

MAKING STREET CARS COMFORTABLE

THE man was apparently as sane as the editor was to whom he was talking. Sometimes you can tell and sometimes you can't. Editors are very peculiar that way. Anyhow, the man was talking and the editor was listening.

"I am an inventor," the man was saying, "and am profoundly interested in New York's transportation problem. Something must be done, and that quickly, to relieve the congestion."

"You talk like a doctor," ventured the editor.

"I am a doctor," retorted the man; "a doctor seeking to cure the ills of urban travel. I am confining my ministrations to the surface cars, believing there is enough on the earth requiring attention without going above it or beneath it. I have at my home models of cars, which if adopted would, in my judgment, be of the greatest benefit to the public."

"For example I have what I call the Rush-hour car. This pattern is without seats, but has a very liberal supply of straps for the comfort and convenience of passengers. In each of these cars the maximum load will be carried and they will be quite as comfortable to the standees as the ordinary seat-car is, if not more so, as each passenger will know and feel that he has as good accommodations as any other passenger."

"It is probable that only men will ride in them, but that will be an advantage rather than otherwise, for when the men have been carried away from congested points the ladies will have some chance to get seats in other cars."

"Will they have side doors?" inquired the editor casually.

"Only on Sundays," replied the inventor solemnly, and continued: "Another model is of the telescope car. This is built on the extension principle, and during rush hours can be shoved out to double its capacity during the less active hours of traffic. The two ends of the

room in those parts of the car where the standees can make those who had seats in the central portion of the car wish they had stood near the doors so they could get out before they had been carried two or three blocks beyond their destination. In these cars only the men will stand; the ladies will occupy the seats."

The editor didn't say anything, but he looked it. The inventor proceeded with his narrative.

"A third model I have is the rubber car. No relation whatever to the rubber-neck car. This car is not fully developed as yet. I propose to make it of rubber so that it will stretch to the utmost limits of the corporation's greed if necessary."

I am sure it will be popular—with the companies. It should be no less so with passengers, because when people insist upon crowding into a car it will be some satisfaction to know that it will do all it can to accommodate them. Existing cars do not do this, which is why you can hear so much masculine profanity when two or three hundred persons are raising a row with the conductor because they cannot be put into a space only large enough for, say, sixty to seventy-five, counting those hanging on to the platform, cornice, and window sills. It requires no stretch of the imagination to understand what the rubber car will be when I get it fully perfected."

"Who said it would?" inquired the editor, but the inventor ignored the un-called for query.

"But the car on which I base most of my hopes," he said, "is the triple-decker. This car is not much higher in build than the ordinary surface cars, and has a narrow aisle down the middle, with three tiers of seats holding two passengers each, on either side. Passengers will have to stoop some in order to get into their seats, but once in they can sit up as straight as they please, without fear of

"The cars may be a bit stuffy and close when packed, but the passengers can endure some discomfort for the sake of getting home at night before their dinners are cold, or getting to their offices in the morning before the dock clerk gets his work in on their time. In any event it is a good deal better than waiting on the corner, which remains in one place."

"There will be no standing room, as the cars will be too high for the average-length passenger to reach a strap, even if the aisles were wide enough to allow a passenger to stand other than edgewise. About 120 passengers may be carried at one load."

"Of course these cars are to be run only during the hours of congestion, unless it is discovered that they may be run at all hours at a greater profit than any other, in which event they will displace all other cars. On Sundays these cars may be used for children's picnics, when they may carry 200 if properly packed."

The editor was still listening as though he enjoyed it, and the inventor went ahead.

"I have another car in mind," he said, "which will provide seats for all passengers, will permit no standees either in the body of the car or on the platforms, will provide plenty of light, warmth, and ventilation; will not stop when full except to disembark passengers, will have

"Here, here," interrupted the editor, "don't talk like a visionary. I'll stand for practical and practicable things, but I don't want any pipe dreams."

"Huh!" sniffed the inventor, rising abruptly. "I see plainly, Sir, that you are in league with the corporations. Good morning."

"Step lively," chuckled the editor, and the inventor did.