

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

JANUARY, 1944.

Issue No. 160.

COMPREHENSIVE POST-WAR PLANS

Approximate Cost of £14,250,000 Involved

THE Commissioners have submitted to the National Works Council a programme of post-war works, covering a wide range of improvements in the Service. It involves a total approximate cost of £14,250,000 and, if adopted, will be spread over some years. Conspicuous in the programme is a number of works made pressing by the expanding transport needs of the State. The Chairman (Mr. N. C. Harris) has made it clear that unification of gauges is a paramount national post-war work, and in the event of its being undertaken, the Departmental programme would necessarily require to be amended in vital details, particularly in connection with locomotives and other rolling stock designed to replace existing vehicles.

The rolling stock section involved construction during a period of five years of 70 locomotives, 1,780 passenger and 116 country and suburban motor cars. Among the locomotives are 40 of the "K" class, 10 additional passenger locomotives (of an improved type), and two of the "H" class, the solitary example of which is now giving excellent service in fast goods work on the North-East line. The trucks will be of the general goods type, and will include cattle, sheep and motor types. The proposed passenger trucks will include sufficient to provide for new suburban trains.

Track Reconditioning

Not less impressive is the list of works for the Way and Works Branch. These embrace a great amount of track reconditioning and relaying, reconstruction of bridges, reconditioning of buildings, etc. In anticipation of the heavier traffic to South Australia and between Melbourne and Adelaide, the tracks between Sunshine and Ararat, and Sunshine and Bendigo will be relaid with heavier rails. A new locomotive depot and marshalling yard at Seymour, and expansion of the shed accommodation at Spencer Street are also listed.

The rapidly developing suburban traffic, already a problem on certain lines, necessitates provision for duplication between Heyington and Gardenvale, and between Camberwell and Clayton, as well as the provision of additional tracks between Jolimont Station and Camberwell, and from Jolimont Junction to South Yarra to

complete the duplication between Flinders Street and Caulfield. This section of the plan includes the reconstruction of the Richmond railway station, and the replacement of the present Cremorne bridges over the Yarra River by a new structure to carry six tracks. The scheme provides for straightening the curve in Alexandra Avenue under the present bridges.

The expansion of suburban track facilities obviously means additional platforms and tracks at the Flinders Street and Princes Bridge stations—important works in themselves and entailing heavy expenditure.

No less significant in the post-war programme is another progressive stage in the modernisation of Newport "A" Power Station and the construction and equipment of new substations, etc., in connection with the suburban electrified system.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.

SPRINGMAKER A. J. Clark; App. F. & T. N. E. Collins; Lad Labr. G. A. Koschek; Lad Labr. D. J. O'Hehir; Lad Labr. E. J. F. Page; Lad Labr. F. J. Punch.

R.A.A.F.

Lad Labr. B. C. Coglan; Lad Labr. J. F. Davies; Lad Labr. G. L. Gollop; App. C'smith. G. M. Harris; Jnr. Clerk E. G. Hocking; Lad Labr. J. F. Kingdon; App. El. Ftr. A. A. Long; Lad Labr. J. H. Macpherson; Lad Labr. J. Mortimer; Springmaker R. E. Sankey; Lad Labr. J. W. Sedgeway; App. Painter S. Watkins.

R.A.N.

Jnr. Clerk B. R. Hansford.

JUDGE WINNEKE'S DEATH.

Judge Ellis now Chairman of Classification Board.

ALL sections of the Railway Service deeply regret the passing of Judge Henry C. Winneke, Chairman of the Railways Classification Board, who died last month after a short illness.

A remarkable man in many respects, he was highly regarded by all who knew him. As a lawyer and as a man of the world who could colour the dullest meeting of men with his philosophy and humour, he will remain a fine memory to his intimate friends.



Judge Winneke

With his attractive human qualities went a scholarship which exhibited the eminence of his intelligence. He was born in Talbot, and at the age of thirteen won a State School Scholarship which gave him two years at the Dookie Agricultural College, of which he became Dux. He subsequently continued his education at Scotch College, being Dux in two successive years, and followed up this record by graduating B.A., LL.B. at Ormond College, Melbourne University, with first-class honours in classics, philosophy, law and mathematics.

No less conspicuous, also, was his excellence in sport. For two years he was stroke of the Scotch College crew. He also appeared, later, for the Melbourne University in rowing and football, and for several years was a prominent figure in the Fitzroy Football Club.

His career at the Bar was brilliant, and in 1913, when he was appointed to the County Court Bench, he was the youngest man ever to secure the coveted position. He was also Chairman of the Court of General Sessions, and for some years Chairman of the State Coal Mine Industrial Tribunal.

The late Judge Winneke has been succeeded as Chairman of the Railways Classification Board by Dr. A. D. Ellis, who has also been appointed a Judge of the County Court.

Like his distinguished predecessor, Dr. Ellis received his early education at the Talbot State School where his father was headmaster. He was subsequently trained at the Teachers' Training College and later attended

(continued on next page)

SURVEY OF ACTIVITIES DURING 1943

Another Excellent V.R. Achievement

THE year 1943 closes another fine achievement on the part of Victorian railwaymen. Exceptionally heavy transport demands which involved difficulties and emergencies peculiar to the times called for all their skill and diligence, and the result was a performance of which the Commissioners feel justifiably proud.

A feature of 1943 was, of course, the revenue of £17,120,223—the greatest in our history, exceeding the “high” of the previous financial year by over £2,500,000. The surplus for 1942-3, viz., £787,703, was another record, exceeding the surplus of 1941-2 by £138,356. Although the earnings will be considerably less than in the previous year, the financial result in 1943-4 is expected to be a satisfactory one.

Another important happening in the past year was the restriction on railway service owing to the coal shortage. In an earnest endeavour to meet the request of the Commonwealth Government for a substantial reduction in coal consumption, the Department in September last curtailed the existing country passenger train mileage by approximately 45 per cent.

This in itself was a drastic reduction, but it is even more remarkable when it is remembered that the service immediately prior to the alteration represented a 16 per cent reduction on the train mileage in December, 1941. Actually, in two years the passenger services for civilian travellers have been cut by more than half. No other railway system in the Commonwealth has made a comparable cut.

During the year, the demand for trucks was heavily maintained. In spite of heavy sustained war traffic over the past twelve months 31½ million bushels of wheat (19 million bushels of bulk

and 12½ million bushels of bagged wheat) were carried by the Department. One of the highlights in transportation service was the efficient handling of over 60,000 passengers between Melbourne and Flemington on Melbourne Cup Day.

Amongst its many important activities, the Rolling Stock Branch completed in September the first of 23 Garratt engines for use by the Commonwealth Government. Since then, three others have gone into service. In the last issue of the “News Letter” we published portion of a letter of thanks from Mr. F. Mills, Controller of Locomotive and Rolling Stock Construction, Commonwealth Ministry of Munitions, who said, among other nice things, that “this performance reflects the highest credit on your workshops’ staff.”

The Way and Works Branch continued its activities with several important Defence jobs, superimposed on a heavy Departmental work programme. It constructed the six new tracks, extending the Melbourne Goods Yard in the Spion Kop area, and completed the “flyover” near the Burnley station, designed to obviate delays caused by “down” East-malvern trains having to cross the “up” Box Hill-Melbourne track on the level.

The resources of the Refreshment Services Branch were often severely strained, but the performance was excellent. The Branch has been called upon to provide meals for up

to 3,000 servicemen on one day at different stations throughout the State in addition to supplying meals for many hundreds of ordinary travellers. A new development in refreshment service was the successful conversion of restaurants into cafeterias at Spencer Street and Flinders Street stations.

We deeply regret that during the year several gallant railwaymen were killed, or died on active service, and some are now prisoners of war. Several V.R. men were decorated. Lieutenant Dudley Marrows earned the D.S.O. and D.F.C., and D.F.C. were awarded to Flying Officer Kearney and (posthumously) to Flt.-Lieutenant R. H. Roe (killed in aircraft accident). Flt.-Lieutenant Clive Miller received the D.F.M. Flt.-Lieutenant K. Woodward and Pilot Officer K. Miller were mentioned in despatches, and Flt.-Lieutenant P. H. R. Hodgson, killed in action, earned the unusual distinction of having an aerodrome named after him. We must also mention the honours received by ex-V.R. men—Temporary Captain C. Kubale, now in the 8th British Army who was awarded the M.B.E., and Sergeant H. J. Bell, of the A.I.F. who has already collected both the D.C.M. and the M.M. for outstanding valorous conduct.

As indicated last month, the Victorian Patriotic Fund rendered considerable help to a variety of war charities. It is hoped that the subscriptions for the year will be increased by help from railwaymen who are not yet engaged in this most deserving patriotic activity, contributing 6d. a pay (or 10p a week) from their pay envelopes.

The extent of the railway staff's direct interest in the war is indicated by the fact that at the close of 1943 the number on active service was approximately 2,500, whilst 1,500 are exclusively employed in the production of munitions.

Judge Winneke's Death

(Continued—)

the Melbourne University. After leaving the University, he taught in country schools and at one time was classical master at the University High School.

In addition to distinguished service at the Bar, he collaborated with other legal authors in the preparation of several legal works, and also played an important part in the consolidation of the Statutes under Sir Leo Cussen.

In the last war he gained promotion from the ranks, won the M.C., and was mentioned several times in despatches. At the end of the war he was a captain. He wrote the “History of the 5th Australian Division,” which as a thesis won for him the distinction of Doctor of Letters.

In sport he was celebrated as a sprint runner and hurdler. He was sprint champion of the University and of Victoria on several occasions.

NEW CAFETERIA AT FLINDERS STREET STATION

THE success of the self-serving cafeteria, which replaced the dining room on the main concourse at Spencer Street station, is revealed by the fact that since its opening an average of 2,300 persons per day have made use of this facility as compared with a previous daily average in the dining room of 1,770.

The ability of the self-serving cafeteria to meet the often hurried demands for food at a time of staff shortage decided the Commissioners to convert the upper dining room on No. 1 platform, Flinders Street station on similar lines.

The new Flinders Street cafeteria, the entrance to which is through the present doorway on the west side of the fruit stall on No. 1 platform, provides accommodation for 72 at 18 tables.

As at the Spencer Street cafeteria, patrons will form a queue along a rail

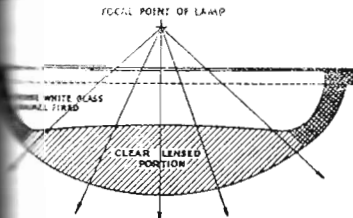
where they pick up the necessary trays, and then turn to a counter selecting from glass sandwiches, buns, scones, butter, and other refreshments.

Next to this section is found a “bain marie” the official title for the steel receptacle in which entrées, vegetables and sweets are kept. Following this is the tea and coffee service, and when the customer has picked up the cutlery he required presents his tray for assessment by the cashier and pays the necessary charge before passing out into the dining section.

The work of conversion took two to three weeks, and during the period people requiring refreshment made use of the dining room in the basement of the Flinders Street station.

TWO NEW SUBURBAN TRAINS

THE Department has commenced the construction of two additional suburban trains. They will comprise 14 cars—6 M.'s (motor coaches), 4's (1st-class trailing coaches) and 2's (2nd-class smoking trailers)—of the standard Tait type with sliding doors and cross compartments. Generally the new cars will be similar to the present suburban sliding door type, which have been found very acceptable, but following a modern trend for simplicity and economy, rivets and mouldings will be eliminated wherever possible. Also, the interior exterior panelling will be of the standard type. More comfortable seats will be provided in the new 2nd-class



One innovation will be the inclusion of the luminator type of lensed lighting, introduced in the Department's tram cars running on the Kilda-Brighton line.

As shown in the diagram above, the lamp provides a high intensity beam over the selected area. An inner section of fired dense white glass provides a soft diffused light in the ceiling area for general illumination.

The new lighting will necessitate a slight alteration to the contour of the lamp, which will materially improve its appearance.

Appreciation Of V.R. Effort In Hospital Appeal

THE Secretary (Mr. E. C. Eyers) has received the following warm letter of thanks from the Lord Mayor (Mr. T. S. Nettiefold) for the cheque to the value of £280/13/- representing the amount collected from the railway staff in connection with the Hospital Saturday and Sunday Appeal:

I write to say how very gratifying and pleasing it is to receive this splendid contribution to our appeal. I know that since the inception of the Lord Mayor's Fund the staff of the Victorian Railways has been most constant in its support of this central organisation, and I am sure they will share the satisfaction which we feel at the result of this year's appeal to the public of our City.

It is noted that an amount of £15/- is to be allocated respectively to Hospitals named by you in accordance with the wishes of certain subscribers to the appeal Fund. I am receiving our careful attention and I would be glad if you would kindly convey to all associated in this year's effort my own very warm thanks, and an expression of appreciation from the Appeal Committee."

Fine Work By V.R. Auxiliaries

CONGRATULATIONS to the Geelong V.R. Patriotic Fund Auxiliary, which has raised more than £2,500 for patriotic charities. Started in 1940, the Geelong Auxiliary has been continuously active, raffles, parties, card nights, dances and other functions having followed one another in quick succession. Over £700 has been raised from dances alone, and the response from other entertainments has been equally good. At the time of writing, the Auxiliary has distributed over £2,300. The Geelong Branch of the Red Cross has benefited to the extent of £700. Contributions to the local Branch of the A.C.F. total over £600. Also, cheques totalling £206 and £143, have been handed to the Geelong Soldiers' Lounge and Fighting Forces' Hostel. This Auxiliary owes much of its success to the inspiring leadership of its President, Mr. A. J. Holden, and Secretary, Mr. P. Legg.

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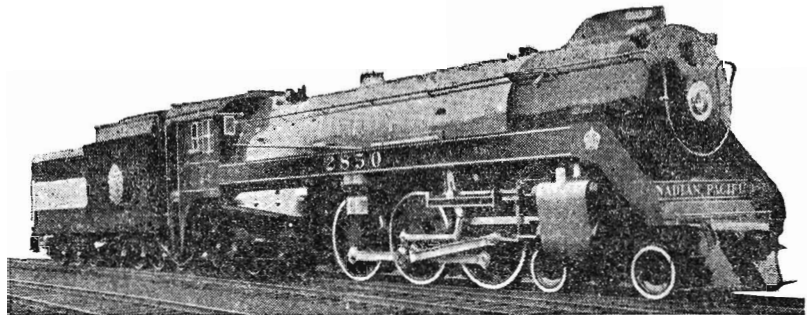
The special drive in the "Ugly Men's" Competition in Bendigo was a tremendous success. Bendigo V.R. Auxiliary won the competition, with £1,211 raised in one month out of a total of £3,350. The Railways' "Ugly Man" was Mr. J. Smythe, Manager of the Railways Workshops, Bendigo, who personally gave a lot of his own time to assisting the noble effort. Much credit, too, goes to Mr. V. W. Hosking, the Chairman of the Committee, and Mr. S. C. Ellis, Secretary of the Bendigo Auxiliary.

The presentation of a mobile canteen to the Salvation Army by the Ararat V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary at the end of November was another big episode in the record of this patriotic activity. The presentation was made in the Alexandra Gardens, Ararat, and Major Satchell of the Salvation Army, in warmly thanking the Auxiliary for this gift, congratulated this band of workers on the splendid effort they had put forward towards the comfort of the troops. The canteen, which cost £870, carries 100 gallons of liquid, and could keep tea or coffee hot for eight or ten hours, or liquid cold for 24 hours. It included, also, an excellent amplifying system; a short-wave radio and a gramophone, for which the latest records would be regularly provided by the Auxiliary. After the presentation the Auxiliary entertained Major Satchell and other visitors at a social tea in the V.R.I. Hall, Ararat—a cordial function of tea, cakes, and other good things, which was highly appreciated.

V.R. CASUALTIES.

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to announce the death as the result of war injuries of Corporal L. H. Bunning, No. 2 Provost Corps, 2nd A.I.F., previously 2nd Railway Construction Co. Before enlistment he was a striker at Newport. The "News Letter" also regrets to mention that Private J. J. Bradley, of the 2nd Pioneers, who was previously a lad labourer at Jolimont, is now a prisoner of war in Burma.

HUGE MILEAGES BY C.P.R. LOCOMOTIVES



WHEN their Majesties the King and Queen, travelled across Canada in 1939, their train was hauled by the Canadian Pacific Co.'s Hudson locomotive 2850, a photograph of which appears above.

Owing to the fine performance of the locomotive all engines of this type are now referred to as the "Royal Hudson" class, and they have special authority for displaying a crown on the running board enclosure near the front on each side.

These locomotives, which are of the 4-6-4 type, have justified their special distinction because several are covering

phenomenal mileages. During a recent month, No. 2859 ran 19,053 miles and in two other months mileages of 18,265 and 18,452 were recorded. The average monthly mileage for this engine over a period of 6 months was 17,197 miles.

No. 2858 covered 17,547 miles in one month, and Nos. 2838, 2839, 2840 and 2841, all running on the long journey between Toronto on Lake Ontario and Fort William on Lake Superior, have averaged 16,000 miles a month over a 6 months' period.

The Victorian Railways cordially congratulate the C.P.R. on a splendid achievement.

LOCO. FOREMAN AS SLOGAN WRITER

HELPING the service with inspiring slogans is the self-imposed mission of Mr. J. K. McIvor, Shed Foreman at the North Melbourne Loco. Depot.

For the past nine months he has been hammering out messages, mostly in neat and effective couplets. These he has written up in chalk on a small blackboard in the Locomotive Shed, which is under the eyes of railwaymen passing in and out from the job.

Typical messages have the agreeable qualities of brevity, appropriateness and point:

Coal position looking grave.
Encourage all concerned to save.

Economy, the golden rule,
Is well applied to oil and fuel.

Keep oil utensils clean and neat—
Grit in bearings causes "heat."

Be out in time. Co-operate—
It saves reports for being late!

Australia calls. Let us respond.
Support the loan by Group or Bond.

Mr. McIvor's cleverness in this form of appeal comes from long practice in writing light verse. He used to contribute to country newspapers, and he recalls that when he enlisted for the South African war and arrived in Africa just before peace was declared, he expressed his disappointment in verse which greatly tickled his Commanding Officer.

OBITUARIES.

THE "News Letter" regrets to report the death on November 26 of Mr. George T. Bruce, former Stationmaster at Spencer Street, at the age of 76.

An experienced transportation officer with a popular personality, he started in the Department as a porter in 1885. Subsequently promoted to Stationmaster, he served with conspicuous success at Birchip, Wycheproof, Ringwood, Box Hill, Kyneton, Traralgon, Bendigo, Benalla and Seymour.

He achieved the coveted promotion to Spencer Street in 1924 and retired in 1927.

Mr. Bruce, who had a host of friends, was a native of Majorca, near Talbot, and he never lost touch with his old district. At the time of his death, he was Secretary of the Talbot Old Boys' and Girls' Association, and derived much interest from this activity.

* * *

The "News Letter" also records with sorrow the sudden death by electrocution on December 9 of Mr. Francis Alexander McGaffin, leading hand in charge of the transporter cranes at Wodonga, who was discovered dead in his crane.

"Lofty" McGaffin, as he was popularly known in the Wodonga District, where he had worked for the greater part of his life, was only 40 years of age. He joined up with the Department at the beginning of 1941, as a driver on one of these cranes.

In this particular service he was very useful, for in addition to his competence as a driver, he possessed an uncanny ability for making repairs—a talent of particular value in wartime at an important link in the transportation systems of New South Wales and Victoria.

First Aid Students Wanted ! . . .

VIGOROUS recruiting for the first aid classes, which will be started about the end of this month, is being undertaken by the Ambulance Officer (Mr. W. J. Blackburn) and his staff.

All railwaymen and women without a knowledge of first aid are urged to join up, and the appeal is also addressed to those who have qualified in first aid in the past to enlist for a refresher course.

All the classes in the metropolitan area will be held at the Flinders Street Station Building, and it is hoped that sufficient students will be available to provide full classes three times a day, viz., 10 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on five days a week.

Women employes in the service in need of first aid knowledge will be instructed in special classes, and if sufficient are offering one day each week will be devoted to their tuition.

In addition to the classes in Melbourne, the Ambulance Officer is arranging for first aid instruction in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Ararat, Seymour, Castlemaine, Benalla, Maryborough, Warragul, Korumburra, Traralgon, Murtoa, Dimboola and Woodend.

It is planned to provide day classes in Ballarat, Bendigo and Seymour, but night instruction will be the rule in the other railway centres.

The attraction of first aid is not only the value of the subject, but the recognition that the knowledge brings. For each yearly examination that the student passes he or she will receive some award. In the first and second years the award is a St. John Ambulance Certificate. Success in the third year earns a St. John Bronze Medal; 4th year brings an official voucher; 5th year a silver efficiency medal, and the 8th year a gold Life Membership Medal.

The Commissioners have agreed to grant one day's leave for each examination that the student passes. This will be recognised as a commendable incentive, greatly encouraging further study in first aid.

SERVICE.

MAJOR I. Buzzard, who will shortly be relinquishing his post as C.O. of the 6 Aust. Ambulance Train, records his high appreciation of Victorian railway service in this cordial letter to the Chairman of Commissioners:

"I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Victorian Railways for the great co-operation the various departments have given the Unit during the last two years.

"The Unit has functioned in a highly satisfactory manner, and no small measure of this success has been due to the assistance given by the members of the Victorian Railways.

"All departments at all times of the day and night have always been most willing to help and to take a definite personal interest in the train.

"I cannot adequately express myself, but I would be grateful if you could convey my appreciation to the members."

Rebuilding Of Murchison Bridge

THE rebuilding of the greater portion of the railway bridge over the River Goulburn at Murchison—actually placing the old wooden structure with a modern steel and concrete one—is practically completed. Various factors are responsible for the renewal of this bridge, which was constructed of timber in 1890 and designed to carry a locomotive of 123 tons. For one thing, the age of the timbers justified a new structure on the stream, especially as in recent times the old timbers were called upon to carry "N" class locomotives weighing 123 tons.

Another consideration was that when the river was high, considerable trouble and expense were incurred by debris collecting against the wooden piles causing scouring of both banks by the diversion of the stream flow.

In deciding upon a new bridge of steel and concrete, the Department was influenced by the fact that such timber was difficult to obtain, that it is more economical to use rolled steel beams than timber beams of equivalent strength. In fact, the cost of maintenance is also a factor, for it is less costly to build a bridge with steel beams and concrete piers than to erect a timber bridge.

The new work in the bridge comprises twelve 30 ft. spans and 60 ft. spans with five concrete piers and 14 concrete piers on approaches. The foundation for the river piers was carried out by coffer dams using steel sheet piling. The concrete employed was a mixture using mine tailings from Chiltern as an aggregate. The concrete mixers are of 10 and 7 cubic feet capacity, and concrete is transported by hoppers and chutes supported by elevating towers thoroughly packed by pneumatic vibrators. The use of these machines enabled a very dry mix to be used.

A feature of the job was that it was completed according to programme without any major delay or interruption. Excellent work has been done by Spotswood Workshops, in the fabrication of the steel girders, 12 of which were for 60 ft. spans. The erection of these spans at the site was carried out at the rate of a span a week as they arrived from Spotswood. All concerned in the foundation and erection are deserving of commendation.

In order to secure as much unbroken time as possible on the line on which river spans were being erected a road motor service between Murchison East and Murchison was connected with the A.E.C. Road Motor at that place was arranged.

Wholly set up and printed in Melbourne at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laurens Street, North Melbourne, by the Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

FEBRUARY, 1944.

Issue No. 161.

95 APPRENTICES JOIN THE SERVICE

THE "News Letter" extends a warm welcome to the 95 apprentices who commenced work in the Department on January 10. These lads, chosen by ballot out of a total of 143 selected, include 47 apprentice fitters and turners, 18 electrical fitters, 11 boilermakers, 6 car and wagon builders, 3 carpenters and joiners, and the remainder are distributed over various trades embracing armature winder, car painter, coppersmith, interlocking fitter, patternmaker, tinsmith and sheetmetal worker. Five fitters and turners and one boilermaker started in the Ballarat Workshops, and five fitters and turners and two boilermakers commenced their railway careers in the Bendigo Workshops. 38 of the 95 apprentices are from country districts.

The Board of Selectors—Mr. J. Kerstonhaugh (Staff Board) Chairman, Mr. E. C. Thompson (Engineer, Electrical Engineering Branch) and Mr. F. S. Kent (Staff Officer, Rolling Stock Branch)—interviewed a total number of 610 applicants in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, and other country centres, and were engaged examining them from November 3 to December 3.

Many of the country lads had to travel long distances to school—an example of tenacity made impressive by the fact that in several instances they had to help their parents with their work before leaving for and after returning from school.

Enterprising Lads

One lad of 16 years selected at Geelong as fitter and turner, travelled 30 miles in each direction daily to school. Despite this handicap the boy possesses his Intermediate Technical Certificate and has been awarded his first year Diploma Course. Another boy interviewed at Sale, travelled 15 miles by bus to Bairnsdale each day, and many other lads had journeys of from 10 to 30 miles to school daily, many covering portion of their journey by bicycle and the remainder by bus.

One promising lad, selected as fitter and turner, submitted some very good mechanical drawings and a model of a "Z" van, complete with folding doors, lamps, auto. coupler, etc. When questioned, the boy said that he had himself constructed the model from drawings, but had received permission from the local Stationmaster to take photographs of a "Z" van from various angles. From the prints obtained, he built his replica which was an excellent job.

WE THANK OUR CUSTOMERS

THE railways may justifiably claim to have done a good job in handling the unprecedented volume of goods and passenger traffic during the war years, a task made increasingly harder by emergency conditions, but we are fully conscious that the standard of service has left a great deal to be desired, and that we owe much gratitude to our customers who have exhibited a tolerance and understanding of our difficulties.

Their helpfulness has been apparent in many ways; in loading and unloading trucks promptly, in ordering the minimum of trucks they require, and in patiently accepting the discomforts of passenger travel and the inconvenience due to delays to goods which are inevitable in these troublesome times.

This co-operation and the earnest efforts of a loyal, hard-working railway staff, have been responsible for a very commendable railway performance during a very trying period in which the major transport system rose to every emergency although the standard of service is often not what we would wish.

For that co-operation we are deeply grateful and we take this opportunity of recording our appreciation and our assurance that any shortcomings in our Service will be remedied as soon as circumstances permit.

M. Starnes Chairman
A. J. Hannay Commissioner
A. L. Nicholas Commissioner

Christmas Traffic Well Handled

"AS a private citizen, I take this opportunity of congratulating your Branch on the excellent job which you did in connection with the very difficult situation which arose through the coal shortage. I feel sure that Victoria has reason to be proud of its Railway Department."

The foregoing extract from a letter to the Acting Superintendent of Train Services (Mr. F. D. Greene) from Mr. G. B. Woodgate, Principal of the Dookie Agricultural College, is only one of many complimentary references that have been made to the good work of the staff in handling the traffic over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Owing to the restrictions enforced by the coal shortage, the traffic was not as heavy as in previous years, but the task of getting thousands away over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, followed by the job of returning them home in the New Year was completed without a hitch. The public realisation of the limited train accommodation was responsible for a readiness to abide by the arrangements made by the Department.

Transportation officials, who closely watched the traffic, reported one of the best conducted travel seasons in their experience. The crowds who queued up on the Spencer Street Station on the first days when the booking for the Christmas services opened, set an example of orderliness and patience which was of immense assistance to the booking staff.

The practice of endorsing all tickets from Melbourne for the train on which the passenger could travel, which was introduced for earlier wartime holidays when train services were less drastically curtailed, again proved invaluable in regulating the outward traffic to the various country centres, and the co-operation of the public in this respect was greatly appreciated by all concerned.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.

LAD Lbr. K. R. Dunstan.
R.A.A.F.

Lad Lbr. N. K. Davey; Jnr. Clk. T. J. French; Lad Lbr. A. H. McNamara.

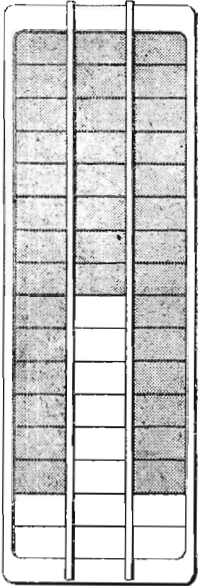
W.A.A.A.F.

Miss P. L. Tyrell (Junior Typist).

Tourist Bureau's New Phone System

A REMARKABLE telephone system has been installed in the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau to facilitate expeditious handling of the large numbers of telephone enquiries which reach high peaks at various hours of the day and demand the special attention of a large staff.

In this system telephone enquiries automatically "queue up" with the result that every enquirer is taken strictly in turn, thus eliminating the possibility of any enquirer being unnecessarily delayed. A further virtue of the new equipment is that enquiries are automatically switched among the answering staff, who are able to deal with the calls at far greater speed than was possible under the previous arrangement.



Design of Telephone Indicator. Centre white spaces show that 8 inquiries are receiving attention, whilst 2 spaces each side reveal that two are waiting.

The Automatic Enquiry Equipment, as it is officially described, is the work of the Engineering staff of the Postal Dept., and it permits a maximum of 20 enquiries to queue up for attention, though of course, even at the height of the peaks, nothing like that number is allowed to accumulate.

A most ingenious section of the equipment is an illuminated indicator in the enquiry room (a replica also faces the Manager of the Tourist Bureau at his table) in which the number of calls receiving and waiting attention is displayed. As shown in the accompanying plan, the glass face of the indicator is divided into three vertical lines of transparent squares, the centre line recording the number of enquiries receiving attention and the side squares the number waiting. These squares as they flash on and off, enable the controlling officer in the enquiry room, and the Manager in his office, to keep a constant check on the handling of telephone enquiries to the Bureau.

The magnitude of this important railway activity is demonstrated by the fact that from the morning of December 23 last, when it was ready for service, up to January 25 a total of 95,131 telephone enquiries had been received and answered.

The number of enquiries answered on specially busy days was as follows:—

December 23	...	2,652
" 24	...	4,566
" 25	...	2,174
" 26	...	2,005

Furthermore, in a concentrated rush of enquiries on Saturday, January 8, 1,640 enquiries were disposed of between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, or approximately at the rate of nine a minute!

Plane Spotting at Mt. Buffalo National Park

IT can now be revealed that Mr. Peter Hargreaves, the Engineer at Mt. Buffalo National Park, was initially responsible for saving a 'plane from disaster.

Mr. Hargreaves spotted the 'plane travelling in a certain direction at night and his report to the Control Room at Wangaratta immediately excited attention, as no 'plane was known to be moving that way, though one expected in the same vicinity should have been travelling on an opposite bearing.

Afterwards the Control Room reported The Chalet to say that the 'plane actually en route between Sydney and Melbourne, had been contacted after several district reports of its movements had been received, and had been safely grounded with its passengers at Benalla. The report from the sharp-eyed Mt. Buffalo Engineer was the first indication that the 'plane was in trouble.

There is no permanently manned voluntary Air-Observers' post at The Chalet, but various members of the staff report the movements of aircraft observed as they go about their regular duties.

How much this work is appreciated is shown by the following extract from a letter from the headquarters of the Southern Area of the R.A.A.F. in Melbourne, addressed to the Manager of The Chalet in regard to the episode related above:—

"This is a particularly fine example of the splendid spirit of loyalty and duty of your observers and of their willing co-operation with the R.A.A.F. which undoubtedly resulted in saving from destruction a valuable aircraft and from probable injury an even more valuable air crew.

V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND ACTIVITIES

THE V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee is preparing another "drive" among those members of the Railway Service who are not contributors. Over the past twelve months the total number of subscribers has practically remained stationary, the losses due to retirements, deaths and other causes, being just compensated for by new recruits. Although the amount asked from contributors is only 3d. a week (6d. deducted from every fortnightly pay) many railwaymen have not yet given the necessary authority to make this trifling deduction which, in the aggregate, would amount to a fine yearly sum and provide much needed help for various war charities. If all the Branches in the Department contributed as handsomely as the Accounts Branch, for example—over 90 per cent. of the Accounts Staff are contributors—The V.R. Patriotic

Fund Committee and the Railway Service would have something to be proud of. Let us hope that the "drive" now being planned will be followed by a hearty response from non-contributors.

Another active auxiliary has sprung up at Newport. Feeling that they are sufficiently numerous and willing to have their own auxiliary, the Aircraft Workers have withdrawn from the general Newport Auxiliary and have established their own organisation. The Chairman of the Committee is Mr. C. Fowler, Area Manager at Newport; the Secretary is Miss N. Bradley, and Mr. E. F. McDonald has the onerous job of Treasurer. Under the care of Mr. Fowler, and with the co-operation of other interested members of the Aircraft section, the new Auxiliary intends to make a drive and break all records by enlisting 100 per cent. of the staff in the effort.

The Secretary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund (Mr. W. E. Elliott) has received the following from A.C. Burns, J. C., of the R.A.A.F. active service:—

"I wish to thank you, the committee and members of the Victorian Railways Patriotic Fund for your very generous gesture and your gift which I greatly appreciate."

That is the first recorded message of thanks for one of the Christmas parcels sent out to railwaymen in active service and that letter will be followed by others. Nearly 1,000 parcels were distributed, each containing a ½-lb. plum pudding, ½-lb. tin of biscuits, tin of fruit chocolate, raisins, nuts, cigarette toothbrush, tooth paste, writing envelopes and other very acceptable things. Undoubtedly those parcels received a warm welcome wherever they appeared.

UNIFICATION OF GAUGES

An Urgent National Job

PROBABLY the most urgent of Australia's post-war requirements is the unification of the railway gauges. Unification is broadly a matter of men, material, time, and money, all of which will doubtless be available after the war to a Commonwealth with abounding resources. But what should be done NOW is to set about the preliminaries so that when the war is over the actual work can be taken in hand in earnest, providing useful employment for many thousands of men.

As a first step a number of qualified engineers should be released to undertake the planning of this big job. The actual work of unification may take up to four years in Victoria, but longer in Queensland and Western Australia. But before the track alterations in Victoria could be started, up to three years may be needed to assemble and prepare material and build locomotives and rolling stock. The length of this period will be very dependent upon the extent to which planning has been completed before authority is given to proceed with the scheme.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the conversion must be continent-wide. Every railway line in Australia, with the exception of small feeder lines carrying little traffic, must be the standard gauge of 4 ft. 8 ins.

In the past, some advocates with a vision for compromise have toyed with the idea of converting trunk lines to a piebald proposal which every railwayman knows would only multiply the present break of gauge troubles and create infinite confusion and inefficiency.

Insurance for Defence

Unification of gauge, which has been strongly supported in the Press as an urgent post-war measure, cannot be considered on economic grounds alone. It will certainly facilitate transport and give much greater flexibility for the interchange of raw materials and finished products, but must be regarded mainly as an essential insurance for the defence of the country.

Australia's railway gauge problem, the history of which is too well-known to be repeated here, is only a repetition of the short-sightedness demonstrated in other countries. In Great Britain Parliament had decided in 1846 to prohibit the construction of any further railway with a gauge of more than 4 ft. 8½ ins., but the construction of different gauges was not completed till 1892.

As late as 1867 in the United States of America there were no fewer than 12 gauges in use, ranging from 3 ins. to 6 ft. Here they are, in all their bewildering variety: 3 ins., 4 ft. 5½ ins., 4 ft. 7 ins.,

4 ft. 8 ins., 4 ft. 8½ ins., 4 ft. 9½ ins., 4 ft. 9¾ ins., 4 ft. 10 ins., 5 ft., 5 ft. 4 ins., 5 ft. 6 ins., and 6 ft.

Even in 1885, there were still nearly 13,000 miles of railway continuing business on other than standard gauge.

Break of gauge has certainly been a disability in Australia during the present war, the scale of our operations in the North having been largely governed by railway capacity. We should not take another chance. It might easily mean losing our country.

IMPORTANT CHANGES ON V.R. STAFF BOARD

THE Commissioners regret that owing to ill health, Mr. A. J. Letham has been obliged to relinquish the position of Acting Chairman of the Staff Board, which he took over when Mr. D. Cameron, Chairman of the Board, was appointed Deputy Director General of Manpower under the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Letham's successor is Mr. Norman Quail, who has had many years' experience in handling staff matters in the Department.

Mr. Letham has resumed his previous position as a Member of the Railways Classification Board, and Mr. W. H. Swaney, Chief Clerk of the Way and Works Branch, who was appointed to the vacancy on the Classification Board when Mr. Letham was promoted to the higher post, is now an Acting Member of the Staff Board.

Unique Photo of V. R. Air Hero and Crew



HERE is a remarkable picture of Flt.-Lieut. Dudley Marrows, D.S.O., D.F.C., and his crew taken with a rubber dinghy in which they were rescued from the Bay of Biscay some time ago. Flt.-Lieut. Marrows, who is the middle figure of the three young airmen standing at the back, will be remembered for his fine feat of courage and endurance in saving his crew after his Sunderland flying boat had been shot down in a running encounter with six Junkers fighters. The full story of this feat was published in the November issue of the "News Letter." Before enlistment Flt.-Lieut. Marrows was a member of the Stores Branch at the Spencer Street Head Office.

Mobile Canteen Does Good Work

The following extract from a letter received from Lieutenant C. S. Morris, formerly of the Secretary's Branch and now in Northern parts, is of more than usual interest to railway employes generally:

"By the way, I saw something yesterday that forcibly reminded me of former days. It was a very good looking Salvation Army 'Panel' van bearing the inscription 'Presented by the Newport Workshops and Aircraft Auxiliary of the Victorian Railways Patriotic Fund No. 2.' The Salvation Army No. was 89 and the vehicle had travelled 3,300 miles by road. Heaven knows how far it had gone by rail on a flat truck. Anyhow it looked good to me.

The above is the second Mobile Canteen presented by the Newport Workshops and Aircraft Auxiliary. A third van, provided by the Ararat Auxiliary has been completed, and was presented for service at the end of November.

OBITUARIES.

THE "News Letter" regrets to report the death on January 22 of Mr. A. V. McCullough, Acting Superintendent of Melbourne Yards, at the age of 55, and on January 23, of a namesake, Mr. Alex. McCullough, S.M. at Warburton, also 55 years.

Mr. A. V. McCullough joined the railways as a supernumerary in 1908, and became a porter on the permanent staff in 1910. After two months as porter he joined the shunting staff in the Melbourne Yards and was promoted to Leading Shunter in 1912.

For two or three years he was a goods guard, but returned to the Yards as foreman in 1919. In 1936, he had risen to the post of Yard Supervisor, and was appointed Acting Superintendent of the Yards on November 29th last.

After only a week in the new job he took ill and never recovered.

A genial, kindly man and a splendid leader with a fine record of loyal and efficient service, Mr. McCullough will be greatly missed by the many friends he had made in the Department. Two of his sons, Messrs. David and William McCullough, are serving in the A.I.F.

Mr. Alex. McCullough joined the service as a lad porter in 1907 and was promoted to A.S.M. in 1913, becoming an S.M. three years later.

He served the Department faithfully at Nar-Nar-Goon, Knowsley, Bamawm (now Lockington), Windermere, Chelsea, Toorak and other stations and had many good friends in the Department. His son, Mr. Eric McCullough, is also in the A.I.F.

* * *

THE "News Letter" also regrets to record the death of Mr. Richard Scott, sub-foreman car cleaner at the age of 56.

Mr. Scott had been associated with the car cleaning staff at the Car Cleaning Depot, Dudley Street, for over thirty years, starting on the permanent staff in December, 1920. He was a leading car cleaner in 1926 and became a sub-foreman in March last year.

Mr. Scott, who served with the A.I.F. in the First Great War, was highly popular with all railwaymen. At one period he played with the 2nd Eighteen of the Prahran Football Club. Another recreation was fishing, at which he spent many delightful meditative hours.

SPEEDY FEEDING OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL

THE following complimentary reference to the good work of the V.R. Refreshment Branch comes from Mr. G. B. Lincoln, Normanby Chambers, 430 Little Collins Street, Melbourne:—

"I fear my usual habit is to criticise Government Departments rather than to praise them, but, in common justice one must give honour where honour is due. I have just received a most pleasing report from my son regarding the efficiency of your catering staff at Seymour, and I think it is only fair to let you know how much it was appreciated.

"The boy returned from the North with about 600 others, and when they arrived at Seymour the whole 600 were regaled with a most acceptable meal and put on their train again in something like 15 minutes.

"Not only was the meal appreciated and the cheerful manner in which it was done by the staff, but most favourable comments were made by the fellows regarding the organisation which made such a feat possible."

To that should be added this extract from a letter by W. I. Peterson, A/B. in Dutch New Guinea.

"By the way, I would like you, if possible, through the "News Letter" to sincerely thank the railway staff at Wangaratta for the wonderful work in feeding us on our way here. Their organisation, together with food, was definitely superior to any other feeding station further North, and some of those were quite good. I mean this, in all good faith, and am just expressing the view of all sailors who passed through with me."

The North-East line carrying large numbers of the Defence Services both ways between Melbourne and Albury is the busiest that the Refreshment Branch has to cater for. Something like 3,000 meals are served weekly to Defence units at Wangaratta, and about half that number at Seymour.

The meals provided are usually steak and kidney pie or sausages for luncheon with cold meat and salad for tea. The speed with which the staffs at Seymour and Wangaratta dispose of a trainload of 500 or 600 hungry warriors is a tribute to their efficiency and service.

Shorthand—Elementary Theory.

Miss N. Scott Asst., C'wealth Serum Lab'tory.

Advanced Theory.

Miss V. E. Harding Jrn. Clerk, State Elec. Com.

Speed (150 words per minute).

Miss M. Hopper Typist, Secretary's Branch, Spencer St.

Typewriting (64 words per minute).

Miss B. J. Watts Office Asst. Accts. Bch., Spen. St.

V. R. I. EXAM. RESULTS

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students who gained the highest percentage marks in the annual educational examinations conducted by the Victorian Railways Institute:—

Engine Working—Junior Grade
J. Knight ... Cleaner, Ararat

Senior Grade.

A. G. Johns ... Fireman, Warragul.

Westinghouse Brake—Junior Grade.

W. J. Young ... Cleaner, North Melbourne.

Senior Grade.

J. R. Jenkins ... Fireman, North Melbourne.

Internal Combustion—Engine Mechanics.

S. J. Newland App. F. & T. Newport Works

Permanent Way Construction & Maintenance—Junior Grade—Track Ganger's Section.

T. H. Lethlean Repairer, Manildra.

Senior Grade—Special Ganger & Road Foreman's Section.

J. Carroll ... Platelayer, C. Ganger, Leederville, Newport.

Safeworking—"A" Division—Signalling.

M. J. Sypott ... Clerk, Melbourne Goods.

"B" Division—Train Running
D. Courtney ... Goods Guard, Traralgon.

Station Accounts & Management—Junior Grade—Operating Porter's Section.

R. J. Seddon ... Jrn. Clerk, Warradong.

Senior Grade—S.M.'s & A.S.M.'s Section.

P. J. H. Shedman, Fitzpatrick Ararat.

Storeman's Duties—Junior Grade
M. O. Fishwick Labourer, Ballarat Nth.

Senior Grade.

D. J. Gleeson... Skilled Labourer, Warrnambool

Ticket Checking.

J. L. Duncan Lad Porter, Caulfield.

Miss V. Wylie Porteress, Newport.

Bookkeeping—Grade 1.

Miss M. Matthew Clerk, State Com. Flin.

Grade 2.

Miss J. Smith Dependent member.

(Continued in column)

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston Street, North Melbourne, by the Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

MARCH, 1944.

Issue No. 162.

WHAT THE RAILWAYS DID IN THE BUSHFIRES

Notable Emergency Work By Staffs Concerned

THE recent bushfires with their serious loss of life and immense damage served to reveal again the fortitude of many, and provide numerous stories of heroism that must rank high in the record of devoted human endeavour. It is superfluous to say that everybody concerned "did his bit", the common danger producing in all a valiant readiness to fight the fires and tackle the task of restoration, regardless of pressing personal considerations. In that great performance the work of Victorian Railwaymen deserves an honored place. All involved in the areas threatened sprang immediately to duty, demonstrating by their skill and courage the capacity of railwaymen when emergency calls.

The first fires swept over great areas in the Western, North-Eastern and Midland sections of the State, and they had scarcely died away, leaving an appalling waste of ruin, before another outburst, fanned by a vicious northerly gale, was raging through Gippsland, involving the Yallourn Open Cut and creating urgent problems for railwaymen, for bridges were turned into torches, and sleepers were in flame over miles of important track.

A typical case occurred between Gheringhap and Maroona, where 18 miles of fencing, over 8,000 sleepers, and many culverts were destroyed, and two bridges between Berrybank and Gnarkeet—one over Gnarkeet Creek being 240 feet long and 45 feet in height, the other being 55 feet long but much less in height—were reduced to ashes. In both cases the fires, starting on the timber decking and spreading down through the timber trestle piers, left little but the rails hanging precariously in the air.

Prompt Restoration

Realising the necessity of prompt restoration, a railway team of 23 experienced bridge men was immediately collected for the rebuilding of the bridges. Within four days the large quantity of timber and plant required was whisked from various parts of the State. The men worked from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Saturdays and Sundays included) and their toil involved a week to clean up the ruin, and within three weeks from the date of the fire, new bridges were in place. unquestionably a magnificent effort.

In addition to the heavy track damage between Gheringhap and Maroona, extensive renewal of sleepers

was necessary on the Geelong-Colac, Ararat-Portland, Koroit-Hamilton, and other sections of the Western lines. Also culverts and gates, cattle-pits, buffer-stops, etc., had to be restored, the whole task involving rapid heavy work over long hours, but it was completed with a thoroughness which has received widespread commendation.

Critical Damage

In the North-East of the State the bushfires on January 8 and 9 caused critical damage. In the Everton yard the signal-box, coal stage and Station-master's residence were destroyed. In the Bowser-Everton-Yackandandah sections two small bridges and many hundreds of sleepers had to be replaced. Here, as elsewhere gangs of local railwaymen rose to the situation, and over two days in succession they toiled, with short intervals for meals, from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. In the Bendigo area the story was just the same—a cheerful spirit of service for the purpose of restoring communications.

The holocaust in Gippsland is too recent at the time of writing to permit of more than a brief reference to the railway effort. But standing high as an example of the protective service by railwaymen was the work of the track force which strove to save the bridges between Rosedale and Kilmany. Despite all their efforts, the swift, enveloping fire destroyed two bridges, but by a supreme endeavour they managed to save one—a truly fine achievement.

Then again, there was the excellent performance in the Yallourn yard, where the staff, assisted by the train crew, managed, in spite of the danger, to isolate a number of burning trucks from others loaded with highly inflammable briquettes.

In the early stages many problems confronted the Transportation staff, demanding quick decision and resourcefulness. With telephone lines down, communication with stations in the fire areas had to be obtained by other means. All sorts of roundabout measures were adopted to meet the situation. On February 14, the day of the ruinous fire in Gippsland, the "Up" afternoon train from Bairnsdale had to be stopped at Traralgon and accommodation found for over 300 passengers at Traralgon, Maffra and Sale. Improvising bus transport; 30 trucks of stock at Stratford and Traralgon had to be discharged, fed and watered in neighbouring paddocks; ice had to be sent down, partly by rail and partly by road, to re-ice refrigerated trucks for the transport of perishables. All these were jobs that the Transportation men took in their stride.

Drastic Restrictions

The fire damage at Yallourn, the consequent restriction of power and electric train services, and the supply by Newport Power Station of a large amount of power to the State Electricity Commission, necessitated drastic restrictions on suburban timetables, especially in view of our limited coal reserve. The immense work of altering the weekday timetables, coupled with the tasks of re-rostering the train crews, etc., was completed by Head Office staffs working all one night.

In another all-night's work, the Saturday and Sunday services were altered and useful assistance was given by some ladies from the Printing Division. The travelling public, advised one day that the timetables would be altered, and confronted the next morning with notices showing the

(Continued column 3, page 2)

SIR HAROLD CLAPP TO PLAN UNIFICATION OF GAUGES

RAILWAYMEN throughout Australia will be glad to know that the importance of unifying the railway gauges of the mainland is recognised by the Federal Government, as evidenced by the appointment of Sir Harold Clapp to submit a detailed plan for the unification of Australian railway gauges.

Sir Harold, who has been relieved of his duties as Director-General of Land Transport to enable him to concentrate on the formidable undertaking, possesses all the necessary qualities for the job. His wide experience in America, coupled with his record as Chairman of Commissioners of the Victorian Railways, gives him a unique fitness for this new activity.



SIR HAROLD
CLAPP

This Department is, of course, as much interested as any other Australian railway system in seeing the unification scheme brought to fruition. There has never been any real difference of opinion as to the desirability of a uniform gauge, but there has never been a full appreciation of its value and the necessity for it. Experience during the war years has demonstrated the extent to which movement of troops, equipment and supplies depend upon rail transport, and this in turn is governed largely by what can be handled at break of gauge stations.

No matter what other action is taken to ensure Australia's future safety, nothing short of the unification of the railway gauges can provide a proper foundation for that security. It is therefore hoped that Sir Harold Clapp's investigation will be well supported, so as to lead rapidly to the attainment on that desirable goal.

The Victorian Railways extend to him the best of good wishes in a truly national task.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.

APP. E. Fitter K. R. Huntsman; Lad Lbr. J. C. May.

R.A.A.F.

MLDR. G. J. Bamford; Jnr. Clk. W. Barnett; Lad. Lbr. L. C. Cinoris; Lad. Lbr. J. S. Fletcher; Lad Lbr. J. Ladd; Lad Hall Ptr. T. W. Mullarvey; Lad Lbr. N. J. Pekin; Jnr. Clk. S. E. Ray; Lad Lbr. D. G. Barnard; Clk. R. C. Benbow; Jnr. Clk. M. J. Dwyer; Jnr. Clk. M. J. Kerger; Lad. Lbr. N. A. Mulligan; Mldr. J. L. Newman; Jnr. Clk. V. J. Quinn; Lad Lbr. J. V. Riley; Lad Lbr. R. J. Young.

R.A.N.

Jnr. Clk. J. F. Davis.

FALLING DOWN ON THE JOB?

THE drastic curtailments in train services, and the many other restrictions affecting the convenience and comfort of our customers, could easily create the impression that the railways have fallen down on the job.

Nothing, of course, could be further from the facts. Actually, despite coal shortages and other disabilities, the railways are handling a much bigger volume of traffic, both goods and passenger, than during any other period of their history.

But—because the demands of defence have had to come first—the fact remains that the service we are now giving the public falls a long way short of acceptable standards.

Whether this will be held against us when normal conditions are resumed will largely depend upon the nature of our present relations with our customers.

If they feel that our behaviour towards them, even in isolated instances, is discourteous, or that of "take-it-or-leave-it", we can expect trouble—and will deserve it—when we are again obliged to compete for business. On the other hand, if our attitude is friendly and considerate, and shows that we really want to be as helpful as possible, we can reasonably expect to retain their patronage.

Railways in Bushfires

(continued)

alterations in detail, had no conception of the vast amount of work that was necessary to bring about the change so rapidly.

In the course of adjusting the electric train service it was necessary to review the operations of 250 timetabled trains for the week-days, Saturdays and Sundays, which affected the travel of half-a-million daily passengers. Then three separate timetables, for week-days, Saturdays and Sundays had to be prepared, involving the typing and duplicating of 15 foolscap size stencils, a total of approximately 380,000 sheets. In addition, altered docking and terminal arrangements had to be prepared and printed.

This was the quickest job performed by the timetabling, rostering and duplicating bureau staffs. On the Way and Works side, the full story of the reconstruction of bridges between Rosedale and Kallman and other major works must be told when those urgent jobs are completed. But the restoration of the tracks so that a through service could be maintained from Melbourne to Bairnsdale, via Maffra, two three days after the fires had died down, was a highly meritorious job.

Altogether, the bushfires were responsible for another stirring chapter in the story of the railway man's response to a crisis.

MANY BY-LAW OFFENCES IN 1943

FINED £2
TRAVELLING FIRST-
CLASS ON SECOND-
CLASS TICKET
DONT LET THIS BE
YOU!

THAT is an example of the crisp messages to railway patrons which are now appearing regularly on the "Bulletin" boards on railway stations throughout the electrified area.

The purpose of such "Bulletins" is to draw attention to the risks run by passengers who break the railway by-laws. Offenders are numerous, the number detected and punished running into thousands every year.

Last year, for instance, over 1,000 were prosecuted for travelling without a ticket, and nearly 800 for travelling first-class on second-class tickets. Those found stealing rides on expired tickets were well over 200 and a similar number were reminded that smoking in a non-smoking compartment may be expensive.

Approximately 150 offenders had to pay heavier fines for giving railway officials wrong names and addresses, and nearly 100 discovered the high cost of using abusive or obscene language.

Close on 100 people were saddled because they transferred their tickets to somebody else who also had to pay a fine.

One of the commonest troubles is the railway patron who will take a short cut to or from his station by crossing railway lines, or who enters or leaves a station by unauthorised routes, obviously a dangerous practice. Approximately 250 were fined because of this offence last year, whilst over 300 were fined for entering or leaving railway carriages on the "wrong" side.

Also included in the year's record were 33 cases of assault on railway officers, 35 cases of damage to railway property, and 32 instances of offences, mostly juveniles, stealing electric light globes.

A steadfast campaign is being carried on against by-law offenders by Special Inquiry Officers and special checkers who are rapidly dispelling the illusion held by some people that they can cheat the revenue with impunity.

GERMAN LOCOMOTIVE POSITION

ALST British observers have hesitated to believe reports of transport disabilities in Germany, it is now generally presumed that the combined effects of overloading and air attack are increasing felt.

For four years the German railways recently met the most critical demands of the German military machine, producing the necessary support for the largest and quickest movements of troops. At the same time it would appear to have also met the bare necessities of civilian demands, an achievement due partly to the theft of large quantities of stock from the occupied territories.

The air raids developing in their intensity and severity with the increase in carrying capacity of the bombers, are not only finding out locomotives in service, but are destroying railway workshops also. In the opinion of the "Railway Gazette" these raids "leave little doubt that destruction is far exceeding possible replacement."

The German locomotive building programme is now said to have fallen behind schedule. Air raids on Henschel at Kassel, Krupps at Essen,

Schneiders at Le Creusot, Fives-Lille, Batignolles at Nantes and Cockerill at Liege have all caused great damage.

Loads of bombs have been dropped on repair shops at Lingen, Paderborn, Julich, Duisburg and Dusseldorf, and many of the attacks were sufficiently destructive to involve months of repair. As an example, the damage caused by an American air force to repair shops at Lille was so extensive that for at least six months after the raid the work of restoration had not been undertaken and the staff had been distributed elsewhere. Another attack by British Lancasters on that part of the Creusot works (France) which builds locomotives was evidently so searching that the sheds remain in ruins eight months after the visit.

Official R.A.F. announcements about destruction and damage of locomotives tell their own formidable story, one striking example last year revealing how approximately 150 engines were either blown up or severely damaged. Another aspect of the transport picture is that a damaged but repairable locomotive may have to be hauled a long way to workshops causing further inroads into transport capacity.

Two V.R. Architects Win Valuable Prizes

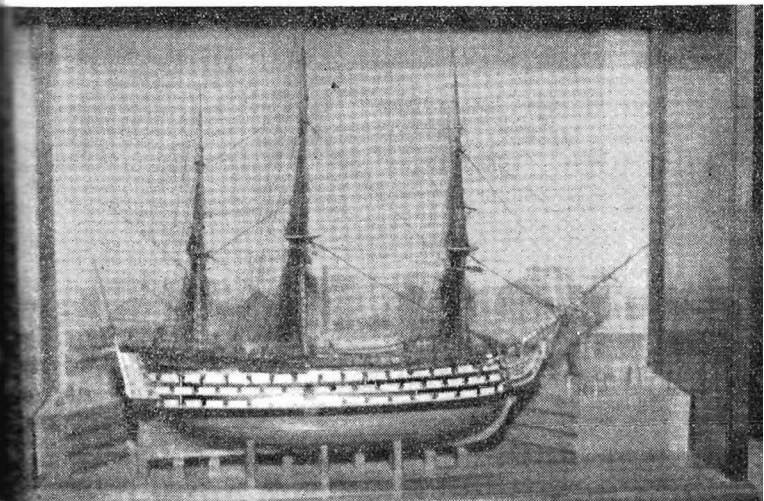
WARM congratulations to Mr. G. A. Nicholls, a member of the Chief Architect's staff in the Way and Works Branch of the Department, who has been awarded the Grice Bronze Medal in connection with the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier.

The importance of this achievement will be realised when it is stated that the Grice Medal, which is awarded for outstanding performance over the full period of the course, has only been won 8 times during the past 22 years.

Further excellent work by Mr. Nicholls in the Architectural Atelier also secured the President's Special Prize of £2/2/0 for the year 1942. Another Railway colleague in the Atelier, Mr. S. H. Evans, of the Chief Architect's office, was awarded the V.A.S.S. prize of £3/3/0 for the year 1943.

One of the features of the course in which both railwaymen were engaged was a prepared layout for a 200-acre neighbourhood unit in a given area, showing community centre, primary and nursery schools, fountain, shopping sections, single house, pair and flat units, church, green belt, playing-field and swimming pool.

THE REMARKABLE HOBBIES OF MR. SMITH, ex C.M.E.



The model of Nelson's famous 100-gun ship of the line, "Victory" which appeared in a model exhibition at Melbourne recently, is further evidence of the versatility, patience and skill of Mr. A. E. Smith, a former C.M.E. of the Victorian Railways, now living in retirement at Brighton.

The model, which took 2 years to build, is true to scale and complete to the last block, and the realistic modeller even shown one of the guns which was broken adrift close to the place where the main deck where the illustrious

Admiral died at the Battle of Trafalgar. The little "Victory" in its glass case, and with a background of Portsmouth painted by Mr. Smith, was constructed from a copy of a plan dated 1759. Photographs of the original "Victory," which were taken from several positions and were secured in England by Mr. H. P. Colwell, Chief Electrical Engineer, were also of great assistance in building the model.

Mr Smith has a flair for models of a nautical character which he attributes to his early association with an Australian sea captain with whom he travelled considerably as a lad. Mr. Smith's model of an excursion steamer with engines and boiler built to scale is now in the Technological Museum where there is also another Smith achievement—a model of an old type beam engine used in the 1880's on the slip at Williamstown, then known as the "patent slip".

On the walls of his home hang several fine water colors painted by him, including a striking study of the celebrated old tug, "Albatross," towing a "windjammer" through angry seas at Port Phillip Heads.

Nowadays Mr. Smith devotes much time to astronomy, and to further his knowledge of the planets he has built a telescope. Characteristically he has done everything required for the job, even to the delicate and laborious task of grinding the lenses himself. In this latter aspect of the task he is grateful for the valuable advice of Mr. W. Stone, ex-Chief Electrical Engineer of the department, who is an expert in the science.

Much of his time during the war has been spent in his home workshop manufacturing parts for aircraft, and several worthy charities have benefited by the proceeds.

V.R. Men on Service Grateful For Christmas Parcels

"YOUR very welcome parcel arrived yesterday and the contents were received very gratefully indeed. I might say that I think the compiler of the parcel must have been an old soldier, or an old Aussie's wife, as the contents were just what a soldier needs."

That cordial little note from Sergeant V. K. Smith, A.I.F., "somewhere in Australia," is typical of the numerous letter-cards and letters, from V.R. men on service, now flowing in in acknowledgment of the parcels distributed through the V.R. Patriotic Fund before Christmas.

Those parcels went all over the world. Several steadfastly followed the boys moving around from address to address, but were none the less appreciated, despite the inevitable delay in arrival. Altogether a great job, reflecting credit on all concerned.

* * *

The Committee of the V.R. Fund is so gratified with the success of the parcels distribution that it has practically decided to send two parcels each year, one about June and the other before Christmas, to reach railwaymen on service. The 1943 Christmas parcels were despatched through the Melbourne headquarters instead of through the Auxiliaries as on former occasions and thus allowed the differences between the wholesale and the retail purchase price of all commodities used, and the cost of packing to be saved. This meant a considerable reduction in cost and will mean, in future, a big annual saving with two parcels to be despatched yearly to over 2,500 men.

* * *

On Sunday, April 16, those Sunday concerts for servicemen which were quite a feature at the V.R. Institute Rooms, Flinders Street Station Building, last winter, will be resumed.

Every Sunday following until November, any serviceman who drops in will be assured of a striking entertainment of concert items, band music and dancing, all helped down by afternoon tea, cakes and sandwiches, provided by a small army of voluntary helpers.

Although professional artists contribute to these programmes, they charge nothing for this patriotic service, and no wages or expenses are claimed by the numerous girls, including many from the V.R. Refreshment Services, who turn up regularly to lend a hand. Actually, the only cost is the small outlay for the food required, but the cost is immaterial beside the benefit to a frequently lonely soldier who has often stepped out of a wet, dismal Melbourne Sunday into an entertainment that speedily gets a smile on his face again.

EXPERT SAFE WORKING INSTRUCTOR

MR. D. Courtney, Safe Working Instructor at the Traralgon Centre of the Victorian Railways Institute, has a record which is worth mentioning.

He has been an Instructor in Safe Working at the Geelong and Traralgon Centres for seven years, and although many railwaymen have passed through his hands in studying safe working, he has not had a failure, either at the Departmental exams conducted by the Block and Signal Inspectors or at the annual exams conducted by the Institute.

In three separate years his pupils have gained highest marks in the State in the annual exams. He coached Mr. N. C. Allen, winner of the "Harold W. Clapp" Prize, at Geelong in 1938, and last year his careful tuition was largely responsible for the success of Mr. N. W. Isaac of Traralgon in securing the "N. C. Harris" Prize.

During Mr. Courtney's last year at Geelong, five out of the seven top markers in the annual examinations were his pupils, and this year four of the six pupils who passed through his hands got well over 80 marks in the exams.

Mr. Courtney is now coaching three local railwaymen for the next exam for the "N. C. Harris" Prize. As he holds all Safe Working certificates obtainable and has had much practical experience, he can be regarded as one of the most valuable Instructors in the Institute in a subject that he has made particularly his own.

OBITUARY

THE "News Letter" reports with regret the death last month of Mr. George Oakley, a former member of the V.R. Printing Works Staff, at the age of 61.

Mr. Oakley started as an apprentice in the V.R. Printing Works in 1904, became a machinist in 1912, and twelve months later was engaged in the ticket-making section of the Department. He continued in this post until his resignation in 1938, when he left to take up outside duties in Caulfield.

As a member of the V.R. Ambulance Organisation, his achievement was outstanding. He secured his first certificate in 1916, his Bronze Medallion three years later, followed in 1921 by his Silver Efficiency Medal, and in 1924 by the coveted Gold Life Membership Medal. Three times, also, he won the individual championship in the annual competitions, and was second on two other occasions.

He commenced first Aid Corps work with the Spencer Street No. 3 in 1917, and during his association with it the Corps twice won the Senior events in the Annual Competitions, was placed second on three occasions, and in another year was third.

Mr. Oakley's capable direction as Superintendent of the Railway Officers' Corps from 1924 to 1929 was responsible for it securing one first-prize, and three seconds in three consecutive years.

Highly esteemed by all who knew him, Mr. Oakley leaves behind him a record for honesty and energy in all he undertook.

NEW ANNEXE FOR PRODUCTION OF AMMETERS & VOLTMETERS

ONE of the activities of the Department brought about by the war is the production of electrical instruments for the Commonwealth Government.

In a new wooden building, 40 ft. x 80 ft., recently constructed, about 60 women are engaged in the manufacture and assembly of parts of the instruments. All particles of dust must be kept away from the work and windows and other direct avenues of ventilation have therefore been avoided. Air is washed and circulated in the workroom, the walls, ceiling and polished floors of which are padded with insulating wool.

The women are seated at long benches brilliantly lit with fluorescent tube lighting of an average intensity of 70 foot candles. At one bench where the work is of a more critical nature, illumination of slightly over 200 foot candles has been provided.

Intricacy of Work

The intricacy of the work is shown by the fact that there is an average of 60 different parts in each small instrument, and there are 16 separate operations required before the instrument is ready for service.

Approximately 275 voltmeters and ammeters are turned out each week which is very creditable as many of the staff were previously dressmaking shop assistants, waitresses and nurses and have quickly adapted themselves to the task.

Work commences each day at 7.30 a.m., and such is the attraction of the work that one of the girls living in Seymour travels down from her home town each day to Melbourne and returns at night.

Some of the parts for the instruments are manufactured at the Electrical Workshops, Spencer Street, and Test Division Workshops of the Department. Others are supplied by several private firms.

TICKET CHECKER RETIRES

MANY representatives of all grades assembled at Princes Bridge Station on Friday morning, February 11, to farewell their esteemed comrade, Frank Ick, who retired after 40 years of service, 35 of which he had spent at the Princes Bridge Station.

Many of his comrades spoke in the praise of Mr. Ick who has made many friends both in and outside the Department. At the conclusion Mr. Ick, Beagley, S.M., Flinders Street, presented him with a wallet of notes.

In reply, Mr. Ick thanked and expressed his great tribute to all his fellow workers.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston Street, North Melbourne, by the Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

APRIL, 1944.

Issue No. 163.

GALLANT V.R. BOY WINS THE D.C.M.

WARM congratulations to Corporal Ronald Arthur Drew of the 37/52nd Infantry Battalion, who has just been awarded the D.C.M. for one of those deeds of cool heroism which color the brilliant record of the Australian Army in the present war.



Corporal Drew, D.C.M.

Heavily attacked "somewhere in New Guinea," Corporal Drew stood up in a hail of enemy bullets, and firing his Bren gun from the hip, killed four Japanese. This achievement broke up the attack and enabled his platoon to gain its objective.

Corporal Drew, who is now convalescing near Port Moresby after a bout of malaria, enlisted in February, 1942, and following a period of training was allotted to a mortar platoon. He has been enduring the unique fighting conditions in a savage climate for over a year, and with the exception of his illness he has emerged unscathed.

Corporal Drew was formerly a lad porter in the Department, serving for nearly 18 months at the Malvern railway station. Two other brothers, one of whom was also in the Department before enlistment, are in the R.A.A.F.—one now an observer in England, the other in the ground force at Darwin.

Their father is Mr. C. T. Drew, a member of the Way and Works Staff Office at the Spencer Street Head Office.

A REMARKABLE RAILWAY FAMILY

CORPORAL Ronald Arthur Drew D.C.M., has the unusual distinction also of being a fourth generation V.R. man. Indeed, he belongs to a family which has had its name on the paysheets for over 60 years.

His great grandfather was Solomon Drew, a ganger in the Way and Works Branch, who was killed near Birregurra in 1889. Solomon Drew was the father of eleven children, five of whom—Thomas, Solomon, William, Henry, and Cyril—joined the service, whilst his widow, Mrs. Angeline Drew, became a gatekeeper at Geelong after his death.

Thomas Drew, a ganger who retired when working on the piece of track where his father met his death, is the parent of C. T. Drew, of the Way and Works Staff Office, and grandfather of Corporal Drew, D.C.M. Thomas Drew's brother, Solomon, formerly a motorman, has also retired. William, another brother and formerly a Yard Foreman at Geelong, died recently; but two other brothers, Henry, a Guard at Maryborough, and Cyril, a Guard at Williamstown, are still with the Department.

Another son of Thomas Drew, William, is in the Control Room at Seymour, whilst Corporal Drew's brother, Leslie Charles, of the R.A.A.F., was a lad laborer in the Way and Works Branch before enlisting.

That is a most striking record of one family's achievement through the years. There are probably other railway families with equally interesting stories to tell. The "News Letter" would like to hear from them.

Former V.R. Man Editing Army Journal

MAJOR C. H. Cheong, formerly of the Betterment and Suggestions Board and Advertising Section of the Victorian Railways, is another capable young journalist who has established an excellent reputation.

He and R. H. Hughes (now war correspondent for the Sydney "Telegraph" in North Africa) left the Department almost at the same time, Hughes to start his newspaper career on the Melbourne "Star," now defunct, and Cheong to join the "Herald."

Major Cheong remained about 10 years with the "Herald" and its associate journals, concluding a good record as a Sub-editor on the "Sun News Pictorial."

With the foundation of the "A.I.F. News," issued from Cairo for the entertainment and instruction of our troops throughout the Middle East, Major (then Captain) Cheong became Editor—a post for which he was particularly well fitted.

There were all sorts of limitations preventing an Australian metropolitan standard of production—particularly inferior paper and lack of variety in type—but the 20-page weekly speedily acquired a note of its own and its easy, breezy description of current events made it immensely popular with its many readers. Those who possess numbers of the "A.I.F. News" will cherish them as the years roll on.

Whilst returning to Australia, Major Cheong managed to produce a small edition of the "A.I.F. News" for issue on his ship.

He is now editing "somewhere in Australia," another Army Journal, "Table Tops," which promises to achieve the same popularity and importance as his previous effort, "A.I.F. News."

SERVICE.

WRITING to the Secretary for Railways under date February 3rd, Mr. R. Womersley, Honorary Secretary of the Mansfield Betterment Railways Committee, pays the following tribute to the good work of the Department:

"At a meeting of the Mansfield Betterment Railways Committee held yesterday I was directed to compliment your Department upon the splendid manner in which it has handled the transport of stock from Mansfield during the past season."

WE ALL LIKE ATTENTION . . .

We all like attention. If we have to buy anything, we like the salesman to take an interest in our needs, even if—as is not unusual nowadays—we are unable to get just what we want.

Our own customers feel the same way. Under war-time conditions we are unable to give them all that they would reasonably expect from us in normal times. This is not due to any fault of ours, but because coal supplies are short and war needs must receive priority.

But, if we cannot offer our customers just what we would like to, we can at least demonstrate that we realise they are entitled to the best attention and the most friendly help we are able to give.

There could be no better recommendation than to have it said of us: "The railways have a tough job, but we feel they are trying to meet our wishes."

If we have earned this praise, we will have gone far towards securing the goodwill and the future custom of those who are now dependent upon us for service.

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO

UNDER THE DEPARTMENTAL GROUP SYSTEM PARTICULARS OF WH

HANDLING FREIGHT TRAFFIC in the U.S.S.R

THE transport of freight traffic comes first, and then passengers and luggage." That is the ukase of the Commissar of Transport in the U.S.S.R., and apart from urgent troop movements it is the general practice to give precedence to freight. In order to restore the transport position, under the changed conditions after the revolution, the U.S.S.R. decreed in 1935 that all main line passenger services must be curtailed, and afterwards regulations for securing the fullest and speediest use of the Soviet's fleet of goods trucks were tightened up.

In a country where every major industry is nationalised there is very little private freight, and that consists mainly of baggage and small consignments in less than wagon loads. Nevertheless, railwaymen will learn with interest that "all persons found guilty of arranging uneconomic transport are liable to punishment"

Uneconomic transport covers a quantity of offences. Conspicuous among them are crosshauls of the same classes of goods and hauls of goods over unnecessarily long or short distances. Also, the transport of timber, which is limited even in Siberia, is forbidden over certain routes, whilst firewood, banned in certain areas, cannot be carried in other cases more than 500 kilometres (approximately 311 miles). Since 1939 potatoes cannot be carried from one area of Russia to another.

Fulllest use of Trucks

Most remarkable are the decrees designed to secure the fullest use of every truck in work under the banner of the Sickle and Hammer. Following a series of tests it was found that the maximum time required for loading any truck with a carrying capacity of 40 tons and over was four hours, and in 1939 a table was issued giving the various times permitted for loading or unloading trucks (both covered and open) of varying carrying capacities.

Where technical assistance is required and available, the loading or unloading periods are arranged by the Chief of the Goods Department of the Railway Divisional Management. Under certain conditions loading and unloading periods allowed at "private sidings" are governed by contract, but must not exceed the times fixed in the tables.

Failure to load or unload within the prescribed time brings penalties' starting with one rouble per hour per two-axle wagon for the first 12 hours and increasing to 6 roubles officially 4/9d.)

per hour for over 36 hours delay. Also the railway management can load or unload at the expense of the consignor or consignee, whilst goods which remain in a wagon five days after the wagon has been placed at the disposal of the consignee are, after prior valuation by the railway, sold by auction.

On the other hand, extra energy in loading or unloading will be rewarded by the return of 1 rouble per wagon per hour for all the time saved under the fixed periods.

To prevent congestion in railway warehouses, charges are increased fivefold. In special cases, the Commissar of Transport "may order warehouse charges to be increased tenfold and demurrage threefold".

All rail wagons must be loaded to the fullest capacity—the loading tonnage for various commodities in the several sizes of trucks ranging up to 60 tons capacity have been widely circulated—and if a wagon containing metals, coal, ore or grain has not been loaded to the decreed capacity, the person responsible is fined 1.50 roubles for every ton short.

Not less striking than those regulations are ingenuities in loading designed to make use of every cubic inch of available space. A common practice is to stow certain commodities in the space between coupled wagons and the system of carrying three lorries on two wagons is probably unique in railway practice anywhere.

The Soviet's drastic emphasis on the importance of freight traffic as against passenger traffic has not been lost on Germany, where many of the measures with regard to the transport of goods are stated to "bear a striking resemblance to those adopted in Russia".

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.

ENGR. Assistant K. N. Opie
Draughtsman L. Webberley.

R.A.A.F.

App. Tinsmith J. A. Wilson.

Another "Lively Corpse"

THE following little piece, strikingly headed "A Lively Corpse," comes from the "Greenboro Record," North Carolina, U.S.A.

"The pick-up in railroad business volume in the last decade, and more especially in the months since World War II broke out, has been great to the degree of astounding! It seems hardly possible now that only a few years ago many people were counting the railroads out—saying they might stay in the picture a while longer to carry "heavy goods," but asserting they would never again offer any serious competition for the planes, buses and trucks. How wrong these prophets were! And how lucky for us all that the railroads are still in the game carrying their part of the nation's transport load—the heaviest such load in history—now when victory is dependent to a very great degree upon our ability to keep cargoes, freight and passenger, rolling with speed and safety."

In this connection the added statistics taken by the Victorian Railways in the war years is not without interest as indicated by the following figures:

Year	No. of Passenger Journeys	Tonnage of Goods Carried
1938-39	142,123,567	5,250,166
1939-40	144,649,075	5,547,022
1940-41	159,218,412	5,881,921
1941-42	180,981,900	6,765,413
1942-43	195,830,057	8,017,600
Increase in 5 years	37.8%	52.7%

What a record those figures cover! Those mounting millions of passenger journeys indicate the magnitude of the service of transporting many thousands of men belonging to the three defence arms, and, in the goods, increasing by over two million tons in two years. We get a clue to the huge quantities of munitions, equipment and other necessities carried whilst meeting the greatly increased civilian demands. Much of that war transport was provided at very short notice, and includes some remarkable episodes in which railway resourcefulness and ingenuity played dramatic parts.

FIRST VICTORY LOAN

PUBLISHED IN THE WEEKLY NOTICES, APRIL 4 TO 25, INCLUSIVE

V.R. MEN ON SERVICE WRITE TO "NEWS LETTER"

VICTORIAN Railways men on active service on various fronts continue to record their appreciation of the "News Letter" forwarded to them monthly, each copy being mailed under special cover carrying the address. "News Letters" have been acknowledged in Britain, Canada, the Middle East, and letters are constantly flowing in from New Guinea.

Here is an extract from a letter of thanks from L.A.C. A. Yole, R.A.A.F., Swanton, formerly Operating Porter, Queensland: "Never once whilst stationed at Darwin did the 'News Letter' fail to arrive, and was eagerly scanned by myself for news of the railways at work during war."

L.A.C. H. W. Jones, who was a Ship Laborer, Newport Loco. Storehouse when he enlisted, writes from Canada and mentions that a "News Letter" had followed him half way round the world, via Darwin and Queensland. In recording his pleasure at receiving the little paper he mentions: "Have travelled many hundreds of miles on American and Canadian trains since leaving Australia, and still think the 'Spirit' is as good as any."

"Would like to express my gratitude for your monthly news," says Sgt. I. McKenzie, formerly Lad Porter, Footscray, writing from Townsville, and adds the interesting comment: "Have come in contact with many of the employes of the Railways who are on the ground staff. These boys are doing a marvellous job and will be a credit to the Department when they rejoin it after the war."

Much travelled Sig. R. J. W. Brown, "G" Section Signals, 2/12th Field Regt., R.A.A. (Laborer, Melbourne Goods) now "somewhere in Australia," says, in sending his thanks: "I have received the 'News Letter' from Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Syria, at sea and in New Guinea."

Another grateful correspondent is Mr. J. J. Rowsell, G. Branch, H.Q., N.G. Forces (Lad Laborer, Newport), who declares, among other things, that he has visited Y.M.C.A. huts and "I have seen chairs and stools branded with the Spotswood Workshops mark. The boys up here in New Guinea sure do appreciate comforts like that."

Then there is L.A.C. H. R. Mudford, R.A.A.F. (App. Sailmaker, Newport) "somewhere in Canada," who informs us by "Air-Graf" letter that the "News Letter" brings my friends and workmates to just out of arms

reach." In a previous complimentary letter, he included some patriotic verse. The sentiment of the piece is indicated in the following stanza:

"We'll sing together lustily.
We always will be free.
We'll never let the Nip or Hun
Destroy our liberty." . . .

State-wide Raffle To Help Patriotic Fund

THE General Committee of the V.R. Patriotic Fund is now discussing the details of a further State-wide raffle which should be launched before the end of next month. It is known that the prizes will be particularly attractive. Every member of the Service will be asked to buy tickets, or assist in the sale of them among relatives and friends. If the raffle is as successful as the previous State-wide raffle, the V.R. Patriotic Fund should benefit by upwards of £500.

* * * * *

Though Donald is a relatively small railway centre, it possesses an active Auxiliary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund. The annual meeting of the Auxiliary was held at 8 p.m. on Sunday, March 5, when it was revealed that a most successful bowling carnival had been held on the bowling green of the local V.R. Institute for the benefit of the Fund. The Donald Auxiliary is doing good work, and much of its success is attributable to the energy of its Chairman (Mr. H. C. Allen) and its former Secretary (Mr. J. Smart), who has just been compelled to relinquish his duties owing to illness in the family. It is known, however, that the incoming Secretary (Mr. A. C. Daws) will prove a worthy successor. Under his care and with the generous help of Chairman Allen and the Committee, the Auxiliary will continue to expand.

* * * * *

As this issue goes to press, Mr. W. E. Elliott, the popular General Secretary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, is enjoying a well earned spell. His duties as Secretary of the Fund, combined with the job of Secretary of the V.R. Institute, keep him regularly busy over long hours. His many friends, who appreciate his energy and conscientiousness in those responsible posts, will wish him a happy holiday.

P.M.'s Comment On Standardisation of Gauges

IT is of particular interest to the Department to note that in a reference to the standardisation of gauges last month, the Prime Minister (Hon. J. Curtin) declared that "the conversion of Victorian Railways would comprise the major undertaking" in the proposed scheme, and "that it is only since the present war that the neglect to attend to this vital aspect of national transport has been so strongly brought home to the people of the Commonwealth."

As announced in the last issue of the "News Letter", Sir Harold Clapp is to be associated with the preparations for the standardisation—and he will hardly need to be assured of the hearty co-operation of the Victorian Railways in this task.

According to a statement in the press, Sir Harold would be asked to prepare reports on the scheme, which will cover three stages—investigatory, preparatory, and actual conversion—for the consideration of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, and as a basis of discussion with the State Governments concerned.

It is sincerely hoped that this assignment indicates a determination by the Federal Government that unification is an absolute necessity in the interests of national security for the future.

V.R. AIRMAN RETURNS

AMONG the crews who recently brought Short Sunderland Flying Boats on a 16,000 mile run to Australia was Flight Lieutenant Irwin A. Clarke, a former junior clerk in the Accountancy Branch.

Flight Lieutenant Clarke enlisted in February, 1941, and three months later went away to become one of the stalwarts of the "Coastal Command," protecting Britain's sea approaches against U-boats and performing other notable services.

Engaged almost continuously over three years, he has happily emerged without injury of any kind; though his boat, accompanied by another Sunderland, was responsible for the dramatic end of a U-boat.

Submarine spotting, he tells us, is one of the most thrilling of all wartime adventures.

Driven into operating at night, the U-boats have found the risks no smaller, because the planes, fitted with powerful searchlights, are practically as deadly as in daylight.

FRENCH RAILWAYS UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION

IN the light of the tasks which have been set Victorian Railwaymen during the war it is interesting to read what has been happening to the French railways since the German occupation.

From the time of the German advance into France until the armistice in June, 1940, more than two-thirds of the public transport of the country was interrupted. Following the armistice the German military authorities controlled all the railways in the interests of the German Army. This meant more trouble for the railways—chief among them being the shortage of rolling stock due to the large amount "requisitioned" by the Germans; loss of track taken for use in Russia; scarcity of fuel and lubricants; the disruptive effects of the R.A.F. raids; and, up to the time of the German entry into Vichy France, the diversion of traffic to unusual routes because of the demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied France. The lines of railways in Alsace-Lorraine were appropriated as part of the German system.

Shortages of coal and oil necessitated progressive cuts in the services until by the beginning of 1943 the passenger train service was less than 30% of the 1939 level. Despite that reduction the number of passengers carried remained about the same as in pre-war. Overcrowding became appalling, necessitating the issue of "tickets of admission" giving access to the trains but no claim to a seat. In addition, the average fare was increased 30 per cent.

Two Notable Benefits.

With the goods traffic, war damage to tracks and installations and lack of rolling stock, coal and oil caused many difficulties. Out of sheer necessity came two notable benefits. Firstly, the loading of wagons improved immensely, the average load per wagon increasing from 9 tons pre-war to 11½ tons in 1942. With only 79 per cent. of the pre-war total of goods wagons the total tonnage in 1941 was 2 per cent. greater than pre-war, and this, with the longer hauls, brought about an increase of 15 per cent. in the ton mileage. Secondly, to enable the mounting traffic to be handled a special effort was made to secure more intensive use of the reduced number of engines and a reduction in the number of engines under or awaiting repair.

Loading, unloading and deliveries continue on Sundays and holidays. Stations are open for 14 hours a day.

No traffic is accepted for a distance of less than 25 kilometres (15½ miles). The number of staff employed on the French Railways prior to the war was 433,000, but has been considerably reduced since.

The effect of the occupation on the working hours of employes will be readily appreciated from the following:

At 1st January, 1937, 8 hours per day for 298 days, with 52 rest days and 15 days' leave, making a total of 2,384 working hours per annum.

From 1st January, 1937, to 1st September, 1939, application of the 40-hour week

From 1st September, 1939, to 1st August, 1940, introduction (as a war measure) of the 60-hour week.

From 1st August, 1940, the total number of working hours were fixed at 2,408 per annum, but this seems to be a theoretical minimum as operating and maintenance grades are excluded. Broken shifts are authorised up to a 16-hour spread with a 3-hour break.

Here's An Unusual Story Of Service

AN unusual story of service concerns a lady and gentleman who recently spent a happy day at the Sir Colin Mackenzie Sanctuary at Healesville.

They had arrived at the Flinders Street station in time to catch the 8.10 a.m. train which leaves the East end of No. 1 Platform daily for Healesville. The gentleman bought the tickets, but on arrival at the barrier on No. 1 Platform he found that he had lost them. A hurried search failed to reveal them, and when he explained his predicament to the checker on duty, he was allowed to travel on the understanding that he would pay his fare when he reached Healesville.

On arrival at Lilydale, however, he was astonished to be met by the Stationmaster, who informed him that the tickets had been found at Flinders Street and would be sent on by the 5 p.m. train from Melbourne. They would be awaiting him at Healesville on his return from the Sanctuary in the evening, the Stationmaster added.

Sure enough, the return tickets were awaiting him, as mentioned, and he came back highly impressed with a service that should go to such trouble to enable him to have his day out without worry. He particularly commends the checker who allowed him to pass the barrier and the Stationmaster at Lilydale who, after being supplied with an accurate description of him by telephone, picked him out and relieved him of all further anxiety.

BOMBING THE JAPS IN NEW GUINEA

FLIGHT Sergt. G. A. McMullen, R.A.A.F., formerly a junior clerk in the Way and Ward Branch, includes this bit of graphic writing in a letter home:

"We were awakened before dawn one morning by the orderly officer who realised "something was cooking. After a hurried breakfast (bully beef) proceeded to the briefing hut and found that our target was to be a coconut plantation.

"Once around the landing strip then off, and we climbed steeply to go over the Owen Stanley mountains which are 9,000 feet at their lowest point.

"Coming down to the sea we motors roaring at full power and barely missing the wave tops. We shot over the beach and then directly ahead lay our target—a coconut plantation—looking very innocent. But it did not stay that long. The whole plantation seemed suddenly to spring to life and the air was full of tracer bullets and burning shells. I could see the little yellow men quite clearly below the palm trees and we had the pleasure of letting them with all our guns and seeing quite a few of the Japs go down.

"About this time the tail gunner called up on the intercom: 'Let's get out'r here. They are taking everything at us except the kid's sink.' To this the navigator replied: 'That's a lie, I saw that about past five minutes ago.' 'Bombs away,' the bombardier called, leaving our calling cards with the little Nipponese friends we departed for a more hospitable area to witness the effect of our visit.

"Our bombs were fitted with delayed action fuses to prevent damaging ourselves while flying so low, but they did not have long to wait and suddenly black clouds of dust and smoke sprang into the air and beautiful oily flames right in the centre of the target.

"When we were congratulating another on good shooting and bombing the tail gunner called up with a disquieting news that he had been hit in the leg with a bullet and a big hole had been blown in our motor by a near flak burst.

"When nearly back we also made an unpleasant discovery that the fabric was tearing off the damaged elevator. Lady Luck stayed with us and we landed safely and in one piece." A very successful little outing, all things considered.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston Street, North Melbourne, by the Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

MAY, 1944.

Issue No. 164.

Another V.R. Lad Wins The Coveted D.F.C.

LAST month railwaymen learned with gratification of a fine record of achievement another V.R. boy, Flying Officer Kenneth Albert Richards, which earned for him the Distinguished Flying Cross.



Flying Officer K. A. Richards, D.F.C.

In the official citation, it was stated that "during operations in Italy, Flying Officer Richards has completed a large number of sorties during which he has attacked shipping, road transport, and targets in the battle zone with much success.

"In January, 1944, he attacked a medium sized ship with excellent results. Some time later, he attacked another vessel of similar size, obtaining a result which caused its destruction.

"This officer has invariably displayed commendable courage and determination, and his accurate bombing has been a noteworthy feature of his efforts throughout."

Further details were provided by the Minister for Air (Mr. Drakeford), who said that in the shipping attack off the Jugo-Slav coast in January, Flying Officer Richards had made such an accurate attack on a 3,000-ton ship that his bomb fell right down the funnel! This ship sank. At the end of February another direct hit by Richards on a 5,000-ton ship split the vessel in two.

Flight-Lieutenant Richards is one of the smallest and most popular

(Continued next col.)

HANDLING OF EASTER TRAFFIC Excellent Staff Performance

CONGRATULATIONS to the railway staff for the efficient handling of the heavy Easter holiday traffic. All concerned—stationmasters, enginemmen, guards, porters, signalmen, booking clerks, yard staffs, mechanics—worked with the object of ensuring that under the prevailing conditions there would be as little cause as possible for complaint.

Due to the restricted services passengers inevitably suffered some discomfort and heavy trains made it difficult to keep to the schedules; but the job of carrying many thousands on their holidays and returning them without any hitch was an excellent performance.

Realising that the conditions of the times confront the railways with a formidable task, the travelling public accepted any unavoidable delays and inconveniences with helpful philosophy.

This Easter the mileage run was approximately 24,000 train miles less than in the Easter of 1943, but traffic this year was heavier per train.

Actually, on Easter Thursday and Good Friday—the total number of passengers leaving Spencer Street and Flinders Street stations for country destinations was just on 50,000—or about 3,000 less than the number on the same two days last year, when more trains were available.

V.R. MAN KILLED IN ACTION

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to learn that Lieutenant John Forster, A.I.F., formerly in the railway branch of the Crown Solicitor's Office, has been killed in action.

Lieutenant Forster was a very promising young officer who had been specially trained in commando and jungle fighting. He joined the Department in 1938, and at the time of his enlistment had just completed the first year of his law course at the University. He was also a very competent musician, and for some time had been organist at the Methodist Church in Mont Albert.

members in an all-Australian Kittyhawk Squadron in Italy. He is the son of Mr. J. A. Richards, Stationmaster at Warragul.

He joined the railways as a Lad Messenger in the Secretary's Branch in 1935, and was a Junior Clerk when he enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in May, 1940. He is 24 years of age.

"MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES"

CONGRATULATIONS to Acting Corporal R. N. Beatty, who has been "mentioned in despatches" for "services in connection with the packing of parachute supplies for troops in forward areas in New Guinea during 1943."

Acting Corporal Beattie, who served in the Middle East before being transferred to New Guinea, is one of the V.R. motor omnibus drivers with a particularly fine record for safe driving.

As a motor lorry driver at the Batman Avenue Garage, and later as a motor omnibus driver stationed at Belgrave, he won the silver medal for five years' safe driving, awarded under the Safety Council's "Freedom from Accidents Campaign."

When he enlisted he had been driving safely for nine years, which means that he only required another year's unblemished record as a driver to secure the coveted gold medal for 10 years' safe driving.

SERVICE.

UNAVOIDABLE circumstances preventing the 7.15 Wandin to Lilydale train today from connecting with the usual city bound train caused inconvenience to travellers.

"I wish, as a business man, to congratulate the staff at Lilydale on their promptitude in getting a service for us to reach the city only 20 minutes' late."

The above is a copy of an unpublished letter to the press which Mr. V. H. Gill, of Mt. Evelyn, forwarded to the Chairman of Commissioners (Mr. N. C. Harris) last month. It refers to the highly commendable emergency arrangements which were made when the 7.15 a.m. car goods train from Wandin to Lilydale arrived at the latter station 29 minutes late, preventing the usual connection with the 7.57 a.m. electric train from Lilydale to Melbourne. By utilising two electric motors which were run from Croydon to Lilydale, the staff concerned were able to arrange for the delayed passengers to be carried to Ringwood, making prompt connection there with a train bound for Melbourne.

THREE POPULAR RAILWAYMEN PASS ON

THE LATE MR. W. PHELAN

"HIS only hobby was helping other railwaymen." That is the unanimous tribute of hundreds of V.R. employes to "Big Bill" Phelan, who died last month at the ripe old age of 81.

He joined the Service as a permanent hand in 1882, and right up to his retirement in 1926, he was conspicuous in all movements for the benefit of railwaymen. He was President of the V.R. Mutual Benefit Association in 1896, and of the Amalgamated Employes' Association in 1901, the predecessor to the Railways Union, of which he was a Councillor.

In 1904 he nominated for the job of employes' representative on the Railways Board of Discipline. There were fifteen candidates in the election, but the power of his personality enabled him to top the poll. In subsequent elections for the post, which are held every three years, he had two "walk-overs" and remained on the Board up to his retirement.

When the V.R. Institute was being mooted in 1909, Mr. Phelan was a member of the provisional committee, and in the first election for the 17 Councillors of the Institute, he again topped the poll. The Commissioners appointed him the first Vice-President of the Institute, and his ideals of service, coupled with his ability as a speaker and fine qualities as a man, kept him in that position until he retired into private life.

As a railwayman he had wide experience, serving as a shedman, headporter, guard and signalman. For 20 years he worked all the big signal-boxes at North Melbourne, the Viaduct, and Princes Bridge, and finally became Block and Signal Inspector.

But, standing above his excellent official achievement in the Service, was the record of his help to his fellow employes. Every railwayman who grows reminiscent about him has some telling anecdote of his generosity.

* * *

THE LATE MR. H. JOHNSON

JUST a little over a year after his retirement from the Service, Harry Johnson, late of the Correspondence Room of the Secretary's Branch, has passed on.

Those who knew this amiable, unobtrusive railwayman will regret his end. He had hosts of friends over his outstanding record service of 51½ years, and no enemies. He had cherished another record which is not likely to be challenged in our time. He had served under no fewer than 25 Commissioners and had many interesting reminiscences of some who are now only names in the Service.

Mr. Johnson joined the Railways as a lad in the Telegraph Branch on Derby Day, 1890. Following short periods in the old Telegraph Branch and Yard Inspector's Office, he spent eight months in private employ, returning to the Railways in the Secretary's Branch, and remaining there—in his latter days in control of the correspondence room—until his retirement last year.

Mr. Johnson was a member of an old railway family. His late father was Benjamin Burton Johnson who retired in 1909 and lived to the age of 84. In his time B. B. Johnson was an expert concertina player and first revealed the charm of long range music by playing his concertina within the audible range of long distance railways telephones systems. He had two other sons in the railways—Foreman Benjamin Burton Johnson of the Electrical Workshops, Spencer Street, and William Bennett Johnson, A.S.M., Burnley Group.

Another member of this railway family was William Bennett Johnson, uncle of the late Harry Johnson, a senior telegraph operator at Spencer Street for many years. The old Johnson railway spirit is still maintained by W. B. Johnson's two sons—Burton Blyth Johnson of the Transportation Branch at the Head Office, and Eric William Johnson, Senior Clerk of the Bendigo Loco. The latter won the Military Medal and Bar in the First Great War.

* * *

THE LATE MR. J. J. WHITE

DIED last month, deeply regretted by all who knew him, Mr. John J. White, Supervisor of the Ticket Checking Division.

He had held that post since 1940, and his tact and diplomacy were an immense asset in handling many difficult situations brought about by infringements of the V.R. By-Laws.

Mr. White, who was just on the verge of 50 years, entered the Service as a junior clerk in 1910. After about 6 years in the suburban area, he entered the Metropolitan Superintendent's office. Subsequently working with the Officer-in-Charge of Ticket Collection he laid the foundation of his experience in ticket checking.

In 1922 he was transferred to the Head Office, where he had control of the Country Section of Special Ticket Checkers, later qualifying for the important post in which he died.

Mr. White's hobby was his job. He worked early and late and into week-ends, never grudging that extra bit of effort which is necessary for full achievement, whatever the size or the importance of the task.

APPOINTMENT OF MR. W. FORREST AS SIGNAL AND TELEGRAPH ENGINEER

MR. S. P. Jones, who has retired from the post of Signal and Telegraph Engineer, and is now busily engaged in bringing up-to-date estimates of cost in connection with the conversion of the Victorian system to standard gauge, has been succeeded by Mr. W. Forrest, his assistant in the Signal and Telegraph Division for the past 22 years.

Mr. Forrest, who is a native of Beechworth, joined the Department as an apprentice in the Telegraph Branch in 1905, after matriculating for a University. When the Telegraph and Signal Sections were later amalgamated, Mr. Forrest became a draughtsman and subsequently a draftsman in the Signal and Telegraph Branch.

Enlisting for service in the First World War, he left Australia to join the Signal Engineers in 1915, subsequently gaining a commission, and served in both Egypt and France. After the war he spent nine months with various English Railway Companies investigating Signal Engineering practices.

Wide Experience

Returning to Australia, he resumed his work as draftsman and draughtsman, graduating through the various sections of the Branch and gaining wide experience in its mechanical and electrical activities, he was appointed Construction Engineer, and later Maintenance Engineer, which positions he held until his appointment as Assistant Signal and Telegraph Engineer.

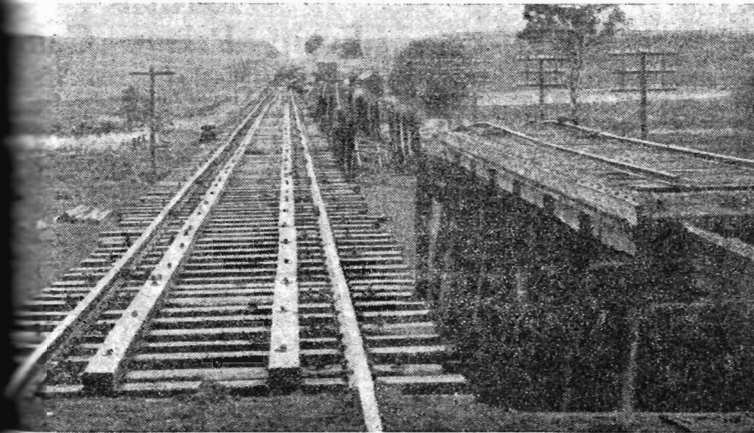
He is a member of the Institution of Signal Engineers, England, and is an associate member of the Institution of Engineers, Australia.

The successor to Mr. Forrest as Assistant Signal and Telegraph Engineer, is Mr. C. B. Young, who started his railway career in 1907 as an apprentice fitter and turner in the Signals Shops at Newport. Six years later he was appointed Electrical Engineer-in-Charge at Seymour.

Subsequently Mr. Young came to the Head Office as a draftsman and draughtsman, and on assisted Mr. G. H. Wison in the installation of power operated signalling equipment in the metropolitan area, including the first metropolitan power interlocking signal apparatus in the South Yarra signal-box.

After spending a period of time on all circuit work for power signalling, etc., he became Power Signal Engineer, and Construction Engineer. Mr. Young has been a member of the Level Committee since 1932.

RAPID RESTORATION OF BRIDGES DESTROYED BY BUSH FIRE



The above picture of the new bridge between Kilmany and Rosedale, the remains of the old bridge can be seen to the right—"with the stumps of piles sticking up forlornly in the air."

SPLENDID team work is responsible for the restoration in six weeks of two bridges, respectively 810 and 270 feet long, between Kilmany and Rosedale, which were destroyed in the disastrous bush fires which swept through this area of Gippsland on February 14. The raging fires, driven by a high wind, razed both to a few stumps of piles sticking up forlornly in the air, with the rails drooping down on to the ground below.

New permanent fireproof structures of concrete and steel are ultimately to be erected on the sites of the burnt bridges, the two temporary bridges being erected alongside. In order to connect the temporary bridges with the existing lines, 220 feet

of new bank were required at each end of each bridge, involving 5,000 yards of earthwork.

Gangs of skilled men with the necessary pile drivers, dragline excavators and other implements, were assembled on the sites of the ruined bridges within a week of the fire, and working steadily for 10 hours a day over every day in the week, they completed the jobs and restored rail transport between Traralgon and Sale in time for the Easter traffic.

Both of the temporary bridges have been constructed with pile piers and rolled steel beams. The big bridge crossing the Latrobe River stands 22 feet above summer level of the stream, whilst the smaller bridge has a maximum height of 22 feet.

MR. MAN "CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS."

WARM congratulations to Mr. A. H. M. Rogerson, Assistant Estate Officer, who, on April 1st, became Champion of Champions in the final of the Victorian Bowls Singles tournament held at the St. Albans Bowling Green.

Mr. Rogerson was proved supreme among 83 champions lined up for this test of skill and nerve, and his performance is all the more commendable for the reason that he has to live busily following a severe operation some years ago.

As a member of the Thornbury Bowling Club, he has been single handed champion of his Club in the seasons 1935-36, 1937-1938 and 1943-44, on each occasion qualifying for the grand final and possible success, which is the dream of all bowling enthusiasts.

Mr. Rogerson entered the Department in 1897, and spent some years in the Transportation Branch before returning to the Estate Office.

JUST LET THINGS TAKE THEIR COURSE

IT is disheartening for us all to know that we are unable, because of the existing abnormal conditions to give our customers the kind of service we would like to give.

There would be no excuse, however, for any of us adopting the view that because it is not within our means to remedy the present defects in service—it does not matter much whether we continue to do our best or just let things take their course.

An attitude of that kind could be seriously harmful to our future. Railway reputation is made or marred by the quality of service given by each individual member of the staff, and there never was greater need than at present for all of us to "keep on our toes."

Let it be our constant aim to convince our customers—by extra effort when we are able to make it, and by acts of thoughtfulness for which there are many opportunities—that we value and are anxious to retain their goodwill. We cannot have too many friends!

Read This Story Of Fortitude and Courage

LA. C. Jas. Henry Green is an example of fortitude and resolution worthy of the highest commendation.

Originally a clerk in the Stores Branch of the Department, he enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in 1941 and after six months in reserve he was posted overseas for training as a pilot.

He got as far as Alexandria and twelve days after arrival he became the victim of one of the most extraordinary accidents in the war. He was walking along a road at night when a barrage balloon sent up in expectation of a raid broke loose and an immense length of cable dropped to the ground, one end becoming entangled in a bus travelling about 300 or 400 yards ahead of the young Australian.

Before he knew where he was his left ankle was hooked up in the whirling cable, and he found himself hauled over rough ground by the bus at 25 miles per hour. He hit various obstacles, including a sandbagged wooden building, and finished up against two blocks of concrete.

During this amazing ordeal in which he covered fully half a mile, he never lost consciousness and by some miracle managed to keep partially erect, with the result that the whole of his injuries were confined to his left leg. True enough, he lost his left foot which was smashed to pulp, his knee cap was broken and his femur fractured.

He was over a year in hospital and had four operations. Nevertheless, he has emerged bright and smiling with an artificial left leg, and he recently left for overseas once more to be trained as a navigator. He characteristically commends the art of the surgeons that enabled him not only to walk, but dance and ride a bike with all his original vigour.

L.A.C. J. H. Green is now doing an Air Bomber's Course, "Somewhere-in-Canada." Writing to the "News Letter," he speaks highly of the hospitality he has enjoyed and also mentions the surprise aroused generally by the discovery that he possesses only one leg:

"Everywhere I have been everybody has been astounded when they hear I have only one leg," he says. "When I go flying I wear only one flying boot, and one day an Officer, 'Service happy,' of course, pulled me up and told me I was not properly dressed for flying, but he soon found out his mistake. On the Station there are a lot of Englishmen, and one of them said, 'Do you know you have only one flying boot on?'"

"WILD LIFE IN BUSHLAND"

THAT is the appealing title of the first colour "talkie" produced by the Department. Indeed, it is one of the first colour "talkies" made in Australia, and is the present summit of achievement in the production of short films, prepared for the purpose of educating the public in the beauty of Victoria.

"Wild Life in Bushland," which runs for twenty minutes, was produced under the supervision of Mr. L. C. Bromilow, Acting Manager of Publicity and Tourist Services, and in collaboration with Mr. D. Fleay, Director of the Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary at Healesville, which is the setting for the production. The commentary is by Mr. John Dease, from the manuscript by Mr. Norman McCance, and the outstanding photography is the work of Mr. Bert Fairfoul, of the Publicity and Tourist Staff.

The film is quite unique, being the first record in colour of much of Australia's fauna, under practically natural conditions at the Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary. It is obvious that the job of recording characteristic ways and habits of so many birds, animals and reptiles, many of them shy, or otherwise difficult subjects for the camera, involved a great deal of intimate, patient photography. In this direction, of course, Mr. Fleay's co-operation was invaluable. The colour shots, secured at night, are particularly interesting, being the first of this kind attempted under outdoor conditions.

Magnificent Colour

Highlights of the film are the magnificent colour of many of the birds, a lyrebird family at dinner feeding a "foster" chick, an all-in wrestle between a giant old-man kangaroo and a Cape Barren goose, a green tree-climbing snake shown against the skyline, and the Director of the Sanctuary, Mr. D. Fleay, fondling a lengthy Queensland python.

Originally conceived, like its predecessors, to encourage travel and develop a tourist sense in those who are unconscious of the natural loveliness around them, "Wild Life in Bushland," together with our other films has developed a new mission, i.e., educating and entertaining the Australian and Allied Services, and there is now a keen demand for them, particularly among American soldiers.

The technical work of the film is of a high order. The film was made on Kodachrome processed by the Kodak Co. and the sound track was the work of Kinelab Pty. Ltd., Sydney.

The Australian and Allied Services have standardised on 16 mm. film, but until recently it was impossible to put a sound track on 16 mm. colour film. This particular difficulty has now been overcome in "Wild Life in Bushland."

ANOTHER HANDSOME GIFT BY ARARAT V.R. AUXILIARY

THE Ararat V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary is maintaining its place in the news by its generous gifts to war charity movements. Last November, it presented a mobile canteen, costing £870, to the Salvation Army. This canteen, which carries 100 gallons of liquids and is fitted with an amplifying system, a short-wave radio and a gramophone, is proving immensely valuable. Confirmation of this comes from Major Satchell of the Salvation Army, who has just returned from a visit to the forward areas. He has informed the Committee that he saw the canteen in operation and that it is giving wonderful service to the troops.

Realising the great work that is being done by the Salvation Army, the Ararat Auxiliary has now decided to donate to the Army a refrigerator for the use of Australian Servicemen on any battlefield where it can be most effectively employed. This refrigerator will cost £240, and when it is ready for service it will be specially presented at Ararat to the Salvation Army by the local Auxiliary Committee.

* * *

The series of free Sunday entertainments for Servicemen, which have proved a great attraction during the past three years, were resumed at the V.R. Institute on April 16th. There are actually two concerts each Sunday—one at 3 p.m. conducted by the Central Committee of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, and the other at 8.15 p.m., sponsored by the combined Committees of the Newport Workshops Auxiliary and Sports Auxiliary.

Tea, cakes and sandwiches are features of the afternoon concert of song, music and dancing, and a fine aspect is the voluntary labour generously provided by numerous girls, including many from the V.R. Refreshment Services. Professional entertainers, who frequently appear at these happy little gatherings, give their services free, and the only expense is the small amount required for the purchase of refreshments. The concert items involve no extra charge to the Committees concerned.

Veteran V.R. Man Returns From Prison Camp

PRIVATE Peter James, who enlisted from the Paint Shop at Newport to do his bit in the present war, may have an unusual record as a soldier. Though only 44, he is a veteran of the First Great War, having enlisted at 17 in the 6th Battalion. His service in the present war has been with the Army Medical Corps in the Middle East.

He was among the many Australians left behind and taken prisoner when Crete was evacuated in June, 1941, and it was his good fortune to be one of the "exchange" Diggers who were released and returned to Australia last month.

He has had 2½ years' experience of enemy prison camps. Two of these were on black bread and no tea in a concentration camp in Crete, followed by a fortnight in Salonika, where the premier item on the menu was biscuit soup, actually little more than boiled biscuits, which were given out only for breakfast.

In Germany, the food was just a little better. Boiled potatoes, occasional soup, potato dumplings and rare issues of pork were sufficient to keep him alive, though he and several others suffered from beri beri, due to malnutrition, and had to be kept in one of the prison hospitals for some weeks.

Like most other prisoners, he was compelled to work, and toiled many ten hours daily building drains, doing heavy farm labor where the hours were from 5.30 a.m. to 10.0 p.m., interrupted for three half-hour breaks for breakfast, dinner and tea. It may be added that the last-named prisoners who showed defiance and refused to work were given three weeks "solitary" on bread and water.

ENLISTMENTS.

R.A.A.F.

LAD Porter R. A. Ashwell; LAD Porter D. A. Brown; App. Cadet V. A. Burgess; App. Student T. S. well; Lad Lbr. P. J. Davern; Jnr. L. L. Dixon; Lad Lbr. A. E. Duff; Lad Porter G. E. Gale; Lad Porter G. Gale; Lad Porter D. A. Hill; Porter J. L. Lawrie; Lad Porter G. McLean; App. Student G. N. Marshall; Lad Labr. R. C. Roberts; Jnr. G. P. Tait; Lad Porter W. E. W. Tait; Lad Porter K. J. Toohy; Lad Porter R. L. Watts.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laurens Street, North Melbourne. Sole Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

JUNE, 1944.

Issue No. 165.

“YOUR TROUBLES — AND OURS” Striking Folder Revealing Railway Difficulties

THAT is the attractive title of an eloquent little folder which has just been issued by the Commissioners to explain to their patrons the difficulties of the Victorian Railways brought about by the war. “You do not have to tell us that the service we are giving to passengers is far from satisfactory,” the Commissioners explain. “We know it and we regret it as much as you do.” “The defects in service arise chiefly from shortage of coal and qualified manpower. Thousands of railwaymen have enlisted in the fighting forces, and many others are engaged in vital war industries.”

After referring to the serious situation—and the fact that the department is living from hand to mouth, the Commissioners said they were in constant anxiety lest further reduction of supplies should prevent them from continuing even the existing restricted services.”

It is emphasised that whilst war requirements—the paramount consideration—are being met, this is now possible only at the expense of civilian convenience.

The causes of late running are named—the very heavy loads of passenger trains, poorer steaming facilities of the coal supplied, double tracks at stations, and heavy congestion of vans.

The Commissioners believe that many patrons would rather put up with the discomfort of the crowding of many trains than not be permitted to travel; the alternative—a priority permit system—would be very difficult to apply and would require extra staff which is not available.

Greater Seating Capacity

Reference is made to the need to use more carriages which in normal times are in service only for short periods at holiday periods. They are lighter weight and have much greater seating capacity than the regular cars, and thus tend to reduce the degree of crowding.

Sections are devoted to the restriction of seat booking, which—because of the natural tendency for a seat holder to stand on his rights—prevents the maximum use being made of seating accommodation, and also to the endorsing of tickets for specific sections out of Melbourne. The latter, of course, is the only means of placing a limit on overcrowding and giving servicemen and women a reasonable chance of travelling when they wish.

In referring to the rush at buffet counters at refreshment stations, the Commissioners point out that with the limited staffs dining room service could not be given to passengers of the crowded trains in the short time available, but with a buffet service many more people are able to obtain at least some refreshments.

The unfair discrimination alleged by some people because country services and not suburban services have been drastically cut has no foundation, for the reason that suburban trains are operated by electric power generated by slack coal or brown coal, neither of which is usable in steam locomotives.

THE following handsome tribute, addressed to the Chairman of Commissioners (Mr. N. C. Harris), has been received from Mr. D. York Syme, Managing Director of the Melbourne Steamship Co. Ltd.—

“Travelling from Sydney this morning in the ‘Spirit of Progress’ I read the pamphlet, ‘Your Troubles and Ours,’ which was placed on each passenger’s seat in the Parlor Car. I was very much impressed with the clearness with which the difficulties confronting the Railway Department were set out, and the excellent tone of the appeal to travellers to make allowances in the face of your unparalleled difficulties during the War. I think the publication is an excellent idea, and the appeal to the patience and understanding of railway patrons will evoke, I feel sure, a ready response.”

“As a frequent traveller to Sydney, I do want to congratulate you, and all your colleagues, upon the excellent service and high standard of courtesy maintained by your Conductors, and the staff of the Dining Car. The unruffled good nature shown by your men when the long waiting queues must tend to put their nerves on edge, is something to be admired.”

“I think the service the Victorian Railways Department is giving in all its branches is worthy of all Victorians’ sincere admiration.”

In referring to the fact that during the war a vastly greater volume of traffic (both goods and passenger) than ever before has been handled, the Commissioners record that in 1943 the railways carried 2½ million (46 per cent.) more tons of goods and nearly 54 million (38 per cent.) more passengers than in the year before the outbreak of the war. They mention this as a practical demonstration of the ability of the railway system to meet extraordinary war demands “and a tribute to the efficient teamwork and loyal co-operation by the rank and file of railway men and women—the great bulk of whom are regularly and willingly working long hours.”

Further Objectives

Greater comfort and greater speed and a frequency of service to meet all reasonable demands are objectives for the future. To achieve these, improved rolling stock, better tracks and better equipment will be essential. Under present day conditions it is impracticable to undertake more than a limited amount of preparatory work, but it is the Commissioners’ intention to carry out an extensive programme of improvements as soon as they are free to do so.

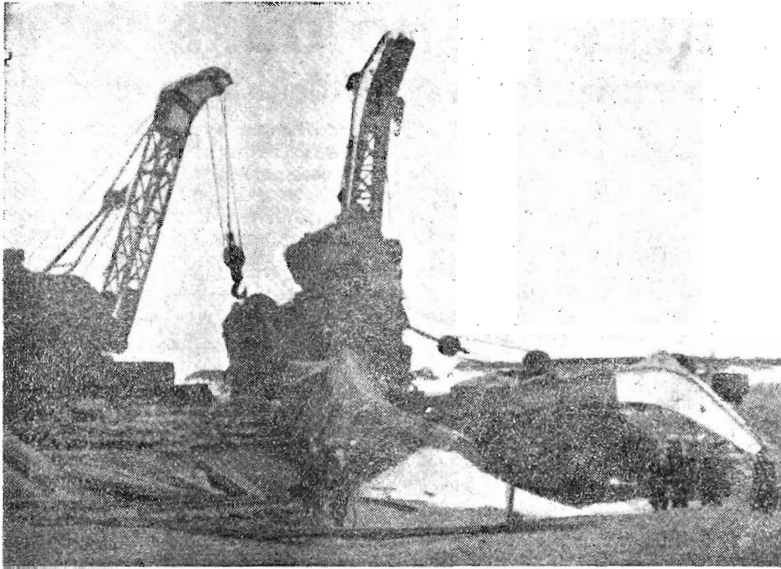
The following striking words conclude the folder:—

“Meanwhile, we will use every effort to give the best service possible with the means available to us, and at the first opportunity will remove the restrictions and disabilities which now exist only because there are no practicable alternatives.”

Every member of the staff should study the folder carefully and see that it has a wide circulation amongst railway patrons.

Fine Team Work Revealed in Berrybank Derailment

ON April 28th, on a 7-ft. embankment about 2 miles on the "down" side of Berrybank station, a broken rail resulted in the derailment of a number of "GY" and "GZ" trucks loaded with bulk wheat. After making some progress in the rerailing operations, which were undertaken without discharging the loading, the foundation for the packing of the 60-ton wrecking crane failed, with the result that the crane overturned and slid down the bank.



Lifting up the Derailed 60-ton Crane.

To deal with this situation, which it is hoped will be unique in the history of the Victorian Railways, a breakdown train with a 60-ton and a 30-ton wrecking crane was despatched to the scene under Mr. Cornish, Chief Foreman, North Melbourne Locomotive Depot.

Owing to its high centre of gravity and its weight of approximately 90 tons, the lifting and rerailing of the overturned crane presented unusual difficulties. It was first lifted up to rail level still in the overturned position, and was packed with sleepers to hold it whilst the tackle was adjusted for turning the crane right way up.

For this packing, and the packing of the two working cranes, three truck loads of sleepers were required in addition to the tons of oregon packing normally carried on the breakdown train.

The most difficult operation—that of pulling the crane into an upright position—then commenced. As there were no trees in the vicinity which could be utilised as anchors, beams were sunk into the ground, cables were placed around them and led through pulleys so that the tractive power of a "C" and an "A2" engine could be applied to the crane. Although through the arrangement of the pulleys the pull of the engines had been multiplied by three, they had to exert their maximum tractive effort to bring the crane back slowly into its upright position.

The derailment occurred in the area swept by the disastrous fires early in the year, and the wind blew across the desolate plains without interruption at almost gale force during the whole of the rerailing operations.

At first the men were almost blinded by the ashes from the track; then, just as goggles arrived on the Monday evening, it started to rain heavily and the goggles were not required. Almost without pause it blew and rained, with occasional hail storms, until the following Friday when the job was completed, and the service on this busy line restored.

During the whole period of a long job in exceptionally bad weather, and involving difficulties calling for much resourcefulness and ingenuity, Rolling Stock and Way and Works personnel working as a perfect team were all animated by the desire to complete the task as rapidly as possible. The Refreshment Room Service at Geelong and the Dining Car Depot in Melbourne rendered great assistance in providing the foodstuffs required during the operation.

The Commissioners were so impressed with the excellence of the job that they have expressed their special thanks in a personal letter addressed to everyone engaged on it.

Flt. Lieut. Ken Richards Scores Again!

FOLLOWING his fine achievement (mentioned in the May issue of the "News Letter" in blowing up a 3,000-ton ship splitting in two another vessel 5,000 tons off the Jugo-Slav coast for which exploits he received D.F.C., Flt.-Lieutenant Ken Richards has again sprung into bannered news in the press for scoring a hit on the Pescara Dam.

Flt.-Lieutenant Richards was one of a number ordered to smash the sluice gates of the great Dam, 10 miles from the Allies' Advance front.

The effect of the combined attack was to release a vast quantity of water which raced towards the town of Pescara, flooding supply and concentration areas behind the enemy east coast disposition, under the command of Field Marshal Kesselring and destroying for the immediate future one of Italy's chief sources of hydro-electric power.

The dive-bombing crews had been specially trained for weeks in overcoming the particular problems presented by this dangerous raid. He stated that "they were briefed to make a power dive through the flak, and their bombs had to crash on a small target from a low level because heavy automatic explosions were required to crack the iron sluice gate."

Flt.-Lieutenant Richards had evidently learned his lessons thoroughly and his genius for hitting the bull's eye is revealed by the further reference to the fact that he swooped down on the railway bridge at Pescara and had blown an immense hole in that strategically valuable structure.

SERVICE.

MR. F. Meldrum, T. & G. Builders, Corner of Collins and Rundle Streets, Melbourne, records his appreciation of good service in this letter to the Chairman of Commissioners: "Yesterday morning, as I was travelling to the City by train from Glen Iris, one of your ticket checkers boarded my train. To my dismay, I found I had lost my ticket. Now this story has a happy ending and that is why I mention it to you."

"I was not made to feel a failure by the checker. On the contrary he was pleasant and tactful, and said that he would ring Glen Iris and see what I had dropped the ticket on the ground form. The ticket was found by the Stationmaster, Glen Iris, and when I reported to him last evening he was most courteous—even to the extent of refunding me 8½d. for my ticket from the City to Glen Iris."

"Will you please accept my congratulations on your staff and through official channels my appreciation of the action of the checker and Stationmaster at Glen Iris."

RECONDITIONING SECTION OF HEIDELBERG LINE

RECENT temporary alterations to the time-tables of the electric services between Melbourne and North Carlton, Reservoir and Heidelberg, have been designed to provide extra time in the overall run between Melbourne and Heidelberg—a change demanded by the fact that extensive reconditioning of the tracks over the route which carries the three services between Melbourne and Heidelberg necessarily involves slowing down of the trains.

This work, which entails a considerable amount of re-laying, re-spacing, ballasting and improved drainage on two sections of track, including tunnels, will not be completed in some weeks.

The biggest problem in the under-taking is the re-conditioning of the road bed and tracks in the tunnels, where work during the "peak" hours of train running is necessarily restricted. Such operations are therefore confined to a short night shift between midnight and 5 a.m.

Another problem is the difficulty of obtaining levels for drainage in the formation. Previously the drainage was limited to a line of pipes running between and parallel to the tracks. Today larger pipes are replacing these with tributary transverse pipes at regular intervals.

This section of the work fixed the overall time of the programme, as it is confined to "off peak" traffic hours during the day time to avoid disturbing local residents at night and the operation of pneumatic rock drilling tools.

BUILDING TUG BOATS NOW!

A BRAND new spectacle in the Newport Workshops is the construction of a tug boat for the Commonwealth Government.

This is the first of a number which have been ordered, and it is the first job of this nature to be undertaken by the Victorian Railways.

The vessel, which will be 75 feet long, 18 feet broad, with an overall depth of 17 feet, is being constructed of steel. As down hand welding is essential, the hull is being constructed in five sections, mainly upside down.

A feature of this special job is the erection of a scribing loft. Here are carefully prepared the templates for the development of the lines of the boat.

The shop in which the work on the hull is being undertaken has been divided into two parts, one part for the construction of the separate sections and the other for the assembly of the sections into the completed vessel.

The transport of the finished hulls to their launching place involves not only special road equipment but also a careful selection of route.

ENLISTMENTS.

R.A.A.F.

Lad Lbr. L. G. Anderson; Lad Lbr. L. H. Barker; Jnr. Clk. W. A. Basterfield; Lad Porter F. P. Caruthers; Sup. Engine Clr. G. F. Cumming; Jnr. Clk. W. Dunstan; App. Car & Wagon Bdr. J. J. Dwyer; Lad Porter K. M. Ferguson; Jnr. Clk. I. Gifford; Jnr. Clk. D. E. Gow; Lad Lbr. A. A. Keartland; Jnr. Clk. J. F. Longton; Sup. Engine Clr. L. G. Moloney; Lad Porter A. P. Palmer; App. Car & Wagon Bdr. D. E. Sutcliffe; Lad Lbr. H. R. Turner; Lad Lbr. R. J. Wilson.

R.A.N.

Clk. T. M. Duffy.

V.R. MEN KILLED IN ACTION.

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report that Pilot Officer F. O'Dwyer, of the R.A.A.F., previously reported missing, is now considered to have been killed in action. A quiet unassuming fellow, he joined the railways as a Supernumerary Labourer in 1935, and became an apprentice Sailmaker two years later. Pilot Officer O'Dwyer, who was only 25, had served three years with the Militia before enlisting in the R.A.A.F. in 1942.

Another deeply regretted casualty is that of Flying Officer P. T. Jeffrey, killed in action on May 4 last. This young officer, who enlisted in the R.A.A.F. only two months after joining the railways as an electrical mechanic in July, 1939, was a keen air enthusiast. Before the outbreak of war he was a volunteer in the "No. 21 Squadron," which was the training school for a number of other outstanding airmen. He was 27 years of age.

RETIREMENT OF MR. EDWARD ARMFIELD.

ALL good wishes to Mr. Edward ("Ted") Armfield, Special Officer attached to the Traffic Branch, who retired last month.

Mr. Armfield, who had been 45 years in the Department, had specialised in timber and log loading and in other work connected with the Supervisor of Weighing's Division, including assistance in the preparation of the loading diagram which is essential at all goods sheds throughout the State.

In recognition of his popularity, his colleagues made Mr. Armfield, who is an ardent follower of the great Izaak Walton, a present of a purse of notes for the purpose of enabling him to purchase a complete fishing outfit.

COMPETITION FOR TREE PLANTING AND DECORATION OF STATIONS AND DEPOTS.

In the annual competition for tree planting and station yards in 1943, the first prizes in districts where entries were received were gained as under—

Section	District	Name	Grade	Location
New work without piped water supply	Geelong	Mr. W. J. Lind	Ptr.-in-Charge	Moriac
	Metro.	Mr. L. H. Jones	Stationmaster	Wandin
Maintenance of existing trees and gardens with piped water supply	Ballarat	Mr. H. J. Freestone	Operating Porter	Wallace
		Mr. W. T. Bettess	Ptr.-in-Charge	
	Geelong	Mr. L. S. Dwyer	Stationmaster	South Geelong
Maintenance of existing trees and gardens without piped water supply	Seymour	Mr. A. A. Newman	Operating Porter	Longwood
		Mr. J. W. H. Branagh	Ptr.-in-Charge	
Maintenance of existing trees and gardens without piped water supply	Bendigo	Mr. B. W. Lyndon	Ganger	Kotta
		Mrs. M. I. Lyndon	Caretaker	
	Geelong	Mrs. A. S. Bruce	Caretaker	Grassdale
		Mrs. G. A. Young	Caretaker	
New work	Metro.	Mrs. H. Williamson	(equal in points)	Woorit
		Eastern Ballarat	Mrs. P. Excell	Caretaker
New work	Ballarat	Mrs. M. E. Canning	"	"
		Mr. H. Stevenson	Chargeman	Ouyen Loco. Depot
Maintenance of existing trees, gardens, etc.	Ballarat	Mr. W. O'Shea	Foreman	Bendigo Loco. Depot
		on behalf of Loco. staff		

LOCOMOTIVE AND WORKS DEPOTS (STATE WIDE).

It is very gratifying to the Commissioners that active interest is still being maintained by the staff in beautification work at many points, despite the overtime which is being worked in many cases, the closing of the Departmental Nursery at Flemington for the issue of trees, shrubs, etc., and difficult seasonal conditions, particularly the unusual dryness in certain areas in the planting months.

HAVE YOU A SHARP EYE?

A MILLION things must be done To enable trains to be run; But the things done are not always new. Some may have grown old and call for review. A sharp eye may detect where certain faults lie— Faults fattened by Practice that none can deny. Faults, indeed wasteful, lacking in care. Which — you feel sure — you can quickly repair.

WELL, if you have noticed some fault, some extravagance or waste, some mechanism or method that invites improvement, send your ideas to the Betterment and Suggestions Board, Railway Administration Offices, Spencer Street, Melbourne.

Every idea with a proven value will be suitably rewarded—and don't forget every communication to the Board will be kept strictly Private and Confidential.

V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND—£45,000 in UNDER 4 YEARS

UP to the end of April last the Patriotic Fund had been established 3 years and 8 months, and over that period the handsome total of £45,001 had been raised. That represents an average of over £1,000 a month, somewhat higher than the Committee's ambition when the Fund was first established. At the present rate of earning, the completion of 4 years' activity at the end of August next, should see the striking total of £50,000.

Although the result to date is an excellent one it could still be much better. The number of contributors is increasing, but there are thousands of railwaymen who have not authorised the small deduction of 6d. a fortnight from their pay envelopes as a regular gift to the V.R. Patriotic Fund. As considerable sums are now being devoted to the relief of war prisoners, every man in the railways should contribute his "mite", just for the pleasure of feeling that he is doing something for fellow railwaymen who are in enemy hands.

The Aircraft Auxiliary at the Aircraft Area, Newport Workshops, which was established as an Auxiliary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund about six months ago, has already raised more than £1,000—a remarkable performance.

The value of this activity, carried on by an energetic Committee, of which Mr. R. J. Murray, Area Manager at Newport, is Chairman, Miss N. Bradley, is Secretary, and Mr. E. F. McDonald is Treasurer, is shown by the substantial donations which it has already made to the Australian Red Cross, Australian Comforts Fund, Red Cross Prisoners' of War Fund, Air Force House, Blamey House and similar organizations. The Auxiliary also allots some of its steadily mounting income to the Beaufort Squadron Adoption Fund, and is sending parcels to ex-members of the Aircraft Area staff who are now in the fighting forces. In short, it is putting up an achievement of which any patriotic organisation might be proud.

* * *

Owing to the absence for a well-earned rest of Mr. W. E. Elliott Honorary Secretary of the V. R. Patriotic Fund, work in the State-wide raffle in aid of the Fund, which was referred to in the April issue of the "News Letter," was temporarily suspended. With the welcome return of Mr. Elliott much improved in health, arrangements for the Raffle will soon be completed.

Earnest consideration is also being given to the project for despatching 2 parcels a year to ex railway members of the fighting forces.

Here let us commend the generosity of Mr. W. O'Shea and the staff of the Bendigo Loco. Depot, who intend to donate to the local Auxiliary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund the amount of the first prize (£2/10/-) won by them in the Locomotive and Works Depots sections of the Annual Competition for Tree-planting and Decoration of Stations, etc. as shown on page 3.

NEW CAFETERIA AT ST. KILDA STATION

ENCOURAGED by the success of the cafeterias at Spencer Street and Flinders Street railway stations, the Department has converted the Refreshment Room at St. Kilda station into a cafeteria of simpler type.

Patrons at St. Kilda now pick up the necessary tray and cutlery at the end of a long counter, and then choose from the array of cold foods—salads, sandwiches, scones, rolls and butter, sweets, etc.—or secure, further along the counter, a hot joint or entree with vegetables, or a meat pie together with tea, coffee, or milk. The cost of the refreshments is rapidly assessed by a cashier and paid by the customer who then proceeds to a table.

Since its debut as a cafeteria, the upper room at Flinders Street station has had an average of 900 customers per day, as compared with 500 per day before its conversion.

The Spencer Street cafeteria also maintains its attraction. As a dining-room, it averaged 1,270 customers per day, but as a smart, modern cafeteria it has achieved a daily average of 2,300.

The demand for Victorian Railways meals elsewhere continues to be heavy, and an interesting sidelight is provided in the record number of 5,713 dinners served in the dining car of "Spirit of Progress" during the four weeks ended February 12 of this year. The previous "high" in this special service was 5,428 dinners for the four weeks ended December 18 last. On the "Up" journeys the demand for breakfasts is similarly heavy, the daily average served recently reaching the high figure of 230.

ANOTHER LONG SERVICE RAILWAYMAN.

IN a reference to the late Mr. H. Johnson in last issue, it was stated that he had been in the Department for 51½ years, and also had served under no fewer than 25 Commissioners. This record, it was declared, was "not likely to be challenged."

Actually, it has been challenged by Mr. Robert Harsley, a sawyer working at Spotswood, who writes that in addition to serving under 25 Commissioners he has "had 52 years of continuous work in the Railways Department where I am still employed."

Mr. Harsley, who was born in 1877, retired in January, 1942, but owing to the shortage of staff is being retained in a supernumerary capacity in his old job.

Good luck to you, Mr. Harsley.

Loud Speaker System in Bendigo Goods Yard

BENDIGO Goods Yard has recently been equipped with loud speakers, and from his office the Yard Foreman can now direct the movements of trucks in the Yard.

Staff in the Yard desiring to speak to him can, in their turn, readily confer with the Yard Foreman.

At any time, the Yard Foreman can visit any part of the Yard and by using a convenient telephone, can direct operations by means of the loud speakers, a facility which also enables Bendigo Control to reach him at any time, anywhere in the Yard.

This system of communication which has proved so successful in the Melbourne Goods Yards, simplifies the performance of Yard operations in proper sequence, and places the experience of foremen more effectively at the service of shunters.

The same system will soon be introduced at Ararat, and ultimately at Ballarat and Geelong.

The system of loud speakers on passenger platforms which has proved so valuable at Flinders Street, Spencer Street, and Ballarat stations, has also been introduced at Bendigo station.

Holiday Train Association Fine Record

THE Holiday Train Association held its annual meeting at the V.R. Institute, Flinders Street, last month. One by-product of the evening was the presentation of a cheque for £36 to the V.R. Patriotic Fund. The Association's gifts to the Fund now total £105—an excellent achievement.

This was the "tenth birthday" party of the Association, which since its formation under war conditions still has a membership of 427. At least a dozen of the first Holiday Train party in 1932 are still members of the Association.

Up to the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, 55 Holiday Train trips, carrying a total number of 5,327 passengers, had been run, and had embraced every section of the State as well as parts of South Australia.

The receipts had reached £2,000 of which about £13,000 represented Departmental revenue.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laursen Street, North Melbourne, by the Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

JULY, 1944.

Issue No. 166.

THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF RAILWAYS IN WAR

Striking Broadcast Address By Lt.-General Bennett

THE strategical importance of railways is greater than ever it was, in spite of the strides made in the development of road transport. In fact, the increase in the use of Diesel and petrol driven road vehicles has added to the importance of rail transport. That striking comment was made by Lieutenant-General H. Gordon Bennett in a broadcast over the 2FC station (Sydney) on May 16.

Amplifying his reference, Lieutenant-General Bennett further remarked :

" Before the mechanisation of our armies—that is, before the development of the road motor; when all transport was horse-drawn—was considered that an army could operate 75 miles ahead of its railroad. One would imagine that the production of petrol driven trucks would have extended this limit considerably—almost to infinity. In fact, it is not so.

" Parallel with the modernisation of armies in this respect is the introduction of new weapons. The number of artillery pieces has been multiplied. The weapons of the infantry soldier have been increased both in weight and in numbers. The ammunition required for these arms and equipment has sunk into insignificance what was used in the days of the horse. Nowadays we have tanks, armoured cars, tractor mounted guns, not to mention aeroplanes, all of which need fuel and spare parts.

Dependence On Railways

" This has resulted in such concentration on the roads, that greater dependence than ever is placed on the railways. In addition, the size of the armies has been increased from tens of thousands to millions of men. All these have to be provided with food, ammunition and other supplies. This means greater loads on our railway systems than ever. It would be impossible to rely solely on road transport even to reduce our dependence on railways."

Emphasising the inability of roads to provide effective transport for an army in war, Lieut.-General Bennett declared that 360 tons of war material travelling in lorries (with an interval of 150 yards between each lorry) would occupy 10 miles of road. "Another factor," he continued, "is that only

specially constructed, first-class roads will stand the strain of the heavy traffic of a modern war. Not all road bridges will carry a 70 or 100-ton tank. I have seen our medium tanks crash through the surface of what appeared to be good roads. The constant wear and tear soon wears even the best of roads so that an army of road workers is required to keep them trafficable."

Talking of the recent destruction by Allied air attacks of the railways in Northern France and Belgium, and especially of the marshalling yards and railway junctions, all preliminary to the invasion, Lieut.-General Bennett declared that "if the destruction has been effective, it would paralyse all railway movement as far back as 250 miles from the Straits of Dover and the North Sea, that is from the Channel ports. The effect of this will be to isolate the garrisons defend-

ing these ports, preventing them from being supplied with food and ammunition and, more important still, with reinforcements.

" We may be sure that road movement will be similarly blocked so that the landing of the invaders should be free from any interference from Rommel's counter-attacking reserves. Assuming that they have succeeded in overwhelming the fixed channel defences, our troops should be able to move well inland before they come up against a concerted attack.

Value To Armies

Touching on the value of the continental railways to the invading Allied Armies, the General explained that in order to make the damaged tracks rapidly serviceable, "Railway Construction units have been trained and specially instructed in their tasks. As soon as the enemy has been pushed clear of the beach-head so that we can use the railways, these Railway Construction Units will cross the Channel to France, taking with them sufficient steel rails to repair the damaged lines. We would soon see complete trains, fully laden with stores, being ferried on specially constructed railway ferries across the English Channel into France—as was done in the last war."

" It might be said," he continued, "that the Germans, with their flair for organization, will quickly repair the damage inflicted by our aircraft and will soon have the railways running again. It is well known that Germany is very short of steel rails, and it was stated some time back that rails from the less used lines were taken up and used to restore damaged railway tracks. Apart from this shortage of steel rails, there is a shortage of rolling stock and especially locomotives.

CONFIDENCE . . .

PUBLIC confidence in the railways is vital to their future success.

Upon it will depend, very largely, whether business is retained or lost when competitive conditions—probably intensified—have again to be met.

Unfortunately, the quality of service we are now able to give is not a good advertisement. Many people do not fully realise our difficulties, and consequently there is danger of losing their confidence.

To prevent this, we have to convince the public that the fault is not ours. Words alone are not enough, although it will help if questions and criticisms are intelligently and courteously answered.

The surest means is to demonstrate, by friendly and willing assistance to our customers in the many ways that are still open to all of us, that we are anxious and ready to do all we can to offset their present disabilities.

(Continued in Col. 3, Page 2.)

25th BIRTHDAY OF ELECTRIFIED SUBURBAN SERVICES REVEALS VALUE OF THIS SPECIAL TRANSPORT

THE recent twenty-fifth birthday of the electrified suburban services on the Victorian Railways provides an opportunity of realising the immense value to Melbourne of its electrified transport. Since its debut in 1919, that highly organised service has carried many millions of passengers; it has cut many minutes off the schedules of the former steam trains, and through its speed and efficiency has enabled suburban residents to live further away from their jobs—thus helping to relieve the problem of congestion in a rapidly expanding metropolis—or alternatively to waste less time in travelling.

The changeover from steam to electricity was smooth and uneventful, and daily travellers quickly realised the value of the new transport by the greater acceleration and reduced schedules.

The inauguration of electric operation took place early on Sunday morning, May 29. Theatre crowds went home on the Sandringham line on the late Saturday night in the puffing steam trains. Midnight arrived and about a half-hour later the first electric train, heralding its departure with the then unfamiliar whistle of its type, crept out of its platform at Flinders Street, rapidly gathered speed on its way to Richmond and was duly recorded arriving at its destination (Sandringham) on time.

Throughout the night until the following early morning that train and eight others whirled "up" and "down" in a full dress rehearsal of the daily schedule, each train loaded with a sufficiency of pig iron to give the equivalent of passenger weight so that schedules could be proved.

Services Rapidly Built Up

From that day the service was rapidly built up to the safe, speedy and efficient transport medium it is today. There have been stoppages and interruptions through lightning and other unforeseen causes, but never for long.

Improvements since the first train whirled into the news included the provision of high-speed circuit breakers in substations and tie-stations to limit damage by lightning in abnormal weather, and the extension of three position automatic signalling which provides for increased traffic capacity and safety under intensive traffic.

As a result of age and heavy service demands the original generating plant at the Newport Power Station is now approaching the end of its useful life, and a new turbo-alternator, with two modern boilers, has recently been installed as a first step towards rejuvenation. This set is of much greater capacity and efficiency than the older units. The details are:—

Economical Rating 24,000 kw.
Maximum Continuous Rating 30,000 kw.
Two-hour Rating 37,500 kw.

The turbine is of the single cylinder horizontal reaction type, direct coupled to the alternator, which generates a three-phase twenty-five cycle supply at 20,000 volts.

Each of the two boilers has an official rating of 187,500 lb. of steam per hour at 400 lb. per square inch and 750° F. superheat at the stop valve, and both are fired with pulverised black coal.

With the completion of this new plant, Melbourne's suburban transport is in a sounder position, and valuable coal economy is being secured.

Adapted in conformity with the growth of Melbourne's population, especially peak hour requirements, the suburban electric railway system is likely to meet all demands made upon it for many years to come.

Railways in War.

(continued from page 1)

"The constant bombing by our tank busters over the past months has destroyed locomotives and trains in large numbers. To shift steel rails requires trains with engines, which Germany lacks. Rommel will be hard put to it to make any quick restoration of the railway system. We may be certain that, as fast as he repairs the damage, further raids will undo his work."

THE importance of railways in peace and war is further revealed in the following striking comment by Lord Leathers in the "Passenger Transport Journal" of December 13 last:

"The war has made it clear that the railways are a national asset which must be maintained in full efficiency. This is absolutely necessary not only for trade and industrial purposes, but also for defence. From this it follows that the financial position of the railways must be firmly established. We cannot allow such a vital service to be starved of proper maintenance and improvements owing to shortage of funds or inability to raise new capital."

The foregoing official Govt. recognition of the absolute necessity for a healthy and efficient railway system is of great importance and cannot be made too widely known. State ownership of railways in Australia makes it even more important that the principle be understood.

To sum up, a moving army relies primarily on adequate rail support and that opinion is generally endorsed by all Allied Army leaders. Lieut.-General Bennett pithily put it in his A.B.C. broadcast: "Experience has proved that the further forward railways can be used, the more efficient the army becomes."

Bendigo North Workshop's Effort for Victory Loan

THIS framed Certificate of Honour, which was received from the Federal Treasurer (the Hon. J. B. Chifley) and is now displayed in a prominent place in the Bendigo North Workshops, is a tribute to the Workshop employees' contribution in connection with the First Victory Loan.

Approximately every third man in the 'Shops—altogether 108 men—signed up for a total of £1,780. Of that number, 66 signed payroll application forms, the remainder being cash applicants. Whilst the number of men employed at the railway workshops represents only about 33 per cent. of the railway employees in the Bendigo district, nearly 80 per cent. of the payroll applicants in Bendigo are Workshop employees.

In the last three loans Bendigo North Workshops employees have contributed the fine total of £6,000—an excellent effort—and a handsome response to the good work of a special Loan Committee consisting of a Workshops Shop Committee, with Mr. V. Hosking as Chairman and Mr. A. C. Ebdon as energetic Secretary and Organiser.



V.R. Airman Has Front Seat At The Invasion

Of course, a Victorian Railwayman would have a front seat at the invasion. He is Flying-Officer William A. H. Kellett, navigator in one of the Mosquito night fighter squadrons, which scored the first "kill" off the French coast by sending four big four-motored Heinkel 177's spinning into the sea.



Flying-Officer W. A. Kellett

Kellett's Mosquito was under the control of Flying-Officer F. Stevens and these men were responsible for two of the four tanks destroyed.

This squadron, which had the job of protecting Allied convoys and beachheads against an expected night attack by the Germans, held the record among Britain's night defence forces in "kills" and in number of hours flown for the months of March and April. Squadron Leader Hampshire was particularly gratified over the fact that up to the time of the invasion his squadron had flown 3,000 hours without scratching a mudguard.

Flying-Officer Kellett is 23 years of age. He joined the Department as a junior clerk in the Accountancy Branch in 1936, and was subsequently transferred to the Stores and Secretary's Branches. He was an inquiry clerk in the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, when he enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in November, 1941.

MR. T. P. LYNCH PASSES

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to learn of the death last month of Mr. T. P. Lynch, former Secretary to the Minister of Railways, at the age of 73.

He had been associated with the Railways in various capacities since 1899, when he started duty in the Engineer-in-Chief's office. On the establishment of the Railway Construction Branch in 1892, he was transferred to that Branch, and was promoted to Chief Clerk in 1904. In 1916 he became Secretary to the Minister, and remained in that capacity right through to his retirement early in 1937—a record length of service in the job.

He was Secretary to the Ministers in 15 different Governments, exhibiting a courtesy and diplomacy that won the trust and admiration of them all.

Mr. Lynch was exceptionally well-informed on the political history of Victoria. He was also "well up" in cricket, which he had studied closely.

FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON REDUCED SERVICES Railways Feel The Coal Shortage

LAST month the starvation of slack as well as large coal forced the Commissioners to make further reductions in train services. Suburban services were cut by 10 per cent. during "peak" periods on week days and Saturdays, and by 50 per cent. in the "off-peak" hours. Broadly, this meant that 13 "peak" trains were cancelled in the morning and 10 in the evening, and the decision as to which train would be withdrawn was made after reference to special tallies of train loadings. Those tallies indicated the trains that could be cancelled with least inconvenience to the public.

Sunday travel was reduced to one train to Melbourne on most lines in the mornings, no morning trains from Melbourne, a half-hourly service only during afternoons and evenings, with last trains leaving Flinders Street about 10 p.m.

There were no special trains on Saturdays for patrons of racing or football events, and this gave many thousands possibly for the first time a realisation of the effects of the coal shortage in Victoria.

Goods train mileage also had to be further restricted, requiring rigid control of truck supply for general loading, live stock and commodities like wheat and firewood at country stations.

An improvement in supplies of slack coal enabled the Commissioners to restore the normal service on suburban electrified lines on week days as from Monday, June 26. Modified Sunday restrictions were introduced on June 25, providing additional trains in the morning and after 10 p.m. but no improvement between 1 and 10 p.m. The Sunday service depends on assistance readily given by the State Electricity Commission, but further improvement in the near future is unlikely.

In spite of all that has been done, continued short supplies of large coal prevent any relief at present so far as steam trains are concerned. Until production improves, or rationing of other industries takes place, no restorations can be expected. It is a national disaster that the railway contribution to the war effort of Australia should be restricted in this manner.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.

LAD Lbr. W.C. Murcutt.

R.A.A.F.

Lad Lbr. J. F. Bourke; Lad Lbr. L. W. Cowan; Lad Lbr. R. Gladstone; Lad Lbr. C. Kirkham; Lad Lbr. W. T. Martin; Lad Lbr. A. V. McDonald; Jr. Clk. L. J. McIntyre; Lad Lbr. G. Megee; Lad Lbr. A. A. Murray; Lad Lbr. S. Reiter; Lad Lbr. J. W. Woolan.

R.A.N.

Clk. J. R. Beech; Jr. Clk. L. L. Phillips.

W.A.A.F.

Miss A. M. Gardner (Process Worker).

REFRESHMENT SERVICE REACHES NEW PEAKS IN PROVISION OF MEALS

"JUST a word of thanks for the meal we had at your station on What we ate was not what we appreciated so much as the way it was served up to us. Most of us had travelled 3,000 miles and we had not seen anything to come up to your meal. Thanks to yourself and the girls who helped to serve it to us."

The above note from Private J. W. Parry, addressed to the Manager, the Railway Refreshment Rooms, Seymour, is typical of many which have been received by the Refreshment Branch testifying to the good work in providing wholesome meals to members of the Allied Services passing through.

The magnitude of this special military service is shown by the fact that in the week, May 22-28, the Refreshment Branch provided 13,700 meals for the Fighting Services at various Refreshment Rooms. At Seymour alone between 1,500 and 1,600 service meals were consumed in one day.

A Difficult Task

Apart from meals for troops, the Refreshment Branch is performing a difficult task in feeding large numbers of railway passengers on the trains which still run.

For instance, a new "peak" in the provision of No. 1 dinners on the "Spirit of Progress," viz., 5,745, was established for the four weeks ending June 3. That figure was 155 greater than the previous "high," established for the four weeks ending May 6. Similarly, a new apex in the consumption of breakfasts on the same popular train was reached in the four weeks ending June 3, viz., 6,540.

Much as the necessity for such performances may be regretted, these figures are only possible with team work of a very high order.

ANOTHER BIG RAFFLE PLANNED TO ASSIST THE V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND.

ANOTHER grand assault on the pockets of the charitable will be undertaken by the V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee next month. To assist the fund another big raffle is planned and tickets to the number of 125,000 will be on sale from early in August to about the middle of September. The first prize will be an open order for £100. Substantial 2nd and 3rd prizes with a number of consolation prizes are also included, the total value of the prize money being £150. Each ticket will cost 6d., a book of five tickets being available for 2/-, and the merits of the cause for which the raffle is being run, plus the attraction of the prizes, should bring a ready response. Indeed, it is expected that every ticket will be sold and that there will be keen competition among railway groups in seeing which can secure the largest number of ticket-holders.

* * *

The Hamilton Auxiliary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund is justly proud of its achievement. Organised in September, 1940, under the care of an enthusiastic local Committee, it has raised just over £500, the details of which are as follows:—Australian Comforts Fund, Hamilton, £166/17/-; Australian Red Cross, Hamilton, £162/17/-; 2nd A.I.F. Friendship Club, Hamilton, £15; V.R. Ambulance Appeal, £111/13/-; Red Shield Hut, £6/6-; Greek War Victims Fund, £5; Forwarded to Melbourne for payment to various patriotic appeals, £32/16/6.

The President of this energetic Committee is Mr. M. J. Hannigan, and Mr. M. J. Fitzpatrick is Secretary and Treasurer. The Auxiliary possesses an industrious Ladies' Committee of which the President is Mrs. V. Grant, wife of a former President of the Hamilton V. R. Institute, the Honorary Secretary is Mrs. E. J. Fisher, whose husband is also an ex-President of the Institute; and the Treasurer is Mrs. W. McPhee, wife of the present Senior Vice-President of the local V.R. Institute. The ladies spend much of their leisure knitting for the Forces and they have manufactured more than 200 garments comprising 92 pairs of socks, 27 pairs of mittens, 42 pull-overs, 6 scarves, 28 balaclavas and 4 caps, etc.

Incidentally, the Hamilton Auxiliary has provided hampers for the 13 men of the Hamilton Railway staff now on active service. Weekly contributions from local railwaymen added to the handsome profits from social functions, strongly patronised by railwaymen and their friends, have been responsible for this Auxiliary's excellent record.

The Honorary Secretary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, Mr. W. E. Elliott, has advised that the Manager of The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park, Mr. E. W. Ingham, has forwarded a cheque to the value of £23/10/-, representing contributions to the Victorian Railways Patriotic Fund from Chalet guests.

The Committee of the Fund is very pleased to acknowledge these contributions and takes this opportunity to express its appreciation of the generosity of the donors.

V.R. MEN DIE ON SERVICE.

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report the death in England of Flt.-Sgt. K. F. Galvin, R.A.A.F., at the age of 21. He was a member of the crew of a Halifax bomber which crashed on an operational flight during the invasion, and he was instantly killed. He enlisted in June, 1942, after serving as a junior clerk in the Melbourne Goods. His father is Mr. J. M. Galvin, Federal Secretary of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen.

Two other deeply regretted casualties are those of Sergeant J. R. Kraemer, R.A.A.F., and Private F. Morgan, A.M.F. Sergeant Kraemer, who was killed was born in 1920, and before enlistment had been a lad porter at Ararat. Private Morgan died on Service. He was born in 1912, and before joining the A.M.F. in 1942 he had been a repairer in the Way and Works Branch, working mostly in the Wangaratta district.

Medical Attention At Mt. Buffalo National Park.

THE value of first aid knowledge was dramatically demonstrated at Mt. Buffalo National Park recently when an urgent operation on a lady visitor was undertaken by a visiting Medical Officer and successfully completed with the assistance of Mrs. Ingham, the wife of the Manager of The Chalet, and Miss Tutt, a member of the office staff.

These ladies were fully qualified in first aid, and when the operation was decided upon, their help was enlisted to administer the anaesthetic and assist the doctor generally. Both carried out their unusual duties to the complete satisfaction of the operating surgeon.

The possibility of urgent medical attention being required at Mt. Buffalo National Park has never been lost sight of by the Department, and the services of a medical man on holiday at The Chalet without his instruments have often been enlisted in emergency. In such circumstances, the medical instruments and supplies which are kept at The Chalet have proved very valuable.

All the motor vehicles in use at The Chalet carry ambulance equipment, and complete first aid kits are on hand at the ski runs in winter.

V.R. Prisoner Of War Passes Accountancy

CAPTAIN G. H. Halliday, M.C., who has been a prisoner of war for some months, has reached the news again for passing the immediate examinations of the Commonwealth Institute of Accountancy.

It is a tribute to Captain Halliday's morale and ability that he studied and sat for his exam. whilst a prisoner of war in Germany.

Captain Halliday has the distinction of being the first Victorian railwayman to be decorated for gallantry in the present war. Here is the official description of the feat which won him the Military Cross.

"At Bardia at 1800 hours on January 3, 1941, Captain Halliday was ordered to attack and capture posts 19, 14, 17 and 15. Although daylight reconnaissance was not possible, and neither artillery or mortar support was available, the night attack succeeded and the Battalion right flank established."

"His task called for consummate skill and courage, and the attributes Captain Halliday displayed to the full. His example in personally leading attacks on strong-posts, was a major factor in the Battalion's ultimate success."

Captain Halliday, who is 34 years of age, enlisted in the 6th Division of the 2nd A.I.F. soon after the outbreak of war in 1939. Prior to enlistment, he was a Lieutenant in the 52nd Battalion of Militia. He joined the Department as a junior clerk in the Way and Works Branch in 1925.

Death Of Mr. Frederick Tuck

THE deeply regretted death of Mr. Frederick T. Tuck, Foreman Welder at the New South Workshops, removes a highly skilled railway tradesman whose ability and personality were admired by all who knew him.

The late Mr. Tuck was 59 years of age and had been in the Department since 1912. He joined originally as a boilermaker, and subsequently concentrated on welding. He was appointed Foreman Welder in 1931. At the time of his death he was in charge of the welding work on tug boats which the Department is constructing for the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Tuck was an Englishman who had acquired his original technical education in the London Polytechnic. He had also been employed in the United States.

A quiet, capable, unassuming man, he will be greatly missed by those who had good reason for appreciating his charitable nature.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laurens Street, North Melbourne, for Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

AUGUST, 1944.

Issue No. 167.

RESTRICTIONS IN RAIL SERVICES TO THE COUNTRY Difficulties Of Department Explained By Radio

MANY country people are annoyed about their train services. They want particularly to know why they should still have to put up with a reduced number of trains, when suburban trains which were recently reduced have nearly all been put back. They say this looks like unfair discrimination. Is there any answer to that?"

That was the first question in a discussion explaining the reasons for the restriction of country services, which was broadcast over Victorian radio stations last month.

The answer to the question, of course, was that country and suburban services depend on different fuels—suburban on small black coal used at Newport Power Station, or brown coal for the power from Yallourn; whereas large black coal is needed for steam locomotives. The fact that a little more small coal became available for the production of electric power and that limited supplies of power were now provided by the Electricity Commission at week-ends made it possible to restore almost the normal suburban services—at any rate for the time being.

"Why can't better supplies of large coal be obtained for locomotives?" brought this pertinent reply: "That question could best be answered by the coal miners and the authorities who allot the coal that is mined. The facts, however, are that the supplies of large coal remain dangerously low—so low, indeed, that even with the existing train restrictions they are enough for only about two weeks."

Small Coal Not Usable.

Naturally, the country railway users who small coal cannot be utilised for country services, and as revealed in the broadcast, "the horsepower of a locomotive with its small grate depends on rapid combustion of clean coal. This needs a fierce draught through the grate and fire. If small coal were used a lot would be picked up by the draught and lost through the funnel, as well as through the grate openings. Furthermore, slack coal is dirty and ashes would clog the fire, and the engine would fail in its job."

To make locomotives serviceable for the use of small coal they would have to be redesigned to take mechanical stokers and larger grates, and it would

be several years before there would be enough of the altered engines to make any difference.

Brown coal might be used if dried and pulverised, "but this would need even greater alterations to locomotives."

In reply to the question: "Is there much saving in coal from country train restrictions?" it was stated that the saving was 140,000 tons a year.

"But why don't the Railways get more coal from Wonthaggi?"

POST-WAR TRAFFIC

NUMBERS of people are now travelling by train who for years previously had rarely made a railway journey. They are doing so not from choice, but because they cannot use their motor cars as frequently as when fuel and tyres were readily obtainable.

It is unfortunate that their impressions of railway service should be formed during times of abnormal stress and difficulty. Fewer trains, crowded compartments, late running, and the many irritating—although necessary—restrictions that confront the would-be traveller, are all apt to lead to a judgment utterly unfair to normal railway service.

The effect this is likely to have upon future railway traffic depends largely upon the understanding and reasonableness of the public generally. But it also depends no less upon the attitude of the railway staff towards their customers. If this is considerate and helpful, demonstrating a real desire to give the best attention and service possible in present circumstances, the contest for post-war business will already have been half-won.

To that question the answer was: "The coal distributing authorities decide the quantity of coal that the railways and other industries may have."

SIDLIGHTS ON THE COAL PROBLEM.

TO most people coal is just coal, irrespective of its origin, but to enginemmen the quality of coal is everything. Since the war, the quality of the New South Wales coal supplied for railway use has deteriorated even more than that of clothing material.

Adding to their difficulties in handling the larger and heavier passenger trains, enginemmen have now to use much larger quantities of Lithgow coal and much less of the Maitland coal which was available in pre-war days. The heat value of Lithgow coal is considerably lower than that of Maitland.

Also, its ash content is much higher and it burns at a slower rate, thus necessitating a thicker fire. To allow for the thicker fire and provide the necessary air for combustion, grates with larger air openings have had to be provided on the passenger locomotives. Yet even this provision cannot take care of the ash accumulation in the firebox.

Whereas with Maitland coal a passenger train can run from Melbourne to Bendigo without the fire being cleaned, now the fire has often to be cleaned three times en route. On other runs the pricker has to be used frequently to take the ash through the grate.

Owing to those and other causes, country trains, generally, are being delayed to a serious extent, and this is making it necessary to review certain of the schedules in order that they will more nearly accord with the actual working conditions.

"In one recent year the railways spent as much as £170,000 extra in bringing coal overland. Unfortunately however, one result was that the coal authorities gave the railways

(Continued col. 3, page 2)

FINE PRESENTS TO MILITARY HOSPITAL

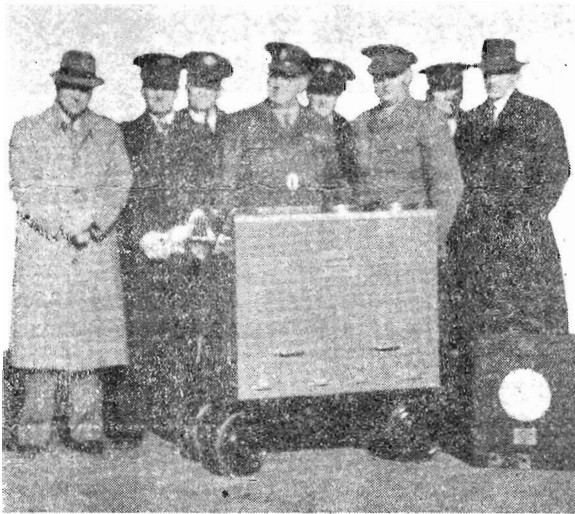
THE presentation of an electrically heated food conveyor costing £87, to the Heidelberg Military Hospital by the Electric Running Auxiliaries of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, followed by five more donated by the Central Committee, has relieved a difficult situation brought about by the winter weather. Some of the

outlying wards are up to half-a-mile distant from the kitchen, and food prepared for the patients tends to grow cold, despite all the efforts of the staff to keep it warm.

But packed in one of these food containers, soups, broths, meats, vegetables, and other nourishing things, emerge as hot and steaming as when they leave the kitchen, and the gratitude of the staff and patients for this thoughtful gift can be imagined.

In the accompanying picture, Colonel Garnet Leary is recording his thanks for the containers. Beside him is Major Purvis waiting to accept with warm words the public address system also shown.

This public address system, consisting of amplifier, loud speaker and microphone for use in Army Educational Service, was also a handsome present from the Electric Running Auxiliaries.



Restrictions In Rail Services

(Continued from page 1)

much less of the tonnage that arrives by sea."

"If it had not been for the over-landed coal," it was further declared, "the cuts in train services would have had to be made much earlier, and they would have been more drastic. Moreover, important Victorian industries, including the gas companies, were assisted by getting a great deal more of the coal that came by sea."

Use of Firewood

Referring to the use of firewood in place of large coal, it was mentioned that it has been extensively used in the winter months, and is being used today. Actually, 80,000 tons of firewood have been used in locomotives in place of black coal during the winter, thereby saving nearly 30,000 tons of coal.

To a further question, "Will country train services ever be restored?" the answer came frankly, "Of course they will. No one can believe that the railways will be forever starved of coal, and the Railways Commissioners are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to restore and improve the services."

TWO OUTSTANDING V.R. PARENTS

MR. Jas. J. Turley, goods checker at Geelong and Mr. T. V. Sexton, a member of the staff in the North-East District Accounting Office at North Melbourne, must be regarded as two of Australia's outstanding parents.

Mr Turley is the father of 14 children under 16: Lorna (15½), Jean (14), Arther (13), Harold (12), Mary (11), Thelma (10), Lucy (8), John (7), Jim (5), Lois and Marie, twins (4), Eric (3), Norma (2), and Baby Kathleen, 6 months old.

Mr. Sexton is also the father of 14, viz., Clare (20), Irene (19), Thomas (18), John (17), Michael (16), Therese (14), Martin (13), Veronica (12), Pauline (10), Austin (9), Kevin (7), Mary (5), Brian (3), and David, a sparkling young fellow who arrived recently.

Mr. Turley, who is 45 years of age, joined the Department in 1921 in the Way and Works Branch. He subsequently transferred to the Transportation Branch and served as an operating porter at Yallourn and other stations, before changing over to his present job at Geelong.

Mr. Sexton, who is somewhat older, joined the Accounts Branch as a clerk in 1910 and has been serving in that Branch ever since.

If there are any other railwaymen with even larger families than those referred to we should like to hear from them.

V.R.I Choral Society Is Growing

CONGRATULATIONS to the V.R.I. Choral Society which, under the care and direction of its eminent conductor, Dr. Ehrenfeld, is becoming an increasingly important organisation. Interest in the Society's activities is shown by the fact that during the last financial year it not only enlarged its own membership from 40 to 51, but through the good work of Mr. J. Pettigrove, Secretary of the Victorian Choral Union, 21 members of the Kelvin Choir joined up, giving it a full strength of over 70 enthusiastic singers, and greatly enhancing its prospects of success in competitive performance.

The Choral Society, however, is not content with a membership of 70. It has room for additional members in the Department and will be glad to hear of anybody in the Service (male or female) who wishes to take advantage of an excellent opportunity of enlarging his or her musical education. All that is required of each recruit is that he or she has a voice and is a member of the V.R. Institute.

Dr. Ehrenfeld, who gives his services without any remuneration, has striven mightily for the success of the Society. Not only in rehearsals, but in the delivery of arresting lectures during the past year, he has revealed his striking musical scholarship.

The President of the Society is Mr. J. S. Morcombe, of the Rolling Stock Staff Office, and the Secretary

is Mr. W. Southey, of the Joinery Workshops.

The Society has received many requests for its services. In recent months it has been heard at the Cairns Memorial Church and various other suburban churches. In the last, it provided the choral number in a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon at Wesley Church, celebrating Emancipation Day. Other conspicuous appearances were made with the Mitcham Choral Society at Como Park, and the Cairns Memorial Choir at their candle-light service at Christmas.

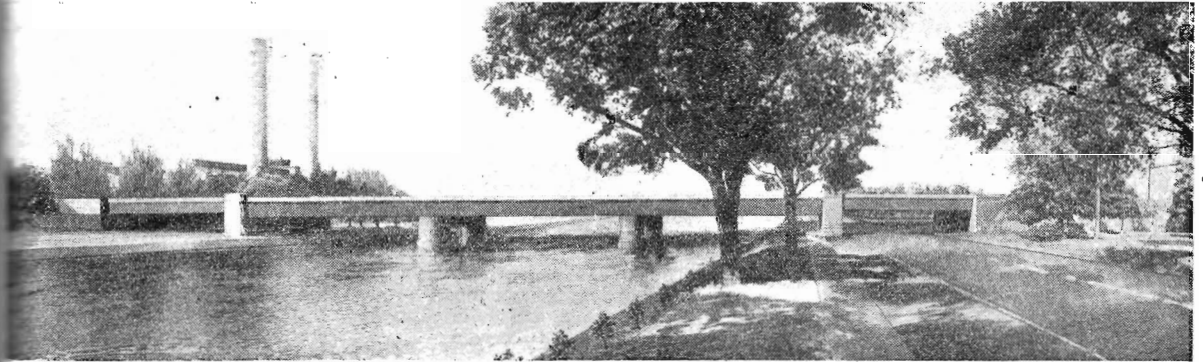
In a social way the Society has had several delightful outings in the country, and periodically stages "social evening" or a "theme night," which are invariably well attended by the members and friends.

ENLISTMENTS

R.A.A.F.
 SUP. Lbrs. I. I. Anderson, K. R. Adams, M. T. J. Bryant, R. A. Cameron, App. F. & Trn. H. J. Christopher, Sup. Lad Lbr. M. A. Connelly; Sup. Lbr. L. Conolan; Jnr. Clks. S. J. Foster, R. Gaylard; App. C. & Wagon Builder G. Gilham; Jnr. Clk. L. Harper; Sup. Lbr. R. A. Heritage; Jnr. Clk. R. Hickey; Lad Labr. W. H. Johnson; Jnr. Clk. T. F. Juliff; Lad Labr. B. King; Jnr. Clks. W. V. Kilborn, R. M. McLaughlin; Sup. Lad Lbr. J. Melbourne; Jnr. Clks. W. Murray; V. C. O'Callaghan; Sup. Lad Lbr. T. J. Rushmore; Jnr. Clk. C. Scott; Sup. Lad Lbrs. E. Slade, L. C. Speirs; Jnr. Clk. K. J. Walker; Sup. Lad Lbrs. P. J. White and J. A. Young.

R.A.N.
 Sup. Engine Clnr. J. R. Foletti.

WORK COMMENCED ON NEW CREMORNE BRIDGES, SOUTH YARRA



The above picture shows how the new bridges will look when completed. Alexandra Avenue, as it will appear when straightened, is on the right.

FOLLOWING the preliminary boring for testing purposes, work has been started on the Cremorne Bridges which are to replace the present railway bridges crossing the river at South Yarra. The new bridges will consist of three separate superstructures on a common substructure. They will carry six railway tracks, instead of four, will be 448 feet long, practically double the length of the present structure, and are estimated to cost £335,000.

The present bridges comprise one span of 148 feet over the river and two spans of 41 feet covering the railways on either side, but the new bridges will be of five spans—two of 148 feet and three of 96 feet. Plate girders with concrete deck will be used in the superstructure and the substructure will be of mass concrete piers supported by concrete foundations founded on Silurian mudstone.

The considerable additional length of the bridge is due to the decision to eliminate the present "dog leg" in Alexandra Avenue under the present bridge—an improvement which will be greatly appreciated by motorists.

Widening The River

Provision will be made for the South bank of the Yarra to conform to the widening of the River, which has been carried out in the past in connection with the straightening and beautification of the banks of the stream. The widening of Harcourt Parade, now running under the present bridge on the Richmond side has also been planned.

To minimise the interference to traffic on Alexandra Avenue, that end of the new bridges will be completed first. When that section of the job is finished, the staff will concentrate on the construction of the first bridge on the western side, to carry the Sandringham lines. The second bridge required to carry two tracks on the Caulfield line will then be completed, and finally the third

bridge for the two additional tracks required in continuation of the Caulfield line duplication.

The construction of the bridges will provide employment for a period of from two to three years for about 150 to 200 workmen comprising labourers, skilled labourers, plate-layers, and several classes of skilled tradesmen. Under the present war conditions the staffing of the job is difficult, but all suitable labour that is available is being concentrated on this work and other works not so urgent are being slowed down or postponed to provide some of the workmen required.

Not only is reconstruction necessary for railway, road and river considerations, but it will make possible an extension towards the city of the quadruple track from Caulfield which now becomes double track at South Yarra. The post-war programme includes a new Richmond station and another pair of platforms at Flinders Street, without which an adequate service cannot be given during "peak" hours.

DEATH OF MR. J. L. POWER

THE recent death of Mr. John Laurence Power, at the age of 76, breaks another link in the chain of memories associated with the old V.R. Telegraph Staff.

Joining the Telegraph Branch as an operator in February, 1884, Mr. Power served in practically every capacity in that Branch, eventually rising to Supervising Telegraphist, from which position he retired 12 years ago.

For many years he was generally accepted as being the fastest sender on a Morse key in the Commonwealth, and his colleagues took the greatest delight in listening to his magnificent sending on the Morse from Spencer St. to the Central Electric Telegraph Office.

His kindly and unassuming personality endeared him to all with whom he came in contact and a host of friends deeply regret the loss of one who was truly "one of Nature's gentlemen."

Records For Careful Driving By V.R. Motor Men

MEMBERS of the V.R. Road Transport Division continue to be conspicuous in the annual distribution of certificates and medals in the National Safety Council's "Freedom from Accidents" Competition.

This year 7 drivers—Messrs. G. R. Fleiner, W. T. L. Keating, L. J. Freston, R. Horne, A. V. Reed, C. F. Simms and L. J. Watson—reached their 13th consecutive year for blameless driving.

As it is the practice to issue a certificate for each year up to 4 years, a silver medal for 5 years, and gold medal for 10 consecutive years for driving without mishap, with bars for each year between 5 and 10 and beyond that figure, each of the drivers mentioned is now the proud possessor of four certificates, a silver medal with four bars, and a gold medal with three bars.

Mr. B. D. Powell, another motor driver of the Electrical Engineering Branch, is not far behind with a record of 12 years' driving without accident.

The following railwaymen have driven regularly without accident over these periods of years:

11 years ...	Messrs. N. H. Gladwin, A. M. Currie, and H. F. L. Wehsack.
10 " ...	Messrs. A. G. Middleton and A. W. H. Houston.
9 " ...	Messrs. S. E. Iceley and F. Chalwell.
8 " ...	Messrs. J. McInerney, D. D. Garlick and D. A. Wallace.
7 " ...	Messrs. H. A. Doyle, C. T. Faulkner, L. Sheppard, W. J. O. Wallis, C. C. Pownall, T. P. Pritchard and W. J. L. Sidebottom.

All those who drive cars through city and suburban traffic will realise the unremitting care which has been necessary on the part of the drivers named to secure these coveted honours.

RENT FREE AREAS FOR VEGETABLE GROWING

AMATEUR vegetable growers in the Department will be greatly interested in the announcement that, as a wartime measure to assist vegetable production, the Commissioners have decided to make available to V.R. employes, free of rent, areas of railway land, up to a quarter of an acre in extent for the purpose of growing vegetables for their own use.

Throughout Victoria there are areas of land adjacent to stations, in yards, and along railway lines, which only require the industry of a vegetable grower to burst into pictures of beans, cabbages, parsnips, etc.

Applicants for vegetable plots will need to make their own arrangements about water, and municipal rates, if any, will be their responsibility.

Employes, who already lease railway land for grazing or cultivation may take advantage of this offer provided suitable land is available, but will not be entitled to any reduction in the rent of the land they now lease by reason of their using all or part of it for vegetable growing.

Any railwayman who is interested should first apply in writing for the land that has "caught his eye," indicating clearly its area and position. If the ground is in the station yard, application should be made to the Stationmaster; if outside station limits, to the ganger of the length concerned, who, after adding his comments, will forward it through the usual channels to the Estate Office.

Each successful applicant will be required to sign a simple agreement with the Department.

Perhaps The Allies Can Explain

DUTCH refugees are telling today, with grim ironic relish, this supposedly true story.

An arrogant German, waiting for a train at a railway station in the occupied Netherlands, left the platform to wash his hands. When he returned, he found, to his consternation, that his suitcase was missing. Failing to find it, the Nazi raged furiously. Addressing a Netherlander who was standing nearby, he roared, with apoplectic countenance:

"What a ghastly country, where I just go out to wash my hands, and return to find my suitcase gone!"

With immobile features, the Netherlander answered: "But you ought to hear what happened to me. About a month ago I was in Berlin, at the station that you call Annhalter Bahnhof. I had to leave the station temporarily. When I got back my suitcase was gone—the platform was gone—and, as a matter of fact, the whole Annhalter station was gone!"

The comment of the Nazi is not reported!

(—Railway Gazette" (England).)

LIFT THE ARM RESTS UP

IN a recent reference in "The Age" to crowded country trains and the Department's efforts to induce passengers to push back the arm rests to provide more seats, the Commissioners agreed to give a trial to the suggestion that advice regarding the arm rests might be delivered over amplifiers by train announcers at Melbourne and principal stations.

The further suggestion by "The Age" that the good nature and consideration of a traveller might be aroused if he or she were appealed to in verse made several potential Laureates busy. Owing to the lack of space it is impossible to include all the contributions, but here are the briefest and best that have been received:

Lift the arm rest—make a seat,
For some poor cow with aching feet!

Lift the arm rest—be a sport—
Lift it—just because you ought!

Thoughtful Theo, though not slim,
Smiles as do the Cherubim;
Lifts his rest, adjusts his feet,
And thus provides another seat.

Come on! Lift the arm rest up,
See the room that it will make;
Let some tired soul sit down—
Do it for your pleasure sake!

Talking to you Mr. Brown,
As you settle in your seat:
"Do not keep the arm rest down—
Give that standing girl a treat;
Make room for her, with a smile,
Lift the arm rest, that's the style!"

Patriotic Activities Of Ballarat Nth. Workshops

THE patriotic activities of the Ballarat North Workshops have received a striking tribute from Mr. N. Begg, Honorary Secretary of the Ballarat Patriotic Fund Council. Mr. Begg's letter addressed to Mr. H. W. Harman, Manager of the Workshops, is as follows:—

"On closing the books of the Ballarat Patriotic Fund Council for the financial year ending June 30th last, one of the most striking features was the remarkable consistency of contributions from the employes at your shops.

"Since the inception of the contributory scheme they have contributed a sum of no less than £792/11/8d., which is a remarkable achievement. This combined with many other works undertaken by various sections of the shops, the other appeals that they have supported and the large sums of money that have been received from the Victorian Railways Patriotic Fund, has been of inestimable value to patriotic efforts in Ballarat.

"Will you please convey to one and all, the grateful appreciation of the Mayoress, Mrs. M. Martin, and members of this Council for their generous assistance."

Another V.R. Man Mentioned In Despatches

THE following striking announcement appeared in a recent issue of the "London Gazette"

"His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve that the following is mentioned in recognition of distinguished services in the Middle East, including Egypt, East Africa, Western Desert, the Sudan, Greece, Crete, Syria and Tobruk, during the period February, 1941, to July, 1942: Signalman G. J. Quirk, 1st Aust. Coy. Signals, VX.1636 (now Sergeant)"

Sergeant Quirk, who is 28 years of age, joined the railways as a lad at Glenbervie in 1932, and served as a messenger at Melbourne before being transferred to the Despatch Office at Spencer Street. He joined the A.I.F. in 1939, and is indicated in the "London Gazette" that he has seen long and valiant service.

THREE V.R. MEN "MISSING" AND ONE KILLED.

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to learn that Flt. Sergeant C. Clement and W. J. Cowey and Gunner E. D. Dale, have been reported "missing," whilst Flt. Sergeant W. Porter has been killed in an air accident in England.

Flt. Sergeant C. Clement, aged 25, joined the railways as a supernumerary in 1937, and before enlistment was a porter at Surrey Hills. Flt. Sergeant W. J. Cowey was 19, and before enlistment in the R.A.A.F. in 1943, was a junior in the Accountancy Branch. Flt. Sergeant W. Porter was officially reported "missing," and is believed to have been killed.

Air Gunner E. D. Dale was approaching his 29th birthday when reported "missing" after a flight over France. He entered the Department as a lad in 1936, and at the time of his enlistment in 1942, was a storeman in the Seymour Loco. Depot.

Flt. Sergeant Porter was born in 1917 and started in the Railways as an engine cleaner at Bendigo Loco. Depot in 1937. At the time of his enlistment in the R.A.A.F. in 1941 he was a supernumerary fireman at Ararat.

ONLY SON OF PAYMASTER GLEESON REPORTED KILLED.

THE many railwaymen who know and appreciate the kindness and courtesy of Mr. P. S. Gleeson, the popular Paymaster in the Accountancy Branch, are extending the deepest sympathy to him over the loss of his only son, Flying Officer J. B. Gleeson.

The young officer, who was educated at the Melbourne High School and became an accountant, enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in January, 1942. Eighteen months later was posted to No. 10 Sunderland Squadron. Some critical air operations he is reported "missing" and is now presumed to have lost his life.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laurens Street, North Melbourne, by the Victorian Railways Printing and Publishing, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

SEPTEMBER, 1944.

Issue No. 168.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE COAL POSITION Revealing the Difficulties of the Department

IN a striking review of the coal position as it affected the Victorian Railways over the past four years, the Commissioners have emphasized the three following outstanding facts:

- (1) The decrease of 254,000 tons in the quantity of New South Wales coal received by sea for the 12 months ending 30/6/44, as compared with the tonnage received in 1940/41, and the increase of 266,000 tons in the quantity brought by rail during that period.
- (2) The extra expense incurred by the Department in overlanded coal from New South Wales.
- (3) The heavy burden which the Victorian public have to bear through the inadequate supplies of coal for railway purposes.

The following table illustrates the progressive fall in each of the four years in the tonnage received by sea and the increased quantities overlanded from New South Wales:—

Year	Total Tonnage, Large and Small Coal	
	Received by Sea	Received by Rail from N.S.W.
1941	362,600*	21,000†
1942	253,300*	113,500†
1943	153,300*	110,000*
1944	108,097*	153,500†
		146,375*
		141,059†

* Maitland. † Lithgow.

Coalage by Sea.

It will be noted that the tonnage of Maitland coal received by sea in 1944 was only 108,000 tons compared with 362,000 tons in 1940/41, while during the same period the quantity of coal overlanded increased from 21,000 tons to 287,000 tons, approximately one half of the latter tonnage being Lithgow coal, of inferior quality to the Maitland product.

An appreciation of the heavy cost involved in bringing New South Wales coal overland will be gained from the following comparison of the cost of Maitland (seaborne and overlanded) and Lithgow (overlanded) in trucks at Melbourne:—

	Average Cost per ton
Maitland (large)—	
By sea	... 39/7d.
By rail via Wodonga	... 66/5d.
Lithgow (large)	
By rail—	
via Wodonga	... 51/7d.
via Tocumwal	... 54/5d.

In addition to the heavy extra cost involved for overlanded—which includes arbitrarily low railway freight rates—it is necessary in order to secure the same result, to use much larger quantities of Lithgow coal because of its lower calorific value—approximately 15 per cent—by comparison with Maitland coal.

WE CAN'T HAVE TOO MANY FRIENDS . . .

WE will need them all when we again have to compete for traffic.

Can we hold them in the face of the inconveniences and discomforts which they are having to put up with . . . because of the desperate shortage of coal?

The answer depends largely upon the quality of the personal service given by every member of the staff. If all of us are determined to prove, by our demeanour and our actions, that the interests of our patrons are still our first concern, there need be little fear that the present unavoidable shortcomings will be held against us.

There is no better way of securing friends—and future business—than demonstrating our own practical friendliness by giving courteous and efficient service always.

An allowance of 7/6d. per ton is being made by the Coal Commission on all large coal railed in excess of 4,000 tons per week. The total value of the subsidy from the Coal Commission last financial year, however, was only about £20,000, or approximately 1/5d. per ton. The allowance is thus little more than a token payment.

After making provision for this subsidy, the additional cost involved for the 287,000 tons of coal which were overlanded by this Department from New South Wales during the year ended 30th June last, was approximately £220,000. The Commissioners have repeatedly urged that a reasonable allowance be made to them in respect of this additional expense.

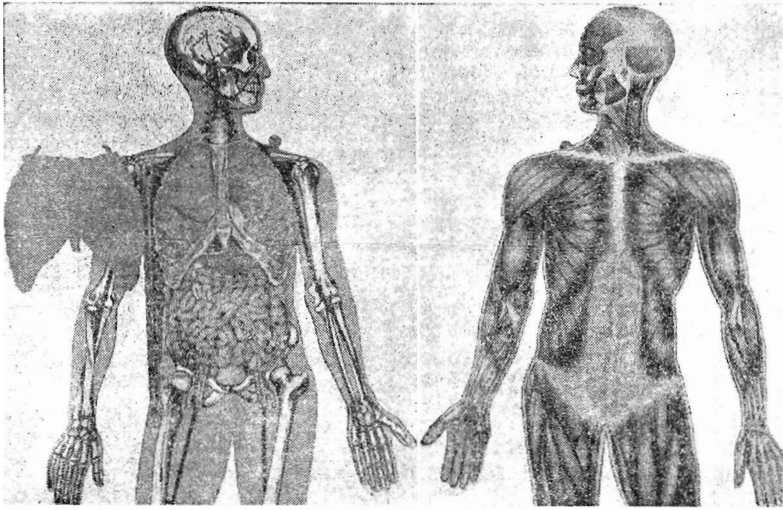
Costly Overlanding.

An important aspect of the costly overlanded by the Department of this huge quantity of New South Wales coal, and one which has frequently been stressed by the Commissioners, is that other Victorian users have been enabled to obtain a far greater proportion of the better quality Maitland coal than would otherwise have been possible, and at a price much below that paid by the Commissioners for the poorer quality Lithgow coal. Practically no coal has, in fact, been overlanded for users other than this Department and, to a limited degree, the State Electricity Commission.

The extent of the train service restrictions which the Commissioners have been obliged to introduce because of the inadequate supplies of

(Continued col. 3, page 2.)

INGENIOUS ANATOMICAL FIGURE FOR FIRST AID INSTRUCTION



AN ingenious anatomical figure of immense value in the instruction of first aid has just been completed in the Department.

It is a figure with the ribs and organs revealed on separate hinged flaps attached to the body and opened out for study as required.

Some idea of the figure will be obtained from the illustration above showing on the left the hinged sections and on the right the outstanding muscles of the human body. For the purposes of space, the illustration is cut off above the knee, but the actual figure

is 5 ft. 10 in. high, and is constructed of strong ply-wood supported on a tubular frame, the whole resting on a small wheeled base to facilitate movement.

The actual work is the achievement of the Commercial Drafting Room of the Way and Works Branch, after long consultation with Professor Sunderland, Professor of Anatomy at the Melbourne University, who readily gave advice and direction in the difficult and delicate task of indicating accurately the various organs, muscles, bones, etc., which have been drawn to scale.

V.R. Emergency Transport of Penicillin

SINCE the curative virtues of penicillin have been realized, the railways have figured in several dramatic efforts to carry the wonderful drug to urgent cases.

The story last month of "Spirit of Progress" slowing down at Kilmore East so that a parcel of the drug could be handed to a waiting doctor on the station is only one of several occasions when the railways have been employed in this valuable emergency work.

Recently there was a sudden call for penicillin from Orbost. The earliest available train was the 1.55 a.m. "newspaper" train from Flinders Street to Bairnsdale, arriving at the latter destination about nine hours later. The drug was taken from there by a service car to the Orbost Hospital.

About the same time the early morning "newspaper" train to Wonthaggi was similarly employed with similar results.

Another interesting achievement in the railway transport of penicillin was contacting at Sunshine a military

train which was running through from Albury to Serviceton by the Sunshine Loop. A parcel of penicillin was handed to the Parcels Foreman at Spencer Street, who handed it to the guard of a suburban electric train bound for St. Albans. This guard then delivered his precious package to the Stationmaster at Sunshine, who transferred it to the following military train which carried the penicillin to Ballarat Base Hospital.

There have been cases of rapid railway transport of penicillin to Ballarat, St. Arnaud, Hamilton (thence by road service to Casterton), Horsham and Mooroopna, and all have been carried out without a hitch.

Success in this emergency service depends on the most careful arrangements and the Departmental decree that the drug must be handled from man to man, each recipient being advised in advance of the responsibility awaiting him, has contributed towards some striking recoveries, when any carelessness or mishap en route might have meant the loss of the patient's life.

Coal Position—continued from page 1

coal, will be appreciated from the fact that, whereas the regular scheduled steam passenger train services average 66,000 miles per week prior to December, 1941, the weekly average is now only about 30,000 miles—a reduction of approximately 55 per cent. The extent of the inconvenience to the travelling public in Victoria is considerably greater than indicated by these figures, as, in addition to the reduction in ordinary passenger services, a substantial amount of special passenger mileage for civilian purposes has been eliminated. Moreover, the use of the poorer quality Lithgow coal inevitably causes late running of trains, because of the delays in resorting to clean fires.

In addition to the reduction of 55 per cent. in passenger services, there has been a reduction of approximately 28 per cent. in mixed train mileage, while the average weekly goods train mileage during recent weeks represents a reduction of approximately 20 per cent. miles per week as compared with the mileage prior to the introduction of the restrictions in September last or equivalent to about 15 per cent.

The total saving in large coal at the present time, including about 600 tons per week as a result of the burning of firewood in pilot engines during the winter months, is equivalent to about 2,600 tons of Maitland coal per week—a reduction of approximately 30 per cent. by comparison with what the consumption would have been under normal conditions.

So far as the Commissioners are aware, no other other railway system in Australia has been burning firewood in locomotives in any quantity except, of course, for lighting purposes, which is common practice.

The Commissioners feel that the foregoing facts constitute a very strong case for a greater allocation of coal for Victorian Railway use, for the allotment of a due proportion of the seaboard coal that actually arrives in the State and for a more equitable distribution of the additional overlanding coal either by means of an increased subsidy from the Commonwealth Authorities or by the pooling of the cost of coal received into and distributed in Victoria, charging all users on the basis of average cost and calorific value.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.

APP. F. & T. A.A. Chivers; Lad Lbr. W. Knight; App. F. & T. G. Mason.

R.A.A.F.

App. Elec. F. A. D. Ariss; Sup. Lbr. W. L. Banfield; Lad Lbr. R. L. Barker; App. F. & T. C. J. Cameron; App. F. & T. S. J. Evans; Jnr. Clks. E. J. L. Harrison; Lad Lbr. L. G. Hecker; Lad Lbr. K. M. Jarman; Lad Lbr. V. P. McGawley; Lad Lbr. K. W. Stemmer; App. F. & T. W. Vanstan; Lad Lbr. K. A. Winnell.

R.A.N.

Jnr. Clk. N. S. McLaren; Lad Lbr. J. M. Outbridge.

W.A.A.A.F.

Miss S. P. Good (Jnr. Clk.).

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS' 90th BIRTHDAY

ON September 13, the Victorian Railways will be 90 years old. That date has an even greater historical importance, for it was on that day ninety years ago that the first train in Australia was sent on its momentous run of a little over two miles from Flinders Street to Sandridge (now Port Melbourne). At the time another small line was under way from Sydney to Parramatta, but Victoria had the honour of starting the first steam-driven transport for the continent.

Of course, the sedate, elderly gentlemen who were assembled to watch the first Victorian train depart from Port Melbourne on September 13, 1854, had no conception of the great service which was to grow from this modest overture. The day, it is recorded, was rather warm, and the special group gathered around the Governor (Sir Charles Hotham) probably felt the heating effects of top hats and frock coats as His Excellency and the appropriate words in launching this new and wonderful activity.

There was a band to play striking tunes, and the bandmen blew themselves hotter and hotter when they were cramped in one of the fourriages behind the tiny locomotive which puffed out importantly in seeming realisation of the greatness of the occasion.

That Little Train

The little train with its four small carriage loads of privileged travellers and their "Sunday best" left Flinders Street at 12.20 p.m., and at each end of the first journey several hundreds of colonists produced spontaneous cheers.

That was the beginning 90 years ago. Everything now relatively toylike, but nevertheless the debut of a method of transport which was to revolutionize life, influence opinion and industry and achieve the vast practical maximum of carrying passengers and goods from one side of the State to the other in hours, instead of days.

If those immaculate gentlemen, normally bursting with the pride of the event, could by some miracle, be transported into the present age and landed again on the site of that far-off beginning of the Victorian Railways, how amazed they would be!

The scene would surely be staggering to their 1854 eyes . . . a great London-like Flinders Street with swift electric trains whizzing into its platforms loading or unloading thousands of passengers, and on the miles of tracks beyond, stretching out to all parts of the State, train on train, some loaded with cattle, sheep, wheat and

other goods, others packed with travellers, all busy in a service which is indispensable to our progress.

It is a big leap in development from the midget of 1854 to the tremendous "H" locomotive, hauling huge loads at a fast speed over the North-Eastern route, to the "S" and "A2" locomotives, which are responsible for the express run of 190 miles over heavy grades in under 4 hours by Australia's premier "Spirit of Progress," and to the whole organization with its multitude of activities, which now provide a livelihood for an army of nearly 30,000.

That is the picture today—a picture affected by the coal shortage and other war difficulties, but still an achievement inspiring both in its latter day importance and in its future possibilities.

DEATH OF V.R. SOLDIER IN A PRISON OF WAR.

The "News Letter" greatly regrets to report the death, whilst a Japanese prisoner of war, of Private L. R. Prince, of the Armoured Division of the A.I.F.

When he enlisted in 1941, he was an apprentice coppersmith in the Rolling Stock Branch. He entered the Department in 1939 and was only 23 years of age.

WASTE NOT . . . !

W asteful and old, within your eye's range,
A practice is shown—
-sh! . . . maybe your own—
T hat surely demands an immediate change,
E ven by methods deservedly known.
N ow is the time to make that quick change.
O ffer your thought—it may mean reward—
T o the Suggestions and Betterment Board!

There are many methods in the Department—methods endorsed by time, but now out-of-date—that need improvement and even elimination.

There is particularly the method of waste which creeps in by carelessness and inattention, and gradually becomes responsible for extravagant practices.

Look around you and see if there is some method which can be improved or which will save time and money.

Or maybe you have some mechanical suggestion that would be of advantage to the Department.

Send your ideas to the Betterment and Suggestions Board, Railway Administrative Offices, Spencer Street, Melbourne. Every accepted idea will be rewarded and every communication will be kept strictly private and confidential.

Buy A Ticket in The V.R. Patriotic Raffle

THE State-wide raffle conducted by the V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee in aid of the Red Cross closes on the 19th of this month. The first prize is an open order for £100; second prize, order for £20; and third, £10, with 20 consolation prizes of open orders for £1. As the price of each ticket is only 6d. (a book of five for 2/-) there has already been a big demand for them. The Committee, however, would like every railwayman for the sake of the cause to buy or dispose of at least one book of tickets. Here is a great opportunity to surpass previous efforts, and if we all do our bit among our friends another record should be achieved.

Following on the successful distribution of approximately 2,500 parcels among railwaymen serving in the various fighting forces, the V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee is preparing for another magnificent shower of a similar number of parcels at Christmas. Orders have been placed for the necessary goods and packing which is done voluntarily, will be commenced within the next few weeks.

Each parcel will contain one 30-oz. can of fruit, one 16-oz. packet of biscuits, ½-lb. package of dried fruit and nuts, ½-lb. block of chocolate or 8-oz. tin of "Kool-Mints," an assortment of P.K.'s and Steam-Rollers, a packet of cigarettes, tubes of shaving cream and tooth paste, tooth brush, writing pad, envelopes and pencil. The pleasure with which the V.R. men on service receive these gifts is shown by their grateful letters.

Recently the Ararat V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary presented a mobile canteen costing £870 to the Salvation Army. In the following letter, sent to his parents in Ararat, Sgt. L. S. Denton records his warm appreciation of this serviceable gift.

"I have returned finally, definitely and happily, and am not sorry to be back as far as the travelling goes . . . midnight arrival in misty rain at our destination was brightened considerably for everyone, but especially for myself, by a warm cup of coffee served by none other than Service Car No. 109, the mobile canteen donated by the Ararat Auxiliary of the Railways Patriotic Fund to the Salvation Army. Any mobile canteen would have been welcome to us—tired and dirty as we somehow always manage to get when travelling, and damp and cold with foul weather conditions—but to me the name of Ararat somehow made the journey worth while. I say and I will often say again, 'Thanks Ararat folk. You'll never really understand just how much that canteen and the thought behind the gift of same are appreciated by us fellows.'"

That is real appreciation. If you are not a regular subscriber of 6d. per pay to the Fund through the pay roll, don't hesitate. See your paying officer and join up.

DEATH OF TWO OLD V. R. MEN

THE "News Letter" regrets to announce the death of two old railwaymen—Mr. John L. Parker, aged 94, and Mr. G. Lancaster, who passed on a few days after his 84th birthday.

Mr. J. L. Parker entered the service of the old Hobson's Bay Company in 1876, and was taken over when the Government acquired control of all the railways two years later.

During his career Mr. Parker had been Stationmaster at various country and suburban stations, the last station being Richmond from which he retired just a few days before the big accident there in heavy fog on July 18, 1910.

Mr. Lancaster started as a pointsman in the Department in 1877 and was promoted to Signalman in 1884, working in signal-boxes at Newport and North Melbourne, and serving as a Yard Inspector for a period after 1888.

Mr. Lancaster, who retired in 1920, is the father of Mr. V. Lancaster, Officer-in-Charge of the Duplicating Bureau, Mr. N. Lancaster in the Way and Works Branch, and the late Mr. G. Lancaster, a valiant of the famous 14th Battalion, A.I.F., who was killed in France in 1918.

ANOTHER V. R. MAN LOSES A GALLANT SON.

ALL railwaymen will extend deepest sympathy to Mr. D. McCormack, a popular fitter at the North Melbourne Loco. Depot, over the death on service of his celebrated son, Squadron Leader D. W. McCormack, D.F.C. and Bar, Commander of "Churchill's Own," one of the most famous fighter squadrons in the R.A.F.

Squadron Leader McCormack, who was killed on a non-operational flight in Burma on August 11, was born at Seddon in 1917, and before enlistment was an electrical mechanic employed by the State Electricity Commission.

Following training in Australia and Canada, he joined "Churchill's Own" squadron and became one of the many nightmares to German shipping in the North Sea. One courageous attack on an enemy convoy resulted in the sinking of a 4,000-ton supply ship and of two flak ships and heavy damage to five other vessels. He later led a squadron of Hurri-bombers in raids over Europe and afterwards directed a squadron of bombers on a raid on German cruisers at Brest.

He went to India in 1942 and led his renowned squadron in many hazardous, long-range, low-level attacks on the Japanese in Burma.

TALKING OF BIRDS AND DOGS

THE duck which was found travelling on a train at Moorabbin last month recalls the true story of a drover—an old customer of the railways—who had a remarkable kelpie which always travelled with him on his trips. One day the drover was asked to pick up a flock of sheep at Balranald and bring it by road to Newmarket.

He duly departed by rail to Balranald accompanied by his kelpie, and the pair arrived in good order and condition. In Balranald, however, the dog was lost and was missing when it came to moving the sheep. The drover had to borrow a couple of local dogs for what proved to be a long and difficult job.

The sheep, however, were ultimately delivered at Newmarket with the kelpie still missing. Some days after the drover's return to Kyneton the animal turned up, very thin and somewhat damaged, but it still had a little wag left in its tail.

Where it had been was, or course, unknown, but by a miracle of instinct it had returned home—a distance of over 200 miles—on a road which it had never trodden before!

Retirement of Mr. W. Ross.

TOO late to be recorded in our August issue the farewell to Mr. W. Ross on his retirement from the job of Loco. Foreman at Geelong Loco. Depot, calls for mention because of his popularity and the warmth of the complimentary speeches which were associated with the presentation of a handsome chiming clock.

Mr. Ross started his railway career in 1894 as an apprentice fitter and turner in the Deniliquin and Moama Railway Company, taken over by the Victorian Railways in 1923.

He, however, joined the Victorian Railways in 1901 as a fitter and turner, and during the whole of his career in the Department he had been associated with the maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock.

He served at many loco. depots and was successively Depot Foreman at Benalla, Ballarat, Maryborough and Geelong. He had been stationed at the last-named depot since 1931. A man of exceptional interests and enthusiasms, Mr. Ross was engaged in various outside activities. He was associated with the establishment of a branch of the V.R.I. at Seymour in 1917, and later took a great interest in V.R.I. activities at Benalla.

He also holds the Bronze Medallion and a Gold Medal as evidence of his striking success in First Aid.

At one time he was keenly interested in choral singing and his name will be found among the members of the Ballarat Union Champion Choir of 1928-29.

V. R. Now Providing Looms for Aeroplanes.

ONE of the new words to find a way into the technical vocabulary of the Electrical Engineering Branch of "looms"—the official title for the mazes of wiring that are fitted into modern aeroplanes.

This Branch is now engaged in providing "looms" for rear fuselages of Beaufighter planes, and this extremely intricate work is occupying the close attention of 70 women "somewhere in Melbourne."

Actually, the "looms" arrive complete from abroad, and it is the work of this staff to undo the wiring on cables and re-assemble them to meet the various needs of the different types of "ship"—bombers, fighter bombers, etc.—of the Beaufighter type.

There are hundreds of wires in many operations involved in equipping a distribution box that will control such operations as gun-firing, intercommunication, camera, landing navigation lamps, the dropping of the dinghy, and the work requires close and, in instances, minute attention.

Women's Special Work

Each woman has a separate task. Many have to follow a special diagram for the assembling of wires, each of which bears on its tiny rubber sleeve a number printed on by a small machine.

The selection of these rubber sleeves obviously demands great care. When completed, the whole job is closely examined by male and female inspectors, who record any faults observed on what is technically known as a "snagging sheet."

This sheet shows the corrections—some of them tiny, indeed—that have to be made to ensure that the electrical distribution boxes and cables are 100 per cent. perfect.

The inspectors work in pairs, each armed with a small electric lamp and a dentist's mirror, the latter for use in reflecting the mesh of wires at the bottom of the box that would not be visible otherwise, and it is the inspector's further responsibility to ensure that all the alterations and corrections ordered have been made to the satisfaction.

The various aspects of this new industry call for infinite patience, and it is a tribute to the calibre of the women employed that each has qualified for her particular job after ten days' instruction and has continued to do it to the complete satisfaction of the controlling officers.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laurens Street, North Melbourne, for the Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

OCTOBER, 1944.

Issue No. 169.

BRITISH RAILWAYS IN PEACE AND WAR STRIKING EXTRACTS FROM A REMARKABLE BOOK

THE "News Letter" has pleasure in presenting for the interest and enlightenment of its readers some striking extracts from "British Railways in Peace and War," a remarkable survey of the railway achievements in Britain, which has been issued by the British Railways Press Office in London on behalf of the major railway companies concerned. In the first quotation published below our readers will be able to follow the developments that occurred in far-seeing railway enterprise in Britain in the period between the Wars.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, main line railways were able to place the country's disposal an asset of immense national and strategic importance. Of them it could truly be said—they were ready; ready for the greatest test that could be made of any undertaking, under the most arduous conditions and, as events have shown, for a duration that called for long and sustained effort.

That the railways have been able to stand up to that test is no chance matter. They have been through fire before, not, it is true, the trial of battle, but they have in the many years between the wars faced decisively a major re-organization of their industry; a battle on unequal terms against acute road competition in a period of trade depression of unprecedented severity.

Throughout this period the railways, privately owned and managed by private enterprise, had, with what is surely great courage and foresight, secured a steady and progressive policy of improvement, to which war called a halt.

Meeting Requirements

It was this policy, carried out in the face of great difficulties which alone made it possible for the railways to meet the transport requirements necessary for Great Britain and her Allies for the successful prosecution of the war.

It enabled the railways to increase the capacity and efficiency of their plant and equipment; it made possible improved methods in operation and organization; it gave staff better and more efficient work to work with. Its total effect was primarily to improve the facilities for all classes of railway users and at the same

time it assisted in securing the same, or better service, at less working costs. Much of the work, carried out at a time of great trade depression, gave welcome orders to manufacturers throughout the country and created employment at a time when it was most needed.

"Throughout these years the standard of speed, cheapness and comfort for passenger travel became progressively higher and higher. By 1938, Britain could boast the fastest and most intensive passenger train service in the world.

GOODWILL

IT would be a grave mistake to think we can rely upon mechanical means alone to secure the public goodwill.

Improvements in train service, whether in frequency, comfort or speed, will not in themselves suffice to hold passengers to the railways when the choice of other means is again available.

The most lasting impressions of passengers are created by the human side of travel, and it is here that railway men and women who come into contact with the public play an immensely important part.

A brusque manner or a show of ill-humour almost inevitably causes active resentment. On the other hand, tact, courtesy, and a pleasant demeanour go a long way to promote goodwill towards the railways as a whole.

"Fast locomotives of new design were built to haul the new high-speed passenger trains; some of them were streamlined. The L.N.E.R. engine, "Mallard," holds the World's record for steam traction with a speed of 125 m.p.h. Despite the relatively short distances in this country, British Railways have consistently had a large number of trains running at average start-to-stop speeds of 60 or more miles per hour. In 1938, there were over 100 of them.

Greatly Improved Locomotives

Heavy freight locomotives have been developed with enormous pulling power. The efficiency of the modern locomotive can be judged from the fact that the miles run per steam locomotive per annum increased from 22,512 in 1923 to 27,210 in 1938, or by 21 per cent. Practically the same locomotive mileage was run in 1938 as in 1923, but the number of locomotives used was reduced by 4,300.

"High-speed service demands a first-class track. Developments in the design of track and components and in maintenance methods systematically pursued between 1923 and 1938, made high-speed services possible with the maximum of comfort to passengers. By 1938 track maintenance had indeed become a more exact science than ever before. Between 1923 and 1942 some 23,000 miles of track were completely renewed. New methods of aligning junctions enabled trains to pass over them at 30 to 40 miles faster per hour. A new method of packing sleepers—measured shovel packing—helped to create a new high standard in track perfection. Bridges and viaducts were strengthened and

Continued column 1, page 2)

Mr. L. J. Williamson New President of V.R.I.

FOLLOWING the resignation of Mr. H. S. Sergeant, Comptroller of Stores, as President of the Victorian Railways Institute, Mr. L. J. Williamson, A.I.C.A., Comptroller of Accounts, has been appointed President.



Mr. L. J. Williamson

Throughout the period of five years during which he held the post of President, Mr. Sergeant never spared himself in promoting the welfare of the Institute, particularly the country branches, where he was always a popular visitor. The able manner in which he carried out all the duties devolving upon the President has been an important factor in the progress of the Institute in recent years.

In a letter of farewell to the Secretary, Mr. W. E. Elliott, in which he emphasised the "loyalty, good-fellowship, and desire for the well-being of the Institute on your part and on the part of the Councillors and Institute enthusiasts throughout Victoria," Mr. Sergeant paid tribute particularly to railwaymen who have given much of their time to the work of the Institute in country and suburban centres quite unselfishly for the benefit of others.

Mr. L. J. Williamson, who has been actively associated with Mr. Sergeant on the Committee of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, of which he has been Honorary Treasurer since its inception, and who served in the First Great War as an officer in the Light Horse and the Australian Flying Corps, is described by Mr. Sergeant as being admirably fitted for a job which requires "a knowledge of Railway and Social work, ability to mix, talk and listen, and, above all, a sense of humour."

Mr. Williamson's energy and enthusiasm in everything he undertakes should make him a worthy successor to Mr. Sergeant in the Chair of the Institute.

BRITISH RAILWAYS

Continued from Page 1

rebuilt to take heavier loads; one railway carried out 1,158 such schemes between 1923 and 1938.

"In the search for higher standards of track maintenance experiments were continually being made with new devices and new methods. Among them was the use of steel keys, which require much less re-driving than timber and prevent rail 'creep'; the testing of steel sleepers in main line track; new experiments with flat-bottomed rails; continuous welded track to give smoother running and the use of two-hole fish-plates to give closer spacing of sleepers at rail joints."

Fine Work In Transport Of Firewood And Tomatoes

RECENTLY the State Premier (the Hon. A. A. Dunstan) paid a warm tribute to the railways' co-operation in bringing large supplies of firewood to Melbourne during the past winter. The Premier's comment was prompted

by the fact that despite heavy demands on trucks for war and other vital purposes in a period of acute coal shortage, the Department carried a larger quantity of firewood to the metropolis than in the firewood season of 1943.

IS THIS THE LARGEST RAILWAY FAMILY?

WHO is the railwayman with the largest family? Recently the "News Letter" gave particulars of the large families of Mr. Jas. Turley and Mr. T. V. Sexton, each of them the father of 14 healthy Australians.

Now a claimant for the championship appears in Mr. Jas. O'Brien, a labourer in the Way and Works Branch. He is the father of no fewer than 17, viz., Albert (25), Jean (24), Hilda (23), Gladys (21), Beryl (19), George (18), John (17), Mary (15), Patricia (14), Frank (12), Ethel (11), James (9), Kevin (8), Margaret (6), Peter (5), Edward (3) and Robert (1). Nine boys and eight girls—a remarkable record, and the father is only 48!

Not far behind him is Mr. W. Kelly, aged 54, a clerk in the Goods Sheds, Spencer Street. He is the parent of nine boys and six girls: William (28), Bryan (27), Desmond (26), Vincent (25), Marie (23), Carmel (22), Kevin (21), Leo (20), Brenden (19), Theresa (18), Pauline (16), Imelda (15), John (13), Margaret (11), and Noel (8).

THE V.R. POSSESSES A CHAMPION CHRYSANTHEMUM GROWER

THE growing of champion chrysanthemums is a fine art, and one at which Mr. B. Hubbard, an electric train driver in the Department, is an adept.

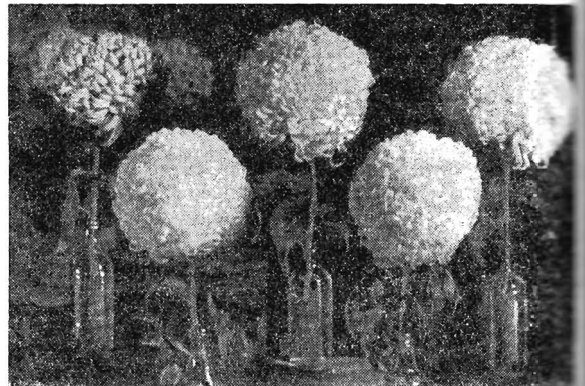
He modestly claims to be one of the leading growers of Victoria, but at the annual chrysanthemum show by the Royal Horticultural Society in the Melbourne Town Hall in May last, he captured the first prizes in all the sections for which he had entered blooms, defeating the noted veteran exhibitor, Mr. W. Pockett, in the Open Class Championship. He also scored at the Malvern and Box Hill Shows, winning, in all, 24 first prizes.

During his career as a grower he has won several Challenge Cups and in all has captured 200 prizes.

The champion flower shown on the left in the front row in the above illustration, received 98½ out of 100 points for a perfect bloom, and the size of the flowers may be gauged by comparison with the bottles in which they are standing.

Mr. Hubbard, who joined the railway service in 1916, and also served for a period in the First Great War, has been an electric train driver since 1936. He has devoted his leisure hours to the production of glorious chrysanthemums which entrance the eyes of connoisseurs.

He is now lecturing to Societies affiliated with the Royal Horticultural Society on the science of producing chrysanthemums. His talks, illustrated by slides of colour, are largely attended.



SUBSCRIBE NOW to the SECOND VICTORY LOAN

Retirement of Mr. Milton Gray, Manager of the V.R. Printing Works

Mr. Milton Gray, Manager of the V.R. Printing Works, has retired. That and the official farewells associated with it, happened too late to be mentioned in the last "News Letter" and are therefore recorded in this issue.



Milton Gray

Everyone associated with this popular personality was sorry to see him go, and there was an extra note of friendship and appreciation in the official good-byes by his Chief, Mr. H. S. Sergeant (Comptroller of Stores) ably supported by Mr. L. C. Stewart (Assistant Comptroller) and Mr. H. D. Agg (Chief Clerk) after presenting a fountain pen to the former Manager of the Printing Works.

A similarly cordial meeting at Lauristown Street led by Mr. W. Houston, who, in the way, will succeed Mr. Gray as Manager, and helped along by good wishes from two old members of the printing staff, Mr. E. Brennan and Mr. C. Southern, resulted in Mr. Gray becoming the proud possessor of an armchair and a wall mirror.

Another farewell message, which was particularly appreciated and will be read with pleasure in his retirement, was personally delivered recently by the Chairman of the Victorian Railways Commissioners, Sir Harold Clapp, who was specially called on Mr. Gray to convey his good wishes and his warm thanks for faithful service in past years.

Mr. Gray, who started at the Government Printing Works in 1892, was transferred to the Railway Printing Works in 1896, has been appointed Chairman of the Discipline Board, in succession to Mr. T. F. Brennan, a very popular Member of the Staff since his death.

With this responsibility added to his social and charitable activities, Mr. Gray should continue to be a very popular man. He has established a remarkable record for public service. During his long and energetic career he has been Mayor of the Malvern Council four times, a member of the Council for 16 years, and has been conspicuous in furthering the interests of hospitals, schools, children's playgrounds, kindergartens, babies' centres, Baby Health Centres, etc. He has served as honorary organist

under the Departmental Group System particulars of which will be published in the Weekly Notices, October 2 to 24 inclusive.

Deductions will be made over 10 Pay Days commencing from November 9, 1944.

in Churches, has adjudicated in Church Debating Competitions and has himself won Debating Championships conducted by Friendly Societies.

* * *

Another esteemed member of the Printing Works staff who retired last month is Mr. L. Morgan, one of the three monotype operators who are responsible for the setting of the type of the "News Letter" and other railway publications.

In a happy send-off led by Mr. A. Svensson, President of the V.R. Printing Works Welfare Society, warmly supported by Mr. W. Houston, the new Manager, Mr. Morgan was presented with a wallet of notes.

Mr. Morgan, who joined the Printing Works staff as a supernumerary compositor in 1903, subsequently qualifying as a monotype operator, will go into a well-earned leisure to spend some of his time at bowls, and cast an expert eye on an occasional game of football. He knows all there is to know of the popular Victorian pastime, for in his youth he was a prominent player in the Collingwood team.

TWO V.R. MEN KILLED, AND ONE MISSING

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to mention that Flying Officer A. Brady of the R.A.A.F. is reported "missing" and that W.O. John H. Hedger and Sergeant M. J. Fahey, also of the R.A.A.F., have been killed, the latter in an aircraft accident.

Flying Officer Brady, who was born in 1921, and served as a junior clerk in the Rolling Stock Branch, enlisted in 1940.

W.O. Hedger, who was also born in 1921, and started in the Department as a junior clerk at Charlton in 1938, joined the R.A.A.F. in 1942. Sergeant Fahey commenced as a junior in the Melbourne Goods in 1939 and enlisted last year. He was 21 years of age.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.
JNR. Clk. P. D. McDougall; Lad Engine Clnr. J. F. Pixton.

R.A.A.F.
Jnr. Clk. J. A. Andrew; Jnr. Clk. J. L. Bruce; Lad Lbr. T. R. Carkeek; App. F. & T. J. C. Clarke; Lad Labr. O. S. Dyke; Lad Lbr. D. N. Flinn; Lad Lbr. A. W. Gale; Jnr. Clk. C. L. George; Jnr. Clk. D. G. Hamilton; Jnr. Clk. D. C. Helmore; App. C'smith J. Maddock; App. F. & T. W. F. Murphy; App. F. & T. D. W. Rumpf; Lad Lbr. W. H. Strick.

R.A.N.
Lad Engine Clnr. D. E. Cracknell; Lad Lbr. J. W. Indian; Jnr. Clk. J. A. Tucker.

PRIZES AWARDED FOR BEST KEPT TRACK LENGTHS

THE following prizes have been awarded for the best kept lengths of track in the various districts. The First Prize is £15, Second Prize £10, Third Prize £5, the Best Improved Prize £10, and the names mentioned are those of the Gangers-in-Charge of Gangs of from 3 to 5 men.

District	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize	Most Improved Length Prize
Tracks with rail over 75 lb.—Metrop. and Eastern	M. J. Monaghan (Pakenham)	G. J. Brown (Trafalgar)	A. Hall-Bentick (Laverton)	C. Nelson (Koo-wee-rup) A. S. Yates (Tarwin)
Seymour	E. R. Gibson (Broadford)	H. R. Billman (Glenrowan)	J. P. Gibson (Tallaroak)	H. C. Brignell (Kilmore East)
Geelong	A. B. Gardner (Werribee)	F. A. Campbell (Buckley)	G. H. Pevitt (Heywood)	L. E. Reid (Kiata)
Ballarat	W. Wouda (Ouyen)	A. Flavell (Burrumb't)	J. H. Jordan (Hattah)	R. D. McDougall (Bacchus Marsh)
Bendigo	H. Welch (Macedon)	W. J. P. Reddie (Pyramid)	C. J. Ryan (Elmore)	R. J. Brady (Harcourt)
Tracks with rails of 75 lb. and under—Metrop. and Eastern	T. T. Coleman (Nyora)	C. F. Smith (Stratford)	L. A. Lang (Nowa Nowa)	W. E. Evers (Kernot)
Seymour	M. Doyle (Cobram)	W. D. McNicol (Dookie)	H. F. Matthews (Numurkah)	A. G. Maxwell (Kanumbra)
Geelong	A. G. Heard (Minineria)	B. Gulbin (Penshurst)	W. H. Mackin (Cavendish)	J. M. Shanahan (Antwerp)
Ballarat	J. Smith (Amphitheatre)	M. J. Aldersea (Joyce's Creek)	A. V. Praed (Talbot)	W. J. Spencer (Newstead)
Bendigo	W. E. Daly (Cobuna)	J. Cook (Daylesford)	W. G. Rowe (Wyche-proof)	E. W. Roberts (Mystic Park)

NOTABLE RECORDS BY GEELONG AND ARARAT V.R. PATRIOTIC AUXILIARIES

THE good work at the Geelong V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary deserves particular commendation. There are 428 regular payroll subscribers at Geelong and their contributions, together with the proceeds from numerous dances and raffles organized by the Committee, will raise the earnings of the Auxiliary to more than £3,000 by the end of the present month. This total in four years reveals a steady, warm-hearted effort and no further compliment need be paid than to mention that Geelong is the first of V.R. Auxiliaries to pass the £1,000, £2,000 and £3,000 apex in its collection of patriotic funds.

* * *

Ararat V.R. Auxiliary again makes the banner lines by securing the use of the Patriotic Fund Shop in Ararat for one week. By extraordinary salesmanship, the Committee disposed of raffle tickets, jams, cakes, toys, etc., all supplied by members of the Fund and their friends and raised the handsome amount of £238.

Result Of V.R. Patriotic Raffle

THE State-wide raffle conducted by the V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee in aid of the Red Cross was drawn on September 26, and the result was as follows:—

- 1st Prize (No. 63814) Mr F. A. Marzorini, 12 Cochrane Avenue, Camberwell.
 - 2nd Prize (No. 110100) Mr. G. Humphreys, Melbourne Yard.
 - 3rd Prize (No. 37830) Mr. A. G. Maxwell, Post Office, Kanumbra.
- First Prize is an open order for £100; Second Prize an open order £20; and Third Prize an open order for £10.

The previous "high" in this form of patriotic activity was £160, so Ararat Auxiliary has again very good reason to be proud of its endeavours.

* * *

Following on the grateful reference by Sergeant L. S. Denton in last month's issue of the "News Letter," to the value of the Mobile Canteen presented to the Salvation Army by the Ararat V.R. Auxiliary, comes this fine tribute from Private K. M. Cahir, of the 2/3rd Aust. Machine Gun Btn., "somewhere on the Northern front" in connection with another canteen presented by the Auxiliary at the Newport Workshops:

"I'd like to mention an incident which occurred recently on one long trip up here. We spent several nights in staging camps and one particular camp where we arrived at about 1 o'clock on a wet, cold morning, we expected the usual slow and muddled staging camp procedure, but instead, were greeted with hot drinks, etc., from a Red Shield Mobile Canteen. This put everyone in a much better state of mind and happening to look on the side of the vehicle, I saw 'Presented by the Newport Workshops and Aircraft Auxiliary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund.' Believe me, all those who contributed to that can rest assured that their generosity was appreciated on that occasion by a couple of hundred very wet and miserable soldiers."

Private Cahir's appreciation was all the greater for the reason that when he enlisted he was an Apprentice Fitter and Turner at Newport.

The Sunday entertainments provided by the V.R.I. for members of the Defence Services and their friends are greatly appreciated by visiting warriors, as this little note of thanks from L.A.C. G. Hirst of Pt. Pirie, South Australia, to Mr. Tom Lockhead, Sub-Foreman at Jolimont Workshops and compere of the Sunday afternoon entertainments for the last four years, reveals:

"Just a short note of thanks to yourself and the girls of the V.R.I. for the grand time that you gave me on many a wet Sunday afternoon and night. It was certainly a great lift for me being a stranger to your city.

I am now back in my own State and have not forgotten to advertise the V.R.I. to boys going over there. My thanks also go to the artists who help to put the shows over."

At a recent meeting of the Committee of the Patriotic Fund several members mentioned similar expressions of appreciation by Servicemen, especially by some from Queensland and New Zealand, who had been passing through Melbourne.

These expressions of thanks must give encouragement to the willing band of helpers at these entertainments to continue their very unselfish work.

* * *

THE following eloquent little note comes from Private Ivor Hancock, a prisoner of war recently transferred to Germany from Italy.

"I received my first mail in Germany yesterday in the form of a package of cigarettes from Australia House in London. They were very welcome. I can tell you. The Red Cross has stuck by us very well, there has not been a week gone by that we have not received a good parcel and 50 cigarettes—I don't know what we would do without the Red Cross.

Well, I have completed 3 years as a prisoner; I wonder how many more I have to do before I leave this world of barbed wire and sentries behind me."

Private Hancock is the son of Mr. Harold Hancock, a repairer in the Way and Works Branch, who served in the First Great War and is a discharged soldier from the present one. The young prisoner's letter of gratitude reveals the fine work of the Red Cross, which receives £1 a week from the V.R. Patriotic Fund for the benefit of every railwayman or son of a railwayman held as a prisoner of war. Sixty-three prisoners are receiving assistance in this way and it is for such reasons that the Com-

NEW CAFETERIA FOR STAFF AT NEWPORT

THE cafeteria opened at Newport Workshops recently to provide quick wholesome meals for the staff of the erecting and boiler shops and foundry, is the last word in hygienic service and comfort.

Constructed with walls of brick and fibro cement, and equipped with up-to-date appliances, this modern restaurant will seat 480 at one sitting—12 at each of the 40 tables.

In the building, which is 140 feet long and 57 feet wide, there is ample room for every requirement—preparation and washing-up rooms, staff retiring room, which contains a shower-bath; and counters for the service of sandwiches, scones, pastries, cake and other refreshments.

The hot food is prepared in a central kitchen at Newport and is carried in hot dixies to the cafeteria, where it is served rapidly to the patrons who enter curved wooden races adjacent to small wooden islands on which are handily stacked the necessary trays, plates, etc.

At the end of each wooden division between the races is a bar where the patron hands in a ticket for his meal. Tickets are sold at the rate of 5 for 4/3d., each ticket covering the supply of a three-course meal—soup, entree and sweet, with a cup of tea.

Casual customers who drop in for a meal will be charged 7d. for an entree only or 1/1d. for three courses.

A feature of the layout is the provision of substantial multipot intervals throughout the eating section, each multipot enabling the patron to help himself to tea.

Everything is arrestingly new from chairs of tubular steel to the 10-oz. mugs, which save soup plates and space by being used for either tea or soup.

There are attractive displays of food of many kinds including appetizing salads, jellies, etc., and the variety both hot and cold foods is ample for all tastes. The efficiency and speed of the service is indicated by the fact that a meal can be served in 3½ minutes.

The Committee is anxious that every one of the Service should contribute 2s. per week—small as the amount is—to enable the good work to be continued.

If you are not already contributing to the V.R. Patriotic Fund, won't you do so now and assist to give this much needed aid to a team-mate in distress? It only means 6d. a fortnight deducted from your pay envelope, and you merely have to ask your Officer to fix the matter up for you.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Laurens Street, North Melbourne, for Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

NOVEMBER, 1944.

Issue No. 170.

HIGHLIGHTS OF "ANNUAL REPORT" Gross Revenue Second Highest in V.R. History

THE gross revenue of £15,974,634, was £1,145,589 less than the record revenue for the year 1942/43, and the second highest in the history of the service. The surplus was £448,136, nearly £340,000 less than the record surplus in the previous year. The decrease in earnings, which occurred principally in passenger traffic (£482,368) and goods and live stock traffic (£655,486) was mainly the result of the changed conditions in the Pacific war zone, which led to a substantial decline in the volume of defence traffic, both passenger and goods; the drastic reductions which had to be made in passenger and goods services owing to the inadequacy of the coal supplies available for railway use, and other causes arising out of the war.

The working expenses amounted £13,295,896—a decrease of £823,045 in the previous year. The main items contributing to the net reduction were:

Decreases:	
Contribution to the Railway Renewals and Replacements Fund	£ 750,000
Commonwealth War Damage contributions	35,000
National Security expenditure	30,000
Writing-off in the previous year the cost of certain sections of line abolished	140,000
Reserves for deferred ordinary maintenance and accrued staff leave	463,000
	£1,418,000

Increases:	
Higher salaries and wages, under Awards, etc.	180,000
Increased coal costs due to higher prices, poorer quality, overland-ing costs, etc.	121,000
Ordinary & Long Service Leave	90,000
Extra Day (Leap Year)	25,000
Overtime Payments	72,000
Additional maintenance work in Way and Works and Rolling Stock Branches	223,000
	711,000
	£707,000

The balance of the decrease in expenditure (£116,000) is more than accounted for by the operating savings resulting from the reduced volume of traffic. The big increases in traffic in the earlier years of the war did not entail a proportionate increase in operating costs, as a substantial amount of the additional business, particularly passenger and high-grade goods traffic, was carried by ordinary trains at very little extra cost. Now, when a progressive decline in traffic is taking place,

it is impracticable to reduce operating expenditure in anything like the same ratio as the fall in revenue.

The total contribution to the Railway Renewals and Replacements Fund was £1,050,000, which was £750,000 less than in the previous year. Although this contribution is greater than that required to take care of the depreciation in a normal year, the rolling stock equipment, tracks, etc., are being subjected to far more wear and tear than under peace-time conditions. Shortage of manpower and difficulty in obtaining essential materials again restricted the amount of renewal and replacement work that could be done. Deterioration of the

property proceeds at an accelerated rate when current maintenance is deferred. The arrears will inevitably have to be overtaken at a later date, and advantage was taken of the buoyancy of the revenue to make further provision towards meeting them. At 30th June last the total amount in the Renewals and Replacements Fund was £4,884,914.

As it was again impracticable to undertake all the ordinary maintenance work, such as sleeper renewals, renovation of buildings, and general track work which should have been done, an amount of £54,000 was charged against working expenses and credited to the reserve fund initiated last year for the purpose of overtaking arrears as soon as circumstances permit.

PRIDE IN THE JOB . . .

THE inconveniences caused by the present restrictions in service may be held against the railways when they have again to compete for business.

The extent of the harm that this may do will depend very largely upon the quality of personal service given by each individual employee whose work brings him into contact with the public.

A disobliging or discourteous employee—happily a rarity—can do untold harm, not alone by the resentment caused at the time, but by the lasting impression which his behaviour creates—an impression entirely unfair to the great body of railwaymen whose pride in the job has earned them an enviable reputation for friendly, efficient service.

This pride in the job—a sure sign of self-respect, which in itself inspires public confidence and esteem—is the best of all safeguards of future railway interests.

POST-WAR WORKS.

Because of the manpower situation, only a limited amount of progress is being made with plans for post-war works, including unification of gauges. Efforts are being continued to obtain additional technical staff so as to avoid undue delay in undertaking the vast programme of rehabilitation and improvement work which, if the Department is to play its proper part in post-war transport, must be pressed on with as soon as opportunity offers.

ROAD AND AIR COMPETITION.

While the carrying out of contemplated post-war works will place the railways in a position to meet all likely post-war demands, it is important that definite action be taken to ensure that there will not be a recurrence of the destructive competition which existed before the war. The lessons of the war years have amply demonstrated, not only in Australia, but in many other countries, the paramount importance of an efficient rail-

(Continued on page 2)

HIGHLIGHTS OF ANNUAL REPORT—*continued.*

way system capable of rapid expansion to meet a national emergency.

It is therefore essential, so long as railways remain an indispensable means of transport, both in peace and in war, that they be maintained in a sound condition, and that the development of other forms of transport, whether by road or by air, should be in their proper economic spheres and not at the expense of railway efficiency.

The Commissioners said that in normal times they would have welcomed the opportunity afforded by the greater control of road transport to refute many of the arguments that have been commonly advanced in favour of duplication of service. Unfortunately, difficulties created by the shortage of coal and also of qualified manpower have prevented the railways from demonstrating their potential capacity. It is nevertheless significant that despite these serious handicaps, and inability to build up resources in peace time because of the inroads of competition, a vastly greater volume of traffic, both goods and passenger, has been handled in the war years than during any other period of railway history.

In 1942-43—the year of greatest traffic—2½ million (or 46 per cent.) more tons of goods, and nearly 54 million (38 per cent.) more passengers were carried than in the year before the outbreak of war. This is at once a practical demonstration of the latent capacity normally available for additional traffic, and a tribute to the efficient teamwork and loyal co-operation by the rank and file of the staff.

In the case of air transport, the view was expressed that, before definite plans for the future of air transport are allowed to advance too far, steps should be taken to establish adequate control—and this does not imply harsh restrictions—over the future development of air transport, whether engaged in interstate or intra-State services. Any body set up for this purpose should undoubtedly include representation of the Railways as well as of the Defence Authorities.

RESTRICTIONS OWING TO COAL SHORTAGE.

Although steam passenger train services had been reduced since early in 1942, the inadequacy of the existing coal supplies made further drastic restrictions necessary as from 8th September, 1943. The curtailed scheduled passenger mileage was only 52 per cent. of that previously operating and 44 per cent. of the mileage prior to the first restrictions in 1942. Heavy reductions in goods and live stock traffic also had to be made.

As a result, consumption of large coal was reduced from 9,000 tons to about 7,000 tons per week. Even with

this reduction coal supplies were so inadequate that in June last the Department had only 10,500 tons on hand—sufficient for about 10 days. Suburban services had also to be reduced for varying periods because of the short supplies of small coal, but the only restrictions which remain are some cancellations that are operative on Sundays.

An opinion which gained some prevalence was that the country train service reductions were unduly heavy by comparison with those operative in the suburbs. The fact was of course that each type of service had to be restricted in accordance with the available quantity of the type of coal (large for steam trains or small for suburban electric trains) on which it depended. Small coal, even if it were available, could not be used in the existing steam locomotives.

STAFF.

At June 30, 3,108 officers and employees had joined the armed forces, and 73 had lost their lives in the service of their country. 387 were discharged and rejoined the Department—191 of them during the year.

Also 468 officers and employees are on loan to other Government Departments. The total number on leave with the armed forces or other Departments at the close of the year was 3,189, an increase for the year of 67. In addition time equivalent to approximately 1,303 employees was worked on the manufacture of munitions and tools for defence requirements.

At the commencement of the year the total permanent and supernumerary staff (including butty gang workers) was 25,374, with casual labour representing 432 men working full time, so that the total staff was equivalent to 25,806. At 30th June, 1944, the comparable figures were 25,636 and 304 respectively, making a total of 25,940.

Because of overtime working, the average strength of the staff is better represented by converting into ordinary time units the total time paid for. On this basis the equivalent number of full-time men debitable to railway working expenses was 24,794 in 1943-44, compared with 24,422 in 1942-43, an increase of 372.

The permanent staff was increased by the appointment of 133 apprentices to various trades.

RAILWAYS PATRIOTIC FUND.

During the year 1943-44, additional auxiliaries were formed and further substantial donations were made to the Australian Red Cross Society, the Australian Comforts Fund, the Ballarat Patriotic Funds Council and other war movements. Subscriptions average

about £1,000 per month, the nucleus of which is the voluntary contribution of 3d. per week from a large proportion of the railway staff through the medium of the payrolls.

ROLLING STOCK CONSTRUCTION.

One "X" class and two "K" class locomotives were completed within the year, as well as two 7-car suburban trains, 15 workmen's sleepers and 22 general service trucks.

COAL SUPPLIES.

The quantities of coal allocated to the Department during the year by the controlling authorities (the Commonwealth Coal Commission and the State Coal Committee), amounted to 387,500 tons of large and 133,505 tons of small coal.

Supplies from New South Wales totalled 406,954 tons, of which 67,853 tons of large and 41,911 tons of small were seaborne. The balance of 297,190 tons, was brought by rail from New South Wales and involved the Department in an additional expenditure of £220,000 for overland carriage. There was a substantial reduction in the quantity of Maitland coal received and a big increase in Lithgow coal, which is of lower calorific value than the Maitland coal, and consequently involves the use of a greater tonnage. All of the Lithgow coal was transported by rail and the average cost was 51/7d. per ton via Wodonga and 54/5d. per ton via Tocumwal, whereas seaborne Maitland coal, of much better quality, costs on the average 39/7d. per ton.

No other State has been obliged to suffer anything like the restrictions which have had to be imposed in Victoria. The pressing need for increasing supplies of coal for railway use and for equality of sacrifice as between the States was frequently brought before the Coal Controlling Authorities, but with little result.

The precarious position in which the railways and trade and industry generally have been placed, emphasizes the disadvantage of depending on New South Wales for the bulk of the coal required in Victoria, and the desirability of developing Victoria's own resources to the fullest extent.

Experimental burning of brown coal, both in raw form and as briquettes, has been undertaken with limited success at Newport Power Station, and the experiments are being continued. Under war conditions the requisite mechanical equipment for burning brown coal in locomotives is unprocurable, but experiments will be continued as soon as the situation permits. Another avenue which is proposed to explore at the first opportunity

(Continued on page 3)

HIGHLIGHTS OF ANNUAL REPORT

continued.

... is main line electrification. This, of course, would necessarily be part of a long-range post-war programme.

SALARIES AND WAGES.

The amount disbursed was £70,445, compared with £8,670,724 the previous year.

SERVICE.

The Commissioners again recorded their gratification at the service rendered by the staff. The restricted traffic conditions which caused much discomfort and inconvenience to railway users added greatly to the difficulties of the operating staff. But the Staff has risen excellently to the emergency, and had acquitted themselves admirably.

In many sections, including Workshops, substantial overtime caused by power shortage and wartime requirements, was cheerfully worked by the concerned.

F.C. For Another Valiant V.R. Employee

Warm congratulations to Flying Officer John Purves, another railway man who has won the coveted Distinguished Flying Cross.

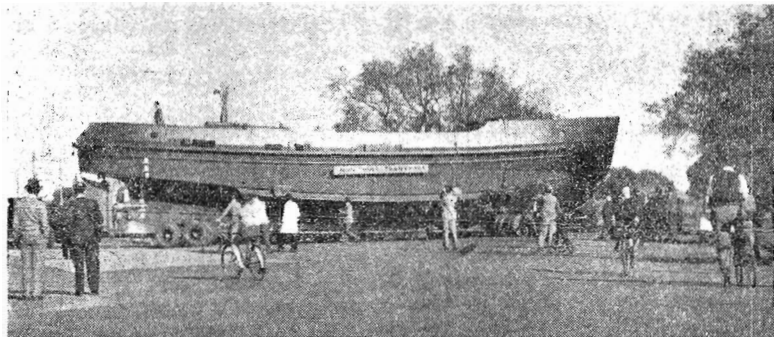


Flying Officer John Purves

The official citation only baldly covers the rare personal achievement which merits such recognition. It says that Flying Officer Purves has taken part in many night attacks on heavily defended enemy targets. These attacks invariably entailed long flights through extremely bad weather, but excellent navigation and accurate bombing resulted in a successful attack on practically every occasion. Flying Officer Purves is an outstanding navigator and observer who, by his skill, courage and devotion to duty, is an example to other members of the Squadron."

This valiant young airman, who celebrated his 26th birthday on October 1, was employed in the Department as a lad porter in the Transportation Branch in 1935.

FIRST TUGBOAT HULL FOR C'WEALTH GOVT. COMPLETED AT NEWPORT WORKSHOPS



THE first tugboat hull completed at the Newport Workshops for the Commonwealth Government provided a problem of transport in hauling it from the Shops to the launching place. The hull is 75 feet long, 18 feet broad, with an overall depth of 17 feet, and the route for its journey to the river had to be planned to avoid the possibility of colliding with the overhead gear of electric train and tram services on the way. The route chosen crossed the railway twice, and careful organization by all concerned, particularly the provision of tram and telephone staffs to raise overhanging wires where necessary enabled the whole formidable job to be completed without a hitch. The most difficult part of the journey, however, was getting the hull under the Flinders Street railway viaduct at the foot of King Street, and this was successfully accomplished. The roundabout journey of approximately 16 miles from Newport Workshops to the water occupied about 4 hours on a recent Sunday morning in accordance with a previously arranged schedule, the vehicle used for the transport being a specially constructed 32-wheel float. In the above illustration the tug is shown turning into Kororoit Creek Road on its way to the waterside.

V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND HAS NOW PASSED £ 50,000

SPOTSWOOD Workshops V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary deserves a complimentary reference for its long sustained effort in manufacturing goods for the Red Cross.

When its programme was first undertaken, a number of the men in the Shop volunteered to work back in their own time to provide leg splints, leg irons, bedside lockers, bandage winders, foot rests and similar hospital equipment. It is significant of the infectious patriotism of these voluntary groups that the Spotswood team now numbers almost 100 men, about 22 of them working each Saturday morning for a period of from 3½ to 4 hours.

Each man gives up at least one Saturday morning in four. Material is supplied by the Railways Commissioners, and is paid for out of the Victorian Railways Patriotic Fund.

To-day the value of the work of this voluntary manual effort group, which is of immense value to the Red Cross, has reached the fine figure of over £2,000, whilst the value of the material supplied is over £300. When the Spotswood V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary was first formed, it was not intended to raise money in the same way as other Auxiliaries do, but as a result of a change in the policy last year, the Auxiliary has already provided more than £600 in cash, much of it derived from card nights, dances, and similar entertain-

ments from time to time. This is surely a splendid effort for a worthy cause.

* * *

A profit of over £800 was obtained from the State-wide raffle conducted by the V.R. Patriotic Committee and drawn on September 26 by Mr. Commissioner R. G. Wishart.

* * * * *

The V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee is now actively preparing to send each V.R. Man on Service one of those parcels which proved to be so welcome when distributed last year. Recognition of the fact that the boys will probably receive, about Christmas time, parcels from relatives, friends and organisations in their own district, has decided the Committee however to postpone its distribution until early in the New Year, when the attractive little bundle of biscuits, tinned fruit, chocolate, raisins and nuts, cigarettes, etc., should be appreciated as a very effective follow-up to the Christmas celebrations.

* * * * *

It is a matter for congratulation that the V.R. Patriotic Fund has now passed the £50,000 mark. Steady contributions to the Fund will soon bring £60,000 in sight. Even finer achievements would of course be possible with greater support. If you are not a contributor won't you authorise a deduction of 6d. a pay from your salary envelope and help in the great work that is being done through the V.R. Patriotic Fund.

Results of Ambulance Competitions

MARYBOROUGH No. 1 Corps again won the First Prize in the Senior Teams' Events of the V.R. Ambulance Competitions held at Lilydale on October 26. It was a "win by a neck," so to speak, for Melbourne Goods No. 1 Team was only half a point behind in the final summing-up by the adjudicators. This was Maryborough's second successive win after filling second or third place on six previous occasions. Mr. J. Mitchell (Newport Workshops) who won the Novice Individual event last year, and was third in the Senior event, caught the judge's eye in the Senior Individuals this year, and Mr. K. J. Hart (Melbourne Goods) was the best in the Novice Individuals for 1944. First Prize in the Novice Teams went to Jolimont Guards, and the best improvised stretcher was produced by the Castlemaine team. The full placings in the various events were as follows:—

SENIOR CORPS EVENT:

- First - Maryborough No. 1.
- Second - Melbourne Goods No. 1.
- Third - Benalla No. 1.

SENIOR INDIVIDUAL:

- DUX - J. Mitchell, Newport.
- Second - K. J. Hart, Melbourne Goods.
- Third - R. Klemke, North Loco.

NOVICE CORPS EVENT:

- First - Jolimont Guards.
- Second - Ballarat North No. 1.
- Third - Bendigo Loco.

NOVICE INDIVIDUAL:

- First - K. J. Hart, Melb. Goods.
- Second - C. K. Kent, Maryborough.
- Third - D. L. Calvert, Spotswood Workshops.

A keen competitive spirit was exhibited in the tests, the planning of which again revealed considerable thought and ingenuity on the part of the Ambulance Officer (Mr. W. Blackburn) and his staff. The whole busy day was completed without a hitch, and was the subject of congratulatory references by the several speakers at the highly successful Annual Dinner, which was held this year at the Doric Hall, South Melbourne. Mr. G. Rogers (Assistant General Superintendent of Transportation) presided, and Mr. Commissioner R. G. Wishart announced the winners and presented the prizes.

In extending a warm welcome to the visitors, Mr. Wishart said the Commissioners were very pleased with the interest which had been maintained in First Aid work throughout the year, particularly at the number of men who had commenced the study of such work. He paid a warm tribute to the adjudicators and to the work of Mr. Blackburn, Ambulance Officer, and his staff.

Toasts to the Fighting Forces, Winning Teams, and Individuals, The Adjudicators, and "Our Visitors," were enthusiastically drunk, and there was additional warmth in the response to the toasts of the health of Mr. and

Mrs. C. Mitchell, whose generosity in making a free gift of 6 acres of land at Lilydale for future Ambulance Competitions made a profound impression on all concerned. In responding to the toast, Mr. Mitchell, who was present as a guest of the Commissioners, said it was the wish of Mrs. Mitchell and himself that the area should be known as the "Blanche Mitchell Gift."

Doctors McAree, Sloss and Sheil, who were listened to with close attention, were again present to comment briefly, but pertinently, on the day's work, which they unanimously proclaimed to have shown an improvement on last year's competitions.

A delightful musical programme was provided by Mr. Ted. Forbes (vocalist) Mr. Syd. Gregory (comedy violinist) Mr. Tom Lockhead (comedian), Mr. Roy Ogilvie (pianist) and the Campbell Brothers, who were responsible for an original musical act.

Success of Former V.R. Motor Mechanic

VICTORIAN railwaymen will be interested to learn that Mr. A.

E. Berger, a former motor mechanic at Mt. Buffalo National Park, and now a foreman with the Department of Aircraft Production, has been selected to visit England to make a special study of requirements in aircraft engines. He is expected to be absent from Australia for a period of nine months.

Mr. Berger, who is only 38, was transferred to the Department of Aircraft Production as a fitter in February, 1941, became a leading hand at the end of the same year, and sub-foreman in March, 1942. He was promoted to foreman in May last year.

His diligence and care in everything he undertakes have ever been outstanding characteristics.

He originally joined the Railways in 1922, and became a motor mechanic at the Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park, in 1926, continuing there with a couple of intervals until the opportunity at the Department of Aircraft Production provided a much larger field for his young and eager ambition.

ENOUGH SAID!

THE following unofficial, but striking warning to persons about to cross the fast lines at Kenton, Middlesex (England) has been inscribed on the abutment of a neighbouring overbridge:—

Stop!
Look!
Listen!
or
R.I.P.

(—"Railway Gazette," England.)

DEATH OF ORIGINAL "MAN IN GREY"

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to record the sudden death on September 30, of Mr. G. R. Bidmeade, the original "Man in Grey" at the Spencer Street Station.

He was officially known as "Station Director," to which post he was appointed in 1920. Granted 6 months leave for urgent private business in 1923, he did not immediately resume his old picturesque job until 1929, from that year until his retirement in February, 1942, he was found regularly in his Box at Spencer Street Station replying courteously and accurately to all sorts of questions on railway matters, and proving a sort of informative lighthouse to many a stranger in need of direction.

V.R. WAR CASUALTIES.

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report that Flt. Sgt. R. J. Ayers of the R.A.A.F., previously reported "Missing" is now presumed to be dead. Flt. Sgt. W. Tee, previously reported "Missing" is now a prisoner of war. Two more "Missing" are Flt. I. P. Hourigan and P.O. F. B. Knight.

Flt. Sgt. Ayers, who was born in 1904, joined the V.R. Printing Works in 1924 and when he enlisted in 1941 he was machine feeder. Flt. Sgt. W. Tee, who returned 21 last month, joined the railways in 1939, and when he enlisted in 1942 he was in the duplicating box at the Spencer Street Head Office. F. O. Hourigan, who is 22 years of age, joined the department as a lad labourer at Newport in 1938, and enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in 1942. P. O. Knight came to the department as a junior clerk in the Accountancy Branch in 1935, and enlisted in 1941. He will be 27 next month.

Originally he was not known as "Man in Grey." That title and uniform which underlined it, was spoken, were presented to him after his return in 1922 of Mr. Commissioner M. J. Canny (then "Outdoor Superintendent") from a visit to America.

Mr. Canny had seen "Man in Grey" helping bewildered travellers in San Francisco and other parts of the United States, and he recommended the appointment of a similar official in Melbourne.

Sir Harold Clapp, then Chairman of Commissioners, quickly saw the value of such an official, and Mr. Bidmeade was installed. When the necessary speakers were provided later, his voice was heard all over the Spencer Street Station.

On his retirement in 1942 he had completed over 40 years of service. He became a "Station Director" and has been for various periods porter, stationer in the Melbourne Yard, ticket collector, and supervising barrier porter. After his return from his special leave absence, he was employed with the Ticket Inspector and conducted the Ticket Checkers' Examinations.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston Street, North Melbourne. Sole Publishers, The Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

DECEMBER, 1944.

Issue No. 171.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ENGLISH RAILWAYS IN WAR

HOW the English railways are serving the war factories and providing for civil needs in England is revealed in these further extracts from "British Railways in Peace and War," issued by the British Railways Press Office in London.

Factory Service

Every week nearly 7,000 special trains are run to carry workers to government factories alone.

For one factory one little shed alone, with room for only nine railway vans and five road vehicles at a time, dealt with 496,018 tons of material during a three years' construction period, and most of it had to be double-handled.

Repeatedly, as the output of the war factories increases, the services have been enlarged. For one factory alone 100 trains are run each day; at the "peak" period 10 trains leave in 10 minutes. In addition, buses make 800 daily trips. Though this programme has had to be superimposed on an already heavy traffic on a busy main line, a remarkable degree of punctuality has been maintained.

Alien Travel

The volume of civilian travel still continues at a high level and trains are crowded because there are fewer of them. Railway staff and equipment are directed to the task of directly aiding the war effort.

The railways cannot cope with the increased traffic and at the same time provide the amenities of travel on a peacetime scale. At holiday times, special leave for the forces has been granted and appeals have been made to the public to restrict their travel to necessary journeys only.

After four years of war more special days were taken. At Easter, the increase at the London main line was 10 per cent. At a popular resort the increase was 96 per cent. greater, and at a provincial centre 55 per cent. greater. With the limitations imposed by the Government on the number of passenger trains, such great increases in passenger travel are an embarrassment alike to the railways and to those travelling to and from the resorts at the same time, however much they may sympathise with the desire for a break at the seaside or in the country."

The following extract shows the remarkable part played by the English railways in preparing for the defeat of the Germans and Italians in North Africa two years ago.

From The Commissioners

AT the close of another year, we extend to every member of the railway staff our good wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

For the loyal and unselfish devotion to duty and the helpful attitude towards management and public alike, which have been shown by the staff generally, we proffer our unstinted thanks. We are deeply appreciative of their excellent work and willing co-operation during a year beset with many difficulties.

Particularly, we desire again to pay grateful tribute to our fellow-railwaymen who are serving with the fighting forces. May the day be not far distant when, with victory achieved, they will be back with us, in full health and vigor. We wish them all good fortune.

We do not forget those who will not return: the gallant men who made the supreme sacrifice in opposing the menace to the lives and liberties of us all. Our heartfelt sympathy is with their relatives, who we earnestly hope may find both consolation and pride in the knowledge that these brave lives were not given in vain, but that others might live in freedom.

M. Harro

Chairman

A. G. Bannister

Commissioner

A. C. Tait

Commissioner

To Unknown Destination . . .

"It is, perhaps, glibly said that this is a war of movement, conjuring up in our minds a picture of Allied armies surging forward irresistibly over the battlefields. But the war of movement starts very much further back—thousands of miles, maybe, away from the scene of the fighting and the success of the initial planning that goes to the task of moving an army.

"Though the Germans and Italians did not know it, their fate in North Africa was sealed in the autumn of 1942, when the first intimations were received at the operating headquarters of the British railways of an impending move of considerable dimensions.

"Over a period of a month, 185,000 men and 20,000 vehicles and 220,000 tons of stores, were carried by the railways to the ports. This involved the running of 440 troop trains, 680 freight trains, and 15,000 wagons by ordinary goods service, which put end to end would be 270 miles in length.

"This large-scale movement, with all its complexities, had to be superimposed on the already heavy burden of traffic which the war has placed on railway transport. It had to be carried out in complete secrecy; even the travelling warrants simply stated "To Unknown Destination."

V.R. WAR CASUALTIES

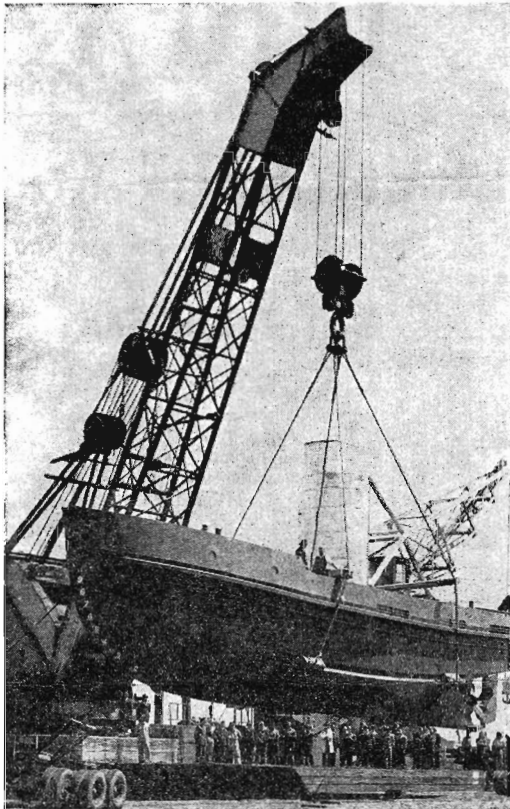
THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report that Flying Officer R. L. Bodie is reported "Missing," and that accidents have been responsible for the deaths of A.C. 2 G. P. Tait, and Private J. N. Greaves.

Flying Officer Bodie, who was 22 years of age, started as a junior clerk in the Electrical Engineering Branch in 1938, and enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in 1941.

A.C. 2 Tait, who was accidentally drowned, was 18, and had only been 6 months in the R.A.A.F. He entered the Way and Works Branch as a junior clerk in 1941.

It was the unhappy fate of Private Greaves to fight in Africa and New Guinea and even escape from Crete where he was a prisoner of war only to lose his life accidentally in Melbourne. He entered the Rolling Stock Branch as a lad labourer in 1936, and enlisted in February, 1940. His father, N. L. Greaves, is S.M. at Koroit.

Preparing To Launch First Tugboat Hull Completed By Department



LAST MONTH the "News Letter" published a photograph showing the first tugboat hull, completed at Newport Workshops for the Commonwealth Government, on its way to the launching place. In the adjoining illustration the hull is shown being hoisted by a large crane preparatory to launching. The picture reveals the graceful lines of the hull and also indicates the propeller, the first of its kind to be cast and finished at Newport. Since the photograph was taken, a second hull has been delivered. It was carried along the same winding route followed by its predecessor and reached the waterside without a hitch. A third hull is now being constructed and should be available in about a month's time.

Public Impressions

LAST year, 194 million passenger journeys were made on our railways, which means that on an average more than half a million people travelled by rail every day.

The impressions of railway service formed by this large number of passengers are of the utmost importance to the future of the system. Unfortunately, the many vexatious conditions caused by the serious shortage of coal are liable to create an entirely false impression of normal railway service.

It is up to all of us who take pride in the job, and have the interests of the system and of our fellow-railwaymen at heart, to make very sure that any acts or omissions of our own do not foster harmful public impressions.

Simple acts of thoughtfulness towards our customers, dictated by courtesy and common sense, will do more than arguments and excuses to safeguard not only railway reputation and future business, but also our own personal standing in the public estimation.

ENLISTMENTS

R.A.A.F.
 PORTER R. Arnold; Lad Labr. C. J. Barnard; Jnr. Clk. L. C. Frimantle; Lad Labr. C. R. Glasby; Lad Labr. D. Keating; Lad Labr. W. Ryan; Lad Labr. W. R. Walsh.
 R.A.N.
 Lad Labr. T. H. Cox; Lad Labr. M. A. Magnuson.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF V.R. MILITARY BAND

ON December 6, the Victorian Railways Military Band will celebrate its 50th Birthday by a Smoke Social. It is now one of the veteran bands of Australia, and its record includes an immense amount of handsome service on behalf of charities of all descriptions.

Originally it was created to provide pleasant musical entertainment for excursion crowds to Healesville, Mornington and other hill and seaside resorts, the band playing selections en route in a special saloon car (No. B.11) attached to the train.

Soon the Commissioners realised the band's possibilities in promoting traffic to convenient seaside resorts, and it started on a series of band recitals at Brighton Beach. The success of these recitals was so great that a refreshment room with a band rotunda overhead was constructed, and the reserve near the station was laid out with lawns and seats.

In 1905 bioscope pictures, forerunners of modern moving pictures, were thrown on the screen in the evenings, and the band supplied all the attractive airs of the day to large audiences.

As the popularity of the band grew, its services were in constant demand. Probably the apex of its achievement was when it was invited to supply appropriate music at State Parliament House, Spring Street, at the swearing-in of Lord Brassey as Governor of Victoria. The band also figured at Parliamentary garden parties; at the first convention discussing the first Commonwealth Parliament; and it was also heard at A.N.A. fetes as well as at the then popular evening open-air concerts on the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

On moonlight trips on the Port Phillip Bay paddle steamers, which will be remembered by music lovers of an older generation, the band was heard in carefully selected programs, and it was also prominent in concerts at the Melbourne Town Hall.

It has raised large sums for hospitals and other charitable institutions in Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong and elsewhere. It commenced "doing its bit" for Hospital Sunday in 1897, and has been available for every Hospital Sunday since.

Railwaymen will remember its recitals at the exhibition to the public of the first "S" Class and "H" Class locomotives, and it will also be recalled

that it gave monthly recitals for a considerable period over 3LO.

Today it is heard principally on fine Sunday afternoon Public Garden recitals, provided by the Melbourne City Council, in which it has been appearing since 1934.

Much courage, pertinacity and patience were required to make the first band fit for service, and the efforts of the late Mr. A. Wallace, the first bandmaster, and of others who helped the movement and clung to the cause, spending much of their own time and money, their enthusiasm for the cause, should never be forgotten. Many of our railwaymen played with the band regularly over periods of years, and the medal for long service must be awarded to Mr. E. J. Pope, who joined up in 1905 and is still a regular playing member.

There have been several distinguished railwaymen Presidents of the band, including the late Commissioner Mr. L. J. McClelland. The longest term of office as President was held by Mr. H. L. Dickson, from 1930 to 1944. Mr. O. K. Duggan succeeded Mr. Dickson in July of 1944. Mr. Max Curlett of North Melbourne Loco. has proved a hard worker for a term which now exceeds 17 years.

RECORD CROWD CARRIED TO MELBOURNE CUP

THE ability of the Department to transport huge crowds in a limited period was again demonstrated on Melbourne Cup Day (November 11) when 60,501 people—a record—travelled by rail to Flemington Racecourse. An additional 4,858 were carried on the return trips, making a grand total of 65,359. The fact that this formidable transportation job was undertaken at the "peak" period of a Saturday without any noticeable inconvenience to regular suburban passengers is a tribute to excellent organisation and fine staff work.

A brilliant blue sky was largely responsible for the record crowd which was 366 more than the next best "high" forward traffic of 135 in 1943—and nearly 25,000 more than the total in 1942, a wet day, by the way, and the first in the history of the race that the date was changed from the first day in November.

Sixteen 8-car trains made 53 trips to the Flemington Racecourse and on the return 19 trains did 42 trips. A considerable percentage of the crowd left the Course before the final event of the day, as is shown by the running of 15 full trains from Flemington to the City in the period between 3.21 p.m. (just after the Cup) and 5.21 p.m. (just before the last race). With the exception of the race patrons who remained to finalise their racecourse matters all were conveyed from the Course within an hour after the last race.

The number of tickets sold at suburban stations to help the booking at Flinders Street and Spencer Street was just on 13,000—a record. This figure shows that the public are increasingly realising the convenience of purchasing at the principal suburban stations both rail and combined rail-and-admission tickets to the Course.

THESE IDEAS MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED TO YOU . . .

SOME time ago a thoughtful railwayman suggested an improvement to superheater tubes in fire boxes of locomotives. It was found after investigation that the suggestion would save the Department considerable annual expense and the employe received handsome reward.

Many other ideas, such as improved lubrication in a wrecking crane, a method of preventing errors in the marking of production orders in Powers machines, ways of disposing of old telegraph poles and tarpaulins, a suggestion that congestion in the traffic at St. Kilda for semi-final and final football matches might be avoided by using football patrons to take rail to Windsor—all those and more have been accepted and suitably rewarded by the Department.

Some idea for betterment may occur to you in your daily job. Look around. Possibly there is some arrangement or routine, hoary with long practice, which can be changed with increase of efficiency and saving of time and money. All you have to do is to write down your suggestion, and send it at once—to the Betterment and Suggestions Board, Railway Offices, Spencer Street.

Remember—every accepted idea will be rewarded and every communication will be kept strictly private and confidential. If you so desire, all communications in connection with your suggestion will be forwarded to your home address.

V.R. Man Is Father Of Two Decorated Sons

THE courage of his sons must be a matter of quiet pride to Mr. C. T. Drew, a member of the Way and Works Staff Office at the Spencer Street Head Office.

In April last, the "News Letter" reported that his youngest son, Corporal R. A. Drew, of 37/52nd Infantry Battalion, had been awarded the D.C.M. for a deed of fine heroism in New Guinea, when he stood up in a hail of enemy bullets and, firing a Bren gun from the hip, killed four Japanese, breaking up the attack.

Following on that achievement, Mr. Drew now learns that the D.F.C. has been awarded to his eldest son, Pilot Officer A. H. Drew of the R.A.A.F., who before enlistment, was an employe of Edward Campbell & Sons, Structural Engineers.

In the official citation, it is stated that "he has completed numerous operations against the enemy in which he has displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty." He has been overseas for two years attached to the R.A.F.

Mr. Drew's second son, Corporal L. C. Drew, formerly a lad labourer in the Way and Works Branch, is also in the R.A.A.F.

These valiant young Drews represent the fourth generation in a notable railway family. Their great grandfather, Solomon Drew, started the railway history of the family as a ganger in the Way and Works Branch. He was killed near Birregurra in 1889.

Welcome Donations To V.R. Patriotic Fund

THE V.R. Patriotic Fund, which has now passed £50,000, owes its size and importance largely to the regular contributions of an army of railwaymen and women, but it also benefits from time to time by gifts from generous people. A particular instance of this is the donation of Mr. H. Booley, of the Car and Wagon Shops, North Melbourne. Like many more railwaymen, Mr. Booley purchased tickets in the big Raffle recently conducted by the V.R. Patriotic Fund Committee, and he won a consolation prize to the value of £1. Knowing that the prize would be a welcome addition to the V.R. Patriotic Fund he handed it over with his best wishes, and the Committee duly recorded its gratitude for the donation.

Another who has earned a warm letter of thanks for his generosity is Mr. E. R. Childe, 12 Gurner Street, St. Kilda. A few weeks ago Mr. Childe left a bag in a railway train and he was so pleased when it was subsequently returned to him by the Stationmaster at South Melbourne that he put a 10/- note in the Patriotic Fund collection box at the railway station.

These collection boxes, which invite railway patrons to contribute their small change have already benefited the Fund to the extent of £1,200, and it is the intention of the Committee to promote this method of appeal, by attaching to each box a new sticker, a reproduction of which is shown below. This original sticker, in two colours, will surely make many pause and dip into their pockets to help the good cause.

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS PATRIOTIC FUND

KEEP ON HELPING THE FIGHTING FORCES

LEAVE YOUR SMALL CHANGE HERE

V.R. Cricketer Shows Astonishing Skill

CRICKET enthusiasts in the Department are talking of the great innings by "Bill" Russell, a lighting patrolman in the electric lighting division of the Way and Works Branch who recently made 271 not out in 140 minutes for Brunswick against Camberwell in the Sub-District Competition.

This innings is not only his Club's record but a Sub-District record. It was practically a faultless exhibition in which the keen young batsman only gave one very difficult chance. Something of the masterly skill displayed will be realised when it is learned that he made 88 when one partner was contributing 10 to the score. At another stage by adroitly "playing for the stroke" he hit up 50 whilst another partner maintained his end. His total included five "sixers" and 41 fours, and towards the end of the innings he had the panting Camberwell fieldsmen distributed rather hopelessly around the boundary.

Bill has made several other centuries in Sub-District cricket—his average is between 500 and 600 runs a season—and his performances are all the more remarkable because his duties in the Department call for his travelling all over the State, leaving him very little opportunity for practice.

Mr. I. WILLIAM RETIRES

THERE was a large gathering of fellow-workmen at the Loco. Depot, Geelong, recently, when Mr. I. William, leading boilermaker, who was retiring, was presented with a suitably inscribed gold watch and a wallet of notes, and a leather handbag for Mrs. William.

Various speakers suitably emphasised the popularity of Mr. William, who joined the Department as a boilermaker in 1903, and after working throughout the State was transferred to Geelong in 1921.

He was keenly interested in ambulance work, and his ability is revealed by his securing gold and silver medals in V.R. Ambulance Competitions.

He assisted in the formation of A.R.P. First Aid Classes, and devoted much of his time to lecturing and demonstrating to First Aid Classes in Geelong and the surrounding district.

Rowing was another of his enthusiasms. As a young man he rowed with the Richmond Rowing Club, and was the Club's representative on the Victorian Rowing Association. He was also secretary, coach and captain of the Colac Rowing Club.

DEATH OF MR. W. T. CORNISH

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report the death last month of Mr. W. T. Cornish, Chief Foreman of the North Melbourne Loco. Depot, at the age of 61.

Mr. Cornish joined the Department as an apprentice fitter in 1900. Six years later he was a fitter and became a leading hand fitter in 1914.

In subsequent years he was promoted to Fitter-in-Charge, Senior Leading Hand Fitter and Foreman Mechanic, and in January, 1925, reached the post which he held at his death.

A loyal, energetic railwayman, assiduous in everything he undertook, Mr. Cornish will leave behind a host of friendly recollections. His warm interest in beginners is recorded in the illustration showing him and two lads beside a locomotive, which is used annually in the poster appealing for apprentices in various sections of the railway service.

He was greatly interested in motoring and gardening, and in later years he developed an affection for Apollo Bay as a holiday resort, never ceasing to extol its beauties to his many friends.

Fine Work For Ballarat Benevolent Home

CONGRATULATIONS to those worthy railwaymen of Ballarat who have given so much of their time and enthusiasm to the assistance of the Ballarat District Benevolent Home. Relying on a series of entertainments, of which a special gala day was a feature, local railway workers raised £940.

This fine effort stimulated other sections of the Ballarat community, with the result that the appeal produced the excellent total of £6,400.

In a letter to the Secretary for Railways, the joint Secretaries of this appeal, Messrs. G. H. Hammer and Keith MacKay, warmly record their "sincere appreciation and grateful thanks for the magnificent help given by the railway employees of Ballarat."

SERVICE

A WARM note of appreciation comes from Mr. W. A. Edwards, 27 Beach Avenue, Elwood, in which he eulogises the courteous actions of the staff connected with the St. Kilda-Brighton Tramway.

"Your conductors," he says, "with exceptional patience and good spirit, were instrumental in extracting my dog from off and from under the tram."

Subsequently he dropped a wallet of bank notes, and although it was three hours afterwards that he first knew of his loss, he received the good news when he got home that the wallet had been found and handed in by Conductor Speirs.

From Morse To Inter-Train Communication

IT is just one hundred years since Morse's electric telegraph became a medium of rapid long distance communication on railways. Prior to Morse's invention, wrecks, derailments and delays were frequent. With the installation of the Morse System train despatching from a central point became possible, but it was left to Charles Minot, Division Superintendent on the Erie Railroad, U.S.A., to make historic use of the new method of communication.

In 1850, he was riding on a train which was held for a "cross" with another train approaching slowly from the opposite direction. Minot asked the telegraph operator to inquire by the new telegraph where the other train was.

Hearing that he could reach Port Jervis before the other train, Minot telegraphed the Port Jervis operator that he was coming on, and to be sure the other train lest there be a wreck. Checking on the other train's progress by Morse telegraph from each station, Minot was able to get to his destination on time, instead of hours late.

First Train Control

Crude as it was, that was the first example of train control, and it led to a flood of subsequent developments in the secure handling of railway traffic. Today, train control is a commonplace of every up-to-date railway system. But American railways are even going further in endeavouring to obtain a reliable means of communication between moving train vehicles in the same train, and between moving trains and way stations.

A novel system has now been installed experimentally on a section of the Pennsylvania Railway in U.S.A. Radio had been tried on many occasions previously for the purposes indicated, but although communication by this means is possible it is uncertain in tunnels, on bridges and similar structures.

The system evolved has the unique feature of providing the communication possibilities of radio whilst restricting the transmission to railway property.

This is achieved by using the telegraph and adjacent telegraph lines as conductors.

Equipment is fitted on locomotives and van, and at wayside stations by means of which it is possible to intercommunicate between trains up to 10 miles apart and between side stations up to 100 miles apart.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia at the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston Street, North Melbourne. Published by the Victorian Railways Commissioners.