

# Battle looms over bus cuts

LIVERPOOL BUSMEN are preparing to resist further cuts in services planned by the MPTE.

Management want to take another 150 buses off the road in addition to the 60 axed (with difficulty) earlier this year.

The MPTE have already given details of the new cuts. But so far no date has been fixed for bringing them in.

As soon as a date is announced, the busmen's Joint Shop Stewards Committee will implement a policy of 'no co-operation'. This means, according to one steward, that "There'll be a big slow-down."

Buses will not leave stops until all passengers are seated; doors will not be opened until the bus has stopped; speed limits will be strictly observed;

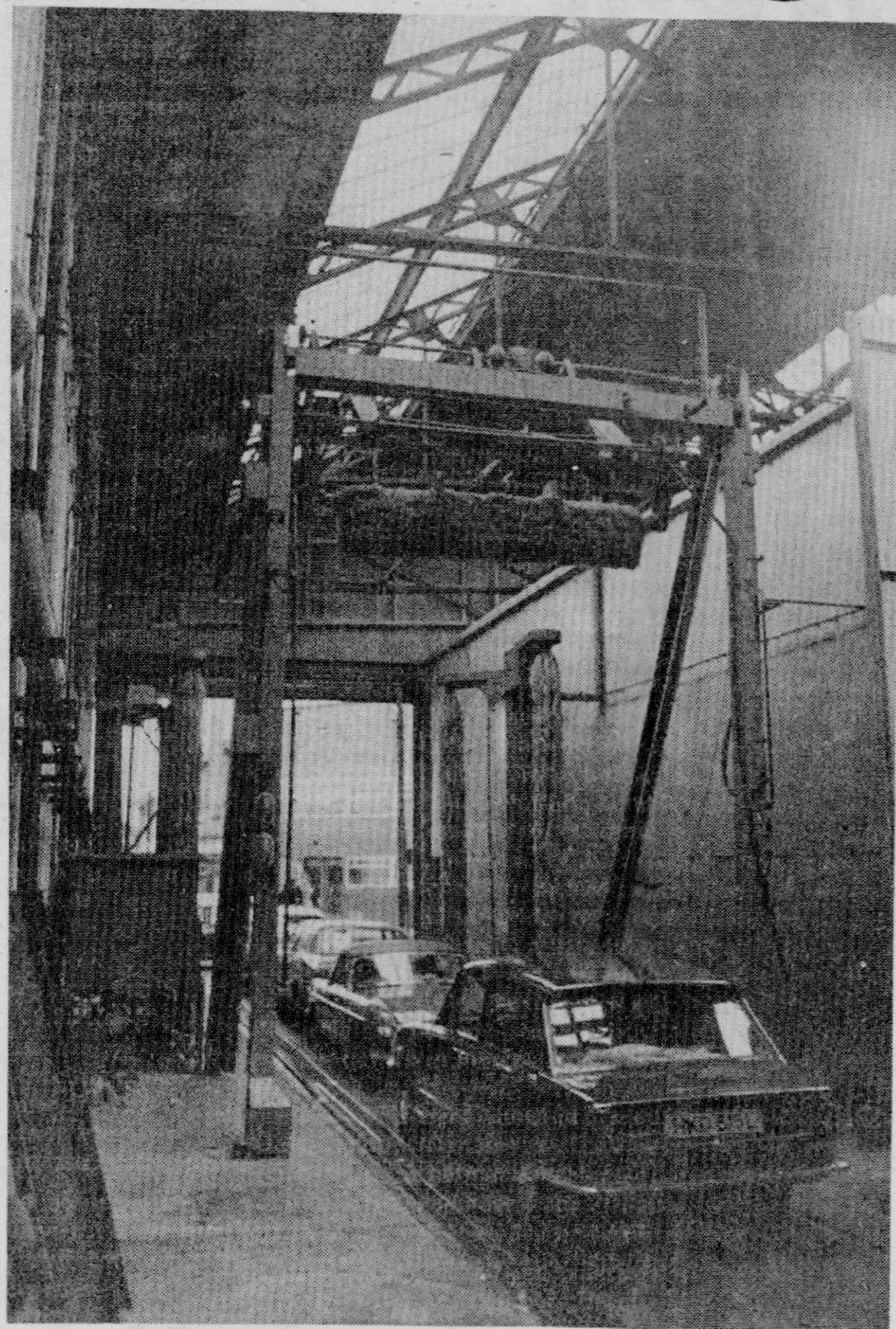
and defective buses will not leave the garage.

Shop stewards are aware of the difficulties in carrying this out, and also that passengers will suffer short-term inconvenience.

And some are angry that a national directive from the Transport Workers' union has given management a way to justify service cuts. It said no cuts should be allowed for financial reasons - unless there was a reduction in passenger demand.

Management, of course, can both manipulate passenger figures and actually reduce demand by, for instance, raising fares or withdrawing free travel passes.

The MPTE's latest plans include ending a number of services altogether. These are the 16, 35/36, 50, 52, 19e, 12a, 71, 87, and Rapid-ride services 439, 400 and 438.



WHEN a film on safety at work was shown to workers at a factory in Preston one man had to have stitches in his head after falling off his seat. Several others were treated for shock. The film has now been withdrawn as it's "too dangerous".

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PERHAPS two heads aren't better than one after all. A zoologist studying a freak turtle with two heads and six legs reports that one of its mouths tries to snatch food from the other at meal times.

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TYPICAL compromise at Merseyside County Council when the fire alarm went off. Half the members rushed out. The other half stayed.

In fact there was no fire. Officials said the alarm had been set off by hot air in the council chamber. Honest!

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TO THANK the Queen for letting him stay in Buckingham Palace, Dr Geisel, dictator of Brazil, presented her with a two-toed sloth.

Some people - who obviously know nothing about animals - have been asking how many toes it had before Dr Geisel got hold of it.

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MERSEYSIDE police say there was only one case of intoxicating liquor being sold illegally last year. At a church hall.

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PETTY THIEF Francesco Aquitano decided the game was up when the police caught him speeding near Bologna in Italy.

So he quickly swallowed twenty 100,000 lire banknotes (worth about £1,300).

"He just grinned when we said the money was stolen" said one of the policemen. "And we can't do anything because we can't trace it."

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IT HAPPENED at the Old Bailey. A man stood in the witness box chewing, and with his hands in his pockets.

"Are you masticating?" asked the judge. Immediately the man pulled his hands out of his pockets.

## The crazy tale of the Garston bus-wrecker

THE MPTE spent £17,000 on what they thought was a bus-washer. But what they bought was a £17,000 bus-wrecker.

The bus-wrecker was installed at Garston bus depot less than three years ago. Since then it has been used only a handful of times - with disastrous consequences.

They tried it on a single-decker... It smashed the windscreen, ripped off the mirrors, and dented the side.

They tried a double-decker... It got angry and punched a hole in the roof.

The bus-wrecker has special

grooves for the bus wheels. Unfortunately, they are only wide enough for the single wheels at the front. There are double wheels at the back and the tyres on these are ripped to shreds.

The bus-wrecker was supposed to replace two men. It was the prototype of a new design, so the MPTE got it cheap. But before it was properly installed, the manufacturer (not surprisingly) went bust.

Another firm brought in by the MPTE to sort out the wrecker couldn't make head nor tail of it.

And now even the MPTE manage-

ment have concluded it was all a ghastly mistake. This year they plan to scrap the wrecker and replace it with a brand new £20,000 machine. Should be good...

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## Postmen knocked

ON RECENT performance Liverpool Housing Department should soon be handling more mail than the Post Office.

In the first week of May, 80,000 letters notifying rate increases were delivered to all city council tenants.

In the second week of May, 80,000 rent accounts were similarly delivered by corporation staff.

And early this month 80,000 rent cards will be pushed through the same 80,000 letter boxes.

Staff - who are paid 3.25p for each delivery - must be very glad that all these pieces of paper don't fit in one envelope.

## GPs give way on health centre

THE SIX-YEAR argument between the people in Vauxhall and their GPs over a health centre for the area is settled now that Doctors Taafe, Attwood, Sytner, Livingstone and Cohen have given their support to the project.

The Area Health Authority considered Vauxhall to be top priority for a health centre but couldn't go ahead with its plans because the GPs refused to co-operate. The doctors said they were too old to change and their patients wouldn't like the site. The Area Health Authority was considering building elsewhere.

Now the doctors say they are interested in the centre and the Health Authority can press ahead with its plans to build in Vescock Street, on the open land between the Lee Jones Centre and the Rising Sun pub.

The consent of the doctors clearly shows how well-organised pressure can have some effect on the Health Service. Working together, the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council and Central/South Community Health Council were informed and persistent.

They were determined that people in Vauxhall should not continue to put up with "slum surgeries" or the poor facilities at the school and fam-

ily health clinics run by the Area Health Authority.

The new health centre should be open in August 1979 and will include five GPs' consulting rooms, school and family health clinic services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody and dental services.

Whether the GPs in Boundary Street and Scotland Road, who are now willing to work from the centre will actually practise there is in doubt.

Most are nearly seventy years old and may have retired or died by the time the centre opens. This will be the time for younger doctors with a fresh approach to community health care to move into the area... doctors who know that their patients will benefit if they work as part of a team with health visitors, secretaries, district and school nurses and social workers.

Attractive premises are only the start of providing better health care for the people of Vauxhall. Finally, it will be the attitudes and approach of the people working from the centre which will decide how much better the service will be to the people in the future.

## One to miss

PEOPLE TRYING to get a mortgage would probably be well advised to avoid a new firm of brokers called Rolling-In Services Ltd, of Northwood, Middlesex.

It is run by the people behind Wehrli Ltd, who are well known to brokers. At least one large insurance company refuses to deal with them because of their methods.

Rolling-In Services, like Wehrli, are expensive. But the Birkenhead couple who were having difficulty getting back a £57 "registration fee" from Wehrli (see last issue) got a refund in full

## Can't get any hotter

*EVEN THAT final journey is not without its problems.*

Four recently-installed cremators at the Springwood Crematorium, Allerton, have been playing up a bit and may be on the way out.

Liverpool Corporation were the first in the country to use a new design from the Wellman Incandescant Cremator Company. Unfortunately, they were designed to use Town Gas and conversion to North Sea Gas has proved difficult.

Temperatures in the flu have built up to dangerous levels. Just how dangerous was shown by an explosion in a crematorium outside Liverpool.

The City of London Crematorium have closed down their four cremators of this type and gone back to using the old ones.

Now Liverpool's Libraries and Leisure Activities Committee (strangely, the committee responsible) plan to spend £40,000 for two new cremators. Amen.

## FREE PRESS APPEAL

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