

JAMAICA N. Y., SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 1936.

Men Toil Under Earth to Build Subway

\$105,000,000 Project Will Link Jamaica and Central Queens With Manhattan; Ride Will Cost Five Cents and Take 30 Minutes.

By ERNEST NEUFELD

For five miles under Queens boulevard and Hillside avenue 450 men are hammering, painting, working away to complete a \$105,000,000 subway to serve Jamaica and Central Queens.

When their job is done and the line is opened to Jamaica next year, Central Queens will be linked with the city's Independent Subway system in Manhattan and residents will become independent of the Long Island Railroad. For, while the Long Island trains take from 15 to 18 minutes to get to Pennsylvania Station from Jamaica, the run on the new subway will be little more than 30 minutes—easy commuting time, the ride costing only a nickel.

Begun in 1929 when ground was broken in Long Island City, the subway is scheduled to be opened as far as Continental avenue, Forest Hills, before the end of the year.

Although work was suspended for 15 months in 1934 and 1935 and was interrupted by strikes, the tracks are down for the entire length of the subway to 178th street, Jamaica. Only two contracts remain to be let, and these only because of last minute changes in plans.

There is still a lot of work to be done. All stations beyond the Union turnpike are uncompleted, needing tiling, lighting, stairways, ventilators, change booths and turnstiles. The stations at Continental avenue and Union turnpike need painting, change booths and turnstiles.

The dividing wall between east and west-bound trains just east of Parsons Boulevard Station, now planned to be the last express stop, has to be knocked out so that tracks for switching back the express trains can be laid.

Wiring for the lighting of the tunnel proper, drainage, and cables for the signal equipment remain to be installed. And the Kew Gardens Yards of the line, though the tracks, block signals, the inspection shed and signal tower building have been finished, requires cable connections and finishing touches.

To Build Crossover

One of the remaining contracts to be let is for the new crossover at Parsons boulevard. Another is for finishing the station at Ely avenue, or 23rd street, Long Island City.

The third is for the installation of a telephone and signal alarm system at a cost of \$266,825, the contract for which is scheduled for approval by the Board of Estimate on Sept. 25.

At a meeting on Friday the Board of Estimate ratified contracts totaling \$27,477 for the completion of the Kew Gardens yards.

The crossover at Parsons boulevard has been made necessary because the Board of Transportation has abandoned its original plan to run express trains after their last stop at Parsons boulevard to 178th street, where they would have been switched for the return trip.

As now planned the tracks at 178th street will be used merely to store cars, with 160th street being the last station on the line. Despite protests by the Jamaica Estates Association, that there is room for both a station and switchback facilities at 178th street, it seems unlikely that the Board of Transportation will alter its decision to make 160th street the last station. The board is considering, however, a design for a station and crossovers at 178th street, drawn by an engineer for the association.

Construction of the subway has been supervised and checked at every point by engineers of the Board of Transportation. Every tie used for the tracks was tested. A Transportation Board man superintended the cutting of the yellow pines in the Carolinas, watched them cut into ties and took the boat with them to New York where they were processed. Officials were stationed in the steel mills to see to it that the rails came out as specified.

Total Cost \$105,200,000

Administrative expenses, interest, insurance and legal charges alone amount to \$20,700,000. The cost of building the subway proper is \$79,700,000, an additional \$4,800,000 going for the construction of the Kew Gardens Yards.

Of the total cost of \$105,200,000 condemning land for the tunnel and yards took \$5,600,000. To the \$105,200,000 must be added the greater part of \$19,500,000 which the Board of Estimate has authorized for the purchase of 500 steel passenger cars for the Independent system.

One feature of the new subway is the mezzanine entrance to the Union Turnpike Station, where Interboro parkway and Union turnpike cross under Queens boulevard. The entrance will permit buses to unload passengers at the point. Pedestrians, however, will not be able to use this entrance, there being no sidewalk provided. The entrance was made for the convenience of automobile and bus riders so that cars would not have to go up to Queens boulevard, clogging the road and the subway entrances there.

Eye to the Future

That the subway was planned with an eye to the future is shown by the provision for a spur at Van Wyck boulevard. Agitation for this extension of the subway has continued for many years. The Board of Transportation is ready when the order to go ahead comes. The connection with the main track to the wall that must be broken through to provide rapid transit facilities for the South Side, is laid. It's simply a question of money.

The question of money was vital throughout the construction of the Queens Boulevard Subway. The suspension of work for months was due to the inability of the city to raise the necessary funds.

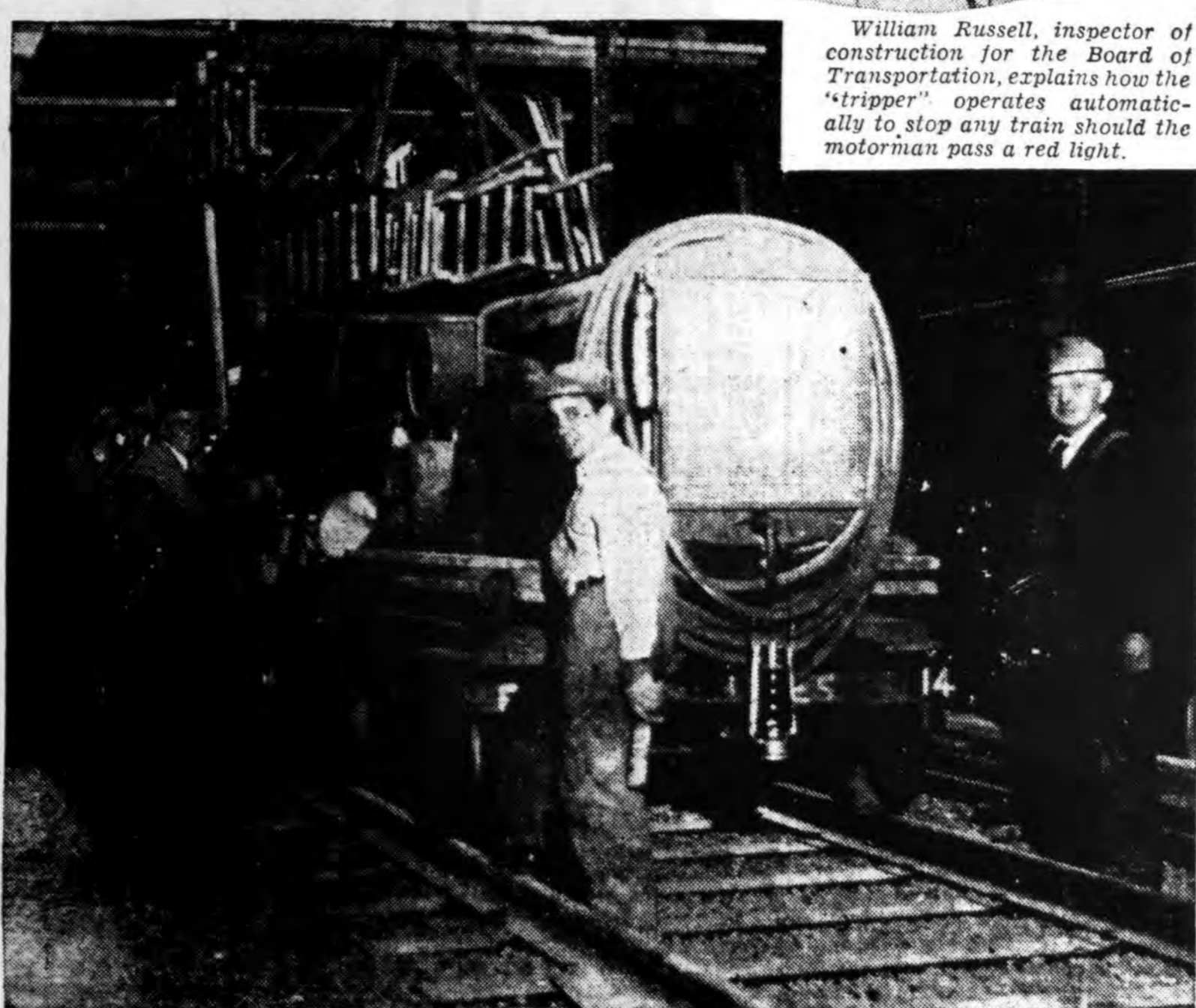
The Federal Government came to the rescue last year with a \$23,000,000 loan and grant for public works. The sum of \$3,100,000 from



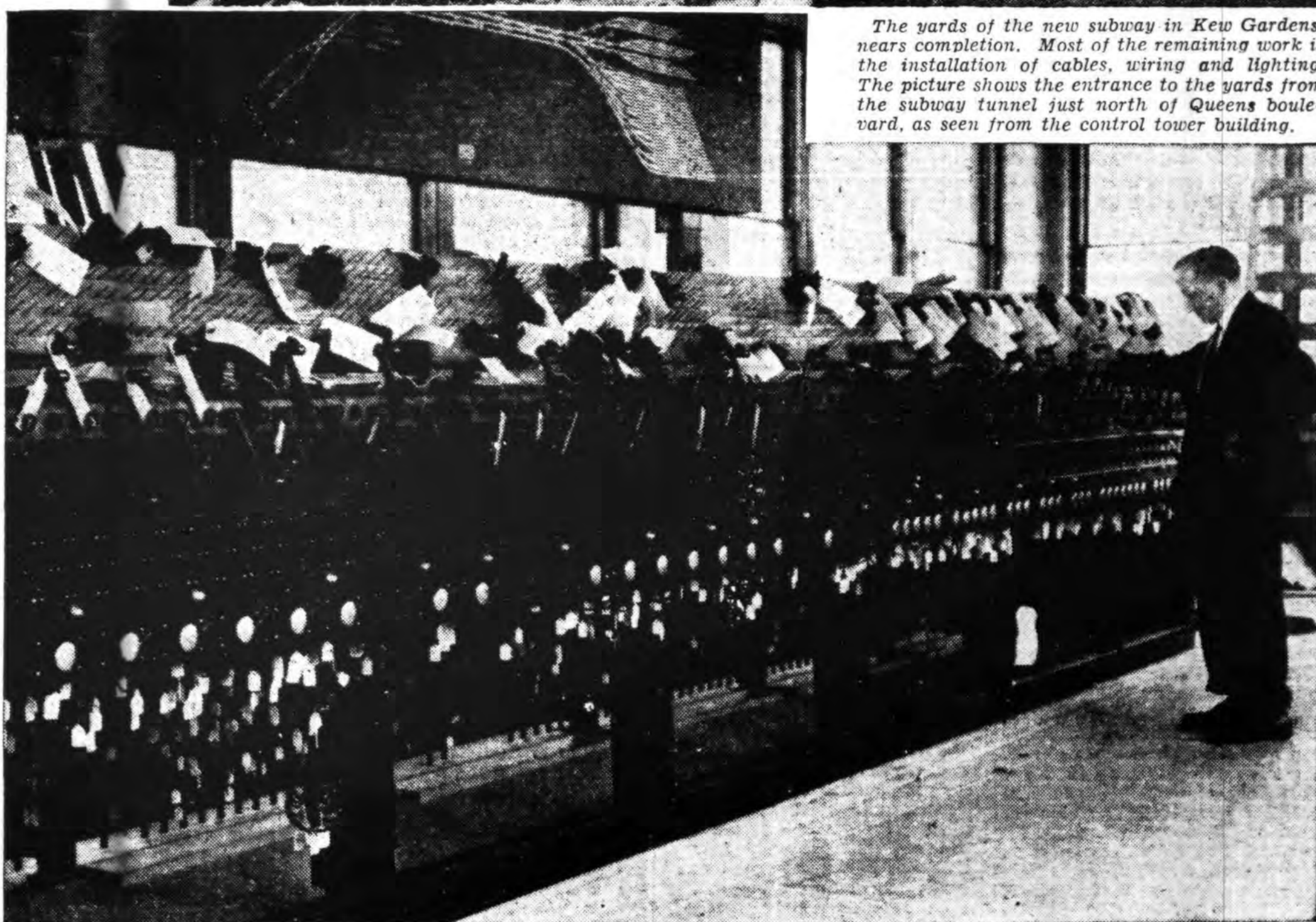
William Russell, inspector of construction for the Board of Transportation, explains how the "tripper" operates automatically to stop any train should the motorman pass a red light.



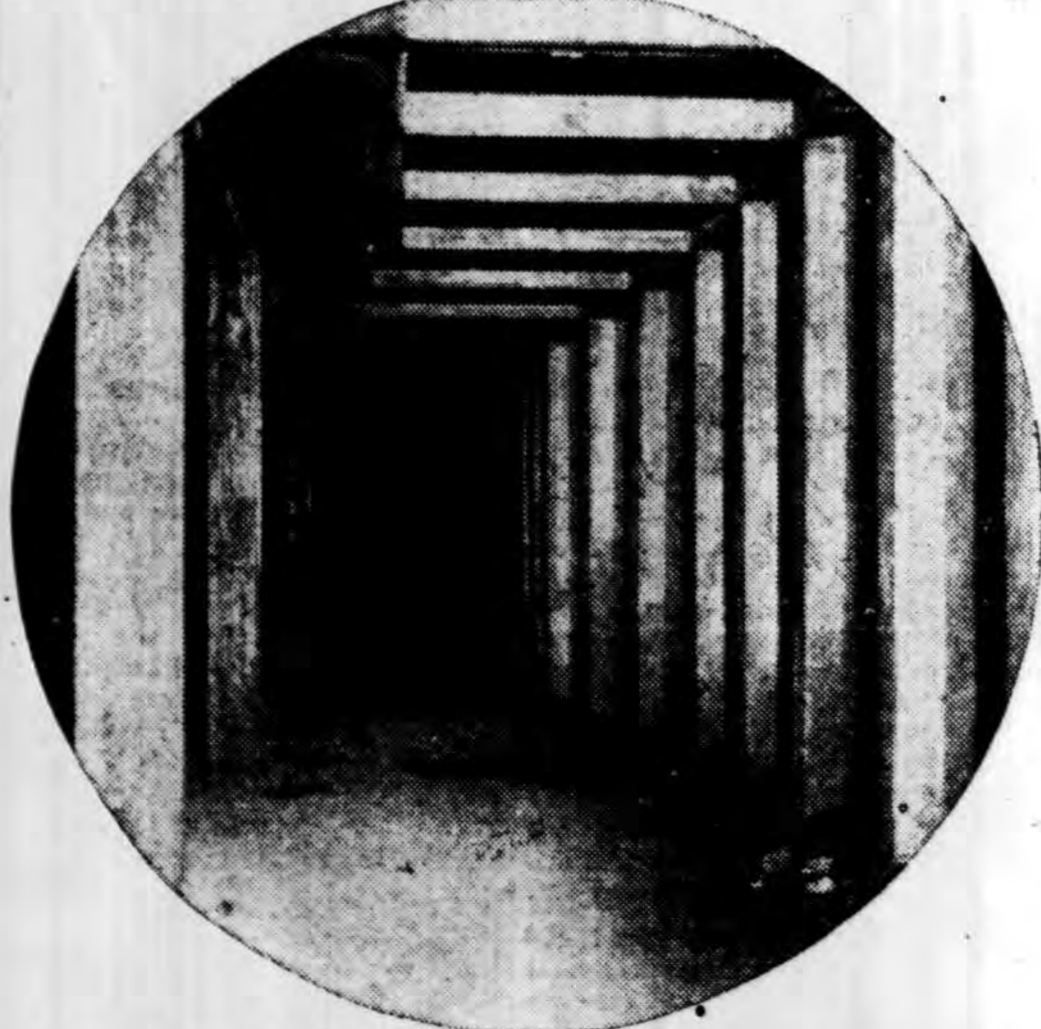
The yards of the new subway in Kew Gardens nears completion. Most of the remaining work is the installation of cables, wiring and lighting. The picture shows the entrance to the yards from the subway tunnel just north of Queens boulevard, as seen from the control tower building.



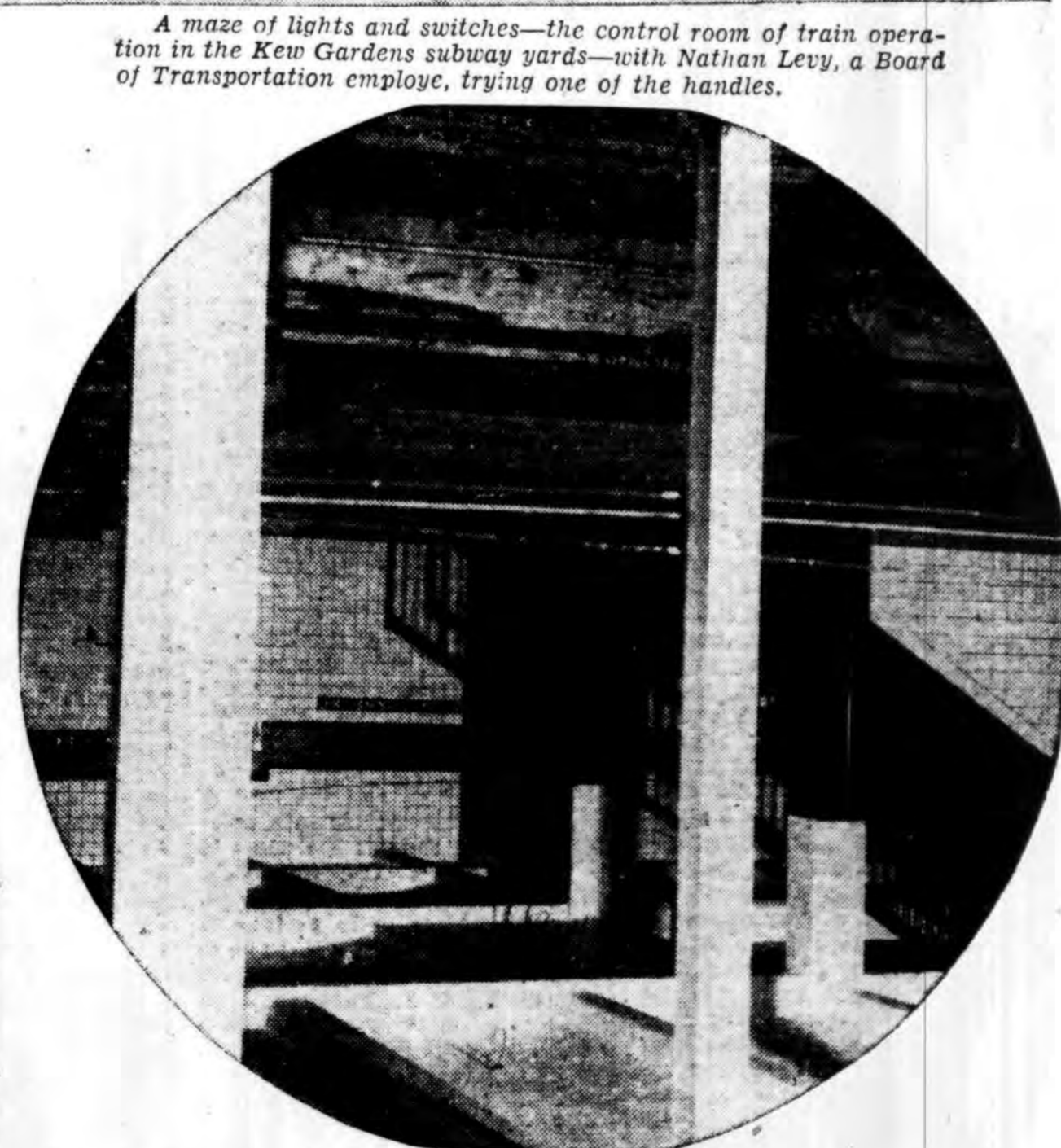
A crew working on the installation of wiring for the signal equipment beyond Van Wyck boulevard station takes time out to give the photographer a chance to "shoot" them and their ladder-carrying truck and compressor.



A maze of lights and switches—the control room of train operation in the Kew Gardens subway yards—with Nathan Levy, a Board of Transportation employe, trying one of the handles.



These doors are the mezzanine entrance to the Union Turnpike Station. The entrance was provided for bus passengers who will be discharged at the point and can go down to the subway directly without having to go to the Queens boulevard stairs. The buses will run along Union turnpike, the side lanes of Interboro parkway in the section. The entrance is not for pedestrians, no sidewalks being provided.



Union Turnpike Station is well along the way to completion. The installation of lights, turnstiles and exchange booths and some painting are still to be done.

The station at 168th street is still in the concrete stage, with many months to elapse before it will get its coat of gleaming white tile. Note the temporary stair in the background.

this allocation enabled the city to finish the subway, on which it had already expended \$102,100,000.

Travel on the new subway will have all the latest safeguards. "Trippers" on the rail will shut off power and put on the breaks of a train if a motorman should pass a red light. All first cars will be provided with a "dead man's button." The motorman must keep his finger on this button at all times. Should he die while running the train, relaxation of the pressure on the button will automatically halt the cars.

Irritated by Delay

In such a case all trains on the line would pull to a stop, the motorman of the train directly behind taking the dead man's place, the motorman of the train behind his moving up, and so on, until the nearest yard would be reached and a reserve motorman could take over the last train.

It is still another year before the subway will be open to Jamaica and businessmen are irritated by the delay.

The Queens Business Men's Committee has charged that the Board of Transportation has made misleading announcements as to the opening date of the subway. District Attorney Charles P. Sullivan is investigating whether he can take their complaint before a Grand Jury on the ground that there has been criminal negligence in the delays.



At left, the end of the line. The bumper, "finis-mark" of the new subway at 178th street, is examined by William Russell, left, inspector of the construction, and the reporter.

The inspection shed of the subway in the Kew Gardens Yards is practically finished. Note the pits stretching the full length of the structure, or 700 feet, each able to accommodate a 10-car train.