

in any other airport in the Orient. The remodelling of the terminal building was designed by Mr. Manuel A. Tavarez, head of the technical staff of the National Development Company. Bringing into play his experience in the building of other airport terminals in the United States, particularly the Detroit National Airport, Mr. Tavarez has designed a building that is both functional and decorative.

The administrative and business staffs of the Manila International Airport, now the National Airports Corporation, have exploited every possibility for business and increased airport revenues. There are presently four restaurants at the Manila International Airport, three for airline and government employees, and a swanky air-conditioned combination bar-restaurant-soda fountain for passengers, guests, and the general public. The terminal building also has concessions for air-conditioned barber shops, Filipino and Chinese curio shops, drugstore, radiogram services, travel bureaus, coin-operated machines, a photo studio, watch and jewelry shop, etc. All the concessions are now operating at the Manila International Airport and 400,000 flying passengers, their guests, visitors, and the general public are expected to keep these concessions going on a profitable basis for both the concessionaires and the Airport.

The initial success at the Manila International Airport has opened new possibilities for outlying airfields. A commercial plan on proportional scale is being drafted for airports at major points such as Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, Zamboanga, Bacolod, and Baguio. The business development of these airports will to a great extent minimize the losses which the National Airports Corporation is bound to suffer.

If the Manila International Airport had operated as a single entity as originally planned, there is no doubt that it would have been one of the very few airports in the world operating on a profitable basis. With its absorption into the National Airports Corporation, the Manila International Airport will have to support the rest of the airports throughout the Philippines, the accounts of which will be in the red for many years to come.

Considering the best interests of safety, public service, and national security, the National Airports Corporation, for all the deficits it will incur, still represents a great stride forward in Philippine aviation which places the country on the same level with leading nations of the world and far ahead of any other nation in the Far East.

Land Transportation (Bus Lines)

By L. G. JAMES

Vice-President and Manager, A. L. Ammen Transportation Co., Inc.

SEVERAL months ago the Public Service Commission issued an order fixing June 30, 1948, as the ultimate date upon which pre-war operators might complete the registration of new vehicles to the number authorized under their respective pre-war certificates of public convenience. As previously stated in this column, the plight of operators of public land-carrier services is a precarious one, resulting from the granting of temporary operating rights to practically all applicants, whereby the highways of the country have become crowded with public utility vehicles of every description.

In many areas, the quantity of public transportation on the roads far exceeds the normal public requirement. Under such circumstances, the pre-war operator, discouraged by falling revenues and ruinous competition and by the lack of ready financial resources with which to effect complete rehabilitation of his operations, has in general

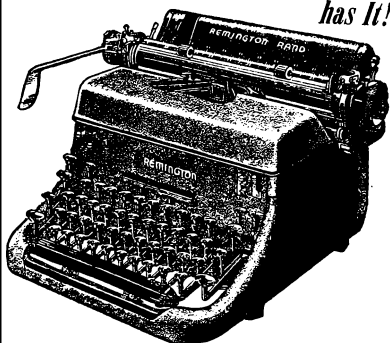
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been either hesitant or unable to make the substantial investment required to bring his fleet of busses up to pre-war status.

The Public Service Commission had recently taken cognizance of the situation and has extended the period within which pre-war operators may register busses under pre-war authority, provided proper application is made and favorable consideration is given by the Commission to such applications. Practically all operators concerned have made application for the extension. The additional period of grace, which will expire on September 30, 1948, gives operators a breathing spell within which to acquire and register additional equipment if the risk of capital seems to be warranted.

The plight of the legitimate post-war operator is no less precarious than that of the operator holding pre-war public utility rights. The former operates under an authority which is purely temporary in nature. Because of the encouragement offered by extensions of these temporary operating rights to December 31, 1948, with the additional assurance by the Public Service Commission that applications for regular certificates of public convenience will be entertained, these operators have reason to hope for permanent rights.

A substantial number of newcomers into the field of transportation have developed sizeable fleets and have operated more or less successfully. They feel that their investments should be protected and obviously will bring concentrated pressure to bear upon the authorities concerned, insisting on further extension of their temporary certificates or the granting of permanent certificates. With at least five times the number of public utility vehicles now on the highways, compared to those in operation before the war, it is obvious that competition will ultimately result in the bankruptcy of a substantial percentage of present operators. Many of the newcomers, lacking the

experience and organizational advantages of the pre-war operator, are hesitant about making future plans that would call for continuation and possible future expansion of their business.

The present chaotic state of public land transportation, affecting the old and the new operator, calls for early and drastic action by the Public Service Commission by way of elimination of a substantial proportion of the temporary certificates now in effect. The streets of Manila and the highways in the provinces are crowded with public utility vehicles far in excess of the public need. A large percentage of these units is composed of trucks and busses unsuited to and unsafe for public use. The vast majority of these operations are carried on by owners who keep no records of accounts and thus defraud the Government of hundreds of thousands of pesos by failure to pay various taxes to which they are subject. The majority of them do not comply with the terms of their certificates which specify the vehicles to be used and limit the operations to specified lines and hours. It would be a very simple matter for the Public Service Commission to cancel the operating rights of those who flagrantly violate the provisions of their certificates of public convenience. This would offer a chance of survival in fair competition to the operators who do business on a legitimate basis and meet their obligations to the Government, eliminating much of the present hazard to which the traveling public is subjected due to overcrowded highways and the operation of unsafe equipment by irresponsible owners.

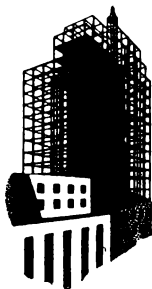
Until steps are taken to eliminate a substantial portion of the present public utility operations, land transportation will continue to be a sorry mess, to the detriment of the Government, the public, and the legitimately operating business concerns engaged in rendering this public service.

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