks of the system, while the local tracks were connected at this point and at Times Square.

Then only local service was given until the express tracks were connected. In a remarkably short time the routes of a railroad carrying the heaviest traffic of any in the world were entirely changed, the carrying power was doubled, and parts of the city heretofore without subway transit found it placed almost at their doors.

The new H system, so-called, utilizes the old subway as its base. On the east side the old subway lines form a connection with the Lexington Avenue subway at the Grand Central diagonal station. The tracks across Forty-second Street to the Times Square Station are the horizontal bar of the H and are used for shuttle service. At the Times Square Station the new Seventh Avenue subway is joined to the tracks of the old subway, extending up Broadway and forming the west side line of the new system.

After the special train had completed its run, the guests left it at Times Square, and headed by the Subway Band, marched to the Hotel Astor, where speakers praised the accomplishment of the mighty task to which New York had so long looked forward.

Thousands Go Astray.

"New York Lost in Its Own Subway" was the drama played at the Times Square Station last night after the new system opened. Amid the shouting of "Broadway this way," "Seventh Avenue," "Downtown," "Uptown," "To your left," "Upstairs," by twenty men and women guards, the crowds surged backward and forward frantically trying to find the train that would take them home. If any one stood still and wore a contented expression, one that said he knew where he was going, he immediately became the centre of an inquiring and querulous group anxious to share in the information. In spite of ample notice of the contemplated establishment of the "H" system service, few had troubled to inform themselves about the new routes by which they must travel.

Policemen, soldiers, sailors, cleaners, mechanics, civilians who knew no more than others, all acted as guides. They pointed and gesticulated, and then the weary traveler would shoot off along one of the myriad of passages, or down a stairway or through a gate. If he were lucky he reached another platform, but if not he found that when he had traversed all the corridors he was back again at the point from which he started. Those who did not look bewildered looked disgusted and angry, for in many cases they had spent hours instead of minutes in getting to Times Square. One woman said that she had been three hours traveling from Washington Square. There were many who limped along after having been injured in the crush, and many who waited in ranks of five or six, upright and immovable, for one of the shuttle trains to return from Grand Central Station.

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They did not return frequently, for it took a long time to load and unload. Those who once got into a car were loath to get out. The result was that the train would stand for five and ten minutes until the passenger was either jammed in or pulled out.

Never did New Yorkers look less urban. They did not know where they were going, and few there were who could tell them. There were too many places to go. They were too tired to stand off and survey the situation. Many were from the beaches. So they asked, and stared and waited and ran and stopped and asked again. Then they gave up, or, perhaps by accident, the right train came along. But there were more to follow, and the platforms were always packed.

The greatest cause of confusion at the Times Square station was the lack of signs indicating the direction of trains. Persons who came to Times Square from the Grand Central Station failed to realize that they had to go through under the tunnel to reach the uptown trains, and many left the station thinking that they could reach the Bronx and Van Cortlandt Park trains by going up to the street.

Passengers were also much confused about reaching Brooklyn. A guard at the Times Square station said that many persons had been compelled to pay two fares because they went through the gates of the Interborough subway to reach the platforms of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains.

At Grand Central Station there was less confusion. Efforts were made to direct all women going uptown to take the trains operating on the former downtown local tracks so that they would not have to cross under the tunnel at Times Square. Guards stationed about the platforms called out the directions of the trains and kept the crowds moving as rapidly as possible. After 10:30 o'clock two trains were operated over the shuttle. There was no fixed schedule, but they were run as quickly as they could be emptied and filled. Today a third shuttle will be run.

Signs in use at the Grand Central Station when the old system was in operation had not been removed, and some passengers waited twenty minutes and half an hour for trains going to West Farms and Van Cortlandt Park.

Women ticket choppers, who have only recently begun to be employed on the subway, received a baptism of fire last night. Many women passengers stopped at the gates to ask questions of the women there. In each case the new ticket choppers were able to answer promptly and accurately.

First Train Made Slow Time.

The trip of the first special train over the "H" lines was hesitating and halting, for the track had not been cleared of tardy trains, and the journey was only as fast as the ordinary local although only two stops were made. One of these was at Brooklyn Bridge and the other near Fourteenth Street on the west side, where a halt was made long enough to give a train ahead time to get out of the way.

At the Times Square station the Subway Band, in smart uniforms, met the train. Those on board formed in line and to the tune of a lively march paraded to the Hotel Astor, where they gathered in the banquet hall and listened to speeches by eminent citizens, many of them largely responsible for the development of the system of rapid transit.

When Chairman Hubbell of the Public Service Commission called the meeting to order the big room was crowded to the doors. Those whose memories ran back to 1904 agreed in saying that the ceremonies were more impressive than those which marked the opening of the first subway.

Buildings in Times Square had been decorated in celebration of the opening. Flags of the Allies floated from the windows of the Times Building and American flags hung about the walls. Since last night was lightless, no ornamental lights could be used. The only electrical display was at the Hotel Astor, where the coat of arms of New York, surrounded by lights, hung over the door.

One of the features of the ceremony marking the opening of the new transit lines, was the giving of a signal to flying all of the Interborough's switchmen and signal control men, that the old type of safety appliance, which had aided in making a record for safe travel on the biggest traffic railroad in the world, was to give place to a newer and even better type. Another feature was the running of several cars on the link through Forty-second Street, that for fourteen years has been part of the main line. These cars will be used for the shuttle service between Times Square and the Grand Central Station. Later two of the four tracks will be used for service between Queens Borough and Times Square.

During the opening ceremonies attached to the Public Service Commission distributed pamphlets of instruction concerning the proper use of the new lines. It has been repeatedly urged by the commission and by Interborough officials that travelers on the "H" lines should patronize those which will land them near their destination without change. The fear had been expressed that many would take the line nearest their place of business and transfer at Times Square, or the diagonal station, rather than walk a short distance for a train that would make a transfer unnecessary.

It has been frequently pointed out that the two transfer points are like the neck of a bottle, and that congestion at them means delay in the entrance and departure of passengers, which, in turn, means a delay along the entire system. There is also an element of danger at crowded points which can be easily avoided by the exercise of judgment in selecting the line to be used.

Among those on the train which led the way for continual service were Mayor Hylan, all of the Public Service Commissioners, Oscar S. Straus, who has just retired as the commission's

Chairman; William R. Willcox, another former Chairman of the commission; Colonel Jefferson De Mont Thompson of the Broadway Association, Henry Bruckner, Calvin D. Van Name, and Maurice D. Connolly, Presidents of the Boroughs of the Bronx, Richmond, and Queens; James Blaine Walker and Frank N. Robinson, secretaries of the Public Service Commission, and many other officials of local railroads and representatives of civic organizations.

Some Confusion Expected.

At the beginning of operation on the new lines confusion at transfer points on the Lexington Avenue subway is expected, but at these points and elsewhere where there will be great numbers of trains running in various directions, the Interborough Company has arranged to have guides whose business it will be to give information to passengers.

If instructions issued by the commission are studied, it is believed that confusion will be lessened. Briefly these instructions say to travelers on the east side line that the Jerome Avenue and West Farms branches of the subway run south to 162d and 149th Streets, respectively, where they join with the main line. For the present the Pelham Bay Park branch will be operated only to and from the Third Avenue station. The first station reached on the main line after leaving Third Avenue is at 125th Street, the point of change for the Jerome Avenue and West Farms branches.

Those traveling on the main lines and desiring to reach Queens Borough must change at Times Square from the west side line, and at the Grand Central Station on the east side. Those coming to Manhattan from Brooklyn on the Interborough system will be conveyed through Lexington Avenue north of the Grand Central. If by chance the wrong train is taken a change may be made at 125th Street without extra charge.

Stations on the New Lines.

The new stations on the Seventh Avenue line are south of Times Square and are situated at the Pennsylvania Station, Twenty-eighth, Twenty-third, Eighteenth, and Fourteenth Streets, Christopher Street, Sheridan Square, Houston, Canal, Franklin, Courtlandt, and Reitor Streets, going to the battery and at Park Place, Fulton, and Wall Streets, on the main line, which will finally join with the Interborough lines in Brooklyn.

New stations on the Lexington Avenue line are north of the Grand Central Station and are situated at Fifty-first and Fifty-ninth Streets; Sixty-eighth Street-Hunter College; Seventy-seventh, Eighty-sixth, Ninety-sixth, 103d, 110th, 116th, and 125th Streets. There are two express stations, at Eighty-sixth and 125th Streets, and on the west side line the new express stations are at Times Square, Pennsylvania Station, Fourteenth, and Chambers Streets.

Expresses to and from Van Cortlandt Park at 242d Street on the west side subway will display two red lights, expresses to and from Dyckman Street, white and red lights; 180th Street and West Farms expresses, red and green lights; Broadway locals, two white lights, and Lenox Avenue locals, two green lights. These are the same lights displayed heretofore.

On the east side subway Jerome Avenue expresses to 167th Street will show green and red lights; to 149th Street, white and red lights; from 149th Street to South Ferry, white and red lights. West Farms expresses on this and all other lines on this subway to Brooklyn will show two red lights. Local trains will show green and white lights.

Travelers on the Lexington Avenue subway, traffic officials said last night, should bear in mind the fact that the 125th Street station bears the same relation, in regard to divergence of lines, as the Ninety-sixth Street station on the old line. As the tracks approach the station at approximately 121st Street there are a number of track ramps and inclines where the trains are sorted and diverted to their destinations. At this point the northbound trains will rise to the upper level and southbound trains to the lower level.

North of 125th Street the tracks slope downward to the Harlem River, where they enter a four-track tunnel. Two of these tracks will be used for the Pelham Bay Park branch, and two for the traffic to and from the Jerome Avenue branch. Over the latter will also flow the traffic to and from the West Farms branch, by the 149th Street connection, which is one of the most important features of the new subway system. In addition to providing a shorter and quicker route to lower Manhattan for passengers to and from the Bronx through Lexington Avenue it will also greatly relieve the great congestion on the Broadway and Lenox Avenue branches of the old subway. This relief will make possible the operation of 50 per cent. more trains on these two branches.