

SCHOLARS' CLUB BULLETIN

January, 1940

No. 30

TOURIST
BUREAU
IS GREAT
PLACE TO
PLAN A
HOLIDAY!



THIS picture of the Booking and Enquiry Hall in the new premises of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, 272 Collins Street, Melbourne—on the Block between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets—gives a good idea of the outstanding features of this modern travel house. The booking counters and panelling are constructed of beautiful Australian timbers, the rubber floor covering features representations of Australian animals copied from aboriginal drawings which have been found in caves in Central Australia, while on the left-hand wall there is a striking mural decoration portraying the dramatic advance in road, rail, sea, and air transport. Altogether the new Bureau provides a delightful atmosphere in which to do business!

DEAR Pals—I hope you all had a very happy Xmas. Here we are starting another year and I suppose you have all made a lot of good resolutions. I've made one that I'm sure you'll all approve of. Do you know what it is? To give you even more interesting Bulletins this year than I did last.

I hope this month's issue is a good start. It contains a lot of interesting matter. I trust you like the picture of the new office of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau which I told you about last month.

And, of course, you will eagerly read on Page 2, some of the features of the new "H" class locomotive now being constructed at the Newport Workshops. My word, the Victorian Railwaymen building it are proud. But not as much as I am!

Your old friend,

Bill Smith

PEN FRIENDS WANTED

HERE are a couple of members of the Scholars' Club who would like to make some pen friends: Betty Perdrisal, 330 Balaclava Road, Caulfield, S.E. 7; and Dawn Chambers, 15 Winifred Crescent, Glen Iris, S.E. 6. Both would particularly like to hear from boys or girls outside Victoria, so here is a chance for you interstate and overseas members to make a pen friend.

Mt. Buffalo Popular

TAKING advantage of the greatly reduced tariff which operated at The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park, until December 16 last, an increasing number of holidaymakers from all parts of the Commonwealth are now extolling the springtime attractions of this mountain wonderland.

Evidence of the stimulating effect of the reduced rate—an 8-day all-inclusive tour from Melbourne for only £5/19/6d., usually £7/15/- is seen in a comparison between the number of visitors during November, 1938 and 1939.

In November, 1938, 863 guests stayed at The Chalet—an average of 29 per day. In the same month of 1939, the figures soared to 2,604 and 87 respectively.

From the end of January to the beginning of Easter, the rate for an 8-day all-inclusive tour from Melbourne will be £6/19/6d., which for these popular holiday months is only £1 more than the low rate of £5/19/6d. which will operate between March 30 and June 30.

* * *

Bureau Revenue, Too

OTHER significant tourist happenings during November last included a rise of nearly £3,500 in the revenue at the Head Office of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, compared with November, 1938.

In a recent week the bookings made at the Bureau for hotel and guest-house accommodation was an all-time record.

GIANT "H" LOCOMOTIVE IS NOW TAKING SHAPE

Largest, Heaviest, Most Powerful In Victoria

IN last February's edition of the Bulletin we told you something about the new "H" class locomotive that is being constructed at the Newport Workshops. This locomotive, which has the 4-8-4 wheel arrangement, will be the largest, heaviest and most powerful to be installed in Victoria, and the first eight-coupled passenger locomotive to be introduced in this State. Knowing that you would all be interested to hear how the work on this mammoth machine was progressing, we paid a visit to Newport recently and we are pleased to report that substantial progress can now be seen in its construction.

The main frames, which consist of two cast steel bar sections each 36 ft. 6 in. in length and weighing 4 tons 6 cwt., had been assembled in the erecting shop and the cylinders were being bolted in position, whilst simultaneously work was proceeding on the valve gear frame supports and other details of assembly.

In the adjacent boiler shop, work on the boiler had been practically completed—the largest boiler, incidentally, yet built for any locomotive in Australia.

In short, another giant of the iron way is rapidly taking shape. It will probably go into service on Seymour line goods trains until the Adelaide line is suitable. We are sure you are all looking forward to seeing this 261 tons, 92 ft. 6 in. long machine, so as soon as it is completed a picture of the new "H" class will be published in the Bulletin.

STATION NAMES EXPLAINED

POREPUNKAH on the Bright Line. There are two accounts given as to the origin of this name. The first is that an Indian Officer who visited the place with a party during a terrific storm coined the name from two Hindu words, "pore" and "punkah," signifying respectively "wind" and "blower." The second explanation of the name is that it was derived from a native name meaning "meeting of the waters" and having reference to the junction of the Buckland and Ovens rivers.

MURTOA received its name in 1873. A local aboriginal declared that it was the native name of the locality and meant "home of the lizard." The place was then lizard infested.

MENTONE was named after the well-known health resort on the Mediterranean, near Nice. The locality was first called "Dover Slopes," but this was later discarded in favour of the present name.

SMOKE DEFLECTORS HELP LOCO. DRIVERS

Amazing Safety Device

IN several issues of the Bulletin we have told you something about the many precautionary measures and safety devices which go to make up the Department's elaborate safety code. This month I propose to tell you about a device which does much to ensure the safety of passengers on the suburban electric trains.

This interesting device is located in the driving cabin of all electric trains, being part of the master controller, and is known as the dead man's handle.

The master controller, by means of which electric current is sent through to the motors, is so arranged that a special key has to be inserted before the control handle can be moved. The button which operates the dead man's valve is on top of the handle and the driver must keep this button pressed down while driving.

Works Automatically

In the event of a driver for any reason releasing the pressure on the button, the handle automatically moves to the "off" position, cutting off the power.

At the same time it permits air to escape from the brake system which results in an emergency application of the brakes throughout the train.

So you see although that the driver may fall asleep, become ill, faint or even die, the safety of the train is provided for by being brought to a standstill automatically.

IN WIDESPREAD USE ON V.R. SYSTEM

A MASSIVE locomotive speeding over the rails and arrogantly belching great clouds of smoke from its funnel is indeed a noble sight. But those clouds of smoke that have so much to do with the picturesqueness of the sight can be a nuisance to the driver and fireman.

To overcome this difficulty smoke deflectors have been fitted to many Victorian locomotives. The first engine fitted with smoke deflectors was No. 993 (an A2), and they proved of such benefit to enginemmen that they were at once fitted to all "S" class and "A" class passenger locomotives.

They are also being fitted to all "N" and "X" class freight locomotives, in fact most of these classes have already been fitted. When the "S" class was streamlined to harmonize with "Spirit of Progress," adequate provision was made for smoke deflection which has proved very satisfactory.

Deflector Described

Briefly, smoke deflectors are two steel plates, fitted to the footplate on each side of the smoke box. They vary in height with the height of the footplate but reach practically to the top of the smoke box curving inward towards the top.

Thus the current of air striking the front of the locomotive is deflected against these plates and rushing upwards on each side of the smokebox drives the smoke upwards and clear of the train.

Over 400,000 People Travelled on "Spirit of Progress" in Two Years

"S" CLASS LOCOMOTIVE'S GREAT WORK

LAST November "Spirit of Progress" celebrated its second birthday. I think any of you who have enjoyed a ride in this de-luxe train will agree that in the two years of its existence it has amply proven the railways' claim that it is the last word in travel comfort. Figures certainly indicate that the public thinks so.

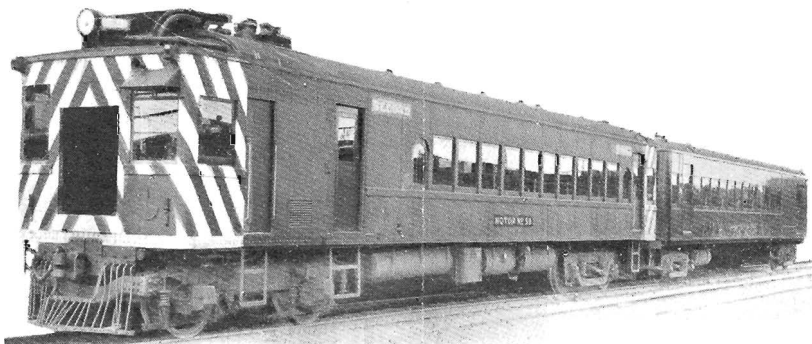
In the first year of operation, the train carried 209,000 passengers, or 28,000 more than were carried by the former Sydney Limited during the preceding 12 months. The figures for the second year reveal a total of over 222,000 passengers—an advance of 13,000 over the already

satisfactory figure of the previous year.

The four "S" class locomotives which share the responsibility of hauling "Spirit of Progress" have strikingly demonstrated their efficiency. They were first placed in service on the Albury line between April, 1928, and November, 1930, and up to November 23 last, they had run an aggregate of 2,243,949 miles.

The mileage per annum of each "S" class locomotive is considerably greater than that obtained from any other type of departmental locomotive. For the financial year ended June 30 last, the average yearly mileage of each "S" class locomotive was 59,114 compared with 35,353 by the "A2" class; 32,537 by the "C" class; and 23,531 by the "X" class.

Petrol Electric Rail Motor—Victorian Railways



There are ten of these units in service, the first of which was built at Newport Workshops in 1928. They are used on lines where steam passenger services would be unprofitable. Up to two trailers can be hauled by the motor car, which can be driven from either end.

The motor car which is painted in broad diagonal yellow and black stripes on each end, seats 19 first-class and 35 second-class passengers, besides having a guard's compartment with space for 1½ tons of freight. The cars are 60 ft. 2 in. long over couplers and 9 ft. 9½ in. wide over body. Weight in running order is 50 tons.

The power unit consists of a six-cylinder 220 h.p. petrol engine direct coupled to a generator. The drive is delivered by two 110 h.p. electric motors located on a motor bogie beneath the engine compartment.

The steel trailers seat 22 first-class and 40 second-class passengers and have a guard's compartment with space for 4 tons of freight. The trailer cars weigh 30 tons. Five trailers were constructed at Newport Shops in 1930.

RE-UPHOLSTERING OF 235 SUBURBAN CARS

OVER the next six years all the first-class sliding-door carriages in the suburban electric stock are to be re-upholstered by a new method.

This undertaking, involving 235 cars, has been decided upon following successful experiments over the last six years. The new type of padding is made by spraying natural animal hair with a liquid rubber mixture and moulding the treated hair to any desired shape, after which the added rubber is vulcanized and the individual hairs become locked to each other.

In May, 1933, four two-passenger seats and backs and two three-passenger seats and backs were fitted with this type of upholstery and they have stood the test of time so well that it has been decided to fit the seats and backs of the 235 cars mentioned with the same material.

The great advantage of the new process is that the seats and seat backs being already moulded to the correct shapes, hand-wiggling of the hair is eliminated and the upholstery can

be fitted much more quickly than at present. Moreover, no hand wiggling is involved to renovate sagging upholstery during the life of the seats.

You might think that the changeover would be expensive, but actually money will be saved in the process. The cost of fitting the cars with the new type of upholstery will be offset by the sale of large quantities of hair at present doing service in the seats and seat-backs, after which valuable savings are assured.

HUGE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY TRAFFIC DEMANDS CAREFUL PLANNING

Nearly 1,000 Cars Used On Two Days

ANY of you who travelled by train to your Christmas holiday—and I hope you all did—must have marvelled at the smooth handling of a colossal transport task by your railways. Getting the thousands of eager, bustling holidaymakers safely and smoothly to their destination is one of the annual wonders performed by the Department, involving painstaking planning and loyal co-operation by every member of the great railway team.

You will appreciate this more fully when I tell you that on the Friday and Saturday before Christmas over 150 trains left Spencer Street and Flinders Street for country destinations. The arranging of the schedules for this huge holiday traffic is a most complex job requiring a specialised knowledge of timetabling. Just consider this: during certain hours on the days mentioned trains left Spencer Street and Flinders Street stations for all parts of the State at barely five-minutes intervals!

One of the problems to be solved during this concentrated traffic period is that of platform accommodation. But not a minute is lost and as one heavily-laden train steams out of a platform another one promptly emerges from the railway yards, and so it goes on.

Another problem is the scheduling of the country trains through the busy suburban area. Both country and suburban trains traverse the

same tracks for between 5 and 10 miles, and here again the most careful planning is essential.

Every available locomotive in the Department was under steam on Christmas Eve over some portion of the 6,000 miles of track in Victoria. Other locomotives performed the less spectacular but equally important work of placing the empty trains into the various platforms. As each loaded train departed the pilot locomotive immediately returned to the platform with another set of empty carriages.

Nearly 1,000 carriages were used in the two days before Christmas. Their allotment for the trains was in itself a big job, as each train load varies and it is difficult to forecast the accommodation for each train.

Still, there are years of experience behind the heavy task of handling the Christmas rail traffic, and the work of forecasting possible train accommodation requirements is performed with great skill and accuracy.

Wheat Bulk Handling System Commences

OF all the transport tasks undertaken by the Victorian Railways none is more important than the handling of the wheat harvest. The railways are the only transport service that can handle the wheat harvest in the necessarily short period and at the low cost which is so essential if the wheat is to be sold in the World's markets.

The Victorian Railways have approximately 15,000 trucks suitable for carrying wheat, and some trains comprise as many as 65 trucks. When you consider that to carry 1,000 tons of wheat to the seaboard by rail only demands a staff of three—the driver, the fireman, and guard—whereas to shift the same tonnage by road in the same time would take 200 5-ton motor trucks, you will readily appreciate that the railway is the only practicable way of handling the wheat harvest.

This year's rail transport of the wheat harvest, which is now in full swing, is particularly notable because, for the first time wheat in bulk is being handled on a large scale in Victoria. The bulk handling scheme, which is one of the most important undertakings in the history of primary production in Victoria, will ultimately embrace practically all of the wheat growing areas in the State.

This year 47 grain elevators, which are part of a scheme of 81 elevators at stations in the Mallee and Wimmera areas, are feeding bulk wheat to the 1,255 special wheat-proofed trucks which carry the golden grain to the flour-mills and great terminal elevator at North Geelong. In addition 250 ordinary goods trucks, with canvas aprons across the doors, can be used if required.

These trucks are specially adapted "GZ," "G" and "GY" trucks, and great care is taken by the Department in cleaning them before loading, in order to ensure the cleanliness of the bulk wheat. In addition, during the harvest season these trucks are used solely for bulk wheat handling.

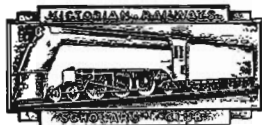
Bagged wheat will, of course, form by far the greater proportion of the wheat handled this season. But however the wheat is carried by rail, growers have confidence in the safe handling of their product by an organisation that has served them without fail for many years.

TELL YOUR MOTHER—

THAT it will cost her very little money to take you and your brothers and sisters for a day's outing during the school holidays.

Family Tickets issued by the railways every day (including Sundays), cover the travel of one adult and 5 children (under 16 years) and two adults and 4 children (under 16 years) to the seaside and the Zoo. On Sundays, family tickets are also available to the nearer hill resorts served by electric trains.

TRAVEL BY TRAIN ON A FAMILY TICKET !



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FEEDING 600 SOLDIERS IN FIVE MINUTES

STRIKING RECORD BY REFRESHMENT SERVICES

TO feed 600 men with a hot meal in five minutes sounds like a miracle, but that feat was performed by the Railways Refreshment Services Branch one day last month. The men were returning to the country after military training at Mt. Martha and the special train was scheduled to pass through Spencer Street close to midday meal time.

The serving of that meal was an object lesson in organization. Too numerous, of course, to be accommodated in the station dining room, the men were provided by the Refreshment Services Branch with a buffet meal on Nos. 7 and 8 platforms. On one trestle were brown paper bags (with sandwiches and fruit); on a second, hot meat pies with sauce; and on a third, cups of tea.

There were three series of these tables, and on alighting from the train the troops in three sections marched in single file past the trestles from which Refreshment Services girls handed each man his bag, pie and tea.

But how, you will ask, were the pies served hot, especially as they were on the wind-swept platform

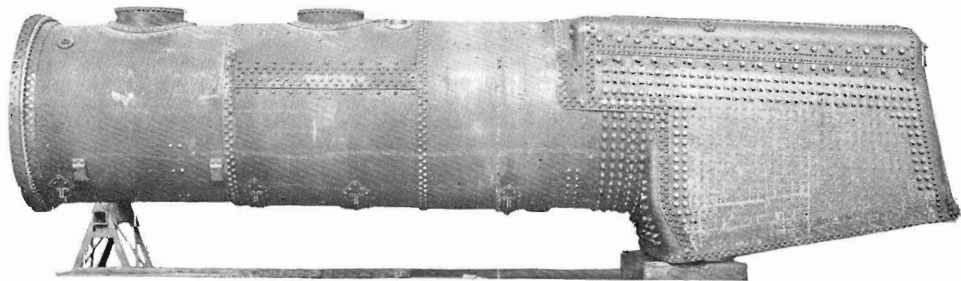
before the train arrived? The running of the train was reported step by step to Central Train Control, and when it left Caulfield, Control flashed word to the Dining Car Depot, West Melbourne.

Immediately, the steaming-hot pies were taken from the ovens, loaded on to motors, and a few minutes before the special train reached Spencer Street the pies were placed on the trestles, delectably ready for the men.

Incidentally, the tea was at the correct temperature, too. When it was made, it was placed in the specially-insulated containers the Department uses for fog signalmen. Tests have shown the tea retains its warmth for more than an hour.

Since the war began, more than 10,000 troops have been fed in this expertly-planned way.

THIS LOCOMOTIVE BOILER IS LARGEST IN AUSTRALIA



PICTURED above is a notable constructional work carried out at the Newport Workshops—the largest boiler yet built for any Australian locomotive. It is intended for the giant "H" class locomotive. The maximum outside diameter is 7 ft. 3 in. and the overall length (including the smoke box which is not shown) will be nearly 45 ft. The weight is estimated at 33 tons. The steel firebox has a grate area of 68 sq. ft. It is 10 ft. 10 in. long and 7 ft. 10 in. wide. The combined heating surface is 4,780 sq. ft., made up of 367 sq. ft. in the firebox (including the syphons and combustion chamber); 3,613 sq. ft. in the tubes and flues; and 800 sq. ft. in the superheater elements.

NURSERY WELCOMES ITS 100,000th CUSTOMER

Patronage Steadily Increasing

If you had walked into the Railways Nursery, in the Flinders Street station building, just before midday on January 18, you could not have failed to notice that a certain atmosphere of tenseness prevailed. The Nursery staff all seemed to be waiting for something . . . all eyes in the reception room were fixed expectantly on the door . . .

And then the big moment arrived. A little girl with a mass of golden hair and big blue eyes skipped into the reception room. The nurses beamed with delight—not only because the little girl was such a delightful creature but because she was the 100,000th customer of the Nursery since it opened in June, 1933. The honoured child was Ann Williams, aged 2½ years, of 102 Willsmere Road, North Kew.

Since its opening the Nursery has steadily grown in popularity with Melbourne mothers and children. There has been a consistent increase in patronage, ranging from 8,700 children in the first year to 26,500 in the year just closed.

In the week December 18–23 last, the weekly attendance of 1,120 passed the previous record of 933 created in the corresponding week of 1938. The highest number in one day was registered on December 15 last when 279 children were in the Nursery in the course of the day.

While the Nursery was closed for 10 months during the infantile paralysis outbreak, it was completely modernized and enlarged. Nothing that would preserve the highest hygienic standards was overlooked.

The objective was to win the mothers' confidence and the development of a feeling of composure in the children . . . in brief, an assurance to the mother that, while she was enjoying a carefree day in the city, her child would be happy and contented in the expert hands of the Nursery staff.

Sound-proofed cot-rooms for the babies . . . open air playgrounds, with an abundance of toys, for the older children . . . special facilities for mothers with young babies, together with an understanding staff, are some of the features which have contributed to the advancing patronage of the Nursery.

DEAR MEMBERS, I suppose most of you are back at school again by now. I hope you had a good holiday and feel fresh and well for another year's work.

Don't forget to write to me if there's anything you want to know about the railways. I'm always glad to hear from you as your letters show me you are taking an intelligent interest in this great railway system of ours.

So long for the present. I hope you enjoy your Bulletin this month.

Your pal,

Bill Smith

LOUD SPEAKERS ARE GREAT HELP TO PASSENGERS

OVER the past few years the Victorian Railways have made increasing use of loud speakers in the handling of traffic. Their great value is particularly emphasized at Flinders Street station, one of the world's busiest terminals.

On every platform loud speakers are installed and during the peak hours this method is successfully used to advise passengers of the departure and destination of electric trains. No longer is there any excuse for rushing down the ramp and jumping into a train, only to find it moving out of the platform the next moment in the opposite direction to that in which you wish to go.

The Men-in-Grey at Flinders Street and Spencer Street also make frequent use of loud speakers, which are an especial help to people meeting trains. At Spencer Street the loud speakers are also connected with the men's waiting room adjacent to the modern hairdressing saloon and shower rooms.

During the height of the recent Christmas holiday traffic the public address network operated by the Men-in-Grey at Spencer Street was supplemented by a portable public address system on Nos. 9 and 10 platforms. This was the first time equipment of this kind had been used on any Australian railway system.

Operated by a battery and mounted on wheels, the portable set has a microphone and two loud speakers, and can be transported in the van of any train. Because of its portability, the equipment will be used wherever needed during busy traffic, such as at racecourse platforms, stations serving cricket and football arenas, etc. It should prove of great value in directing the public regarding train departure times, platforms, ticket issuing offices and other relevant information.

Loud speakers are also used in directing the movements of goods trains from a central point in the Melbourne Yard and assist materially in the efficient working of the many thousands of trucks moving through these busy railway yards.

Victoria Has Many Caretaker And No-One-In-Charge Stations

FEW people realise that nearly half of the railway stations in Victoria are either caretaker or no-one-in-charge stations. Out of the 1353 stations in this State (these figures include sidings), 251 are in the charge of caretakers and 363 are no-one-in-charge stations. Caretakers are in most cases females, usually the wives of track repairers located in the district, and between them the repairer and the caretaker attend to the working and cleaning of the station, oil and keep clean the working parts of points and signals, etc.

The various tasks involved in looking after a no-one-in-charge station are shared by the Ganger in control of the length of line in which the station is situated and the Guards in charge of the trains that pass through the station. A red flag for use by day and, when a train runs after dusk, a lamp showing a red light for use by night, are provided.

A notice board tells intending passengers that in order to stop a train they must exhibit the red flag by day and light the lamp by night, and the driver must accept such signals. Before leaving the station the guard must replace the flag in its fixture or extinguish the light.

The Guard finds out at the previous stopping station whether any passengers wish to alight at the next station and informs the driver accordingly. The Guard issues tickets to passengers who have not already been booked and also collects tickets.

With regard to freight business, a notice board informs consignees that they can only obtain delivery of inwards parcels from the guard while the train is at the station. If a consignee is not at the station when the train arrives, the consignments are locked in the station shed. Fragile or perishable articles, however, are not left, but are taken to the supervising station.

Bill Smith's Letter Bag

BILL complains that he hasn't been getting as many letters as usual lately, but that's probably because you've been too busy enjoying your Christmas holidays to bother about writing letters. However, he was very pleased to receive a letter from Norman Olver of North Carlton. Norman was kind enough to say that, even though he is a Science student at the University, he still manages to get quite a bit of instruction from his monthly Bulletin.

From time to time Bill is asked questions about the nature of the first locomotive to run in Victoria. It is unfortunate that there are very few precise details about this historic locomotive, but by careful investigation among railway historians Bill has managed to piece together the following informative account:—

It was in 1853 that the Hobson's Bay Company commenced its actual building of the line connecting Sandridge (as Port Melbourne was then called) with Flinders Street station. As it was a short and easy track, except for the bridging of the Yarra, the work was well advanced by the middle of the following year.

The rolling stock, however, due to have left England in April or May, was much delayed, and it was decided that Messrs. Robertson, Martin and Smith, the contractors for the bridge, make up a tentative locomotive, using their pile driving engine to work a truck, no doubt with a chain drive.

This became the "contractors' engine" for the job, and the records tell that on June 2nd, 1854, she made the first passenger-carrying trip with a party of directors in two trucks. This, of course, is a parallel to what happens on many new lines and was in no sense the public opening.

By September the track was pronounced as ready, but there was no chance of having the imported engines for some months and the Company had the enterprise to call on Messrs. Robertson, Martin and Smith again for a locomotive. In ten short weeks from the date of the order, the engine was ready to make history. On September 12th, 1854, the "birthday of the Victorian Railways" was celebrated and the line opened as a public utility.

Mustering all the available data, it is only possible to record that she was a six-wheeled tank engine—it may be presumed, a 2-4-0—that she had a locomotive type boiler built by Langlands Foundry and a "very tall funnel." Her horsepower was set down as 30 and she was supposed to be able to pull 130 tons at 25 miles an hour.

Considering the haste in building and the very juvenile state of the industry, it is not surprising to learn that many breakdowns occurred, the crank axle proving a special source of trouble. This might almost suggest that the machine was an inside-cylindered one, but it seems unlikely. On each occasion of default, the "contractors' engine" was called in and rendered heroic help. A little later on things became so distressing that all locomotive-hauled traffic was abandoned for quite a while.

But by Christmas Day, 1854, the first of the Stephenson built 2-4-0 well-tank engines was able to take up its duties and the pioneer was superseded, no doubt to everyone's immense relief. It is understood that later on she was acquired by the contractors for the Geelong and Ballarat line for construction purposes.

BIG SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

JANUARY and February are the most popular months for school excursions, and this year is proving no exception. I daresay many of you have taken part in these great trips run by the Railways every year to the seaside and the Zoo.

On one day this month approximately 1500 children from schools on the Hurstbridge line will take part in an excursion to the beach. Naturally, of course, a far larger number of children from schools in or near the metropolitan area take part in these trips, but there is also a surprisingly large quota from the country.

Taking a lead from last year's country figures, during the two months of which we are speaking, 60 schools excursion trains were run from all corners of the State conveying more than 8,000 children in addition to a large number of adults. These excursions included day-return trips to Melbourne's nearer beaches from points as distant as Cohuna, Kerang, Port Fairy, Albury and Yarram.

TELEPHONE BUSY AT BUREAU

THE telephone lines to the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau simply buzzed in the pre-Xmas rush period. The busiest days were December 22 and 23, when 3,409 and 3,279 incoming calls were handled. A staff of up to 15 was exclusively engaged in answering questions relating to travel by rail, road, sea and air, and every enquiry was quickly and efficiently answered.

From November 13—when the Bureau entered its new Collins Street offices—until January 1, no fewer than 54,353 incoming calls were registered at the Bureau.

In addition to the telephone business through the postal exchange to the Bureau, there were during the period December 8-23, nearly 5,500 calls diverted from the railways exchange to a temporary room established in the Railway Offices, Spencer Street, to ease the pressure on the main Bureau.

RECORD DEMAND FOR REFRESHMENTS OVER HOLIDAY PERIOD

IF there was ever any doubt about the popularity of "travelling meals," the figures for the Department's dining and buffet cars over the holiday period show a decided public appreciation of this type of meal.

On the "Spirit of Progress" dining car, the revenue for dinner on the journey from Melbourne to Albury on December 23, and for breakfast on the return journey on the following day, was a record for this highly popular service. The number of dinners and breakfasts served on these two days was the highest ever recorded and the aggregate of 7,297 meals for the four weeks ending January 6—a daily average of 117 dinners and 144 breakfasts—was a new peak in service on this particular line.

Over the same four-week period, the revenue for the dining car attached to "The Overland" between Melbourne and Ararat was the heaviest since the reintroduction of the service in July, 1935.

A greater demand for refreshments on the comfortable, air-conditioned buffet cars was also exhibited. On the Albury buffet car the revenue for the four weeks ending January 6 was nearly £250 greater than the revenue received over any similar period. The buffet car on the Horsham line reached a new top—actually £80 more than the previous best. On the Warrnambool line buffet car, the previous highest revenue over a month was exceeded by £85.

The celebrated railways meat pie, one of the products of the Railways bakery, demonstrated its popularity in further record-breaking figures. The full issue over the 4 weeks was 4,768 dozen, the largest number produced since the opening of the bakery 20 years ago. During the week ending December 23, 1,886 dozen were issued—a daily average of 314 dozen.

STATION NAMES

THOSE of you who have been following this series of station names must have been struck by the length of many of the names on the Victorian system. It may interest you to know that, by way of contrast, Denmark has no fewer than five railway stations with two-letter names. They are "He," "Ry," "Ro," "Eg" and "No." Some of our porters who have to call "Chillingollah" or "Berriwillock" all the year round would probably appreciate a transfer to one of these Danish stations.

Here are the Victorian station names for this month, starting with another big one:—

BUCKRABANYULE is a combination of two native names, "bukra" meaning "the middle," and "banyul" meaning "hill." The place is so called because it stands on the middle hill of three.

PORT ALBERT was originally known as "Corner Inlet," but in 1841 it was renamed, in honour of the Prince Consort, by a Mr. Orr, who visited the place with a party of friends.

SANDRINGHAM was at first known as "Gipsy Village," a name which was first applied to the locality about 1852. During the latter eighties the district was renamed "Sandringham" after the residence of the Prince of Wales, who afterwards became King Edward VII.

Limiting Lightning Damage On Electrified Lines

IN the past lightning has often caused damage to the overhead equipment on the suburban electric system. A lightning flash charges the lines to a high voltage which "spills over" the surface of the porcelain insulators in the form of a spark. The spark is harmless in itself, but its passage through the air forms a conducting path along which the 1500 volt power current flows in the form of a fierce arc. If allowed to persist its heat will crack the porcelain and the wires will fall.

To prevent power currents flowing under such conditions, "tie" stations have been erected at selected points in the suburban area. In these tie stations are located circuit breakers, which automatically "cut out" the faulty section when abnormal conditions arise.

In order to ensure a continuous and effective supervision of all units of the electric power supply, a most comprehensive system of control is now in process of introduction. The "nerve centre" of this system is a Control Room in Batman Avenue near the Flinders Street station.

It has been specially treated to reduce noise to a minimum, and is air-conditioned. All the equipment has not yet been installed owing to the difficulty, due to wartime conditions, of obtaining vital equipment from overseas. Despite this hold-up, however, the Control Room is already fulfilling many of the functions for which it was designed.

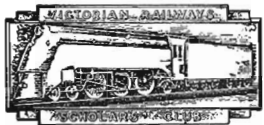
Located in the Control Room are three large diagrams representing the 1,500 volt overhead contact wire system; the 2,200 volt signal supply system; and the 20,000 volt transmission system. To ensure uniformity of illumination, the diagrams are lit by artificial means. The whole of the components of the power system are shown, with the various circuit breakers represented by small coloured lamps.

By means of these lamps the position (open or closed) of any circuit breaker is indicated to the control engineer, and any abnormal conditions are immediately observed and the location defined.

Associated with the diagrams will be a control desk with keys which will enable the control engineer to open or close circuit breakers represented on the diagrams.

By means of the equipment the control engineer will also be able to bring into operation power apparatus in automatic sub-stations which is necessary during daily traffic fluctuations.

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

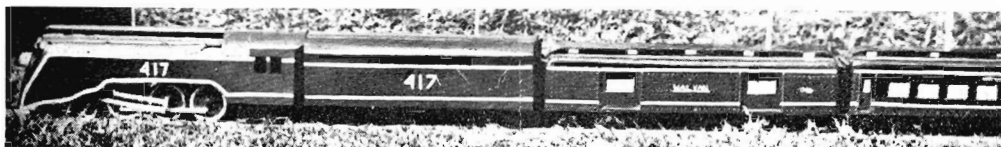


SCHOLARS' CLUB BULLETIN

March, 1940

No. 32

Jim Ryan Is Justifiably Proud Of This Excellent Model Train



THE most interesting letter Bill Smith has received for some time comes from Jim Ryan, 47 Scott Street, Elwood. Jim sent along photographs and details which show that he is a very clever model builder, and as many of you are probably interested in models, we are giving you a description of his work. A picture of one of Jim's models appears above.

The streamlined engine has the same colour scheme as the "S" class engines on "Spirit of Progress." The engine and tender are made of sheet metal and there are also five carriages made of 3-ply with balsa wood roofs and cast brass bogies with imitation springs. The driving wheels on the engine are flood-lit and there is also a light on the front of the train, while the interiors of the carriages are illuminated. Jim made even the wheels himself. The carriages are a mail van, sleeping car, dining car with

tables and chairs, passenger car with 41 chairs and a buffet car complete with dummy oven, counter and 16 chairs.

He also has a station, with waiting room, office, entrance with ticket barriers, stores room, automatic crossing gates and signals.

In addition, Jim has a goods train. The goods engine is a 4-6-4 type, copied from an American "Hudson" engine, while the train also includes three box cars, a coal truck, breakdown van, livestock truck, brake van and petrol car.

Both engines are electrically propelled on 1½ in. gauge rails. Soon Jim hopes to start work on a model of the Edward Henty, one of the four streamlined "S" class locomotives that share the work of hauling "Spirit of Progress." Bill Smith congratulated Jim on his fine model-building and feels sure that you will all share his admiration.

MODERN CASUALTY ROOM AT WORKSHOPS

MENTION of the Newport Workshops immediately conjures up visions of clattering machinery, pounding hammers and the fitful glare of furnaces. That is the general picture, but there is one spot where there is no grease, no noise, but an atmosphere of gentle femininity. We are alluding to the casualty room, where highly qualified nurses attend to the cuts and scratches that are inevitable daily occurrences in a workshop employing such a large team of workmen.

The room has been in existence since 1922 and is fitted with electric sterilizers and dryers, a hot-water service, bandages and all the hundred and one appliances connected with ambulance work. The room is well lighted and ventilated and the interior is always spotless.

It is not often that there is a serious accident in the shops for the men are imbued with principles of safety first. However, small cuts and knocks are unavoidable.

When a man is injured on the job, no matter how trivial the accident may have been, he at once reports to the ward, where his injury is treated. Particulars are then entered in a register, and instructions given him to attend the ward daily until his wound or injury is healed.

A similar casualty ward is attached to the Spotswood Workshops.

DEAR Members—We have a particularly interesting issue of the Bulletin this month. I'm sure you'll all be impressed by the story of what the Department is doing to help in the great defence preparations that our country is making at the present moment; also in the career of our new Chairman of Commissioners.

We have also an account of the model trains constructed by a member of the Scholars' Club, and I would like any other members who are interested in models or any phase of railway operations to write and tell me about them. That's what the Scholars' Club is for—to give you a fuller knowledge and understanding of the great business of rail-roading.

There's also a note on Scholars' vacation tours. See if you can persuade your parents to let you join one of these tours, which are conducted during the month of May. I can guarantee that you'll have the holiday of a lifetime. So long for the present.

Your old pal,

Bill Smith

Railways Are Playing Vital Part In Wartime Conditions

YOU are all aware of the great amount of military activity that is constantly going on around you today, but how many of you realise what a tremendous part your railways are playing in this activity? It has been amply proven that no modern war can be undertaken without the aid of an efficient railway system. For the movements of large bodies of troops, for the rapid transport of artillery, munitions and supplies, the train has demonstrated its indispensability again and again.

THE Victorian Railways, although they were primarily constructed for developmental reasons and without any potential military purpose, are fulfilling a vital function in our war effort. Not only is the Department providing rapid—and often emergency—transport for troops, but it is also assisting in the production of machine-gun carriers, marquees and tents, and in the construction of sections of Bristol-Beaufort general purpose aircraft.

Since the beginning of the war, the Victorian Railways have provided transport for many thousands of troops. Although major troop movements have been sometimes required on days when the public demand for traffic has also been exceptional, the railways have never failed to produce the number of special trains required.

For example, on Cup Day when among the responsibilities of the railways was the transport of crowds of picnickers and holidaymakers to the hills and seaside, and of 50,000 racegoers to Flemington in the space of two hours, 4,500 soldiers were swiftly evacuated from camps in the Seymour district. Ten special trains, some of them composed of 12 cars, with accommodation for 800 men, were assembled for this military job at a time when every car was in demand.

Record-Breaking Traffic

A more significant achievement was during the week December 18 to 23. In addition to an abnormally heavy traffic in passengers and goods, the movement of troops was without parallel in the railway's experience. During the week three military concentrations, including two Light Horse regiments, broke camp and were carried to various destinations throughout the State. Also 5,000 men in the Puckapunyal camp were given Christmas leave and on one day travelled in 10 special trains to various parts of the State. In addition, there was special transport for a large body of naval ratings proceeding on their Christmas leave.

In the week commencing January 22, the railways carried over 20,000 troops. One of the highlights of this performance was the transport and return of 5,000 men of the 6th Division for the great march through Melbourne on Wednesday, January 24. Among other outstanding railway engagements in this period was the transport to Seymour of the 3rd Division and the movement of 5,000 men and 2,000 horses to the Light Horse Camp at Torquay.

Some of these transport jobs are almost given the rank of feats by the emergency circumstances of the occasion, when the railways were asked to produce a set of special trains almost out of a hat, as it were.

The performance will seem all the more remarkable to the layman when it is remembered that outside the metropolitan area the Victorian Railways are practically a single track system. As "up" trains and "down" trains must pass each other through loops at intermediate stations, the addition of ten specials to the ordinary traffic on any one line calls for the most skilful planning.

The transport of troops, however, has provided some invaluable experience for the railways, and if the occasion should ever arise for the quick passage, not of battalions, but of armies in the defence of Australia against invasion, the Railways will be fully prepared.

The railways, in co-operation with the Defence Department, are looking months ahead. On main arterial lines all sorts of additions and alterations for definite military purposes are being carried out. New loops are being provided, yards extended, ramps, sidings, platforms and loading and unloading accommodation prepared, all for the purpose of facilitating transport in this State—should a world conflict actually spread to Australia.

Just what can be accomplished in rapid achievement is shown by the work on an aircraft storehouse erected at Spotswood. The plans were prepared in a few days and the erection of the building, covering an area of nearly 30,000 square feet, was commenced towards the end of September and completed before Christmas.

In all this emergency work, the Refreshment Services Branch is also contributing a big share. Last month, we told you how 600 men were fed in five minutes, and there have been other instances, not quite as spectacular but just as creditable.

MAY SCHOOL VACATION TOURS . . .

You make new friendships and enjoy a full program of sightseeing, games and evening entertainments on these specially arranged tours. An experienced Escorting Officer accompanies every party and a trained nurse is also in attendance.

DURING THE MAY VACATION THE RESORTS SELECTED FOR THESE TOURS ARE COWES (PHILLIP ISLAND), THE GIPPSLAND LAKES, WILSON'S PROMONTORY, POINT LONSDALE, MT. BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK, AND PORT CAMPBELL. INTERSTATE TOURS MAY ALSO BE MADE TO SYDNEY AND ADELAIDE.

A GREAT HOLIDAY AT MODERATE COST

In addition to the remarkably cheap rates for children, there are also concessions for parents, while a **FREE** holiday is available to teachers accompanying every 20 children.

BOOK NOW, as accommodation is rapidly filling . . .

For further details of May school vacation tours, write, phone or call at the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, 272 Collins Street, Melbourne. Telephone, F. 0404.

WELCOME TO MR. NORMAN C. HARRIS, OUR NEW CHAIRMAN OF COMMISSIONERS

NO doubt you all saw the announcement in the papers of the appointment of Mr. N. C. Harris as Chairman of Commissioners in succession to Mr. H. W. Clapp. Everyone who is interested in this great railway system of ours naturally wants to know something about the man at its head, so here is a brief account of his career. The new Chairman is a son of a former prominent railwayman, Mr. C. J. Harris, who occupied the position of Superintendent of Refreshment Services. Mr. N. C. Harris received his earlier education at Scotch College, Melbourne, where in his last year he was head prefect and dux of the school in science and mathematics. He was also keenly interested in sport and won his colours in athletics, rowing, football and cricket.



Mr. N. C. Harris

Rail Freight Service Is Fast, Safe, And Dependable

RECENTLY the Commissioners received a letter of thanks from the Manager of a poultry farm who, during the last hatching season, had consigned £5,000 worth of day-old chickens by rail to various destinations WITHOUT A SINGLE MISHAP. Although a performance such as that reflects credit on the entire railway staff involved, it throws light especially on the scrupulous care of loading which is devoted to every consignment.

When you consider that the railways carry everything from chickens to Clydesdales, and from children's toys to vast pieces of machinery, you realise that loading practically comes under the heading of an art. For instance, the men loading those chickens into the van had to place them in positions free from draughts and yet providing ample ventilation.

The instructions for various classes of loading are most exact and comprehensive. The authorized load is painted on the side of all trucks, care is taken to see that the weight is evenly distributed, security is further ensured by lashings, protection from the weather is maintained by tarpaulins, while the use of loading gauges prevents loads from fouling bridges, etc., in transit.

The loading of bags of chaff, hay, straw, etc., is an object lesson in efficiency. If you were given a number of bags which you were expected to load on to one truck you would probably find room for only about half of them. But the railway staff concerned works to special diagrams, which show how to pack the bags in such a way as to enable the absolute maximum to be carried.

And then consider the variety of equipment available—massive, low-floored, flat vehicles for heavy, unwieldy articles such as boilers and out-size machinery; protected trucks for explosives; refrigerated box trucks for butter; louvered trucks for fruit; special trucks for sheep and cattle; tank wagons for oil and petrol; and specially adapted trucks for the handling of wheat in bulk

Engineering was always his fixed goal, and after leaving Scotch College he went to Canada to combine a graduate course at McGill University with an apprenticeship in the Canadian Pacific Railway. After graduating as Master of Science, he remained for a time a member of the technical staff of that great railway company. This position enabled him to amass much valuable information, especially on rolling stock construction—a subject on which he was later to become an acknowledged authority.

V.R. Career Begins

On his return to Australia in 1911, Mr Harris accepted an engineering post with the Hydro-Electric Power Company of Tasmania. Railways, however, were in his blood, and within a year he was on the pay-roll of the Victorian Railways, first in the Way and Works Branch and soon—for his interest in and knowledge of rolling stock were already recognized—in the Rolling Stock Branch.

The Great War interrupted his railway work. He was in khaki for four years, returning from overseas active service with the rank of Major and with the decorations of D.S.O. and M.C. (He has since been promoted to the rank of Lieut.-Colonel.)

Back From Great War

The war over, Mr. Harris, back on the railway job, soon advanced to the position of Chief Mechanical Engineer. During his administration of the Rolling Stock Branch, a re-organization of the Railway Workshops and notable improvements in locomotives contributed largely to the increased efficiency of the system generally.

The quality of his administration as Chief Mechanical Engineer was recognized by his appointment as Commissioner in succession to the late Mr. W. M. Shannon. In 1934, when Mr. Clapp was away in America and Europe for some months, he acted as Deputy Chairman of Commissioners.

Since the outbreak of war, Mr. Harris has been Chairman of the Transport Sub-Committee of the State Emergency Council for Civil Defence, and in this position he has played an active part in drawing up emergency defence plans.

STATION NAMES EXPLAINED

RUSHWORTH is a town which owes both its existence and its name to the gold rush. It was first known as "Dry Diggings" and a place about four miles away was known as "Wet Diggings." In order to have a more marked distinction between the two names, the warden of the gold-field started casting round for another name. Someone remarked that it was "a rush worth coming to." The words "rush" and "worth" caught the fancy of the diggers, and the name compounded of both words came into being.

STRATFORD, on the Orbost line, is named after Shakespeare's birth-place, Stratford-on-Avon. The river near this township was named Avon, though some said after a river in Scotland and not the English river. However, the association of Stratford with Avon was too much for the local inhabitants to resist.

NAVIGATOR, between Geelong and Ballarat. When the railway line was in course of construction, a sailor obtained a liquor licence for his shanty. On the day of opening the "hotel," he hoisted a naval flag and proclaimed to all assembled "This is the Navigator's Inn." The settlement which grew around has, ever since, been known as "Navigators." The railway authorities clipped off the final "s."

SAFETY RECORD OF V.R. ROAD MOTOR DRIVERS

In addition to the staff which everyone associates with railroading—engine drivers, guards, porters, signalmen, etc.—the Victorian Railways employ a large number of motor drivers, who are engaged on the Department's various co-ordinated services, such as the Ferntree Gully-Cockatoo service, and on those big green trucks on general delivery work.

Although these drivers have no special safe-working code and merely obey the general rules of the road, they, like all other railway employes, are expected to maintain the highest standards of safety. That they are succeeding in doing so was strongly emphasized by the recent presentation of awards to drivers under the "freedom from accidents" competition conducted by the National Safety Council of Australia.

This competition has been held annually

for the past ten years, and under its conditions a diploma is awarded to every commercial motor driver who completes twelve months without being involved in any accident for which he is in any way blameworthy. After five consecutive years of such a performance, a silver medal is awarded. For each further year of freedom from accident a bar is added to the medal, while the acme for all our drivers is the Gold Medallion, presented for ten consecutive years of completely safe driving.

Last year, 73 departmental drivers were entered for the competition and only four were involved in accidents for which they were held to blame—a very creditable performance, you will agree, for men engaged every day in driving big, unwieldy vehicles in heavy traffic. Thirteen drivers have completed nine successive years without accident, and others are gradually building up a similar record.

"Save The Waste And Serve The Child" ! LOOK FOR THE YELLOW BOXES ON STATIONS

HAVE you noticed the yellow boxes that have recently been placed in prominent positions on the metropolitan and main suburban railway stations? If not, look out for them next time you travel by train for they are there for a purpose that should concern you all.

When you enjoy plenty of food and a bright, happy life, you are inclined to forget that a large number of children in Victoria do not enjoy these advantages. Actually figures show that 13 per cent of Victorian children are undernourished.

In order to help these needy children, the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria has started a special drive to accumulate waste products for subsequent sale. From the proceeds, the Union assists the children. The Union can find a market for waste products, such as—

Brass, lead, tooth paste tubes, photographic film covers, lead tops from bottles, lead or tinfoil wrappings (such as tea, cigarette and lolly wrappers).

What we are asking you to do is to save any of these articles that you can and place them in the yellow boxes on the railway stations.

You might also tell any friends you have in the country that if they make up parcels of the articles mentioned and despatch them from any railway station addressed "The Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, Madden Grove, Kew, E.4.", there is no freight to pay on such packages.

So make it your motto to "SAVE THE WASTE AND SERVE THE CHILD."

SOME THOUGHTS ON LONG RAILWAY TUNNELS

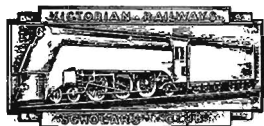
ALTHOUGH most train travellers regard tunnels as a slightly annoying interruption to their reading of book or paper, a tunnel is actually an inspiring reminder of man's continual struggle with the forces of Nature and his ultimate triumph over them. A tunnel, which is a subterranean passage, constructed to carry roads, railways, aqueducts and the like through hills or mountains, under rivers, or even under cities, is one of the most ingenious answers to these obstacles.

There are many great railway tunnels in various parts of the world, notably the tunnels, some over eight miles in length, providing rail connection between France, Switzerland and Italy. There is nothing comparable to these on the Victorian system, but we have several interesting tunnels.

Engineers often decide that a tunnel is the most economical way of saving the expense of constructing a circuitous route. There are nine railway tunnels in Victoria and all are comparatively short. Two are on the Bendigo line—the Elphinstone (1,264 feet long) and the

Ravenswood (1,276 feet). The longest railway tunnel in this State is at South Geelong, which is 1,386 feet long. Others are the Cheviot tunnel (660 feet), the Healesville (491 feet) and the suburban tunnels, the Jolimont (479 and 370 feet), the Heidelberg (222 feet), and the Footscray goods line (1357 feet). The Elphinstone, Ravenswood, Jolimont and Footscray tunnels carry double tracks, and the others single.

In 1935, the double tracks running through the Elphinstone tunnel were reconditioned and relaid with 90-lb. welded rails throughout the entire length of the tunnel and extending beyond both ends. The length of welded track on both the "down" and "up" lines extends for nearly 1,700 feet, and the elimination of track joints guarantees smoother and quieter running.



SCHOLARS' CLUB BULLETIN

April, 1940

No. 33

Here Are Some Unusual Incidents On The Victorian Railways

HOW many railway by-laws can be broken by one action? Evidently inspired by a desire to set an all-time record in regulation breaking, a rail traveller performed a daring feat some years ago. When the Goulburn Valley train was speeding between Nagambie and Mangalore, passengers were startled by the sound of breaking glass. On investigation, an unknown traveller was found huddled on the floor of the carriage corridor beneath a broken window.

MIRACULOUSLY the traveller suffered nothing worse than shock and abrasions.

He refused to give any explanation, but it was surmised that he had swung himself from one of the trees beside the line through the window of the passing train. Although he was guilty of boarding a train in motion, damaging railway property and travelling without a ticket, he was allowed to go free at the next station. But the experience undoubtedly sobered this venturesome ringtail possum, for neither he nor any of his kind has attempted a similar feat since.

An almost equal contempt for the Department's by-laws was shown by a fox which was found wandering casually among the network of lines in the Jolimont Yard. The fox had escaped from an outhouse of an East Melbourne residence and had found its way into the railway yard. A guard showed great agility in cornering the intruder and almost smothering it with a chaff bag. He carried it triumphantly back to the Flinders Street Stationmaster's office. It was subsequently handed over to the Zoological Gardens.

But who said sheep had no brains? A sheep once detached itself from a flock being driven up Spencer Street and walked boldly into the Railways' Head Office. Without hesitation it marched straight to the office of the Livestock Agent, where travel arrangements for its kind are usually made.

BILL SMITH'S LETTER

DEAR Members—Here we are again with another interesting issue of the Bulletin. This month we cover a wide variety of topics, including the Commissioners' statement on the reduction in services on account of the coal strike and a very informative story about our Estate Office.

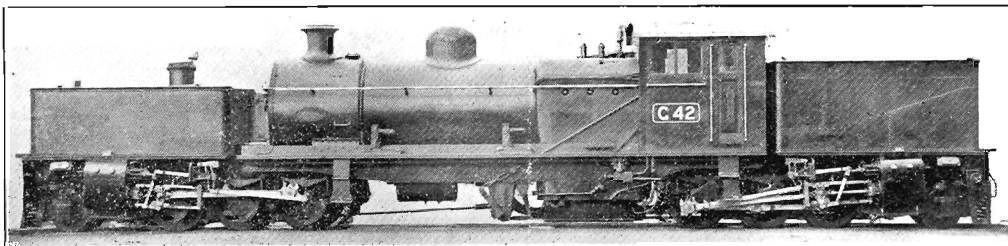
I suppose you are all looking forward to your May holidays. They're not far off now, are they? What are you going to do during the holidays? In this issue you will find some suggestions on School Vacation Tours arranged by the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau.

Now, try to persuade father or mother to let you join one of these tours. Believe me, you'll never forget the experience—meeting other boys and girls of your own age and enjoying new experiences in a completely new setting.

Your old pal,

Bill Smith

Narrow Gauge Loco. "G" Class



There are two of these locomotives in use on the narrow gauge lines between Colac and Crowes and Moe and Walhalla. Leading dimensions and particulars are as follows.—Type 2-6-6-2: 4 cylinders 13½ ins. x 18 ins.; driving wheels 36 ins. diameter; Boiler pressure 180 lb. per sq. in., heating surface total (inc. superheater) 1,227 sq. ft.; grate area 22.6 sq. ft.; tractive effort at 80 deg. boiler pressure 25,270 lb.; length over couplers 51 ft. 7½ ins.; wheelbase, rigid 6 ft. 9 ins., total 44 ft. 6 ins.; distance between pivot centres 24 ft. 9 ins. Total weight roadworthy 69 tons 1 cwt. (of which 55 tons 7 cwt. is available for adhesion). Tank capacity 1,680 gals. of water, bunker capacity 3½ tons of coal.

ESTATE OFFICE IS IMPORTANT—AND INTERESTING SECTION OF V.R. SYSTEM

SITUATED on the second floor of the Administrative Offices at Spencer Street, the Estate Office is one of the most interesting repositories of railway history which you could hope to find. In its strongroom musty files and plans hint at the romance of a State's development, while an oral tradition, passed on from generation to generation of Estate Office employes, keeps alive a store of quaint and often amusing anecdotes.

Perhaps it surprises you to hear that the railways have an Estate Office, but you must remember that the Department is probably the State's biggest landlord. The function of this section is to safeguard the Commissioners' interests in the land vested in them, to acquire new land when that is necessary for extension purposes, and to ensure that any surplus land is put to the most productive use. Thus, if a railway line is abandoned, the Estate Office endeavours to lease or sell the land to the adjoining landowners. This was done in the case of portions of the Outer Circle railway which formerly ran from Fairfield to Oakleigh, and in several other cases.

THE Estate Office arranges the rentals and the leasing of all shops, houses, buildings, sheds, storage sites and agricultural and grazing lands owned by the Department. It also sells buildings which require to be removed in consequence of railway alterations or improvements; prepares land and transfer plans; arranges surveys and makes sub-divisions; drafts and submits plans, reports and estimates in regard to floods, fires and accidents; attends to the formalities and conditions for the construction of private sidings.

Complete records and plans of all railway land are maintained in the Estate Office, and many of them have an interesting story to tell. For instance, there is one plan which deals with the reclaiming, towards the end of the last century, of land for the construction of the Williamstown Pier goods yard. The land required was the site of the old Williamstown cemetery—claimed by many historians to be the first cemetery in Victoria. A note on the plan states, baldly and with a matter-of-factness such as is only found in official documents, that 947 bodies were removed to the North Williamstown general cemetery. It is interesting to recall that portion of the area occupied by Sydney Central Station was in earlier days a cemetery.

Another plan shows the line from Flinders Street to Spencer Street in the days before the present viaduct was built. It is hard to imagine now the little train that used to puff along Flinders Street at street level, but the vision conjured up is all the more droll when you think that the train used to be preceded by a man waving a flag and ringing

a bell to clear the way of loitering pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles. Contrast this leisurely state of affairs with the present-day traffic that passes over the viaduct in each direction, for instance, on a race day.

One of the assignments that was shared by the Estate Office in more recent times was the great anti-mouse campaign in 1917. At this time there was a plague of mice, more especially in the Wimmera, and the vermin made no exception of railway land. They caused great trouble and damage, particularly among the stacks of wheat awaiting transport at various stations and sidings.

The mice were circumvented by having sheet iron fences built around the wheat stacks. Each grain season since then, fences of this type have been erected by the Wheat Agents around the wheat stacks. Except when there has been an abnormally bad plague, this method of protection has been effective.

But perhaps the most romantic episode in the Estate Office's history concerns the search for buried treasure at Queenscliff. For many years there was a legend that land near the Queenscliff station held an immense hoard of treasure stolen from Peru about 120 years ago. The Estate Office received several applications for licences to excavate on the railway land, and in 1934, the Commissioners consented to a syndicate undertaking the work. However, after months of search, the whereabouts of the treasure still remained a mystery, but the search has not yet been abandoned.

Odd Jottings About Victorian Railway Stations

IF someone were to ask you what was the furthest station from Melbourne in Victoria, would you know the correct answer? Here are some interesting figures about our railway system: The remotest station in Victoria is Morkalla, which is 402½ miles from Melbourne.

The other outposts of the Victorian railway system are Woodside to the south-east (154½ miles), Orbost to the east (230½ miles), Cudgewa to the north-east (255 miles), Tocumwal to the north (156½ miles), Serviceton to the west (287 miles), Rennick (near the South Australian border, on the Mt. Gambier line) to the south-west (279½ miles), and Crowes to the south (139 miles). Crowes, incidentally, is the furthest south station on the mainland.

And now for heights. The highest railway station in Victoria is in the north-eastern Alpine region, namely Shelley on the Cudgewa line. It is 2,562 feet above sea level. A New South Wales station is the highest in Australia. It is Ben Lomond, between Glen Innes and Armidale, and it is 4,473 feet above sea level.

But the altitudes of Australian stations are dwarfed into insignificance by some of the overseas stations. The highest railway station in the world is La Cima on the Peruvian Central Railway between Lima and Oroya, which lies 15,865 feet above sea level. The highest station in Europe is Jungfraujoch terminus of the Jungfrau railway, 11,342 feet above sea level, and well within the region of perpetual snow and ice.

Special Trains Run For Varied Reasons

IN addition to the regular train services set out in the time-tables, the railways run a large number of special trains. It is interesting to note the wide variety of circumstances which are responsible for special trains in Victoria, so let us consider a few of them.

Entertainers are a class who are obliged to do a lot of travelling and they mostly prefer to travel by rail because of the superior comfort of that mode of transport, especially on long journeys. For instance, the Russian Ballet company, at present performing in Melbourne, does most of its travelling in Australia by rail. Also all of its scenery and general effects are carried by the same method.

We have described in a former issue of the Bulletin (June, 1939) the special train which is regularly chartered by Wirth's Circus for its triumphal tour of Victoria. In the past, special trains have also been run for the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera company, complete with sleeping cars and trucks for their costumes and stage equipment.

Trains For Royalty

Perhaps the most notable special trains of recent years have been those used on the tours of the Duke and Duchess of York (the present King and Queen) in 1927, and of the Duke of Gloucester in 1934 on the occasion of Melbourne's centenary celebrations.

The former train comprised the pick of the Department's rolling stock, the State cars (which are used by the Governor and Governor-General) and the Commissioners' inspection car, and was hauled by a suitably decorated locomotive, with a pilot engine preceding it and a second engine following.

The same State car was used on the Duke of Gloucester's train. It is a lavishly appointed car containing two commodious bedrooms, a dining saloon, a kitchen and other compartments for the staff.

Then, of course, there are special trains for school picnics from the country and excursions by commercial bodies, special race trains for horses and passengers and also for courting meetings, football trains, troop trains, and the general subsidiary services at busy holiday periods.

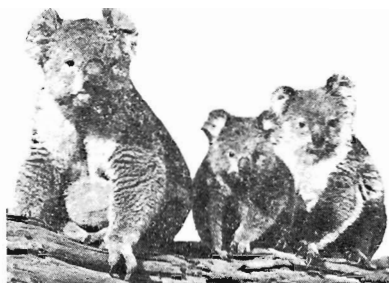
Station Names Explained

BAIRNSDALE is a corruption of the name "Bernisdale," which was given by a Mr. McLeod to a pastoral station occupied by him, and including the site of the present town. The name was derived from a small hamlet in the Isle of Skye, the home of Mr. McLeod's forebears. Another version of the origin of the name Bairnsdale is that it was so named because the children (whom Scottish people call "bairns") were fond of playing in a dale nearby.

TUNSTALL on the Healesville line: As the clay at this place was found suitable for pottery making, works were established there, and the name of an English pottery was given to the locality.

PRAHRAN was originally named "Pur-ra-ran" by an aborigines' missionary in 1837. The name was a compound of two aboriginal words signifying "land partially surrounded by water," and was given orally by the missionary to a surveyor, Mr. Robert Hoddle. The latter wrote it in his note-book as "Prahra," and in that form it appears on a plan of surveyed lands in 1840.

SEE THE KOALAS



the seals, mutton-birds and penguins at Cowes (Phillip Island) on a May school vacation tour.

Other delightful resorts to which there are May school vacation tours are Wilson's Promontory, The Gippsland Lakes, Point Lonsdale, Mt. Buffalo National Park and Port Campbell. Interstate tours may also be made to Sydney and Adelaide.

Enjoy the Holiday of a Lifetime!

These tours provide a full program of sight-seeing, games and evening entertainments. An experienced Escorting Officer accompanies every party and a trained nurse is also in attendance.

REMARKABLY CHEAP FARES are available for children, and there are also concessions for parents. **A FREE holiday may be had by teachers accompanying every 20 children.**

Particulars at the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, 272 Collins Street, Melbourne. Telephone, F. 0404.

HOW RAILS ARE OILED

APPRECIABLY increased life of rails, points and crossings, together with a considerable saving in maintenance costs, are affected by the track lubricators which have been installed in recent years in the suburban area. The track lubricator, which uses a mixture of grease with about 15 per cent. of graphite, is automatically operated.

When a train passes over the ramp mechanism (running parallel with and raised slightly above the top of the rail) a plunger pump is operated. The lubricant issues in measured quantities from eight points and, contacting with the wheel flanges, is carried and deposited on the gauge side of the rail head.

Twenty-eight lubricators are fitted to the "up" and "down" tracks at Spencer Street, South Yarra, Burnley, West Richmond, South Melbourne, Montague, and Collingwood and sixteen in the outer suburbs, and they are thus the lubricating media for suburban lines. Their great value lies in the fact that the grease, after contact with the wheel flanges, continues to lubricate the side of the outer rail head on all curves for several miles from the point of contact.

TRAIN SERVICE CUTS ARE DUE TO COAL STRIKE

NO doubt you have all heard over the radio or read in the papers lately announcements concerning the reductions in train services made necessary by the coal strike. In explaining their action, the Commissioners pointed out that they had to conserve the limited stocks of coal on hand. All reductions in service have been made with the object that all necessary services may be maintained as long as possible. The Commissioners apologized for the inconvenience caused to some people by the strike, and pointed out that they had done everything possible to minimise the inconvenience.

Under the new arrangements there are fewer trains, and some are run slower because they have to do more work. There will not be so many express trains and goods may not be carried as quickly as before; Sunday trains to and from the country are not run; buffet cars have been taken off trains. When they are included in trains more coal must be burned to pull them along. In the metropolitan area, every effort has been made to avoid restrictions during the hours when people are going to and from their work, but during the off peak hours, services have been cut by about half. On Sundays, the last suburban trains now run earlier.

Fine Bridge Work By V.R. Staff

THE most important bridge work undertaken by the Department in recent years was the strengthening of the Melton viaduct, which was completed last month. As a result of this work the whole of the Melbourne-Serviceton line is now available for the heaviest locomotives likely to be used by the Department in the future.

The bridge, which was built in 1886, is 1,230 feet long, and consists of thirteen 60-foot spans and fifteen 30-foot spans, the maximum height above ground level being 130 feet. Although it is wide enough to carry two tracks, only one is laid in the centre of the bridge.

Gradually increasing loads of locomotives have imposed greater strain on the centre girders and cross-beams, and the recently completed work was undertaken to ensure that the load was equally distributed over the four main girders. In addition, the cross girders were replaced by stronger steelwork.

As part of a plan for relaying the Melbourne-Ararat line, new rails (welded into lengths of 270 feet), sleepers and ballast have been laid across the bridge. To avoid reducing speed on curves approaching the bridge, the alignment at the "up" end has been improved.

The work was completed on schedule and caused remarkably little interference with traffic.

Helping Fruit Sales

THE assistance given by the Railways Department to Victorian fruitgrowers in the disposal of surplus apples, caused by the lack of shipping space for export, throws light on the big part which the railways have played in helping the fruit industry in this State.

In 1924, the Department helped to dispose of a pear glut in Victoria. Again, the railways played a big part in the success of Melbourne's first peach week in 1926. In the beginning of 1928, growers had an over-supply of peaches. The result was another peach week, which grew into a peach fortnight and was successfully carried through.

The railways have also made history in stimulating the consumption of citrus fruits. For some years, the Department has been the citrus-growers' largest retail customer.

The "Eat More Fruit" activities of the Victorian Railways have materially aided the fruit industry. At the same time considerable benefit has accrued to the Department itself.

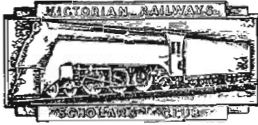
FORGOTTEN RAIL LINES

TURNING back the pages of Victorian railway history, we find several curious instances of lines that failed to justify the expectations of their founders. For instance, in 1859, the St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company opened a line running from St. Kilda across Albert Park to Windsor and continuing on to Brighton. But when the present line was opened from Melbourne to Windsor via Richmond, the old line was abandoned and no traces of it now exist.

In last December's issue of the Bulletin, we told you something about the railway tunnel which ends at the foot of the Brighton pier. This tunnel was also built by the St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Company in 1861. The reason was that Brighton was expected to become an important port for overseas vessels, and the line from the pier under the beach road to Brighton Beach station was to convey merchandise. However, this line was soon abandoned.

A line from Burnley to Oakleigh was opened in 1890, and a second line built from Camberwell, linked up with it at Waverley Road. A third line, built the following year, was constructed between Fairfield Park and Riversdale, connecting with the Camberwell line. The line between Fairfield Park and Oakleigh was known as the "Outer Circle" line, but the only portion which is now used is between Ashburton and East Kew. The Burnley-Darling portion of the old Burnley-Oakleigh line is, of course, still in use.

The Fawkner-Somerton line is one of the rare instances of a line that was opened, closed and reopened. It was opened in 1889, closed in 1903, and again made ready for service in 1928. Still another line built towards the close of last century was the 18-mile connection between Kilmore and Lancefield, opened in 1892. This line was dismantled during the last war.



SCHOLARS' CLUB BULLETIN

May, 1940

No. 34

How Railway Companies At The Front Helped Win Great War Of 1914-18

MOST of you have probably seen references in the daily papers to the formation of Railway Survey and Constructional Companies for service overseas with the A.I.F. As we have pointed out in the "Bulletin," efficient railways are a most important factor in winning a war, and it is interesting to examine the type of work which a Railway Company performs at the actual front.

In the last war, Railway Companies, including many Victorian railwaymen, performed great work on the western front. There were six Companies—three engaged on broad gauge tracks and three on light railways of 1 ft. 11 ins. gauge. One of the latter Companies consisted entirely of Victorian railwaymen numbering 275.

AMONGST the grades in the Company were stationmasters and clerks (known as "Train Operators" on the light railway), loco. drivers, firemen, fitters, mechanics and guards. There was also a break-down gang which, due to enemy action, was busy dealing with derailments. Occasionally there were as many as 15 derailments a night.

One can readily visualize the conditions under which the light railway company operated, particularly during the advance when the Hindenburg line was broken in 1918. A particular achievement was the dropping across "No man's land" of a few lengths of track that were linked with the German light railway, the gauge of which was the same as the British, and making good use of the extensive German system.

Varied Freight

Besides carrying troops and labour battalions, the light railway handled an enormous tonnage of freight, consisting of gas cylinders, supplies of all kinds, and munitions ranging from the lightest to the heaviest of shells straight to the trenches.

You will be surprised when we tell you that the light railway was conducted on the train

control system. Though necessarily crude when compared with the present-day methods of train control, the system evolved under actual warfare conditions has contributed to the development of train control.

Telephones Helped

From a central point—situated at different times in Ypres, Passchaendale, Cambrai, Peronne and Pozieres—telephone systems which were disabled almost nightly by shell fire, radiated to the various "dumps." Though "rough and ready," the system was efficient. It enabled a continuous check of engine power, truck movements, etc.

Right round the clock, the central control staff received from all parts of the light railway, telephonic advices of the position of engines, trucks and the approximate loading requirements of the day.

As the trains ran mainly at night with all lights out, the only indication to the driver that his train was complete was the minute red glow from the cigarette smoked vigorously by the guard sitting precariously on the rear truck—often loaded with ammunition!



HERE is pictured a passenger train at the Emerald station on the Upper Fern-tree Gully - Gembrook narrow gauge railway. The train is hauled by an 'NA' class, 2-6-2 tank locomotive, No. 9, and consists of a number of open-type excursion vehicles and ordinary compartment cars. (SEE PAGE 3 FOR ARTICLE).

RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF VISITORS TO MT. BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

THAT the popularity of Mt. Buffalo National Park as an any-season resort continues to grow apace is evidenced by the April bookings, which created record figures for The Chalet. The aggregate daily attendances at The Chalet during April were 4,750, with a daily average of 158. Until June 30, an 8-day holiday from Melbourne to Mt. Buffalo, including transport and accommodation, costs only £5/19/6d.

You all know, of course, that Mt. Buffalo is administered by the Railways Commissioners. Over recent years great improvements have been made in the standard of accommodation at The Chalet, which now ranks as Australia's finest guest-house. In addition, the Department has taken the progressive step of engaging Continental skiing experts to act as instructors during the snow season. There is a ski-tow at the Cresta Run, which is the favourite skiing slope on the plateau. At present another ski-run is being prepared quite close to The Chalet.

Incidentally, did you know that the railways employ a "Snowline Representative"? During the winter months this officer, who is an experienced skier, is located at Harrietteville (in the heart of the Alpine area), for the convenience and guidance of skiers proceeding to the more precipitous slopes of Mt. Hotham. He advises skiers which track to take according to snow conditions. He also makes other arrangements, such as the hire of riding hacks, packhorses for luggage, ski, windjackets, climbing skins and other accessories. If necessary, he acts as guide.

A Night At The Melbourne Goods Depot

AS you lie in your bed these cold winter nights do you ever hear the long-drawn whistle of a goods train as it speeds through the night? Next time you hear that sound just remember that that very train may be carrying something which you will eat next day. Let us pay an imaginary visit to the Melbourne Goods Depot, where most of these trains either pick up or drop their loads.

FROM about 10.30 p.m., large goods trains conveying hundreds of tons of perishable commodities begin to arrive at the Perishable Shed. As many as 350 trucks of perishables may arrive in a night. Carefully packed in the trucks are fish, butter, fresh fruit, cream, eggs, cheese, bacon, rabbits, vegetables and many other foods. You've never really seen busy men until you have viewed the bustle and speed—although it is all calm and orderly—that goes on at the Melbourne Goods Depot from the time the goods trains begin to arrive until about 7 a.m. next morning.

Cans clatter, doors are opened and closed, lorries and motor trucks come and go, so that the produce which has just arrived may be available for sale at the early morning markets.

Planned Loading Of Trucks

Outwards traffic from the Depot for country and Interstate railway stations averages about 500 trucks, or over 2,700 tons daily, that is, of course, in normal times when there are no restrictions on the goods services owing to a coal strike. Systematic stowing is necessary in order to avoid delays in unloading at country stations. In many cases, a number of small consignments is received for a particular railway station and as these are insufficient to fill a truck, it is necessary to load goods for three or four adjoining stations into the same truck.

This necessitates the goods for the furthest station in the group being loaded first (at the ends of the truck) so that the goods for the nearest station will be placed immediately inside the door of the truck and may be unloaded readily.

In the case of large towns, a number of trucks would be detached from the goods train and placed in a siding for unloading after the train had departed.

ROLLING STOCK REPAIRING IS COSTLY WORK

IN addition to the medical staff which regularly overhauls the human element in the railway organization, there is a big staff of rolling stock doctors who attend to broken down, work-weary and faded trucks and carriages. Painters, signwriters, undergear repairers, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and blacksmiths—these are some of the trades represented at the rolling stock hospitals. Country stock is attended to at the Car and Wagon Shops at North Melbourne, and suburban stock at the Jolimont Shops.

Construction of new rolling stock is, of course, undertaken at Newport Workshops, but the task of keeping the stock in good order involves considerable care and labour. There is nothing cursory about the treatment a carriage receives when it comes into "hospital." Carriages are cleaned and overhauled from top to bottom, the interior woodwork is renovated and varnished, the exterior is painted and the upholstery is either completely renewed or repaired.

Most of the truck repairs consist of adjustments of the drawgear and the repair and re-conditioning of buffers. These sections of the truck, of course, bear the strain, and the buffers, as their name implies, take the heavy knocks and bumps between the heavily laden vehicles.

Now that we have told you of the work involved in keeping the rolling stock in good condition, you will appreciate that the Department requires the co-operation of the travelling public in maintaining it in that condition. You will realize that it is especially thoughtless to place your feet on the upholstery when you remember the pride which the railway staff takes in the quality of its work.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT VICTORIA'S NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINES

LAST month we published a picture of one of the "G" class locomotives that run on our narrow gauge lines. This has prompted a lot of curiosity about the lines in question, so this month we are giving you some details about these highly interesting sections of track.

As you probably know, the narrow tracks in Victoria have a gauge of 2 ft. 6 ins., and they are mainly in mountainous country where it would be impracticable to build a broad gauge track except at high cost. The locomotives which do the work on these lines are all either "G" class or "NA" class. Including sidings, there are 131½ miles of narrow gauge track in Victoria.

The earliest of these lines runs from Wangaratta to Whitfield in the north-east. It was constructed and opened for traffic in 1899. It runs almost due south from Wangaratta up the valley of the King River for 30¼ miles through pleasant agricultural country. The work on this line is shared by a Mail Motor trolley, which has accommodation for a small number of passengers as well as mails and parcels.

Gembrook Line Opened

The second narrow gauge line to be opened was that from Upper Ferntree Gully to Gembrook, a distance of 18 miles. This is the shortest but probably the best-known of Victoria's narrow gauge lines. It was opened in 1900 to serve the holiday resorts of the Dandenong Ranges, and the timber milling industry in the Gembrook district. It is, perhaps, the most picturesque stretch of track in the State, passing through some of our loveliest hill scenery.

The Gembrook line abounds in steep grades of as much as 1 in 30. In holiday periods the small but powerful locomotives have had many stern battles in hauling big trains of ten passenger cars and a van. The average speed on the journey to Gembrook is about 9 m.p.h. but the trip is a most enjoyable scenic experience at any season of the year.

Famous Dog

No story of the Gembrook line would be complete without mention of Jerry. Jerry was a black and white dog of doubtful origin who was befriended by the regular driver stationed at Upper Ferntree Gully. He became the mascot of the line, riding on the engine and racing the train as it toiled slowly uphill. His antics were one of the big features of the trip and Jerry became quite famous. Perhaps fame turned his head, for one day he became a little too venturesome and was run over by the engine. His grave may be seen near the Cockatoo Creek where a small white cross marks the spot.

Longest N.G. Line

In 1902, the third and longest narrow gauge line was built from Colac to Beech Forest. This line was designed to tap the huge undeveloped timber resources of the Otway Ranges. In 1911, it was extended to Crowes, so that the line is now 43¾ miles long. One of the two "G" class locomotives runs on this line, the other doing duty on the Moe-Walhalla line.

The latter, which is 26 miles long, is the most recently constructed narrow gauge line of the Victorian Railways. It was constructed in 1910 to serve the timber industry near Erica, and the mining settlements at Walhalla and other places deep in the almost impenetrable mountains of central-eastern Victoria. This is another magnificent scenic line.

RAIL ADVERTISING DIVISION'S ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

HAVE you ever stopped to think of the amount of work involved in maintaining the Department's platform hoardings covering 154 suburban and 179 country stations? In addition, there are 212 other hoardings mostly adjacent to stations in the metropolitan area. The control of this vast area of advertising is the province of the Advertising Division, whose headquarters are in a building fronting Spencer Street, opposite the General Post Office.

The Advertising Division, which was formed in 1923, is a very important and profitable section of the Department. A large proportion of the posters displayed on our platform hoardings, as well as the carriage-space displays, are designed and prepared by the commercial artists employed in the Advertising Division. In addition, there is a large team of billposters.

A long-range policy of standardizing hoardings has substantially raised the quality of our advertising. The Department now possesses the largest billposting establishment in the Commonwealth, and is regarded as leading in the method of display and orderly appearance of the hoardings.

Station Names Explained

COBURG: On the Fawkner line, was originally known as "Pentridge." As it was desired to remove the odium attaching to the name of the penal establishment in that locality, it was decided to rename the town. It was then called Coburg, in honour of the Duke of Edinburgh, who was also Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

COBRAM: The railway station took its name from the township which was called after "Cobram," a pastoral station taken up by Hume the explorer, about 1845. The name is a native one meaning "head" and was presumably given to the property because it was the head or chief, one in the district.

DEAR Members.—We have lots of good items for you this month. As you will see by the articles in this issue, the Railways have, in addition to engine drivers, porters, etc., such unexpected employes as billposters, a snowline representative and a rat-catcher!

You'll soon be holidaying now, won't you? Don't forget what I told you about the special vacation tours arranged by the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau. If you join one of these tours you'll have the best holiday you ever had.

By the way, Ken. Hancy (c/o McQueen's Motors, 340 Barkly Street, Footscray, W11) would like pen friends aged about 13 or 14 who are interested in reading, stamp collecting and motor cars.

Don't forget to write to me if you want any questions answered. So long till next month.

Your old friend,

Bill Smith

Seeing Victoria By The Holiday Train

SINCE the Victorian Railways ran their first Holiday Train during the Christmas-New Year period of 1932-33, this form of holiday has gained great popularity. Running to carefully arranged itineraries embracing the choicest mountain, bushland and seaside features of the districts traversed, Holiday Train tours provide one of the best methods of discovering your own country in the most comfortable way.

Holiday Trains are run at Christmas, Easter, long week-ends and occasionally on ordinary week-ends. In the case of week-end tours passengers stay overnight at hotels, but on the Christmas and Easter tours the train becomes their temporary home. On the latter occasions the train consists of the "Norman" observation and lounge car, the "Goulburn" lounge car which is fitted with hot and cold showers, four or five or even six sleeping cars (according to the number of passengers), the "Carey" car with more showers, and a van.

Meals are taken at the various stopping places *en route*, but there is a buffet on the train for the sale of soft drinks, sweets, cigarettes, tobacco, etc. There is also a wireless set for the entertainment of the party. At each point visited, cars are waiting to take the party for extensive tours through the most attractive scenic features.

Big Passenger Lists

Altogether, since the Holiday Train tours commenced, 43 Holiday Trains have run. Over 4,000 passengers have travelled on these tours, bringing over £12,000 in revenue to the railways. The passenger list on a tour usually numbers between 100 and 120. Practically every tourist resort of note in the State has been visited, including eastern and south-eastern Gippsland, Mildura, north-eastern Victoria, western Victoria and as far as Mt. Gambier (S.A.). There has even been a tour to Adelaide (S.A.). The next Holiday Train tour will be to Mt. Buffalo National Park during the King's Birthday week-end next month.

AMAZING TEST CAR FOR LOCO. PERFORMANCES

THE dynamometer car, a remarkable vehicle jointly owned by the Victorian and South Australian Railways, has been one of the most important influences in the extensive improvements affected to certain locomotives in recent years. It is safe to say that, without the car, these vast improvements in locomotive performance could not have been obtained.

This car is used to obtain information concerning the hauling power of locomotives and other scientific data of great value to railwaymen. The information obtained enables calculations to be made of the heaviest loads that can be hauled over various grades. Among other things, the speeds which can be maintained under any given set of conditions can also be calculated.

Here is a brief description of the way in which the car works.

It is placed in the train right behind the locomotive, so that all the work done by the engine in pulling the train passes through the couplings to an arrangement of oil-filled cylinders and pistons known as the dynamometer.

The pressure built up in these cylinders is transmitted through pipes filled with oil and through a cleverly designed instrument it records on a moving band of paper the pulling and pushing force and all the work done by the engine.

The speed of the train, the horse-power of the locomotive and much other valuable information is also recorded by means of lines drawn on the moving chart. The force and direction of the wind is shown, the passing of each mile post is recorded, and even the minutes are accounted for by means of electric contacts from a clock.

The efficiency of the Westinghouse Air Brake can also be ascertained from the car, for there are special gauges and pens to show air pressures in various parts of the brake equipment and the forces acting on the wheels of the car through the brake-blocks when the brakes are applied.

OFFICIAL RAT-CATCHER WAGES INCESSANT WAR!

*M*OST of you have probably read the fable of La Fontaine, in which a colony of rats and mice hold a meeting to decide what shall be done to meet the menace of a formidable cat that has recently invaded their domain. You will remember that they decided that the most effective counter-measure would be for one of their number to tie a bell around the cat's neck so that they could hear him coming. But alas! it was impossible to find one of their number who would volunteer for this perilous job.

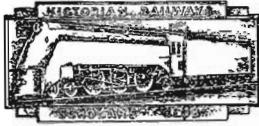
It is quite feasible to suppose dozens of similar meetings being held all over the country when it became known, back in 1921, that the railways had opened a rat destruction campaign by appointing an Official Rat-catcher, complete with a team of dogs and various types of poison. The Rat-catcher earned his spurs by destroying nearly 4,000 rats on railway premises in the first three months.

Since then, the Rat-catcher has carried out

systematic and well-planned raids on his quarry with conspicuous success. Baits are laid in suspected corners, in an attractive form which no rat could resist. The dogs also do their part and can be relied upon to leave no rat hole or nest undiscovered.

The whole of the Departmental property throughout the State is combed by the Rat-catcher, special attention being given to the metropolitan area. The Melbourne Goods Sheds are particularly watched. They contain much produce which is attractive to the rat taste. The Rat-catcher works under the direction of the Claims Agent. You can see the connection there, for it is obviously in the Departmental interests that as little damage as possible be done to goods handled by the railways.

So successful has been the work of the Rat-catcher and his industrious dogs that railway property is kept remarkably free from this cunning pest. In fact, it seems more than likely that the majority of rats now warn their offspring that railway premises are out-of-bounds!



SCHOLARS' CLUB BULLETIN

June, 1940

No. 35

NEW RAILWAYS COMMISSIONER

Mr. R. G. Wishart

THE recent appointment of Mr. R. G. Wishart (Assistant General Superintendent of Transportation) to the position of Commissioner is an inspiration to all young men either in the railway service or contemplating a railway career. For Mr. Wishart's achievement is a further illustration that ability and industry can raise a man from the humblest to the highest post in the railway organisation.

Over 30 years ago, Mr. Wishart commenced his departmental career as a junior clerk in the Transportation Branch. He soon revealed talents which led to his transfer to the Secretary's Branch. Shortly afterwards, he began a close and valuable association with the Commissioners.

He was Secretary to two former Commissioners (Mr. C. Miscamble and the late Mr. T. B. Molombo). In 1925, Mr. Wishart was appointed to a similar post with the then Chairman of Commissioners (Mr. Harold W. Clapp). In all those positions he gained extensive administrative experience,



MR. WISHART

coupled with a personal knowledge of the railway system throughout the State.

Finance Experience

Later, as a Member of the Staff Board, Mr. Wishart widened his knowledge of staff questions and, in 1929, he was appointed Commissioners' Special Officer. In that position finance was the predominating feature, and for nine years he specialized in that important aspect of railway administration.

The highlight of Mr. Wishart's brilliant career was the tour he made overseas with Mr. Clapp in 1934. On that mission he expanded his already extensive railway knowledge by studying the most modern railway developments in Europe and America.

Transportation Activities

Two years ago, Mr. Wishart was appointed Assistant General Superintendent of Transportation, and with characteristic vigor applied himself to all phases of transportation activities.

It is interesting to note that one of Mr. Wishart's fellow Commissioners started his railway career as a messenger. Several previous Commissioners and Heads of Branches have started on the lowest rung of the ladder.

Machine Records Railway Track Imperfections . . .

DURING recent years the Victorian Railways have been improving railway tracks all over this State. Better tracks mean more comfortable riding for rail travellers, especially in view of the modern trend towards faster trains.

An important part in this improvement plan has been played by the Hallade Track Recorder. One of these ingenious little machines was purchased by Mr. H. W. Clapp, ex-Chairman of Commissioners, on his tour abroad in 1934; since then another has been acquired by the Department.

The Hallade Recorder, which is placed on the floor of a carriage, reveals faithfully and with amazing sensitiveness the smallest track irregularities which are not visible to the eye but are largely responsible for the lurching and jolting of railway carriages. By means of needles moving on a chart passing through the instrument, the Recorder shows not only the precise nature of the track faults, but also the exact places where those faults exist.

How Record Is Made

As the train speeds on its way, the instrument records on a line on the chart any rolling of the train due to incorrect packing of ballast around sleepers or any other fault in the track. Another line on the chart indicates the extent of the thrust of the train to one side or the other of the track, caused by incorrect alignment, too quick an entry into a curve or irregularity in the shape of the curve,

Vertical movements of a train are indicated on another line of the chart. It shows, among other things, how excessively sharp changes of gradient are causing discomfort to passengers.

With the chart accurately revealing where any track defects exist, the troubles can be easily corrected. Now standard practice on the English, French and other European railway systems, the Hallade Track Recorder is proving of immense benefit to the Victorian Railways.

STATION NAMES EXPLAINED

GLENROWAN, on the Melbourne-Albury line, was named after the Glenrowan pastoral station, which was so called because it was owned by the brothers Rowan. Of course, Glenrowan is famous as the place where the notorious Kelly Gang of bushrangers was besieged. Ned Kelly was captured and hung, and the others were killed.

NAGAMBIE, on the Seymour-Tocumwal line, was derived from the native name "Nogambie," meaning a lagoon, which, in the early days was near the site of the township. When the Goulburn Weir was made, the backwater filled the lagoon and low-lying flats, forming what is now known as Lake Nagambie.

Fight Against Erosion Threatening Railway Bridge In Gippsland

IN an effort to check the extensive erosion which has taken place on the southern bank of the Avon River in the vicinity of the railway bridge near Stratford on the main Melbourne-Bairnsdale line, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is now carrying out an interesting Scheme. If successful, the work will reduce the erosion, preserve a valuable bridge, and also protect some splendid land from the recurring danger of flood.

When constructed in 1886, the railway bridge was 400 feet long. Today, as a result of erosion, the distance from bank to bank is about 1,000 feet. On two occasions the bridge has had to be lengthened—at first by 293 feet when the approach to the main bridge was washed away; and later by 400 feet when further erosion again threatened the railway line.

For the summer flow of the river, a new channel is to be excavated. In addition, six groyne (substantial river obstructions of stone enveloped in wire mesh) are to be constructed, extending from the present river bank to the new channel. Subsequently, the present river bank will be sloped and planted with vegetation, such as willows, etc. It is expected that the main stream flow will be diverted back nearer to the old channel and that the bank of the river will be stabilized.

It will be of interest to explain the manner in which groyne counter erosion. When an obstruction, such as a groyne, projects from the bank in to the stream, the main current is deflected from the bank around the end of the obstruction. It then returns to the river bank

some distance below. As a result, there is more slowly moving water along the bank below the groyne, thus reducing the tendency to erosion and, at the same time, increasing the likelihood of silt being deposited.

If a series of groyne be properly spaced, the tendency of the current to return to the bank below each groyne is checked by the succeeding one. In this way, the current is kept from the bank until below the end of the series of groyne.

With a properly designed system, the space between the groyne will gradually silt up. If willows or similar trees are planted thickly in this silt, they will help in the siltation process. If, however, the groyne fail, the trees will in time form the protective belt.

V. R. Publicity Work

LAST month we told you something of the activities of our Advertising Division. The work of this section, which is mainly concerned with arranging displays for private advertisers on the departmental hoardings, and in railway carriages, is not to be confused with another very important division of the Railways. This division is known as the Publicity and Tourist Services, and its headquarters are in the Head Office at Spencer Street.

This section handles all the publicity on behalf of the Department itself as well as playing a foremost part in fostering the tourist industry in Australia. The Publicity and Tourist Services cover a remarkably wide field of advertising, including Neon signs, window displays, screen slides, newspaper display advertisements, radio, posters of all sizes (not forgetting pictorial posters), handbills, folders and booklets, leaflets featuring rail and road services to tourist resorts, etc.

In one year the Department's Printing Works have produced nearly 2,000,000 separate pieces of publicity matter for the Publicity and Tourist Services. An example of the important role which this section plays is afforded by the recent coal strike. As the increasing coal shortage compelled the Railways to progressively curtail services throughout the State, it was absolutely essential that the public should be kept informed of these alterations. This was also necessary when services began to be restored. These tasks were performed by the Publicity and Tourist Services through every possible medium.

COAL STRIKE'S EFFECT ON VICTORIAN RAILWAY SERVICES

NOW that the coal strike is over, it is interesting to look back at the measures which the Railways were forced to take in those trying days in order to keep the trains running as long as possible. One method, of course, was to substitute wood for coal on pilot engines and various goods services.

It requires three tons of wood to do the work of one ton of coal. The use of wood also involved special stacking in the tenders—a ticklish job for which gloves were provided to guard against splintered hands. Furthermore, as a tenderful of wood was quickly consumed by the hungry furnaces, emergency dumps of firewood had to be provided at various points en route.

Towards the end of the strike, 8,000 tons of wood a week were being used by the department's engines, helping to reduce the average weekly consumption of coal down from 7,850 tons to below 2,000 tons a week.

Of course, the principal method of conserving coal was by drastically curtailing services. At the height of the restrictions, country and suburban passenger services were reduced by over 70,000 train miles a week. Goods services were also severely cut and a number of heavy or bulky commodities were not accepted for transport.

Warm praise is due to the railway staff which carried on in these difficult circumstances, especially to the men on the footplate—the drivers who skilfully nursed their locomotives in all sorts of weathers and situations, and the firemen (sometimes two firemen per locomotive on heavy runs) who gave their utmost to produce the best results.

REVIEW OF VARIED ACTIVITIES AT VICTORIA'S BIGGEST LOCOMOTIVE DEPOT

DOTTED all over the map of Victoria, at various key points on the great railway network, are the temporary resting places for railway engines—the Locomotive Depots. Here the locomotives are stabled when not in use, examined and reconditioned, refuelled and watered. The biggest depots (apart from the mother depot at North Melbourne) are located at such important centres as Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, Ararat, Maryborough, Seymour, Benalla, Wonthaggi, etc. But the biggest and most important is, of course, North Melbourne, which supplies locomotives and crews for steam-hauled trains radiating from Melbourne.

The Engine Shed contains three electrically-operated turntables for the turning and stabling of engines in the various bays.

A reversing loop is provided to facilitate the turning of the larger types of engines. Engines of the "X" and "S" classes as well as the locomotives hauling the more important passenger trains, are reversed in this manner.

When "Spirit of Progress" arrives from Albury, the cars have to be reversed, but instead of reversing the vehicles by shunting each individual car, time is saved by taking the complete train over the reversing loop. This brings the parlor car, which is always the last car of the train, to the opposite end of the train, and the cars are then in proper sequence for the return journey to Albury.

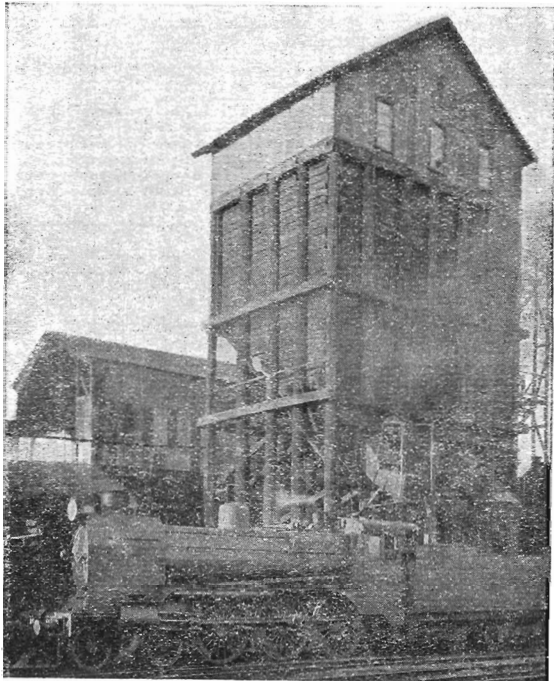
When a locomotive needs minor repairs, etc., the driver fills in a card showing what mechanical attention is necessary before the engine goes into traffic. Mechanics then make the adjustments. One of the first things a driver does after commencing duty is to inspect the card submitted by the last driver of the engine which has been allotted to him. He then proceeds to satisfy himself that the engine has been given the necessary attention and that it is road-worthy.

Approximately 1,000 men, including nearly 300 drivers are employed continuously at the North Melbourne Depot.

The coal used at North Melbourne arrives in hopper trucks and is discharged through an iron grating into large bins connected to an electrically-operated bucket elevator which discharges the coal into huge storage bins. With these modern coal-handling appliances, it takes less than a minute to fill the coal bunker of a locomotive from the large discharging chutes.

The trains to be run and the crews selected for each train are shown on a daily statement known as the roster, from which the staff ascertains the day's program.

The roster sheet shows the locomotives selected for each train scheduled for the day, and a large blackboard indicates in which part of the Depot each locomotive is stabled. This system avoids loss of time by enginemmen and the general shed staff when locating locomotives. It will be realised that a system of this kind is necessary when it is remembered that on an average 159 locomotives of various classes are located at the Depot.



MECHANICAL COAL HANDLING PLANT, NTH. MELB. LOCO. DEPOT.

Automatic Train Control

THE Great Western Railway Company of Great Britain is responsible for one of the most interesting of recent railway developments. A system of automatic train control, recently introduced on this Company's lines, enables the engine driver to receive in his cab an audible warning of the position of each "distant" signal about to be passed.

If the line is clear, a bell rings at the driver's side; but if it is not clear and the signal is at caution, a siren blows and the brakes are automatically applied throughout the train. Tests have proved that at 60 m.p.h. a train can be brought smoothly and automatically to a standstill in 900 yards, or 450 yards before reaching the "stop" signal. The scheme cost about £250,000 and necessitated the fitting of 3,250 engines and installing 2,114 ramps on the track.

Another item of great railway interest comes from Italy. A three-car electric train running between Florence and Milan maintained a start-

to-stop average speed of 101·8 m.p.h. This run broke several records. It was the first railway run on record at more than 100 m.p.h. from start to stop; the top speed of 126 m.p.h. is the fastest ever attained with an electric train of normal type carrying passengers; a speed of 82·90 m.p.h. was maintained up a long grade with an average of 1 in 109 and as steep as 1 in 85 in parts.

A further record was the speed at which numerous curves were negotiated, the figures being 63 m.p.h. round a 20-chain curve, more than 80 m.p.h. on 30-chain curves and 90 m.p.h. round a 35-chain curve.

It is said that these curve speeds gave no inconvenience to the passengers who were actually taking a meal when the worst curves were being traversed. Finally, in the light of this remarkable run, a new time-table has been introduced at 70·3 m.p.h. for the 522·7 miles between Milan and Naples, stops included, and this is the first 70 m.p.h. time-table in Europe for a distance of 500 miles or more; the actual running time is equivalent to an average speed of 72·1 m.p.h.

Incidentally, the Italian State Railways have more than 3,000 miles of electrified track.

NEW ALL STEEL, AIR-CONDITIONED CAR FOR VICTORIAN COUNTRY SERVICE

ANOTHER air-conditioned Corten steel car recently emerged from the Newport Workshops for service on country lines. This was the first of an order for six such cars, three of which will be first-class and three second-class. When the order is completed, the Victorian Railways will have 36 air-conditioned cars in service.

The new car is similar in appointments and exterior lines to the cars comprising "Spirit of Progress" and the steel buffet cars already in service.

The Corten steel shell of each car body is of completely welded construction and presents a smooth exterior finish. Streamline end closures are fitted in conjunction with automatic couplers, making for improved appearance, lessened wind resistance and smoother riding. The four-wheel trucks are of welded construction embodying roller bearings, rubber pads and washers to reduce noise and vibration and improve the riding qualities of the cars.

Each car is 75 feet in length and 9 feet 9 in. in exterior width and weighs 44½ tons with full equipment. The exterior color scheme follows that of the steel buffet cars, viz., bright red body (including roof) with two parallel longitudinal silver bands above and below the window line, with silver lettering.

The first car of the series is first-class, having eight passenger compartments with a total seating capacity of 48. There are two smoking compartments with red chrome leather upholstered seats at one end and all other compartments (including the ladies') are upholstered in blue leather. The side corridor and compartment walls as well as the end vestibule walls are of plain wood painted a pastel shade of light grey, which is also used for the ceiling.

Each passenger has an individual reading lamp located at the base of the luggage rack, whilst the central compartment light is of modern indirect type, providing bright, but diffused illumination. The large double-glazed window in each compartment and the corridor windows are fitted with roller blinds for use as required.

Apprenticeship Selection System Explained

FIFTY apprentices recently commenced their careers in the Victorian Railways. When you remember that over 1,400 lads applied for these fifty vacancies you will agree that the successful candidates have reason to congratulate themselves on securing these greatly coveted positions.

The fairness and thoroughness of the Railways' method of selection have often been praised. Three experienced railwaymen constitute the Board of Selectors, and they travel all over Victoria to interview applicants. The selectors are bound by law to know nothing of the candidate's name, which is known only to the Secretary to the Board. The Secretary allots a number to each candidate and throughout the subsequent interview he is only known by number to the selectors.

The interview has nothing terrifying or official about it but an atmosphere is created which is designed to put each boy at his ease. The selectors, however, take full stock of each candidate, noting details of his school achievements, hobbies or other activities, physique, appearance and intelligence.

So great is the attraction of a railways apprenticeship that lads make extraordinary efforts to qualify for acceptance. One boy interviewed during the recent selections, delivered newspapers before and after school and chopped wood at guest-houses to help to pay the cost of his books and school fees. Another ambitious boy worked as a golf caddy at week-ends and as a tomato picker during his holidays, while another lathered customers in a barber's shop on Saturday afternoons.

Boys of such determination and ambition are the kind that the Railways want. If they win a place in the great Railway team their opportunities for advancement are almost unlimited. The Department treats its apprentices with the interest and understanding of adopted children.

For instance, country lads whose pay is not sufficient to provide reasonable board and lodging away from home, are paid a boarding allowance. The Supervisor of Apprentices, who was once an apprentice himself, keeps in daily contact with the boys and sees that they are moved on from machine to machine periodically so that they can gain an all-round knowledge of their respective trade.

As we have told you in a previous issue of the Bulletin, the most industrious and intelligent youths may win scholarships for the Melbourne

Technical College and free places to the Melbourne University. These enable them to qualify for the higher engineering and administrative posts in the department.

More than one high official in the Department started his career at a workshop bench. The present Chief Mechanical Engineer and the Chief Electrical Engineer of the Victorian Railways both commenced their careers as apprentices.

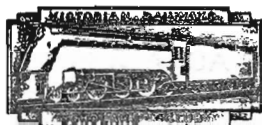
BILL SMITH'S LETTER

DEAR Members.—How do you like being back at school after the May vacation? I hope you all enjoyed your holidays. By the way, did you take my advice and join one of the School Vacation Tours? If you did, I'd like you to write to me and let me know how you enjoyed yourself.

As a matter of fact, I've got a bit of a grievance. Too many of you have been neglecting me lately. I like to hear from you on what you're doing, what you're interested in, how you are enjoying your Bulletins, and I'm only too pleased to answer any questions you may have to ask.

Your old pal,

Bill Smith



SCHOLARS' CLUB BULLETIN

July, 1940

No. 36

BILL SMITH SAYS: "NOT GOODBYE, BUT AU REVOIR"

DEAR Members: I am afraid I have some very sad news for you. This is the last issue of the "Scholars' Bulletin," at least for the time being. This step has been made necessary by the pressing need for the most rigid economy in the use of all materials, especially paper. Many of the materials which the Department uses come from abroad, and it is very difficult to get shipping space, while the price of paper has increased by 45 per cent. since the outbreak of war.

You will agree, I feel sure, that in these times of national stress we all have to make sacrifices and you will be prepared to do without your Bulletins until the skies are a little clearer. I am just as disappointed as you to know that this action is necessary as I have immensely enjoyed the job of telling you about this great railway system of ours. The Bulletin has been appearing for just three years. During that time we have dealt with hundreds of railway activities, ranging from such topics as the Children's Nursery to the Newport Workshops. I hope you have derived some knowledge from what you have read, and that it has stimulated your interest in the State's greatest undertaking.

I feel sure that you will continue to take a keen interest in railways, and still wear your Scholars' Club badge. I hope too that you will keep writing to me as I have made many pen friends since the Scholars' Club was formed. I'll be only too pleased to answer any questions you may have to ask me. I'd like to thank you for the keen interest you've taken in the Bulletin. The warm friendly letters which I have received from time to time have been greatly appreciated. I won't say goodbye, but Au Revoir.

Your old friend,

Big V.R. War on Waste

A VIGOROUS campaign is being carried on by the Railways to eliminate waste in every section of the service. The lesson is strikingly brought home when it is pointed out that to replace a broom costing 3/—, one ton of average freight must be carried 27 miles.

In an organization as large as the railways, the clerical demands on paper are considerable. The preparation of memoranda, reports, forms, circulars, etc., makes big demands on paper stocks, but with an average increase in the cost of printing and writing papers by approximately 45 per cent., the economical use of paper has become a major concern in the Department.

Arrangements have been made for the number of copies of memoranda, etc., to be kept to a minimum, and old forms, circulars and the like are being used instead of scribbling blocks. Departmental envelopes are being used over and over again by affixing gummed address slips on the flaps.

Other plans for conserving paper include single-space typing wherever practicable, the most careful use of carbon paper, and the use of adding machines of the reverse side of speed and track recorder charts, not suitable for further service in this way.

Of course, it is not only in the paper sphere that the railways are exercising the most far-reaching economies. Tarpaulins, ambulance supplies, in fact, every item, no matter how small, is being conserved as far as possible.

IMPROVED RAIL TRACKS NEAR JOLIMONT JUNCTION

IMPORTANT reconditioning and draining work on a 1,000-foot section of double track at Jolimont Junction has just been completed. During the work, on which 90 Unemployed Relief Workers were engaged for eight weeks, delays to certain suburban trains were unavoidable, but every effort was made to cause as little inconvenience as possible to the travelling public.

Waterlogging of the road-bed beneath points and crossings made the work particularly urgent. In July and August of last year, 1,000 feet of the Oakleigh lines in this section were treated and the work just completed was on the Box Hill tracks.

In carrying out the work, the old ballast was removed and the road-bed was excavated to a depth of 12 inches beneath the sleepers. The formation was then graded and treated with ashes, the grade being towards a sub-drain which was laid in the 6-ft. space between the tracks.

This sub-drain was graded to outlet drains which carry the water to the main outlet drain on the south side of the railway lines. The water flows beneath Jolimont Road and ultimately finds its way to the river.

When the old ballast was removed, the tracks were supported on wooden baulks. After the grading was completed new ballast and sleepers were placed in position and, where necessary, renewals were effected to points and crossings.

In addition to the benefits of vastly improved drainage, the reconditioning work on these tracks will have the effect of improving running conditions and reducing the wear on points and crossings and the maintenance in packing up the tracks. It is hoped that, when more Unemployed Relief Funds become available, further work of a similar nature may be undertaken.

How Fog-signalmen Are Called For Duty

CAREFUL PLANS MADE WELL IN ADVANCE

THIS is the time of the year when you are liable to wake up any morning to find your immediate world enveloped by a thick blanket of fog. But if you travel by train you know by experience that the Railways are fully equipped to meet this winter nuisance. Have you ever marvelled at the organization behind the railway effort to make train running safe during fogs? Actually a lot of careful planning and ready co-operation is involved in this important work.

Although fogs are usually expected between the months of April and September, preliminary arrangements are always made well in advance, generally about January. At this stage complete information about the manning of individual signals is prepared by Stationmasters and is forwarded to the Transportation Staff Office. A register is then compiled containing the name of every fog-signalman, his grade, branch and station to which he is allotted. Details of his vision, hearing, colour-sense standard and of his proficiency as a fog-signalman are also supplied.

With the completion of the Register, "Calling Statements"—the most important part of the organization—are then prepared by the Head Office staff and circulated to each station for conspicuous exhibition in the Stationmaster's office.

Every endeavour is made to list fog-signalmen for duty at their local stations or at stations reasonably close to their place of residence, but it is not always practicable to do this. Hence, fog-signalmen are obliged to travel varying distances to their allotted posts.

Attention To Detail

When the "Calling Statements" are received by stations, the Stationmaster arranges for the employes allotted to the job of calling fog-signalmen for duty to familiarize themselves with the private addresses of the fog-signalmen so that they may be rapidly called out when required.

Fog-signalmen are called on duty if the fog is so thick that a fixed signal cannot be clearly seen at a distance of not less than 400 yards.

Two or more of the staff at each station serve as "Callers-up." Many of them use bicycles to perform their task, and, upon completing their work, they lodge a form with the Stationmaster, indicating the time each fogman was called and the reply received—"Will Report"; "Not at Home"; "Sick"; and so on.

Meals Supplied

If, on reporting for duty, a fog-signalman has not recently had a meal, a hot meal is supplied by the Department as soon as possible. If he has had a meal before taking up duty, the fog-signalman must be supplied with refreshments three hours after beginning work. These refreshments consist of sandwiches, bread and cheese and hot tea or coffee.

Employes assigned to fog-signalling duties are drawn principally from the Way and Works, Transportation and Rolling Stock Branches. Stationmasters, assistant stationmasters, clerks, guards, shunters and signalmen are ordinarily exempt from this duty, but in exceptional circumstances they would be required to act as fog-signalmen.

Victorian Railways Have Own Telegram Service

THE Telegraph Office at Spencer Street has been aptly described as the "nerve centre" of the Victorian Railways system. It operates throughout the 24 hours of each day, receiving and despatching messages from and to all parts of the State and beyond.

In the operating room, there are 25 Morse instruments. These connect with circuits extending to almost every railway terminus in Victoria. They connect also with Adelaide and Sydney; and there are three lines to the Postal Telegraph Office, Elizabeth Street, for the direct transmission of private telegrams.

All railway telegraphic business from Queensland and New South Wales to South Australia and Western Australia, and *vice versa*, is relayed at Spencer Street. On the 25 telegraph circuits there are superimposed lines which enable telegraphic, selector and ordinary telephonic messages to be dealt with simultaneously. Up to 15 operators and one supervisor are at work at the same time.

Business Handled

The number of telegrams transmitted and received per day is approximately 5,000, supplemented by upwards of 1,000 telephone messages to and from metropolitan stations and depot offices.

As can be imagined, the telegraphists in the Spencer Street office are the possessors of first-class telegraph certificates with many years of practical experience. Most of them are capable of operating with both hands, thus relieving the strain normally placed upon the right wrist.

Strange as it may seem, telegraphists at Spencer Street, when receiving messages—all by "sound"—are usually able to identify the particular telegraphist operating at the other end. They can detect the characteristics of the dots and dashes just as you can recognize a person's handwriting.

Ordinarily, the business of the office is conducted with clock-like precision. Even when floods, bush fires and other adverse factors seriously affect the normal procedure, the watchword of the telegraphic world—"Instant attention to every telegram" is faithfully adhered to wherever humanly possible.

In cases of temporary cessations of service due to interruptions on any sections of the circuits, messages from Spencer Street are transmitted by alternative routes, the elasticity of the network permitting cross-country "tie-ups" to be quickly established.

V. R. MEAT PIE PRODUCTION RECORD CREATED

600,000 meat pies! That amazing figure represents the number of pies baked in the ovens of the railways' Dining Car Depot at West Melbourne, which have been sold in the last year. These figures easily constitute a record for the famous railway pie. Railway meat pies are especially favoured by the soldiers. Seymour Refreshment Room is heavily patronized by soldiers and reports the biggest sales of meat pies. The main dining room at Spencer Street is a close second.

The Refreshment Services Branch of the railways is fulfilling quite a spectacular role these days. We have told you of the recent occasions on which trainloads of soldiers passing through Flinders Street and Spencer Street stations with only a few minutes for a hasty meal have been brilliantly fed by the Refreshments Branch.

Pies, sandwiches and fruit were spread on trestles on the platforms where the troop trains stopped. It was due to careful organization, including most accurate timing, that the fresh pies were baked in the ovens of the Dining Car Depot and carried by motors to the respective platforms, where they were served steaming hot to the hungry troops.

Another record established by this Branch in the past year was in the business handled in the dining car on "Spirit of Progress," which easily exceeded last year's record of 74,781 meals and £18,000 in revenue. Up to the time of writing over 80,000 meals had been consumed on this train, and it is estimated that the record for the financial year which ended on June 30, will exceed \$1,000 meals.

More over, although out of running for 14 weeks during the coal strike, the buffet car on the Albury express showed an estimated increased revenue of £500, compared with the preceding year. Obviously, "eat while you travel" is an idea that appeals to the public.

Your Radio Programs !

YOU can keep yourself informed of the numerous travel bargains which your railways offer by listening in regularly to their radio sessions. In addition, the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau which, as you know, is administered by the Railways Commissioners, is regularly on the air with suggestions for trouble-free holidays and expertly planned tours. Tell your father and mother to listen in to these programs as well. This is the full list of sessions sponsored by the railways and the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau:—

- 3XY ... 6.45 a.m. and 10.0 p.m. (News session) Monday to Saturday.
10.0 p.m. Sunday.
8.45 a.m. Monday to Saturday: Train announcements.
- 3AW... 8.45 a.m. Monday to Saturday: Train announcements.
4.15 p.m. (Women's session) Monday to Saturday (commencing July 29).
8.45 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. (Until July 29 this session will be broadcast at 8.0 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.)
- 3DB ... 8.0 a.m. Monday to Saturday: Train announcements.
10.0-11.0 a.m. (Women's session) Monday (Tuesday alternate weeks), Wednesday and Friday.
8.0 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.
- 3KZ ... 8.0 a.m. Monday to Saturday: Train announcements.
7.45 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.
- 3UZ ... 8.15 a.m. Monday to Saturday: Train announcements.
8.30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday.

Rail Staff Providing Comforts For Soldiers

THE female employes of the Victorian Railways have banded together and formed a Railway Soldiers' Comforts Club, which has the purpose of knitting socks and other woollies for railwaymen abroad. The girls will also collect books, magazines and other articles for the soldiers. All the girls in the club contribute a fixed sum from each fortnightly pay to buy wool. They already have a good sum in hand, but as enlistments increase—already nearly 800 railwaymen have enlisted—more money will be required, so railwaymen are assisting to build up the club's funds.

The Victorian Government Tourist Bureau has also organized a branch of the Australian Comforts Fund. Under the presidency of the Manager (Mr. W. T. McConnell), 45 members have been organized. This branch of the Comforts Fund promises to help this great war charity with a series of social functions. Lady members of the branch are adding to the number of socks, scarves, etc., and contributions in cash are also rolling in.

Hampers For Troops

The Refreshment Service girls, who have built up quite a reputation for charitable work, are also busy in many individual efforts in the suburbs. Last Christmas, the waitresses in the Spencer Street Main Refreshment Rooms clubbed together and sent half-a-dozen hampers to soldiers at Puckapunyal. Another half-dozen hampers have been sent by these girls to Palestine.

Another fine gesture was made by the waitresses at the Flinders Street Refreshment Room, who donated the overtime they earned on the King's Birthday holiday to the War Comforts Fund.

STATION NAMES EXPLAINED

LARA on the Geelong line, was formerly known as "Duck Ponds." It was here that the explorers, Hume (referred to above) and Hovell terminated their memorable journey in 1824 and rested a few days before starting out on their homeward journey. In the seventies, the name of the locality was changed to "Hovell's Creek" but public protest caused it to be re-christened "Lara," which, in the language of the natives, means "hut on stony ground."

* * *

CONDAH on the Ararat-Portland line was named after the lake in the vicinity which was originally known as Lake Condon. In 1855, the owner of the cattle station on which the lake was situated was told that "Condah" was the native name for black swan, which birds were then plentiful on the lake. Believing the statement, he changed the name to "Condah," and when he found that he had been misinformed he thought it unnecessary to change the name again.

* * *

IVANHOE on the Melbourne to Hurstbridge line was so called after Sir Walter Scott's novel of the same name. Actually the name was first given to an estate in the district and when the estate was subdivided and sold the name passed to the township.

Watch For This Travel Film When Screened Locally

AS a means of further popularizing Mt. Buffalo as an all-the-year resort, the railways have recently produced two films portraying the charms of that famous Victorian plateau. One is a standard size feature short with commentary, which will be exhibited in leading theatres throughout Australia. The other is a silent film in colour which will also receive Australia-wide display in schools, clubs, etc., through the medium of the branch offices of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau in every State.

The popularity of Mt. Buffalo continues to grow apace. During the last period when reduced rates operated at The Chalet—from March 30 to June 30—the attendances reached a figure far in excess of the previous record for that period.

Greatly improved facilities await day visitors to Mt. Buffalo during the present snow season. A considerable amount of money has been spent on these improvements by the Mt. Buffalo National Park Committee.

The gate which has hitherto prevented the use of the Horn Road by private motorists has been removed to Dingo Dell, beyond which the road will still be closed. A new ski run, only three miles from The Chalet, has been cleared at Dingo Dell, and private car drivers will now be able to drive right to the foot of the new run and park their cars at the edge of the snowfield.

Further improvements for the benefit of day visitors are the provision of an attractively designed stone building with two fireplaces at Echo Point on the parking area in front of The Chalet, and another stone building with tables, seats and sinks at the camping area near Lake Catani. A new concrete bridge has replaced the old wooden bridge which spanned the valley below Lake Catani Weir.

NORMAL TRAIN SERVICES

NO doubt you noticed the announcements in the papers about the complete restoration of train services that were cancelled on account of the coal strike. These restorations took effect from June 18, and mean that the normal schedules, with a few minor exceptions, are now in operation.

The dining car is again attached to "The Overland," which now runs on seven days a week. The Mildura train has resumed its 6-days a week schedule, and buffet cars are again in service on the Albury, Horsham, Bendigo and Warrambool lines. The parlor car is again attached to "Spirit of Progress."

However, certain passenger trains now leave earlier than before. The trains now departing earlier from Melbourne are the Bendigo, Warragul, Yarram and Wonthaggi morning trains, and the afternoon train to Albury.

History Of Seaside Electric Street Railway

R. C. DUNN, of 8 Byrne Avenue, Elwood, wrote to Bill Smith asking for some particulars of the St. Kilda-Brighton electric street railway. The reason why it is known by this title rather than as a tramway is because it is administered by the Railways and operates under railway conditions of safeworking. Actually, of course, it differs very little from an ordinary tramway.

This line was opened with due ceremony and ribbon cutting on May 7, 1906. At that time it extended from St. Kilda station to a terminus at Park Street, Middle Brighton, covering a distance of 4 miles (all single track). On December 22, 1907, an extension of another mile of single track was opened from Park Street to opposite Brighton Beach station in Beach Road, making a total route mileage of a little over five miles.

In order to expedite the working and enable the operation of more cars during peak periods and the provision of a more frequent "off-peak" service, the section from St. Kilda station to Elwood Car Depot (known locally as the "Power House") was double tracked in 1913. In 1916 the remaining section from Elwood to Brighton Beach was also double tracked.

Until the change-over of the suburban railway system to electric traction, power for the tramway system was generated at Elwood Power House adjacent to the Car Depot. In 1914, the present sub-station was provided and the system was switched over to power generated by the Newport railway power station. The track, which has been extensively reconditioned during the past few years, is now laid mostly in long welded lengths of 110-lb. rail with separate flange rail bolted to the running rails.

It may be interesting here to give a few details of the other tramline operated by the Victorian Railways, viz., the Sandringham-Black Rock line. This line, which was opened on March 10, 1919, ran from Sandringham station to the corner of Bluff and Balcombe Roads, Black Rock, a total route mileage of nearly 2½ miles of 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. All but a small section of the line was double-track. On September 1, 1920, a single-track extension of approxi-

mately 2½ miles was opened from Black Rock to Beaumaris. The latter section of the line was closed for traffic on September 1, 1931, and lay unused until 1938 when it was dismantled. The Railways Department now operates a road motor bus service over approximately the same route as the abandoned tramway.

Floral Decorations In "Spirit Of Progress"

THE Parlor Car on "Spirit of Progress" is now supplied regularly with magnificent floral decorations from the world-famous Conservatory at the Fitzroy Gardens. This arrangement has been made through the courtesy of the Melbourne City Council.

Of special interest to Interstate and overseas visitors, the blooms—which are neatly labelled with their botanic names—are a striking advertisement for the Conservatory.

To a large extent, the type of flowers exhibited reflects the prevailing display at the Fitzroy Gardens. Magnificent "Glorie de Lorraine" Begonias are now being shown. They will be followed by Poinsettias, Cyclamen, Schizanthus, Calceolarias, Hydrangeas, etc., most of which are hot-house pot plants, particularly suitable in the air-conditioned atmosphere of the parlor car, and are changed at frequent intervals.

The conductor is furnished with information which enables him to answer travellers' questions.