

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to every railwayman in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions for inclusion in the News Letter should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publicity Board, Head Office.



THE MONTH'S THOUGHT

Keep your face towards the sunshine and the shadows will fall behind you.

Issue No. 16

# News Letter

January, 1932

## RAILS ON TRIAL

TWELVE months ago, seven lengths of steel rail of varying composition were installed on the curved section of track between South Yarra and Richmond, in order that tests might be made to determine their relative resistance to wear under heavy running conditions. Four were of British steel manufacture and three of Australian. Measurements of these rails have now been made and the results of a first year's test made available.

THE Australian rails emerged from the test with flying colors, two of them showing the least wear of all the rails, with the exception of the expensive British manganese steel rail, which was taken as the basis for the tests. There was nearly seven times as much wear on the cheaper British carbon steel rail as on the manganese steel rail.

Comparisons of the wear on the seven rails for the first 12 months of the test are :—

Type of Rail.	Ratio of wear with British manganese steel as basis.
Manganese steel (British) ...	1.000
Chromium steel (Aust.) ...	1.471
Medium manganese steel (Aust.) ...	2.290
Chromium steel (British) ...	3.790
Cast-iron steel (British) ...	4.352
Carbon steel (Aust.) ...	4.772
Carbon steel (British) ...	6.909

At the termination of the tests (the duration of which will depend upon the extent of the wear), the rails, which were carefully weighed before being laid, will be taken up and re-weighed. The factor of initial cost will then be considered, in the light of the disclosed durability and comparative tenure of life of each rail.

### By Instalments

Way and Works engineers are at present experimenting with the electric arc as a means of welding rails together. Four such composite rails are now part of the track near Spencer-street, and are being tested under running conditions. If the experiment prove successful, small lengths of rail, which would otherwise be scrapped owing to their shortness, may be used to advantage.

## 22 Stock Specials from Seymour in One Day

SEYMOUR was recovering its breath and mopping its heated forehead after coping with a mass movement of the north-eastern district's live stock, when we went to press last month.

FROM the middle of August until the middle of November, this traffic was phenomenal. No fewer than 2,418 trucks of stock were railed from the district, representing approximately 1,280,000 head of sheep and 33,000 cattle on the hoof. The total would have been even higher had there been no meat strike.

The record for one day was achieved on September 19, when a total of 814 trucks were handled at Seymour, necessitating the scheduling of no fewer than 22 stock specials from the centre.

The maximum load hauled was 74

trucks and van between Benalla and Seymour, but loads of up to 68 vehicles were frequent.

Amongst the special consignments handled was one train load from Tocumwal to Warrong.

### Travel Orders

NOW we have travel orders. The presentation of one of these orders at any railway station is authority for the issue, without any charge, of a ticket to cover the journey specified on the order, the fare having previously been paid by the purchaser of the order.

This enables a person to pay a country railway fare for a relative or friend and to present him with the equivalent order as a gift.

## How Revenue is Falling

AS we go to press, the revenue returns for the first week of December are available, revealing the depressing fact that, within three weeks of the completion of half the financial year, we have earned £451,931 less than for the corresponding period of last year—which was the worst financially in our history.

Total receipts from July 1 to December 7, this year, have aggregated approximately £3,892,960; last year, they aggregated £4,344,891.

During that period, passenger revenue has been declining at the rate of more than £1,600 a day, and goods revenue at the rate of more than £640 a day. The average decrease of revenue from all sources has been approximately £2,800 a day.

## Ambulance Success

EARLY last month, in competition with 21 other teams in the annual contest for first aid and ambulance teams of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and Voluntary Aid detachments, the Victorian Railways quartette carried off the "Herald" challenge cup.

The team comprised Yard Foreman G. W. Cole of the Jolimont yard, Signalman N. E. Ross of Newport, Porter H. G. Kitchen of the V.R. ambulance depot, and Clerk W. J. Blackburn of the Accounts branch. Each man has been keenly interested in ambulance activities for some time past and each has at one time or another been superintendent of a railway ambulance corps.

The railways division of the V.A.D., from which the team was selected, was formed only a couple of months previously.

## Coal and Briquettes

COAL output from the State mine recently reached 202 trucks a day. The average tonnage despatched is about 2,500 tons per working day.

Yallourn's production of briquettes has also been increasing by leaps and bounds; something like 1,100 tons are now being consigned daily, and the average number of trucks despatched has increased from 50 to 90 daily.

## The Driver's Name was Smith

LAST month's problem, "What Was The Driver's Name?" certainly tickled the interest of Victorian railwaymen. Inquiries and solutions reached the editorial office via 'phone, memorandum and personal visit, and the editorial staff have been compelled reluctantly and laboriously to essay a solution of the problem themselves in order to settle the numerous disputes which have arisen.

### The problem may be re-stated :

Three men of the crew of the Continental Ltd. were called Jones, Robinson and Smith. One was the driver, one the guard and the other the conductor, but not respectively. On the train were three passengers, Mr. J., Mr. S. and Mr. R. Mr. R. lived in Ottawa. The conductor lived half-way between Ottawa and Montreal. Jones earned 2,500 dollars. The conductor's nearest neighbor, a passenger, earned exactly three times as much as the conductor. The conductor's namesake lived in Montreal. Smith beats the guard at billiards.

What was the driver's name?

The solution, presented with Euclidean logic, appears to be :

Smith beat the guard at billiards ;  
So Smith is either driver or conductor.

Mr. R. lives at Ottawa and conductor's namesake lives at Montreal ;

In other words, Mr. R. is not conductor's namesake ;

So conductor is either Jones or Smith.

Therefore, conductor is not Robinson,  
and guard is not Smith ;

Therefore, Smith is either driver or conductor,

Guard is either Jones or Robinson,  
Conductor is either Jones or Smith.

Suppose Jones is driver : then Robinson is guard and Smith is conductor. But this conflicts with "not respectively."

Therefore Jones must be conductor,  
Smith driver, and  
Robinson guard. —Q.E.D.

### FIRING LOCOMOTIVES WITH COFFEE !

IF a fireman on the government-owned Central Railroad of Brazil needs nourishment, he can now grab a hunk of "Juel" from the tender and brew himself a cup of coffee. The same goes for the driver.

This is made possible by the decision of the government to fire the road's locomotives with a Juel made from coffee compressed into bricks.

Government officials explain that the object is to dispose of a great quantity of low-grade "java" coffee, which has depressed export prices in an attempt to stabilise Brazil's most important industry—coffee growing.

## Giving Them Beans !

THE quality of Orbost's seed French beans brings that district's name regularly into the English market reports.

Up to the end of November, railwaymen at Orbost had despatched 6,822 bags of these seed beans to the city last year. The prices realised up to £2 per bushel.

Each bag contained three bushels, so that the local growers earned upwards of £40,000 for seed beans alone.

All the bags were forwarded at Commissioners' risk and no shortages were reported.

## The Work of 1931 in Retrospect

NINETEEN-THIRTY'S steady decline in traffic, bringing with it imperative need for strict economy in all branches of the service, continued throughout 1931, and revenue figures are still telling a sorer tale than in 1930.

The gravity of the financial situation necessarily influenced construction programmes and drastically reduced maintenance work (consistent with approved margins of safety) during 1931, but many interesting developments are, nevertheless, recorded in this brief review of the work of the calendar year.

AT Newport, the main building of the new locomotive erecting shop, with a length of 410 feet and a breadth of 138 feet, was brought into use on June 1. Seven "N" class locomotives, the balance of 10 commenced in 1930, were constructed and 44 new boilers were manufactured.

Car construction was limited to one petrol electric rail motor car, making a total of 10 of these units in service. Five 27-ton open goods trucks were also built during the year.

The fitting of automatic couplers was actively proceeded with, 1,024 cars and wagons being so equipped, while 225 other wagons were provided with transition features suitable for later attachment of automatic couplers. Nine engines and 29 tenders were also equipped. This progress spells greater efficiency and safety and enables the practice of increasing train loads to be considerably extended.

The whole question of increased loads was investigated and action taken on many sections. For instance, the load for a "D1" engine from Redcliffe to Ouyen was increased from 440 to 550 tons and for an "A1" engine from Terang to Allansford from 429 to 720 tons. These improvements have reduced train mileage and provided more efficient and more economical services.

\* \* \*

THE Redcliffs-Meringur line was extended to Morkalla, a distance of 9.5 miles during the year.

Twenty-four miles of tracks were relaid throughout the State, and the permanent way was strengthened by 10,300 sleepers and 4,000 cubic yards of bluestone ballast. In ordinary maintenance, 19,000 cubic yards of bluestone and 14,200 cubic yards of gravel ballast were used, 236,000 sleepers renewed, and 58 miles of fencing rebuilt.

To increase the efficiency of track gangs, 31 Casey-Jones motor gang cars were constructed at Spotswood workshops and allotted to various lengths.

The operations of the Signal and Telegraph branch, which was amalgamated with the Way and Works Branch on July 1, were confined largely to ordinary maintenance work. Progress was made, however, with the provision of station to station telephones, and 117 miles of line were so equipped. Selector telephones were installed on 63 miles of line, making a total of 1,718 miles equipped for the train despatcher system.

Other work undertaken by the electrical branch included the completion of details for the erection and equipment of a new single rotary converter unit substation at Coburg, the installation of electric headlights on suburban rolling stock, the exhibition of a number of illuminated advertising signs on suburban stations, and the completion of the programme for the installation of high-speed 1,500 volt circuit breakers.

At Newport power house, the installation of hot-well deaeration plant and of equipment for the burning of pulverised black coal is in hand.

\* \* \*

TO meet the times, the tariff at The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo, and the prices of meals and light refreshments at both city and country refreshment rooms were reduced.

By the use of a new compact type of ticket cabinet at Flinders-street, a full set of tickets was provided at each booking window.

The work of stores reorganisation was completed during the year. A reduction of approximately £1,000,000 in the value of stock has resulted.

Control of stores is now so satisfactory that stocktaking will in future be performed only every three years instead of every two years. . . .

Country passenger train services were still further reduced in conformity with the decline in the number of people travelling and, on some lines, the passenger service was discontinued, a goods service only being maintained. In other cases, arrangements were made for passenger traffic to be handled by rail motor. Necessary curtailments of service were also made in the suburban area.

Commercial activities were intensified to meet the unregulated and continually increasing road motor competition, and every effort was made to provide a standard of service that would conserve rail revenue. Increased traffic was secured by the offer, on special occasions, of a flat rate or limit-fare, which remained the same beyond a certain distance, irrespective of how far passengers travelled.

# We are Talking THINGS ing About !

ALL railwaymen have a very real interest in the Government Statist's estimate last month of Victoria's probable wheat yield this season. Excluding the wheat to be cut for hay, it is estimated that the area under wheat to be harvested will be approximately 3,043,600 acres, compared with last year's 4,600,000 acres. The yield is placed at 35,416,900 bushels. Last season's yield was 35,416,900 bushels. Stationmasters at the different wheat centres will be interested in the following estimate of the yield from the wheat-growing counties :

County.	Area in Acres.	Average.	Produce in Bushels.
Ararat ...	216,100	17	3,673,700
Bairnsdale ...	420,250	15	6,303,750
Benalla ...	141,100	12	1,693,200
Coleraine ...	208,800	9	1,879,200
Geelong ...	214,100	8	1,712,800
Horsham ...	817,800	9	7,360,200
Melbourne ...	424,500	11	4,669,500
Mildura ...	20,100	10	201,000
Murray ...	100,500	10	1,005,000
North ...	62,100	12	745,200
South ...	50,200	13	652,600
Traralgon ...	185,850	15	2,787,750
Warragul ...	182,200	15	2,733,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,043,600</b>	<b>11.63</b>	<b>35,416,900</b>

SOME reference would be appropriate here to the five single-ended rail motors which are at present stored in the Jolimont workshops, having regard to the comment on their withdrawal from service. The release of these vehicles was of course brought about by the severe curtailment of train services as a natural consequence of the serious decline in passenger traffic and the gravity of the financial situation. Apart from any other aspect, these rail motors, which were constructed at a cost of some £3,200 each, have averaged more than 188,000 miles of running. Three of them have done well over 200,000 miles and the other two more than 150,000 miles. It is evident, therefore, that they do not owe the Department anything in service, and they have certainly fully justified themselves by their excellent work in pioneering passenger transport by means of rail motors.

## RAIL MOTOR RECORD

PASSENGER trains are running again on the Queenscliff line. Anticipating that a reasonable volume of traffic will be offering during the holiday season, the Commissioners decided to reinstitute a service from Monday, December 21, to Tuesday, February 2 inclusive. "We have hopes that the patronage offering will justify the operation of the service," the Commissioners said. "We have not changed our attitude that we cannot continue to run trains when the people decide to forsake rail travel in favor of other forms of transport."

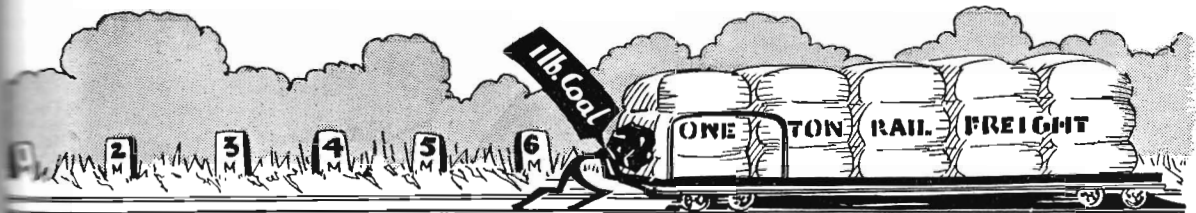
## ADDITIONAL TRAIN SERVICE

THE suggestion was made in the press recently that the Victorian railways should adopt the "container" system for the transport of parcels and thus obviate the need for the individual transshipment and re-packing of consignments. The position is that these containers are already in use on the Victorian railways for parcels traffic and, to a very limited extent, for goods traffic also. However, railway efforts to encourage the use of the containers by firms have not been very successful, and while the system will continue to be used as opportunity offers, the Commissioners' opinion is that there is at present very little scope for an extension of the practice. All the information which has been received on the subject makes it evident that conditions are most favorable to the development of the "container" system in countries with large populations.

## "CONTAINERS" ALREADY IN USE

MAINLY to help the citrus-growers dispose of a heavy crop of lemons, the sale of a special mixed citrus drink, consisting of equal quantities of lemon and orange juice in the same glass, was pushed at all railway drink stalls last month. Orange drinks have always been more popular than lemon drinks at railway stalls, the ratio of drinks sold averaging three orange drinks to one lemon. This special campaign helped to restore the balance a little and to increase the popularity of a piquant citrus shandy, which combines the tang of the lemon with the rich sweetness of the orange.

## "HALF—AND—HALF"



A POUND of coal is scarcely larger than a man's fist. It is black, rather dirty and, regarded as one pound, not very impressive in the matter of cost.

YET, at our present rate of locomotive consumption, one lb. of coal releases enough energy to move a ton of railway freight 6.5 miles.

Each lb. of coal, therefore, that goes to waste on a tender, drops to the ground or is applied to some lost effort, means a waste of 6.5 ton miles.

One lb. of coal lost signifies 6.5 ton miles of opportunity for improvement.

One lb. of coal saved means 6.5 ton miles of efficiency in railroading.

NOTE.—This figure of 6.5 ton miles per lb. of coal covers average running. The actual figure varies—ranging up to 8.76 ton miles per lb. for the Pacific on the Melbourne-Benalla run, where the load is specially built up. The average figure for the service, including pick-up trains and yard shunting, is 3.23 miles per lb. Factors such as the tonnage hauled, the gradients and the class of coal used also affect the returns in various parts of the State.

# RAILWAYMEN of the MONTH

## The Two Macs

THERE are two railway officers for whom Christmases are mile posts; they are both Macs; they are both managers; and they are both keenly interested in the increased traffic at holiday times. Lindsay McClelland has directed the roasting of Christmas turkeys and the making of Christmas puddings at the dining car depot for the past 12 years, to the entire satisfaction of dining car patrons travelling during the festive season. Bill McConnell has just celebrated his third Christmas at the Government Tourist Bureau, where he directs his energies to the encouraging of tourist travel, particularly by train, to the numerous beauty spots throughout the State and even in other States. And no enquiry as to "where to go, how to get there, and where to stay", is left unanswered. —S.C.W.

## Loco Veteran

DRIVER R. FLOYD retired at Geelong the other day after 42 years of service. At a social evening in the Geelong West town hall, he was presented with a wallet, travelling rug and pipe by his friends in the Geelong branch of the loco. men's union. He is a native of Geelong. —J.T.L.

## Moves on

SPRINGHURST said good-bye to its popular stationmaster last month, when the genial Lionel Morris went on transfer and promotion to Kyabram. Well-known in the north-east, Stationmaster Morris has had 26 years of railroading in Victoria. Springhurst's good wishes were accompanied by a wallet of notes. —H.E.C.

## January Birthdays

WALTER Bunker of the State Relief Committee, and Water Supply Engineer H. Willett, on the third; Way and Works Engineer Geo. Luttrell, on the fourth; Chief Clerk Chas. Dunstan of Ballarat goods shed, on the sixth; Assistant Chief Electrical Engineer C. G. H. McDonald, on the seventh; Jack Featherstonhaugh (secretary to Mr. Commissioner Shannon) and Electric Train Driver C. E. Murlitt of Jolimont, on the eighth; Commercial Agent W. Middleton, Lands Officer A. H. Rogerson of the Estate office, and Signalman T. Barton of Melbourne yard, on the ninth; Engineer-in-Charge A. Horton of Newport power house, Supervisor of Road Transport C. G. Walker, and Shunter A. E. Coles of Warragul, on the 12th; Fireman J. O'Farrell of Numurkah, on the 14th; Leading Shunter J. Palmer of Hamilton, W. J. Thornton of the car and wagon shops and Stationmaster Procter of Bendigo, on the 15th; Fireman J. E. Floyd of Warrnambool, on the 16th; Bendigo District Engineer Tom Coakley, on the 17th; Yard Foreman A. H. Sleeth of Melbourne yards, on the 18th; Goods Foreman W. Ellis of Bendigo and Fireman A. E. Bridson of North Melbourne loco., on the 19th; Classification Board Secretary J. Miller, and Train Examiner E. McIntosh of Traralgon,

on the 20th; Bonding Supervisor W. W. Tunn of Flinders-street, on the 21st; Traffic Inspector Alf Giles of the Metro.'s office, on the 22nd; Engineer E. F. McIver and Fireman J. Pollock of Bendigo, on the 23rd; Electrical Superintendent Alec McLean, on the 25th; Lance Bromilow of the Betterment Board and Ticket Maker George Oakley of the Printing office, on the 28th; Leading Shunter C. O'Halloran of Melbourne yard, Fireman R. Sampson of Bendigo and Enginemen's Instructor W. H. Hillis, on the 29th; and Driver W. Busbridge of Geelong, on the 31st. —A.L.

## Naming V.R. Stations

No. 12: ROCHESTER

IN 1853 this locality formed part of the "Restdown" pastoral station, owned by Dr. Rowe. In that year he built an hotel near the banks of the Campaspe-river. Settlement in the neighborhood of the hotel was rapid, and the governor eventually named the place "Rowchester" in compliment to the founder. The name soon lapsed into its present form.

## A Signal Record

A S block recorder, signalman, and block and signal inspector, Edward Anderson will have more than 46 years of practical railroading behind him when he retires at the end of this month. He joined the service in August, 1885, and was made signalman four years later. In this capacity, he served in various boxes including Princes Bridge, Flinders-street "A" and Essendon before his appointment as Block and Signal Inspector at Maryborough in 1922. He moved to Flinders-street in 1926, and to the relieving staff three years later. —J.G.

## Victorian Railways Employees

The most important points for consideration at the present time with respect to

### Savings

are

### Security Stability Satisfaction

The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society's

Group Assurance Policies give ALL of these.

Write for particulars to—

The General Manager  
The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited  
Melbourne

## "White" Man

BOB WHITE—known as "Pinkey" to his hosts of railway comrades scattered from one end of the State to the other—has just retired from the position of depot foreman at Geelong after ten years service at the centre. A practical railwayman from the old school, he started at Maryborough as fitter in September, 1888. Seventeen years later, he went to Benalla leading hand and continued on Korumburra as fitter-in-charge in 1912. His next move was to Wonthaggi as depot foreman in 1914, where he remained until his transfer to Geelong in 1921. A good disciplinarian, yet fair and impartial, he was always popular with his men, his invariable practice of "saying what he meant and meaning what he said" being largely responsible for his knack of making and keeping friends. —J.

## The Last Mile Post Francis Arthur Hackett

THE death occurred last month of F. A. Hackett, well-known and popular clerk in the stores section of the Refreshment Service branch.

Mr. Hackett had had nearly 30 years of service and was for a time in the Transportation Branch.

He was 48 years of age.

## Revenue in Tobacco

THERE has been a boom in tobacco-growing in the King and Ovens Valley districts. Last season's record prices—ranging up to 3/7 per lb. for prime leaf—are responsible.

It is estimated that a total of 5,000 acres will be planted in those areas this season.

Young tobacco seedlings are being raised from as far away as Deniliquin, Echuca, Cobram and even the suburban area. Parcels rates on this inwards traffic are thus bringing the railways welcome revenue before the outwards tobacco traffic commences. On one day alone, 160,000 tobacco plants were discharged at Bowman.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

E.T., S.B., W.M., F.W.H.: Special V device used for that work will be described in February News Letter. E.P.: Personal replies always welcome. R.G.: Apart from his economy, petrol electric has provided a service on the Daylesford-Woodend curtailing the overall running time by as much as 45 minutes.

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

# The V.R. News Letter

March, 1932

Issue No. 17

## Turkeys Travel as Sheep

### Balranald's Mixture

**H**ORSES in a cattle truck, turkeys in a sheep truck, sheep, wheat, chaff, cream, rabbits, sheepskins, wool, hides, harness and fat were in the assorted loading of the mixed train from Balranald on February 18.

So far as is known, this was the first time a consignment of turkeys travelled loose in a sheep truck.

The birds were officially regarded as sheep, the freight charges, with the permission of the Live Stock Agent, being computed on the same basis as for the carriage of sheep.

Stationmaster E. Cassell of Balranald, who reports the circumstances, considers that it would be difficult to enter the variety in the range of primary products which Balranald dispatched by that train.

The caravan certainly merited the title of mixed train.



### BEWARE OF NAILS!

*Protruding nails in cases and splintered wood have inflicted bad gashes on the hands and arms of railwaymen lately.*

*The greatest care should be observed during loading and discharging operations to avoid these accidents, which may very easily lead to serious results.*

## Excursion Traffic Doubled

**R**EVENUE from this year's series of January cheap excursions from the country to the city has more than doubled last year's earnings—£3,500 compared with £1,600. The number of passengers was nearly 3,000 this year and only 1,500 last year.

### Limit Fares Help

**N**ORTHERN and Midland districts provided the biggest share with £1,785, then coming the north-eastern with £909, the western and south-western with £648 and the eastern and south-eastern with £213.

The fixing of limit fares, which were not increased no matter how far the passenger travelled, attracted additional traffic. Bookings on the Swan Hill-Yungera line increased from 87 last year to 236 this year, on the Ultima-Robinvale line from 29 to 189, and on the Mildura line (as far as Yatpool) from 120 to 400.

## Derelict Kites Constitute New Railway Problem

**D**ERELICT kites have been keeping the maintenance staff of the Electrical branch busily employed recently. An average of no more than three kites a day have been removed from the overhead wires during the past few weeks. On several occasions, portions of kites have even become entangled with the pantographs of electric trains, while two substations were shut down when

Heidelberg residents, endeavoring to release a large kite from the wiring, pulled two wires together.

In issuing a warning to parents against the grave danger of this practice, the Commissioners pointed out that a penalty of £20 can be imposed on any person who flies a kite at or to a point within a distance of 300 yards of any railway boundary in the electrified area.

## Farming Train Tour

**F**OLLOWING the very successful reappearance of the Better Farming Train at the end of last year, a further tour of the wheeled agricultural college has been arranged—on the 34th.

Tamboon, the first centre to be visited on this tour will have the train on March 8, and demonstrations will be given at Cobden the following day. The train will then be transferred to the Goulburn Valley, the subsequent itinerary being Stanhope on March 11, Lutera March 12, Tongala March 14, Bramham March 15, Numurkah March 16, Cobram March 17, and Shepparton March 18.

## 29 Specials

**F**EBRUARY is country school picnic month.

This year, no fewer than 29 specials were run from country stations during the month, bringing school-children to the beaches and the Zoo.

Twelve picnic parties selected St. Kilda, five went to the Zoo and four to Port Melbourne for bay trips. Brighton Beach, Mordialloc and Frankston were the destinations of three specials, while Balmoral school, not to be outdone by districts nearer Melbourne, hired a special train for a trip to Portland.

Nine of the specials came from north-eastern stations.

## Real Live Stock Service

**W**ORKMANLIKE handling of two consignments of live stock recently brought the Railways Department well-earned commendation.

A heavily loaded truck of pigs was consigned from Gunbower to a leading city bacon company during the January heat wave. On arrival at Woodend, many of the pigs were in a bad way and a few had already died from the heat. The remainder were promptly unloaded and allowed to rest and recover in the yards until early the following morning when they continued and completed their journey in good condition.

**I**N expressing appreciation of the railway action, the company remarked: "This is typical of many instances in our experience of the sympathetic treatment of livestock by railway officers."

### Long Journey

**O**N that very same day, railwaymen were also enhancing the reputation for efficient service which they had built up in contacts with a family of Gippsland graziers.

Fourteen trucks of cattle were hauled out of Tinamba by the ordinary 1.30 p.m. Goods train. Travelling through the night, the stock were discharged at Nacurrie (N.S.W.) on the Stony Crossing border railway, 322 miles away, at 4.45 p.m. the following day.

## The Month's Topic

### The New Offensive

WE have recently granted freight reductions to traders at centres like Shepparton and Echuca, who had previously been sending their goods by road, conditionally on contracts being signed giving the whole of the carrying business to the railways.

It is well that railwaymen generally should be informed of the circumstances surrounding this policy, which has been adopted as a desperate expedient to regain rail revenue lost at those places to unregulated competitive motor services.

\* \* \*

*THE admittedly unorthodox and illogical features of the action which has been taken could have been avoided if Parliament had seen fit to agree to the Commissioners' persistent representations that regulatory legislation was the only real solution of the problem of competition.*

*In the absence of that legislation, we have been compelled to adopt the only alternative which would enable us at least to control the situation until the community generally realised the imperative need for legislation.*

### Discrimination?

IT has been said that by our action we are favoring some towns at the expense of others. This is not so. Any discrimination between centres had already been established by the road operators. We have recaptured the business which our competitors had secured by using the weapons which they themselves chose.

The fact that the traffic is now being carried by rail instead of by road has in no way altered the situation for traders in other centres.

\* \* \*

*WE had, in fact, two alternatives confronting us. We could stand helplessly aside and watch our business being destroyed by uncontrolled competition free to make and change its rates at will, or we could do what any other business would do in the circumstances—endeavor to combat its competitors by using their own methods.*

### Post-Rail

A PRESS correspondent last month suggested that postal and rail services at the smaller Victorian stations should be amalgamated in the interests of economy.

As a matter of fact, during the past 18 months, arrangements have already been made for the amalgamation of those services at 25 stations as opportunity offers.

## Trackmen Win Prizes for Best-Kept Lengths

### Remarkable Successes of Heywood Gang

EACH year two sets of prizes are awarded to Victorian railway trackmen in each of the five district engineer's sections—one set for the best-kept metal ballast length, the other for the best-kept gravel, scoria or sand ballast length.

Last year's prizes have just been awarded, the most interesting result perhaps being the continuation of a seven-year run of unbroken success in the western district by No. 10 gravel ballast length at Heywood.

FIRST prize is £15, second £10, and third £5, with a further prize of £10 for the most improved length in each district for each type of ballast. Previously there was also a special prize for the best length in each district. To maintain interest in the competition, first-prize winner in any year was eligible only for this "best length" prize during the two following years.

These "best length" prizes, however, have now been withdrawn.

In determining the prize winners, points are given for line of track, surface of track, tightness of fastenings, condition of cuttings and drains, weeding ballast, general appearance (including trimming and regulating ballast), and cleaning, trimming and making up formation cesses. Other factors, such as the natural conditions of the roadbed, curvature, gradients, speed of trains and intensity of traffic, which all influence the amount of work done by the track gangs, are also taken into consideration.

### Heywood's Consistency

Where an extra gang has been employed on a length during the year, that length is automatically barred from participation in that year's competitions.

Heywood, No. 10 length, takes the palm for consistency in the Western district gravel ballast section. In 1926 and 1927, it won the prize for the "best length," which indicated that

it had captured first prize in 1925. First prize was won in 1928, followed by best length prize again in 1929 and 1930; and, last year, the first prize was again secured.

Ganger Sam Pevitt has been in charge right through this period and Repairer Harry Beavis has been a member of his gang throughout. Repairers A. A. Donehue and R. C. Grinham have been the remaining members of the team for the past three competitions.

Wandong, last year's first-prize winners for the north-eastern district broken stone section, won third prize in 1930, and the prize for the most improved length in 1926 and 1929.

Other consistent winners in the broken stone section for the past three years were Colac with a first, two thirds and a "most improved"; Pomborneit with two "best lengths" (indicating a first prize in 1925), second and third; Gerang Gerang with two firsts, a second, and a "best length"; Navigator with two firsts and two "best lengths"; Harcourt with a first, a second and a third in the last three years; and Chewton with one first, two "best lengths," and two seconds.

In the gravel ballast section, Heywood has scored one first, two thirds and one "most improved"; Newell and Ouyen each a first, a second and a third in the past three years; Sale two firsts, a second and a "best length," and Birchip a first, two "best lengths," and a third.

## Railmen Succeed at National Games

ALTHOUGH not represented in the individual championships at the National Games held at the M.C.G. on January 30 and February 1, the Victorian Railways Institute harrriers performed exceptionally well in the team events. In the two-mile junior relay race, a four-man team—A. Davey of Newport drawing office, A. Newell of Newport tarpaulin shop, E. Jones of Newport plant shop, and W. Lynch of head office—won easily by about 60 yards in the good time of 8 min. 24 seconds. Had the team been extended, this time could have been considerably improved.

In the one-mile junior medley relay race, Jones ran 880 yards and Newell 440 yards, while J. Vincent of the

Newport plant shop and S. Leamon of Jolimont workshops each ran 220 yards. After a good race, they finished second but, as the winners were disqualified for changing over outside specified limits, the V.R.I. team was placed first. The time was 3 min. 46 3-5 seconds.

Competing in the boxing section of the games, Reg O'Haire of the accountancy branch, who has been consistently successful boxer for the last couple of years, won the amateur light-weight championship of Australia after two well-contested bouts. He is a son of Senior-Train Despatcher Sep. O'Haire of Ararat, himself a mighty man with the gloves 15 years or so ago.

# General Supt. Canny Discusses French Rail "Rationalisation"

REDUCTION of the number of stations from 8,000 to 1,600, the running of trains for long-distance journeys only with a minimum of 95 miles, the institution of a collection and delivery service for goods and parcels, and the provision of road vehicles or light-power units operating on rails, are the principal features of a scheme drawn up by the French rail authorities in an endeavor to secure "full commercialisation and rationalisation of railway transport."

In a discussion of this plan last month, General Superintendent Canny interestingly compared details of the French scheme with aspects of the Victorian railways policy of economy and rehabilitation.

THE economic basis of the French policy is that the running of trains, light rail units, motor buses, from the point of view of both frequency and carrying capacity, will depend entirely upon requirements. Some such change is necessitated by the increasingly serious effects of road competition.

The French railway system embraces approximately 40,000 kilometres of line (roughly 25,000 miles) and the average distance between stations is being increased from 5 kilometres (3½ miles) to 25 kilometres (15½ miles). The relative importance of the traffic will, of course, be the deciding factor in the reorganisation of sections.

Trains will be used only for long

"Theoretically, the plan seems ideal," said General Superintendent Canny, last month, "but in practice the difficulties will be considerable and it will be of interest to see how they are surmounted. In any case, the details available here are barely sufficient to enable a proper judgment to be formed.

Continuing, Mr. Canny pointed out that in Victoria the number of stations had been considerably reduced in the past year, while goods trains were now being run only in accordance with the available loading. Passenger train services, too, had been substantially reduced to conform more closely with the requirements of the travelling public.

"Some time ago," Mr. Canny said, "consideration was given to the question of running skip-stop trains to save time at the smaller stations, leaving the intermediate territory to be served by road transport. Conditions in Victoria, however, are very different from those obtaining in France, where inter-traffic between adjoining or neighboring country stations is heavier than in this State, and it was considered undesirable to make any change.

"The question of door-to-door deliveries is one that is now occupying the attention of almost every important railway system in the world, and many countries have been enabled to adopt this method because of the nature of the business and the density of the traffic. Again, in Victoria, the conditions are not in our favor.

"We are watching very closely the effect of France's innovations and, if they are found practicable there, we can then see how far they can be applied in Victoria or any of the other Australian States."

## Down Half-Million

LATEST revenue figures available when we went to press, showed that the decline in railway revenue since the beginning of the financial year had grown to approximately £579,000, compared with the same period of last year.

From July 1, 1931, to February 14, 1932, the total earnings of the service aggregated £5,695,426. Goods and live stock revenue was £2,828,224, a decrease of more than £124,000, and passenger revenue totalled £2,213,038, a decline of nearly £336,000.

## Tallangatta Line Takes New Course

THE Sandy-creek deviation of the Wodonga-Tallangatta line has been completed.

This work was necessitated by the construction of the giant Hume Reservoir, the waters of which will eventually submerge the old line.

TO maintain railway connection with the wonderful cattle lands of the Upper Murray, the line had to be rebuilt at a higher level for a distance of 8 miles 52 chains. This new line, now in regular use, leaves the old line at a point 1½ miles on the "down" side of the Ebdon station and rejoins it 3½ miles on the "down" side of the old location of the Huon station.

Huon remains the only stopping place between Ebdon and Bolga, but the station building is in a new position on the just-completed railway.

A large bridge, with two openings of 59 ft. 6 in. each and 29 openings of 60 ft. 3 in. each was erected to carry the line over Sandy-creek, near the Huon station. The bridge consists of a steel plate girder superstructure carried on concrete piers.

The work was carried out by the Construction branch at the request of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Victorian authority for the Murray Rivers Commission under whose auspices the Hume Reservoir works are being constructed. The whole cost of the railway work is being defrayed by the Murray Rivers Commission, which will also be further debited with the capitalised value of the increased working expenses resulting from such factors as the longer haul involved for all loading carried over the line.

Incidentally, it is interesting to remember that the design of the Hume Reservoir provides for a capacity of 2,000,000 acre-feet and a water surface of 69 square miles (44,000 acres). Sydney Harbour covers 17 square miles.

The Reservoir, when completed, will be the second largest in the world, the largest being the Elephant Butte Reservoir in U.S.A., 2,638,000 acre-feet capacity.

## Rush to Sydney

MELBOURNE rushed the Govt. Tourist Bureau last month to book for Sydney by the special trains which will be run in connection with the opening of the Harbor Bridge this month.

Booking opened on Thursday, February 18, and by Saturday three specials had been booked up and most of the seats in a fourth reserved. By Monday the fourth special had been booked up and reservations opened for a fifth special.

### A RAILWAY GHOST

A TALL, white-clad ghost who has appeared every night during the last week just as the southern express from Vienna approaches the mouth of the "Weinsattel" tunnel is terrifying the inhabitants of the Semmering district (South-Eastern Austria), says a report in London's "Morning Post."

A watch has been set at each end of the tunnel. The whole area is frequently searched, and a trolley is run through the tunnel before every train, but so far the phantom has remained uncommercial.

distance journeys, the minimum being 95 kilometres, and for the haulage of heavily loaded wagons. Short distance passengers, parcels and small consignments of goods will be carried either by road or by light power units operating on rails, according to local conditions. Connection with main line services will be made at the new "station centres" by motor omnibuses.

The principle of the "10-railer," which can be run over both rail and road as desired, will be adopted where desirable.

In addition, an elaborate system of collection and delivery of parcels and goods by motor vehicles working in conjunction with the railway will be provided, affording a door-to-door service for both passengers and freight. Goods trains will be run as frequently as the traffic warrants, but trucks and vans containing perishables and live-stock will be immediately worked to the nearest station centre, each of which will be in constant touch by telephone with the surrounding loading points.

# Personal Postscript

## Discipline Board Changes

LES. Phelan, Transportation branch clerk in head office, headed the ballot for the election of an employees' representative to succeed James Fogarty on the Board of Discipline. Mr. Fogarty has just retired after being a member of the board since June, 1926. His successor joined the service as a clerk in the Melbourne goods sheds at the beginning of 1910, proceeding to the office of the Seymour district supt. four years later. In 1918, he moved into the Maryborough district supt.'s office, subsequently taking a prominent part in local matters of public interest. He was honorary secretary of the Maryborough football club, manager of the cricket team, and an official of the Highland sports. At the end of 1926, he was transferred to head office and has since been actively associated with union matters, serving as president of the Victorian branch last year. He is a nephew of Signalman William Phelan, who preceded Mr. Fogarty as employees' representative on the board.

—S.C.W.

## Scaled the Railways

AT the end of this month, Shop Foreman William Turner of the Spotswood workshops—the man who scaled the railways regularly for many years—will retire from the service. He was specially brought out from England in 1903 to supervise the maintenance and testing of the huge army of weighbridges, weighing machines and spring balances in use throughout the system, and was located at the old Spencer-street workshops as weighbridge supervisor and adjuster. In 1923, he was made shop foreman and retained this position when the workshops were transferred to Spotswood in 1927.

—C.R.

## March Birthdays

FITTER A. T. Twells of Geelong and Poultry-farm Manager Tom Harding, on the first; Fireman A. E. Dawson of North Melbourne loco., on the second; Traffic Inspector Alex McLean of Bendigo, Staff Board Member T. F. Brennan, General Superintendent M. J. Canny, and Clerk M. Stanistreet of Room 2, on the third; Chief Foreman W. T. Cornish of North Melbourne loco., on the fourth; Engine-driver G. E. Nelson of North Melbourne loco. and Shunter W. J. Lacy of Melbourne yards, on the fifth; Superintendent of Goods Train Service T. W. J. Cox and Block and Signal Inspector Nolan of Seymour, on the sixth; Engine-driver S. Parker of Colac, Chief Clerk N. J. Lester of the Accounts branch and Train Examiner P. Gill of North Melbourne loco., on the seventh; Rolling Stock Clerk A. J. Paul, of Ararat, on the eighth; Guard A. A. White of Geelong and Clerk Bill Conroy of Room 4, on the 10th; Linesman H. Alexander of Dandenong and Road Foreman E. E. Schurer of Maryborough, on the 11th; Signalman J. Price of Bendigo and Leading-Hand Fitter Mudge of Geelong, on the 12th; District Engineer Tom Bye of North Melbourne, Provodore L. C. Brown of the refresh-

ment services, and Frank O'Dea of North Melbourne loco., on the 13th; Electric Train Driver D. P. Ryan of Jolimont, on the 14th; Fireman G. Mitchell of Bendigo, Carpenter A. Horbury of Bendigo, Asst. Staff Officer P. T. Meares of the Transportation branch, Fitter W. J. Lonsdale of Ballarat, Guard C. A. Potter of Traralgon, and Fitter W. P. Casey of Benalla, on the 16th; Commissioner T. B. Molomby and Works Foreman E. G. Armstrong of Geelong, on the 17th; Engineer J. A. Malan of the Signals section, on the 20th; Cleaner A. G. Clements of Traralgon, Discipline Board Member Les. Phelan and Train Examiner W. Dunn of Benalla, on the 22nd; Boilermaker R. Hill of Ballarat, Signals Supervisor N. S. Smyth of Ballarat, Clerk Jack Norris of the Way and Works, and Guard L. A. Kelly, of Benalla, on the 23rd; Staff Clerk Dave Way of the Way and Works, and Jack Roberts of the truck record room, on the 24th; Train Examiner J. W. Humphreys of Serviceton and Lineman P. Hyde of Bendigo, on the 25th; Chief Clerk H. L. Dickinson of the Rolling Stock, Comptroller of Stores C. W. J. Coleman, and Train Examiner D. Purtle of Dandenong, on the 26th; Engine-driver F. H. Dwyer of Warragul and Leading Porter T. O'Brien of

## Naming V.R. Stations

No. 14: DOOKIE

WHEN the district was being surveyed for a railway, a Mrs. Turnbull, who then owned a station property in the neighborhood, was continually lamenting to the surveyor the loss of that portion of her property which is now the site of Dookie. The woman had lived on the Malay peninsular and the surveyor, knowing the Malay language, called the place "Dookie," which means "lament."

Bendigo, on the 27th; Superintendent of Loco. Supplies E. Dillon, on the 28th; Foreman Car and Wagon Builder J. H. Homersham, of Dudley-street, Fitter J. S. Telling of Traralgon, and Yard Foreman P. H. Burke of Ballarat, on the 29th; Engine-driver C. Crick of Ararat, and Conductor Billy Lynch of Spencer-street, on the 30th; and Advertising Artist Angus McDonald, Jack Cordwell of the Transportation branch and Signalman P. J. Fogarty of Benalla, on the 31st.

—A.L.

## Parcels to Taxes

WILLIAM E. Sheehan, who has just been appointed from 500 applicants to the position of Federal sales tax investigator for the State of Victoria, will be remembered by many railwaymen as Glenferrie's first parcels clerk. Of later years he has been attached to the central finance branch of the Defence department. Signalman J. R. Sheehan of Caulfield is a brother.

—S.

## 310 Years' Service

AMONG the retirements during February there were seven Transportation branch men whose combined service totalled 310 years. Stationmaster J. H. Whykes of Kensington Goods topped the poll with 47 years of railroading. By a strange coincidence, three others of the veterans retired from the same station, Wodonga. They were Stationmaster T. Perry and Goods Guard J. O'Brien, each with 44 years to his credit, and Passenger Guard E. J. Cronk with 45 years. Passenger Guard E. A. J. Bragg of Spencer-street had also completed 44 years with the railways before he retired, while Special Officer J. R. Byerley of Room 10 and Signalman J. Moule of Canterbury were each on the job for 43 years.

—H.

## Simon Cuddigan Goes

ASSISTANT Goods Supt. Simon Cuddigan has retired with 47 years of solid service to his credit. Starting at the bottom of the ladder he climbed to the dual position of metropolitan timekeeper and asst. goods supt. He has been a member of the railway selection committee, goods sheds classifier for the system and departmental representative before the Classification Board and Arbitration Court. The goods sheds staff presented him with a wireless set and a wallet of notes, and leading city merchants presented him with a pair of gold sleeve-links.

—"Goods."

## Transfer That Wasn't

TO move from one station to another and yet to be located at the same station was the unusual experience of Stationmaster W. French recently. He effected the transfer that wasn't a transfer when he shifted his headquarters from the old site of the Hume station to its new site on the Tallangatta division.

—G.K.C.

## First Kernot S.M.

STATIONMASTER A. Knapp of Edithvale who has just retired after 40 years service joined the Department as a porter and was one of the pioneers of the Wonthaggi line. He had the distinction of being Kernot's first stationmaster. For many years he was a.s.m. at Heidelberg and, before going to Edithvale had charge of Barker and Hughesdale.

—H.E.C.

## Two Veterans

THE Transportation branch lost two veterans when Head Porter Bert McKay of Geelong and Signalman Jack Tait of South Kensington recently retired. Both had 45 years service. Bert McKay was previously guard at Leggatha, Melbourne Yard and Daylesford, and Jack Tait put in most of his time pulling levers in the Melbourne Yard.

—H.E.C.

## Uni. Free Place

PERCY Carbin's of the Secretary's branch is at present on loan to the Law Department. He was recently granted a Government free place at the University to enable him to study for a Commerce course. He passed the examination for licensed shorthand writers some two years ago, and since then has been a part-time student at the University.

—J.

## Have you thought of providing for some measure of comfort in the evening of your life?

The System of Group Assurance specially designed for Officers and Employees of the Victorian Railways by

### The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited

provides an economical and convenient means to this end.

By courtesy of the Victorian Railways Department, premium payments may be made through the Department fortnightly

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To THE COLONIAL MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY LIMITED,  
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giving name, address, occupation and date of birth, and, upon receipt of same, particulars with respect to rates and benefits will be forwarded.

## Last Mile Post

JOHN THOMAS WILKINSON

AFTER a protracted illness, retired Stationmaster J. T. Wilkinson has died. He was in the service for 42 years, and was stationed at Bayswater as S.M. for 16 years, retiring some 18 months ago.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to the railwayman in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publicity Board, Head Office.

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# The V.R. News Letter

April, 1932

Issue No. 19

## Victorian Railways Hold Their Own

COMPARISONS of the working results of the Victorian railways with the systems of other countries are always of interest. Here is a succinct *precis* of the latest operating performances of the railways of the U.S.A.:

THERE are 46 important railroads whose common stocks are listed on the New York stock exchange.

Thirty-one were paying dividends at the beginning of 1931. Only six of these roads maintained their dividend rate during the year; eight others reduced the rate, in most cases by 50 per cent. or more; and the other 17 failed to pay any dividend at all, thus making 32 railroads out of 46 which failed to get any return for their shareholders.

The average dividend rate at the end of the year for the 31 railroads which had averaged 7.26 per cent. during 1930 had fallen to 2.81 per cent., and this would have been further materially reduced had the other 15 issues of unpaying railway shares been included.

LAST financial year, the Victorian railways, despite an overcapitalisation estimated at approximately £2,000,000 secured a return of 3.08 per cent. on the capital invested before provision had been made for the fixed charges and expenses.

## Lost Half-Million

UP to March 14, railway revenue since the beginning of the financial year had aggregated approximately £6,500,000, compared with £7,000,000 in the corresponding period of last financial year.

Round figures, this half-million deficiency was mainly due to comparative decreases of £337,500 passenger receipts (which have totalled £2,500,000 this year), £47,000 refreshment branch receipts (£270,500 to date this year), £42,000 in parcels receipts (£251,000), and £37,000 in live stock receipts (£250,000).

Owing chiefly to the acceleration of parcel deliveries, weekly returns of revenue have lately shown an increase over the corresponding returns for the same year. For the week ended March 14, for instance, revenue improved at an average daily rate of £1,754.

But to wipe out the whole of the remaining half-million pounds deficiency before the end of the financial year, a daily average increase of more than £4,000 would need to be maintained from March 15 to June 30.

## Spencer-street's Red Carpets are Retired by Governors But America Still Likes the Idea

NEITHER Sir Isaac Isaacs nor Sir William Irvine, as Governor-General and Victorian Lieutenant-Governor, welcomes the idea of making red-carpeted progress to and from his State car.

AND so Spencer-street's two red carpets which, in accordance with tradition, were previously laid on the platform for the accommodation of the feet of vice-regal travellers, are now resting in the seclusion of the cloak room.

While it is, of course, the practice of most railways to provide carpets in this way for the feet of distinguished travellers, the ceremonial touch finds greatest favor with rail cos. in the U.S.A.

With the idea of lending color to the departure of its most important, the New York Central Railroad, for instance, lays down a carpet-runner each afternoon for travellers by the Advance Century, the Twentieth Cen-

tury and the South-Western Ltd. This carpet is buff colored with a bright red border and is six feet wide and more than 100 feet long.

The Pennsylvania railway has no fewer than 31 rugs or pieces of carpet which it puts down for five regular trains and for celebrities coming and going.

This co. employs a colored attendant exclusively to look after its rugs. He hustles his floor coverings from platform to platform for the five trains, carrying them around on an electric truck and up and down elevators. His only job is to move the rugs and to clean them each night.

When the Yankee Clipper, star train of the New York, Newhaven and Hartford Co., was first scheduled, a jade green carpet was provided for regular use on the platform from which the train started. That color was selected to tone with the fittings of the train itself.

## Mice Plague Hastens Wheat Deliveries from Mallee No Fear of Inferior Flour, Despite Bogey

THE mice plague has been hastening wheat shipments during the past few weeks; railwaymen have been rushing the grain to the seaboard from station stacks in the affected districts—that area bounded roughly by Ultima, Hopetoun, Minyip and Korong Vale.

AS a result of this activity, the quantity of wheat railed this season has been considerably greater than in the corresponding period of last year.

On March 21, this year, more than 8,500,000 bags had been transported to the seaboard and only slightly more than 4,000,000 bags were still stacked at country stations. On March 21, last year, the corresponding figures were approximately 7,500,000 and 7,300,000 bags.

Much of the grain now being transported would normally have remained in stacks at country stations until required for shipment abroad, and with its earlier delivery, the stacks at Williamstown and Geelong have grown considerably. The respective figures were 1,015,564 bags at Williamstown

and 1,262,271 bags at Geelong on March 21; last year's figures were 414,142 bags at Williamstown and 496,962 bags at Geelong.

The principal damage caused by the mice is the destruction of the bags which allows the wheat to flow and causes the collapse of the stacks. Additional costs are thereby entailed for new bags and also for rebagging the wheat. The question of inferior flour should not be regarded seriously as damaged or dirty wheat has no place in the manufacture of flour. Modern flour mills are so equipped that all damaged or inferior grain is automatically rejected during the milling operations.

Referring to the trouble with the mice, the manager of the Victorian Wheatgrowers' Corporation (Mr. C. Judd) explained recently that the most effective method of dealing with the trouble was to remove the wheat rapidly from the affected area, and he expressed the appreciation of his organisation of the excellent manner in which railwaymen were assisting in this regard.

## The Month's Topics

### Causes of Rail Deficits

AUSTRALIAN railway deficits, estimated to have aggregated 81 millions since 1915, are attributed by the Federal Transport Conference in its recent report mainly to—

*The prevailing depression ;  
Motor transport ;  
Over-capitalisation — through failure to provide adequate depreciation and by construction of lines not economically justified ;  
Multiplicity of authorities controlling working conditions.*

(The Commonwealth Railways representatives asserted that the lack of a uniform gauge was a further cause).

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### Co-ordination versus Waste

ILLOGICAL and suicidal competition in each section, together with the "pull" by vested interests, must be replaced by logical and sound co-operation and rationalisation," said the chairman of the conference (Mr. A. E. Heath).

Unrestricted competitive motor transport, conducted under unfair conditions, must conform to the principle most advantageous to the national interests. A satisfactory form of board of control would probably be one with an independent chairman and four members, one each from the railways, road construction authorities, motor interests and general public. It should have full power to make and enforce its own decision.

*It was disclosed that the adverse effect of motor transport upon railway revenue for this financial year is estimated to be: Vic., £1,500,000; N.S. Wales, £1,266,000; W.A., £350,000; Queensland, £200,000; S.A., £200,000.*

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### Evils of Over-Capitalisation

EMPHASIS was laid on the fact that in none of the Australian railway systems was adequate provision being made for depreciation: in some cases, no provision at all was being made. The result was that while the property had been losing value, year by year, in earning revenue, the capital account had not been correspondingly reduced, and interest continued to be paid on a huge sum which was no longer represented by useful assets.

*A rough estimate would lead to the conclusion that the present over-capitalisation of Australian railways was between 90 and 100 million pounds.*

## New Type of Level Crossing Warning Adopted in Victoria

MOORABBIN-road crossing, near Mentone, is the first Victorian crossing to be equipped with the new type of level crossing warning recently adopted as standard by the Australian and New Zealand railways. A second crossing, near Bungaree, will be similarly equipped in the near future.

THE new signal comprises two hooded red lamps, somewhat similar in appearance to the street traffic signals at city intersections, mounted side by side on a white mast surmounted by the usual white cross.

THE lights flash alternately and a bell rings to warn road-users as a train approaches the crossing, and simultaneously a white light is displayed to the train-driver.

THE flashing light signal will be provided in future instead of the wig-wag type now in use in Victoria. The wig-wag signals now installed, however, will not be removed.

The warning indications of the wig-wag signal are a swinging red disc by day and a swinging red light by night, each accompanied by a warning bell. The flashing lights of the new type resemble the motion of a swinging light, as shown at night by the wig-wags, so that no confusion should result from the change.

Warning signals have now been erected at 30 level crossings in Victoria. The first wig-wag signal was installed at the Amess-street crossing, North Carlton, on August 22, 1923. This crossing, in the heart of the electrified area, was selected because the density of traffic made it specially dangerous. Certain other crossings which were regarded as specially dangerous have been similarly equipped.

An important feature of the flashing light signal is that the moving parts of the wig-wag type are dispensed with, thus adding to its reliability and reducing the costs of maintenance. The former type, also, displays a much more effective warning indication at night time when it is most needed.

Both the wig-wag and the flashing light signals are in use in the United States of America, the former being mostly used in the west. A "stop"

indication is added to some flashing light signals, while, at others, the usual red and green "stop" and "go" traffic signals are installed.

The most commonly used warning signal on the Australian railways has been the wig-wag type, but this has now been superseded.

Queensland railways installed the "Pearson" type of signal at some crossings. This device consists of two arms pivoted at the centre and with lights at each end and, as a train is approaching, the arms are revolved in opposite directions by an electric motor with a suitable chain of gears. This is a New Zealand invention, but the New Zealand railways found the flashing light type to be superior and adopted it as standard some time ago.

Prior to the installation of wig-wag signals, warning bells were provided at a few level crossings in the south-western and north-eastern districts, but they have since been replaced. These bells were satisfactory when horse-drawn vehicles were in use, but have proved useless for motor vehicles where the noise of the engine frequently drowned the ringing of the bell.

The flashing light signal, the wig-wag, and the warning bell are operated by means of track circuit or track instruments so arranged that a warning will be given for a period of about 20 seconds in advance of the arrival of the fastest train.

### Will Hume Weir Creep Higher ?

IN the *News-Letter* last month, reference was made to the opening of the 8½-mile Sandy Creek deviation of the Tallangatta railway. This section of the line was rebuilt on a higher level because the waters of the Hume reservoir would eventually submerge the old track.

Should it be decided, later, to improve a still greater volume of water, further sections of the existing Tallangatta line will have to be abandoned.

A second deviation of about 26 chains has already been surveyed near Ebdon station and other sections between Huon and Tallangatta have been partly surveyed. This last survey will not be completed until a final decision is reached regarding the ultimate high-water level of the reservoir.

### Railway Help for Wool Week

"Wool Week" will be held between April 18 and 23.

TO initiate a "use more wool" campaign, a strong organisation has been formed with representatives of graziers', woolbrokers' and woollen manufacturers' associations, the Master Drapers' Association and the Railways Department.

Shop window displays, a mannequin parade, lectures and broadcast talks will be features of the campaign, and a special poster will be displayed at 500 railway station poster-boards.

It is hoped that, by inducing the public to buy wool and woollen goods freely during the currency of the campaign and afterwards, "Wool Week" will help to usher in better days for Australia's greatest industry.

# Tackling Problem of Co-ordination

## Victoria Lags Behind Other Countries

IN a recent issue of the "News Letter" it was pointed out that while Victoria still lagged behind, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand had all introduced legislation to regulate transport services and to protect the community against wasteful duplication.

A SURVEY of overseas countries discloses that similar action has been wisely taken by the governments of Great Britain, Germany, Austria, South Africa, and by the majority of the States of the U.S.A.

In Great Britain, before a licence is granted for the operation of a road passenger service, inquiries are made as to the suitability of the proposed route, the extent to which the needs of such route are already met, the needs of the area as a whole, and the co-ordination of all forms of passenger transport generally in the district. Consideration is at present being given to the question of regulating all goods services in the same

operator is refused a licence.

Persons or firms using motor vehicles for the conveyance of their own employees and products; hotels and sanatoria operating their own bus services; and carriers whose activities are confined to the collection and delivery of goods before and after conveyance by rail, are exempted from the necessity for licensing.

### South Africa's Policy

There are proclaimed areas and routes in South Africa where the unauthorised operation for reward by vehicles carrying passengers or goods is prohibited. Before a licence is granted, inquiries are made to determine whether the requirements of the district are or can be met by other transport facilities, whether the proposed service will adversely affect or assist any other transportation facilities, and whether the existing and the proposed services can be co-ordinated in a manner which is economically sound and advantageous to the public.

The problem of road competition in the United States of America has been tackled by means of local legislation and, in some States, strict regulation of road operators is enforced while, in others, heavy taxation on a ton-mile

### DRIVER'S RACE WITH DEATH

CUTTING loose from a goods train, P. N. Hallman, a Baltimore and Ohio engine-driver (U.S.A.), raced his locomotive at top speed to the nearest station in a futile effort to save the life of his fireman, H. Haas, who was injured when the train passed beneath an overhead track while he was climbing on the tender.

Haas was rushed to a hospital, where an operation on his skull was ineffectual.

basis, amounting to as much as £350 per vehicle per annum, is imposed.

But local legislation has failed to solve the problem and, in the absence of action by the Federal Government, the United States railways were last year obliged to increase their rates on all freight traffic, with the exception of cotton and a few agricultural commodities, by amounts calculated to yield 125 million dollars additional revenue in a year.

In New Zealand, passenger motor vehicles capable of carrying eight or more passengers and goods motor vehicles used for hire must be licensed. Before granting a licence, regard is paid to the extent to which the proposed service is necessary or desirable in the public interest and to the needs of the district as a whole. Where no services exist and provided the licensing authority is satisfied that a proposed service will not unfairly compete with any other services, the railways board and local authorities are given preference over private applicants for licences.

The New Zealand licensing authority is also empowered to fix fares and timetables for passenger services and freight rates for goods services.

Victoria is still waiting for some such form of legislative action, the muddle and the waste of existing conditions increasing with each week of further delay.

To ensure that the charges by road and by road shall be equal, the charges made by road hauliers must conform to a scale of minimum rates laid down by the German Minister of Transport.

In Austria, convincing evidence must be presented to show that there is a public need for new road services where licences are granted for either passenger or freight vehicles. If the railways or postal authorities prefer to operate the new service, the private

## That South Manchurian Railway

SINO-JAPANESE hostilities having focussed world attention on the South Manchurian railway, Victorian railwaymen may be interested in this statistical comparison of the

ramifications of that railroad and of our own system.

Particulars shown are for the year 1929-30:

	South Manchuria	Victoria
Route miles ... ..	690.8	4712.72
Passengers carried ... ..	10,410,579	7,547,240 country 149,571,831 suburban
Passenger revenue ... ..	£1,579,764	£2,125,528 country £2,704,370 suburban
Average per passenger ... ..	3 0.48d.	5.7.59 country 4.34d. suburban
Goods hauled—tons ... ..	2,046,182	7,513,606
Goods revenue ... ..	£10,108,947	£5,599,182
Average per ton ... ..	98 9.6d.	14.10.85d.
Average haul per ton—miles ... ..	211.7	98.17
Average miles per passenger ... ..	64.9	36.30 country 6.20 suburban
Ratio of expenditure to receipts including interest and depreciation ... ..	38.6%	75.95%
Staff engaged ... ..	35,612	24,742
Average number of employes per route mile of railway ... ..	50.1	5.25

The principal commodities moved by the South Manchurian Railways were wheat, soybean cakes, and coal.

### Nine Specials for Bridge Opening

ON Thursday, March 17, seven express trains carried the greatest number of passengers that ever left Melbourne for Sydney on one day—approximately 2,800.

Five specials were run in addition to the two usual expresses.

ON the previous day the vanguard of the exodus has been accommodated in six expresses.

The Harbor Bridge opening accordingly helped to fill 13 trains from Spencer-street in two days.

Big crowds saw all the trains depart and thousands of platform tickets were sold.

### Two Governors

The Sydney Limited on the 17th hauled two vice-regal cars, both the Governor of South Australia (Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven) and the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria (Sir William Irvine) being bound for Sydney.

# Personal Postscript

## Mr. Clapp's New Position

MR. HAROLD W. CLAPP, Chairman of Commissioners, was recently elected president of the Old Melbourne Society by the Council of that body for the ensuing year. He will be installed in his new office on May 12. Mr. Clapp was a student at Melbourne Grammar School in 1885-1886. —S.

## Transportation Retirements

TRANSPORTATION branch men who will begin to take an interest in superannuation payments this month include Assistant Stationmaster C. Manley of Glenferrie, who completes 42 years of service on April 2; Clerk W. McMahon of Flinders-street, 43 years on April 3; Stationmaster L. Malcolm of Cranbourne, 44 years on April 8; Goods Guard A. Gasperino of Benalla, 43 years on April 12; Conductor F. A. Thane of Spencer-street, 45 years on April 22; Goods Guard J. Landers of Donald, 43 years on April 25; and Parcels Porter D. McKay of Flinders-street, 44 years on April 27. —O.N.

## Block

A WALLET of notes was the farewell gift of his metropolitan railway friends to Block and Signal Inspector Ted Anderson, whose recent retirement terminated a 44-year railway career. Mr. Tom Sullivan, assistant to the metro. supt., made the presentation and valedictory remarks were delivered by Block and Signal Inspector David Beddoe and Duncan Considine, the latter recalling that the inspector had taught him the rudiments of safeworking when he started as a block-boy at Essendon. Ted Anderson started as a porter at North Fitzroy and served as Signalman at Essendon, Princes-bridge and Flinders-street "A" box before securing his inspectorship. —H.E.C.

## April Birthdays

DRIVER A. PEVITT of Benalla, Stationmaster J. J. Bradford of Derrinalum, and Cleaner A. McMillan of Reservoir, on the first; Frank Coombes of the Live Stock and Bookstalls Manager E. J. Letcher, on the second; Edward Rosman of the Way and Works and Frank Adams of the Secretary's office, on the third; Shunter E. Pitcher of Geelong and Works Foreman A. S. Guilfoyle of Dimboola, on the fourth; Manager S. H. Evans of Newport signal shops and Yard Porter J. F. Coffey of Woodend, on the sixth; Fares Clerk J. H. Reilly and Loco. Running Officer W. E. Maynard of Benalla, on the eighth; Pym Goode of Room 10, on the ninth; Chief Mechanical Engineer N. C. Harris, on the 10th; Train Lighting Inspector W. A. Chipper and Driver H. C. Madden of Mornington, on the 11th; Train Examiner A. J. Cole of Korumburra, on the 12th; Driver T. Pearce of Geelong, on the 14th; Electric Train Driver John Gault of Jolimont, Inspector of Ironwork W. Watson of Spencer-street and Guard R. Roberts of Korumburra, on the 15th; Fitter's Assistant J. Thyne of

Bendigo loco., on the 16th; Fitter-in-Charge W. A. O'Shea of Wodonga, Stores Chief Clerk G. Farrelly, Depot Foreman B. P. Cock of Sevmour and Clerk R. Stephens of the Transportation staff office, on the 18th; Yard Foreman R. Long of Newport, Leading Porter G. L. Tolliday of Warragul, Train Examiner

## Naming V.R. Stations.

No. 15: MELBOURNE

FLINDERS-STREET takes its name from the street named in 1837 by Sir Richard Bourke in 1837 after Captain Matthew Flinders, R.N.

Princes-bridge takes its name from a stone bridge over the Yarra which was opened for traffic in 1850 and named in honor of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII.

Spencer-street takes its name from the street named by Governor Sir Richard Bourke, in 1837, after Earl Spencer, previously Lord Althorp.

G. E. Harris of Ballarat and Storeman E. J. Cooper of Traralgon, on the 19th; Sales Officer H. D. Agg, on the 20th; Stationmaster G. Johnson of Flinders-street, Assistant Chief Storekeeper W. D. Morgan and Clerk W. J. Thompson of Traralgon, on the 21st; Acting Yard Supervisor G. Calder of Newport Goods, on the 22nd; Cleaner G. Tweddle of State Mine and Shunter W. McCrorey of Melbourne Yard, on the 23rd; Jack Ramsay of the dining car depot, Passenger Guard J. S. Long of Wodonga and Train Examiner J. P. Desmond of North Melbourne workshops, on the 25th; Commissioner W. M. Shannon and Asst. Chief Engineer for Construction F. W. Box, on the 27th; Signals Engineer S. P. Jones and Leader F. Bacon of Geelong, on the 28th; and Leading Shunter G. W. Franklin of Maryborough, on the 29th. —A.L.

## Way and Works Veterans

BENDIGO Way and Works staff lost two veteran railroaders when Roadmaster E. Collins and Road Foreman J. Chamberlain retired recently. Mr. Collins had 43 years of railway service to his credit and his colleague 41 1/2 years. —R.G.

## Ticket-Snipper

HE would be a brave man who would attempt to calculate the number of tickets which Ticket Collector F. Gallagher snipped at the Flinders-street barriers during his just-completed career. Most of his 45 years of service was spent at the world's busiest passenger station, the remainder being put in at St. Kilda. He retired last month. —H.E.C.

## Oil Tank "Don'ts"

BEYOND an occasional minor derailment, Victorian railway experience with oil tank wagons has been exceptionally satisfactory from the safety point of view. Experience overseas, however, reveals that grave results may follow even a momentary lack of care when handling this class of rolling stock.

THE dangers from wreck or serious derailment of tank cars when the contents of the tank escape are obvious, and are widely recognised by railwaymen handling the trains, but less obvious causes have had equally disastrous results.

Instances have been reported from the United States of fires being caused when tank cars with petrol dripping from the discharge pipes have been passing over ash pits.

Again, fuel oil has been allowed to evaporate through failure by the people to place the dome cover properly in position on the truck. The resulting explosive vapor ignites very easily and is incredibly destructive.

Similar leakage troubles have resulted from excessive bumping of tank cars during shunting operations.

Another tank fire, which involved both loss of life and considerable material destruction, was caused by the shunting of a wagon down on to a tank car which had been left standing in an oil depot siding with the discharge pipes still connected. The pipes were broken apart and the fuel

## Railway for Nothing

TOY railways are common gifts at Christmas, but the Bavarian State has gone one better by offering a railway line 15 miles long, complete with stations and rolling stock, and in full running order, to whomsoever is willing to take it over.

Hitherto it has been run by the forestry administration, who could not make it pay, but the State does not wish it to be closed down, as it is largely used by summer holiday makers and winter sports devotees.

oil flowed freely over the track.

Victorian railway regulations, designed to afford every protection, may appear to some railwaymen to be too rigid, but the knowledge that disastrous fires do occur emphasises the necessity for continued care.

Two "don'ts" that are well worth remembering are:—  
Don't bump a tank car you know nothing about; and  
Don't think a smell of petrol around a tank car means nothing.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to railwaymen in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Public Board, Head Office.

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# The V.R. News Letter

May, 1932

Issue No. 20

## Poison Gas Used in Railway Truck

**L**AST month, for the first time in the history of the Victorian railways, poison gas was used to dispose of unauthorised travellers hidden in a goods truck.

The truck was run into a siding and the poison gas was pumped into the vehicle from the four corners simultaneously. When the tarpaulin was removed, 20 minutes later, most of the inmates were dead.

**T**HE few travellers who escaped were dazed and terrified and were either killed by dogs or chased into the sea.

All told, the corpses in the truck numbered 5,800. They were, of course, mice, the truck having contained a consignment of wheat from the micedestinated area at Culgoa.

The action was taken at Williamstown Pier by the Victorian Wheatgrowers' Corporation, and the Railways Department was not concerned officially in the experiment. The preparation used was a powder known as cyanogas, which radiates poison gas on exposure to the air.

The gas has since been used on other trucks which were discovered to be badly infested on arrival at the pier. The principal object of destroying the rodents in this way is to prevent their escaping and attacking the wheat stacks near the pier.

## Victorian Railways Now "On the Air"

**V**ICTORIAN Railway "sponsored sessions" are now part of the regular programme of some of the city and country wireless broadcasting stations. Departmental publicity—advertisements of freight and other bargains and concessions and railway propaganda generally—is now on the air somewhere in Victoria on every night in the week.

Railwaymen should induce their friends to listen-in to these sponsored minutes sessions and thus help to increase the value of this new form of departmental publicity.

### Where and When

Times and stations:  
MELBOURNE (Melbourne): Tuesdays (9.15 p.m.) and Saturdays (8.45 p.m.).  
HAMILTON (Hamilton): Mondays and Thursdays, 8 and 9 p.m.  
BENDIGO (Bendigo): Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 and 9 p.m.  
WANGARATTA (Wangaratta): Twice a week (the nights at 8 p.m.).  
TRAFALGAR (Trafalgar): Twice a week (the nights at 8 p.m.).

## Foggy Days Are Steadily Increasing Influence on Railway Working Costs

**A**S railwaymen are very directly concerned in the incidence of fogs, the news that the average number of fogs recorded in Melbourne is slowly but surely increasing will doubtless prove of interest.

Last year, 36 fogs were recorded by the Weather Bureau, compared with 15 for 1930, 10 for 1929, and 29 for 1928; but despite these occasional inconsistencies the average number has steadily climbed out of the 'teens.

**T**HE fog season has started early this year, adversely affecting railway timekeeping and embarrassing the endeavors of the administration to eliminate unnecessary working costs.

Last year's fog bill was approximately £2,200, representing £2,100 for labor and £100 for supplies, this latter figure including both detonators and refreshments for fog signalmen. The additional expense because of a general fog ranges up to £400 and even more, but, fortunately, they are not frequent. Special arrangements, however, are necessary when a fog settles thickly over portion of the system.

Fortunately, past experience has shown that it is not necessary to call on fog-men for all fogs recorded by the Weather Bureau. For instance, there were five general fogs and five partial fogs for which fog signalmen were required last year, but the number of foggy days recorded in Melbourne by the Bureau was 36.

Nineteen-thirty was a comparatively inexpensive year so far as fogs were concerned, the total expenditure being a little less than £800. Only 15 fogs

were recorded by the Weather Bureau during that year.

An average of 20 fogs a year has been experienced in Melbourne since records were begun in 1857. The greatest number in any one year was 48 (in 1925) and the smallest number was 5. The average for the 52 years ended 1908, was 16.6 fogs a year; by 1918, the average had increased to 18 a year, remaining at that point until 1923, when it reached 19. The average of 20 was reached in 1929. Incidentally, the average distribution of fogs throughout the year is now as follows:—

Spring	...	1
Summer	...	1
Autumn	...	6
Winter	...	12

Of recent years, the fogs recorded in Melbourne have been almost consistently in excess of the 76-year average of 20 a year. The average since 1918 is 28 fogs a year, and as there have already been a few foggy mornings this year, it seems evident that 1932 will help to raise the average another point, and to increase railway working costs correspondingly.

## Talkies as Railway Propaganda

**R**AILWAY activities have recently attracted the attention of local moving picture cos., and sound films featuring the Sydney Limited in running and the new idea of long welded rails lately introduced on the St. Kilda line are now being screened at theatres throughout the State.

**A** CAMERA-MAN was permitted to travel in the cab of the locomotive on the Sydney Limited from Seymour to Melbourne and was able to make excellent pictures of the train in running. Additional interest was given to the film by shots of the train in motion taken from an aeroplane specially hired by the film co. A visit was also made to the North Melbourne loco. depot where, from an ashpit, an impressive action picture of the Pacific engine approaching and passing right over the top of the camera was secured.

This film, which has had appropriate railway noises synchronised with the picture, has been incorporated in

the *Herald* News-Reel.

The second picture, made by the Fox News Service, comprises views of the actual work of welding rails into 200-ft. lengths by the Thermit process, as described in the December issue of the *News-Letter*, and of the treated rails being placed in the track. The resulting reduction in the volume of noise made by the train when running over the new track is clearly demonstrated by a sound picture taken from the van of a St. Kilda train.

The pictorial portion of the film was taken through the leading window of the train over the motorman's shoulder, the sound equipment being installed on the floor of the van.

The former picture should serve as excellent gratuitous "travel by train" propaganda, while the latter will demonstrate to the public that, in spite of depressed conditions, action to improve the comfort of railway travel—and at the same time to reduce maintenance costs—is still being taken.

## The Month's Topic

### Taxes and Rail Deficits

*We must have railways.*

*We must patronise those railways if they are to pay their way.*

*We must meet in taxation the deficits which those railways incur in the absence of our patronage.*

THOSE are the three main planks of the fighting platform of the strictly non-political National Railway Defence "party," to which all railwaymen, by both inclination and purely selfish interest, belong. And those are the three elementary arguments which railwaymen should be prepared to expound when discussion with non-railway friends turns in the direction of taxation—a not uncommon topic these days.

\* \* \*

*For the railways are still indispensable:* primary production would be impossible without them.

*They are efficiently operated by a skilled team of railwaymen:* the financial results of the Victorian railways even in their worst year—last year—compare more than favorably with all other State railways in Australia and with leading overseas railways.

*Their operating costs have been cut 35 per cent. in the past two years;* but interest charges of £10,000 a day remain an uncontrollable burden, and there is a limit to cuts in working costs if essential services are to be maintained.

RAILWAY deficits are due to insufficient patronage by the citizen shareholders of the railway business.

Heavy taxation is due to railway deficits: last year's deficit, for instance, will take at least £10 on the average out of the pockets of each individual taxpayer.

EVERY railwayman will have the opportunity at some time or other of putting this case for the national undertaking which provides him with a livelihood. He should never let that opportunity pass . . .

Emphasise our "party's" common-sense slogan: *Increased railway patronage means decreased taxation.*

### Revenue Down £480,000

FROM the beginning of the financial year until April 14, Victorian railway revenue had totalled approximately £7,350,000, or some £480,000 less than the income for the corresponding period of last financial year.

Goods and live stock receipts aggregated £3,698,379, which was an increase of £11,918; but passenger returns fell away by no less than £361,441 to £2,828,832.

## Lubricants Reduce Rail Wear on Curves

ALTHOUGH locomotive, carriage and truck wheels are grinding their way around curved sections of rail track as heavily and as purposefully as ever, rail renewals at those points have greatly decreased following the adoption and extension of ingenious lubricating methods.

Oil is very successfully combating the heavy wear of the wheel flange on the curved steel rail.

THE excessive wear which occurs between the flanges of the wheels and the head of the steel rails when a train is rounding a curve can be reduced by either of two methods: Rails made of steel more durable than that used in the manufacture of the wheels can be laid, or lubricants can be applied.

If the first method were adopted, the heavy pressure of the grinding wheels would merely polish the surface of the rail. But heavy steel rails cost too much money.

Simplicity and cheapness are the virtues of the second method, which is finding increased application in this State. Oil reduces the friction between the steel of the rail and the steel of the flange, being distributed either by devices fitted to the rails or to the locomotives.

The rail devices have been installed at three locations—on the viaduct between Flinders-street and Spencer-street, between Hawksburn and South Yarra and between Jolimont and West Richmond. They take the shape of a 10-ft. steel trough filled with oiled worsted, through which the wheel flange passes and from which it col-

lects sufficient lubricant to ease and speed its passage around the vast relieved curve.

The viaduct devices are veterans, being now some five years old. They have proved very effective not only in reducing the wear on the rails, but also in eliminating the squealing of the tortured steel which formerly serenaded the electric trains as they rounded the viaduct curves.

The lubricating devices which are attached to locomotives have been introduced on branch lines in mountainous districts (such as the Tallangatta-Cudgewa section), where the curves are numerous, but the service so infrequent that it would not be economical to install devices on the rails. The locomotive device oil-coats the flanges as the train proceeds, and so achieves the same protective result as the rail device. Wear on the steel flanges of the rolling stock wheels and on the steel rails of the track is being alike minimised.

The introduction of these devices and extension of their use has particular value at the present time, where every avenue is being explored to effect greater economy in costs and greater efficiency in service.

### Motor Interests Begin to See the Light

THERE has been no more diverting development in the transport controversy than the recent outcry by the Commercial Motor Users' Association against the competition to which motor 'buses are subjected in Brunswick by horse-cabs.

THE humor of the position becomes literally Gilbertian when the Association argues that the motor 'buses are being placed at a disadvantage owing to the taxes and maintenance costs which they are compelled to pay and which the horse-drawn cabs escape, and when it further complains that the cabs are cutting prices.

For it is precisely those arguments which the Motor Users' Association ridicules and describes as the last refuge of obsolescence and inefficiency when the Railways Department advances them as part of its agitation for wise and effective co-ordination of all transport services.

Who knows but that the motor interests will be converted completely to the railway viewpoint if the Motor Users' Association continues to read departmental propaganda.

### He Didn't Want Bail

PROCEEDINGS at a recent court case in Sydney showed that it sometimes pays a prisoner to be refused bail.

The defendant had been remanded to Victoria and bail had been fixed at £150. To the surprise of the magistrate, the defendant then asked that he be not granted bail. His subsequent explanation—and a very convincing one—was that he would have to pay his own railway fare to Melbourne if he were on bail, whereas he would travel free if in custody.

The magistrate dryly acceded to the request.

### Japan Buys Our Scrap

MAYBE it is a reflection of unsettled conditions in Manchuria where Japan has been accustomed to obtain much of the iron required by her industries, but, whatever the reason, recent purchases from the Victorian railways of scrap iron and steel by Japanese buyers have been particularly welcome.

The local market has been depressed but sales for export have absorbed 5,000 tons or so of scrap during the last few months.

# Vic. Railways Wage War on Waste

ALL over the world in the past few years there has been a steady advance in the war against waste, in the efforts to use the scrap from one job as the raw material for another—in short, to see that 100 per cent. service is obtained from every article in its original form, and that the material of which it is made is then converted into some new form for further use. As the slackening of industrial production has emphasised the necessity for such works if manufactories are to meet operating expenses, the development of reclamation methods has been rapid.

THE Victorian railways have been keenly interested in reclamation work and, as this article shows, are constantly expanding the scope of this portion of their activities.

MOST railwaymen know that there is at Spotswood a reclamation depot to which all scrap is despatched any material or equipment for which they have no other use either because of breakages, obsolescence, wear or otherwise. The review of a few of the practices introduced during the past year or so is a tribute to the keenness of the reclamation staff and indicates the facilities offered for reclamation in the railway field. The amount of scrap for individual items may not seem very impressive when compared with the annual expenditure on stores and materials, but it is the aggregate of the small items that determines the efficiency of the system.

Special attention is given to reclamation of bearing metal. The old metal is removed from the bearings of cars, trucks and tenders and forwarded from locomotive depots and workshops. Other suitable scrap such as lead sheathing from roofs of buildings and condemned lead-covered cables are removed separately and run off as ingots. Samples are analysed by the chemists at the reclamation laboratory, who set out what quantities of the various metals must be added together for smelting back to standard bearing metal. At the present time about 1 ton of metal is processed weekly.

## Gold for Dross

Scrap whitemental from engine bearings is smelted down in a gas furnace where the heat can be regulated to obtain the quality of the whitemental. Over-run metal and skimmings from the top of the pots—is also melted and smelted. When received it contains ashes and other waste matter, and is worth about £15 per ton. From about eight tons of dross, three tons of good metal—a mixture of several kinds—is obtained and is sold for approximately £65 per ton.

Water service materials released from, say, a 4-in. service is replaced by a 6-in. service, illustrate further the value of reclamation work. On arrival at the depot, unbroken pipes are cleaned and examined closely to select only those free from cracks or holes, and those with broken spigots are repaired up. They are then tested up to regulation water pressure, tarred, and returned to stock. The valves are dismantled and the various parts, where reclaimable, are made good, tested, and returned to stock. Previously, many of the old pipes and fittings were

broken up and used as scrap, the price then obtained for scrap iron being about £4 per ton.

Incinerators used at railway stations are made from old 40-gallon oil drums. Everything in the making of the incinerators—the shell, the grate, the rod for discharging the ashes, the cover and its handle—comes from the scrap heap. The scrap materials are worth approximately 3/- as scrap; the completed incinerators are taken into stock at 22/6 each, which includes all labor charges; and, besides meeting departmental requirements, sales are made to state schools and other outside buyers.

One-fire stoves of the old type, released from departmental residences because of cracks or other defects, are made serviceable again by a combined process of judicious selection and reclamation. Sufficient parts can frequently be obtained from, say, half-a-dozen stoves, to make three serviceable ones.

In the Spotswood workshops, the same close attention is given to using up everything that can possibly be converted. Obsolete and damaged furniture which was previously sold is now dismantled and all serviceable timber salvaged for re-use. Beams removed from bridges are collected and the serviceable sections are retained.

The workshops also work in close co-operation with the permanent way section of the reclamation depot. The treatment of crossings affords a good example. Frequently, the prevailing direction of traffic is such that one wing of a crossing will become well worn while the other is practically as good as new. All condemned crossings received at the reclamation depot are dismantled and, by selecting the serviceable parts, it has frequently been found possible to obtain one good crossing from three condemned crossings. The parts are cleaned, rebolted, and lined up so as to make them entirely safe for vehicles to pass over them without fear of derailment.

The assembled crossing is then sent to the workshop and any worn parts of the rails are built up by welding. To eliminate the heavy cost of installing new blocks in the crossings to prevent any vertical movement of the nose, a plate is welded right across the crossing directly beneath this point. In consequence, sound and serviceable crossings are made available at a fraction of the cost of providing new crossings, or of reclaiming the crossings under

# Mr. Clapp on National Advertising

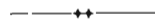
REFERRING to the work of the Australian National Travel Association in a recent article in the Melbourne press, Mr. Harold W. Clapp, writing as chairman of the Board of Control, said that an advertising structure had been built up overseas which was gaining publicity for Australia worth infinitely more than the money expended.

THE Association was also working in close co-operation with overseas shipping cos., which had not only improved their fleets by the introduction of new ships, but had also remodelled the accommodation on many of their liners to prepare for the development of lower-priced mass travel such as had been inaugurated with remarkable success by the shipping lines operating across the Atlantic.

"Cruise ships are now turning their bows towards Australia," said Mr. Clapp. "Special low-priced return tickets from Great Britain are becoming increasingly popular.

"But our national advertising must be continuous and carefully planned. Spasmodic effort by State groups is useless. Our Association has built up a world-wide publicity structure, but the financial support of the Australian people is essential to maintain it."

And increased tourist traffic means, of course, increased railway travel.



# Bargain Football Fares

UNPRECEDENTED cuts have been made in the fares by country football specials this season.

In previous seasons, a reduction of 33½ per cent. was allowed, but this year the cut will range from 60 per cent. to even 80 per cent. for longer distances. A limit charge of 8s., second return, has been fixed, and this will not be exceeded no matter how far the football follower travels.

Country station staffs should ensure the widest possible local publicity for these bargain fares.

the old system.

Factors which have contributed to this increasing interest in reclamation are technical progress, the fact that staff and equipment which previously were busily engaged attending to new works can now be released for reclamation work, and also the growing appreciation of the practical advantages which result from securing from all material the utmost possible service.

Incidentally, these new reclamation practices are having a two-fold effect. In the first place, they are reducing the operating costs and secondly they are enabling more railwaymen to be employed profitably than would have been possible under the old conditions.

# Personal Postscript

## World's Busiest Stationmaster

THE head man at the world's busiest station is about to retire. Forty-six years ago, Francis Frederick Bobsein started work at Moonee Ponds station as a porter; on May 27, as Stationmaster at Flinders-street, he attains his 65th birthday and quits the service. He was appointed clerk less than three years after joining the service and had booking experience at Sandringham and at Oakleigh, where he took over from the late E. B. Jones who became Commissioner. Then the grades of a.s.m., s.m. and r.s.m. took him all over the State, some of his more important stations being Bairnsdale, Warragul, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Benalla, Horsham and Camperdown. At one time, he was chief clerk of the Warrnambool goods; at another he represented the Commissioners on the station classification committee; and on still other occasions he spent short periods at Spencer-street station. A couple of years as traffic inspector under the metropolitan superintendent and four years as examining officer for s.m.'s. and a.s.m.'s., rounded out a career that culminated with his appointment to Flinders-street as stationmaster in 1924. —S.C.W.

## Staff Officer Retires

ON the eve of his retirement last month, Charles Hefley of the Rolling Stock staff office was presented with a wireless set as a parting gift from his colleagues. He had been a railwayman since 1888, when he joined the Transportation branch as a clerk, transferring to the Rolling Stock branch in 1904. For many years past he had been a well-known member of the staff office. —H.

## Ted Hatt Goes

FLINDERS-STREET "A" box has lost its signalman-in-charge, Ted Hatt, straight-goer and good fellow, having called it a fair thing after 44 years. He was a porter at Castlemaine under Stationmaster Paul Reade, and was soon promoted to signalman at Redesdale Junction, being stationed subsequently at Williamstown, Franklin-street, Castlemaine, Seymour, Traralgon and Box Hill. He was in "A" box for 17 years. —H.E.C.

## May Birthdays

GUARD H. Fisher of Maryborough, on the first; Rolling Stock Accountant W. J. Bustelli, and Guard R. J. James of Warragul and Lighter-up J. Headland of Benalla, on the second; Discipline Board Chairman H. Clark and Distribution Engineer W. Steiger, on the third; Jack Barrie and Fred Fewster of the Transportation despatch office, on the fourth; Signalman W. W. Ferguson of Richmond, on the sixth; Chairman of Commissioners Harold W. Clapp and Ganger T. Doran of Bendigo, on the seventh; Shunter A. J. Miller of Melbourne yard and Fireman J. H. Bagley of Wodonga, on the eighth; R. Stanstreet of the betterment board, on the ninth; Porter W. P. Byrne of Warrnambool and Leading Shunter R. E. Hayden of Dandenong, on the 10th; Goods Guard F. G. Brown of Donald, on the

11th; Bruce Longfield of the Traffic, on the 12th; Works Foreman R. Syme of Bendigo, Workshops Manager Harry James of Jolimont and Yard Foreman J. O'Dea of Melbourne yard, on the 13th; Driver A. Lambden of Seymour, Works Foreman W. Pullen of Wangaratta, Guard J. S. Reece of Korumburra and Stationmaster J. R. Dempster of Moriac, on the 14th; Guard S. Craig of Tallangatta, on the 15th; Driver Charley Jordan of North Melbourne loco., Leading Shunter S. Kent of Ballarat and Passenger Guard J. P. Cape of Wodonga, on the 16th; Special Officer Ern Hawken of the Traffic and Enginemen's Instructor Ted Burnell of North loco., on the 17th; Alex. McDonald of the Secretary's office on the 18th; Works Foreman H. Wilson of Wangaratta, on the 19th; Packer W. R. Checucci of Bendigo, on the 20th; Guard Frank Woodford of Ballarat, on the 21st; Yard Foreman Alex. Robinson of Melbourne yard, J. A. Mactaggart of the Accounts branch and Norman Opie of the Way and Works staff

## Naming V.R. Stations

No. 16: ILLOWA

THIS name is probably a corruption of the native word "Illour," meaning "yesterday." The applicability of this meaning to the locality is a mystery.

office, on the 22nd; Way and Works Shops Manager P. R. Leslie, Driver C. W. Bullock of Bendigo and Signalman J. V. Smith of Melbourne yard, on the 24th; Station Director H. Kidd of Spencer-street, on the 25th; Les. Timewell, secretary to the Commissioners, on the 27th; Yard Foreman Jim Darcy of Bendigo and Way and Works Engineer J. J. Montgomery, on the 28th; Overhead Superintendent G. S. Scott, on the 29th; Assistant Engineer W. J. Uren of the Way and Works, on the 30th; and Driver T. A. Williams of Traralgon on the 31st. —A.L.

## 45 Years—and One Day

FORTY-FIVE years and one day of continuous service as a permanent railwayman was the record of Parlor Car Conductor Fred Thane when he retired on April 22. He joined the service as porter at Spencer-street on April 21, 1887, the day preceding his 20th birthday. A year or so earlier, he had helped with the duplication of the north-east line between Essendon and Kilmore Junction, but left that job to work on a sheep station in the Beveridge district. As porter and ticket checker, he remained at Spencer-street for 20 years before being transferred to Wodonga as conductor on trains running over the tracks which he had helped to build. In 1912, he returned to Spencer-street to take up regular running on the parlor car. Amongst his recollections are a Commissioners' award of £2 for his "alertness" in detecting a ticket-scraper who was subsequently heavily fined,

and the discovery in the parlor car of a cigarette tin containing about £300 worth of pearls and diamond jewellery. The former incident was gratifying recognition of his zeal as a checker. The second he regards as a particularly ludicrous episode, not from the value of the jewellery but because of the unaccountable impulse which prompted him to pick up the tin in an empty car, enabling the valuable property to be restored to its owner and thereby save him from any suspicion which may have been aroused had the tin and its contents been collected and destroyed with rubbish from the car. Pleasant, quietly spoken, scrupulously honest, and eager always to do the fair thing, he was one of the most popular attendants which the parlor car ever had. —"Wee"

## 10 Veterans Depart

THE following 10 well-known Transportation men who will draw railway pay for the last time this month have spent an average of 44 years of their lives in the service:—

Stationmaster Wm. McCarthy of Ascot Vale	44
Clerk J. Hunter of Room 9	45
Pass. Guard R. Allan of Spencer-street	44
Signalman E. Hatt of Melbourne Yard	44
Messenger T. Casey of Spencer-street	44
Asst. Supt. T. H. Sansom of Melbourne yard	44
Goods Checker S. Rankins of Melbourne goods	44
Asst. Stationmaster J. A. Kirwan of Gheringhap	44
Clerk J. H. Neville of Melbourne goods	44
Vanman F. W. Smith of Flinders-street	44

Best wishes for a long and happy retirement life to them all. —A.E.

## Stationmaster and Schoolmaster

STATIONMASTER Ted Hally of Essendon, one of the most popular of the old school of railwaymen, will retire from the service on May 12. He was appointed on August 26, 1889, as clerk, and twenty years later went to Essendon as a.s.m. From 1912 on, he was in service in many parts of the State as r.s.m. and, in 1921, was one of the first instructors for the classes of newly-appointed junior clerks and lad porters. So successful was his teaching that he was given charge of the station accounts and management class at the Institute in February 1923, where he coached many as 500 correspondence and oral students at the one time. Promotion took him away from the V.R.I. during April, 1926, to take charge of Essendon station, where he has been located ever since. He was at one time a union nominee on station classification committee. —K.

## Retired from Cranbourne

STATIONMASTER Lewis Malcolm, who retired from Cranbourne on April 8, has seen service in many parts of Victoria since he joined the railways at Kingston in 1888. He had charge of Kilmore Junction, Bayswater, Gembrook (as T.S.M.), Springhurst, Victoria Town, Werribee and Yarram, before appointment to Cranbourne six years ago. He will be succeeded by Stationmaster T. L. White transferred from Carnegie. —F.

## University Man

MAX ROUT of the Comptroller of Accounts' office received his Bachelor of Commerce degree at the Melbourne University commencement celebrations last month. He has been a railwayman since 1918, and the first commerce student from the railways to complete his degree course as the holder of a Government free place. —C.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to railwaymen in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publication Board, Head Office.

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# The V.R. News Letter

June, 1932

Issue No. 21

## Railwaymen Restore Art Treasures

THOUSANDS of pounds worth of art treasures, which had become so badly stained as to be worthless, were recently restored by Messrs. W. S. Macartney and C. McTaggart, chemists attached to the railway testing laboratory at Newport.

They carried out the work so thoroughly that, in some pictures, unsuspected details in the darker portions became quite clearly defined.

ALL told, 14 paintings were treated. They were the property of the National Gallery of Victoria, and had been loaned to the Western Australian gallery some time ago, but, unfortunately, when packed and crated ready for return to Melbourne, they were caught in a tropical storm. The pictures vary in size up to about 14 feet by 6 feet, and the varnished surfaces were seriously damaged by water stains which took the form of an opaque white film, in some cases obscuring more than half of the picture.

Expert advice was sought for the best means of restoring the pictures, and the difficulty was found in securing

removal of the stains had also freshened up the pictures, and they expressed their appreciation by voting ten guineas as an honorarium to each of the railwaymen.

Among the pictures which were renovated were *A Question of Propriety*, *La Fenestration*, *The Poultry Vendor*, *The Convalescent*, *The Crisis*, and *The Burning of Glencoe*.

Mr. Macartney joined the service as supernumerary chemist in the Way and Works branch in 1909, and Mr. McTaggart as supernumerary laboratory attendant at the end of 1912. They were appointed to the permanent staff two years later and were transferred to the Rolling Stock branch when the laboratory was placed under the control of the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Incidentally, they were both students at the Ballarat School of Mines, and neither had taken any particular interest in art until they experimented with the removal of these stains.

Details of their process remain a close secret.

## Further Reclamation Savings

DEVELOPMENTS in reclamation work were briefly reviewed in last month's *News-Letter*. Two further instances have since been brought under notice, which show how the field of this work is being steadily extended.

CONSIDERABLE quantities of various materials for departmental use are delivered in wooden cases which, until recently, were sold for the best price offered. All case-boards in reasonable condition are now used at the workshops, effecting a welcome saving in the purchases of new timber.

The second instance—inspired, incidentally, by a suggestion—also relates to wooden cases. In the past, dogspikes for relaying were despatched in cases holding 5 cwt. of spikes, and the majority of these cases were too badly damaged to be used a second time.

Dogspikes are now supplied in 1 cwt. lots in bags. The cases were worth a few shillings; the bags cost a few pence each.

And the smaller quantities can readily be handled by one man, which was not possible with the 5 cwt. lots.

### A Lost Locomotive

A GOODS locomotive was standing on a siding, between Dalton and Ulverston (Eng.), with only a fireman aboard, when the latter noticed that the ballast was slipping away from the rails and the ground gradually subsiding. He had hardly jumped from the footplate and got clear when the rails gave way, and the locomotive dived funnel downwards into a large hole caused by a subsidence in some worked-out colliery galleries.

Breakdown gangs were soon on the spot and the tender was ultimately rescued, but the locomotive sank lower and lower, and ultimately disappeared completely into the earth.

Local rumour says that it is now running the Hades and District underground railway.

anybody willing to accept the responsibility of undertaking renovations on such valuable subjects. One expert estimated that the cost of the work would be £155.

At this stage, the assistance of the railways was sought and a request was made by the Trustees of the National Gallery for the services of Messrs. Macartney and McTaggart, who promptly volunteered to undertake the work of determining the nature of the damage and the best means of removing the stains in their own time and without cost to the Gallery.

After a good deal of hard thinking, the two railway chemists evolved a method which, with considerable trepidation, they applied to a few small and unimportant areas. It proved successful and all the pictures were then satisfactorily treated. The Gallery authorities were delighted, particularly as

## V.R. Team for League Premiership

RAILWAY football enthusiasts are invited to consider the following eighteen comprised of railwaymen who are connected with the various clubs in the Melbourne League and to assess their prospects of winning the premiership were such a team competing with the League clubs.

Every League club, except Geelong, is represented.

	Players	Clubs
Backs	L. Gough, Head Office Telephone Exchange	Hawthorn
	W. T. Cubbins, Way and Works, North Melbourne	Footscray
	M. J. Bolger, Stores Branch, North Melbourne	Richmond
Half-backs	W. M. Loventhal, Jolimont Garage	Essendon
	C. R. McKay, Newport Workshops	Footscray
	W. Jackson, North Melbourne Loco.	Melbourne
Centres	J. Kelly, Accounts Branch, Head Office	Carlton
	H. C. Okey, Melbourne Goods	Essendon
Half-forwards	C. Morden, Photography Division	St. Kilda
	G. L. Chapman, Hughesdale	Fitzroy
	A. G. McInnes, Accounts Branch, Head Office	Melbourne
	H. Crapper, Williamstown Pier	Melbourne
Forwards	J. Austin, Albert Park	South Melbourne
	L. J. Ryan, Hawthorn	Hawthorn
	J. T. Richardson, C.M.E.'s Office	Melbourne
Followers	G. E. Llewellyn, Geelong	North Melbourne
	L. Murphy, Jolimont Yard	Collingwood
Rover	J. P. Crowe, North Carlton	Carlton

## The Month's Topic

### Comparison . . . .

**I**N previous issues we have referred briefly to the favorable showing which the Victorian railways make from the point of view of operating efficiency, compared with the railways of Great Britain and the U.S.A.

Figures now available set out fully the financial results of the four big groups of British railways for 1931, and enable a more detailed—and a still more favorable—comparison to be made with Victorian railway results.

The combined earnings of the four big railway groups in Britain were 8'18 per cent. less in 1931 than in 1930, and operating expenditure was reduced by 7'84 per cent., with the result that total net earnings were reduced by 11'52 per cent. Comparable figures for the Victorian railways were 16'53 per cent. reduction in earnings, 19'05 per cent. reduction in working costs and 6'81 per cent. reduction in total net earnings.

**I**N other words, while the British railway earnings fell to a greater degree than the reduction in working costs, the Victorian working costs were reduced considerably more than the drop in revenue, although the percentage drop in Victorian receipts was more than twice as great as in Britain. The imperative need for this drastic cut in Victorian working expenses was evidenced by the record deficit last year.

\* \* \*

**T**HE average return on the capital invested in the British railways was 2'92 per cent. last year; if rates and taxes had not been charged, the return would have been 3'03 per cent. Both these figures are exclusive of the amount represented by stores and materials.

The Victorian railways return last year on the same basis was 3'09 per cent.; including stores and materials it was 3'04 per cent.

**T**HE ratio of working costs to earnings shows that the Victorian railways more than hold their own in comparison with the British system. The Victorian percentage was 77'01 last year, compared with 81'09 for the Great Western, 81'25 for the London, Midland and Scottish, 81'01 for the Southern, and 80'95 for the London and North-Eastern.

In other words, it cost only £77 to earn every £100 in Victoria, compared with £81 in Britain. This comparison, of course, excludes interest charges . . .

**I**NDICATIVE as they are of a gratifying degree of efficiency in the operation of the Victorian railways, these favorable comparisons cannot fail to be both a source of satisfaction to all railwaymen and a spur to even higher achievements.

## Four New Ticket Cabinets Replace 18 Old Models at Spencer-st.

**T**HE suburban booking office at Spencer-street station underwent a transformation on June 1. Four new ticket cabinets, of the American type similar to those introduced at Flinders-street on May 1 last year, replaced the old type cabinets previously in use.

*This change-over brought within easy reach of the booking clerk the multitude of tickets which previously were spread over a distance of some yards, entailing a great deal of unnecessary walking for the clerk and, consequently, slowing down the rate of booking.*

**T**HE office is long and narrow and the old cabinets, ranging in size from four tiers to eight tiers of tubes, represented the peaks and valleys of a mountain range. They accommodated approximately 1000 ticket tubes. The new cabinets—one of 372 tubes and three of 216 tubes each—provide a similar capacity, present a uniform appearance, and concentrate the whole of the tickets in a limited area.

In addition to these advantages, the office was rearranged by the removal of a considerable length of counter and other equipment, and the clerk can now more readily co-ordinate his accountancy work with prompt attention to the requirements of passengers. Formerly, his view of the window when working at the office

table was obscured by the ticket cabinets.

Incidentally, the new cabinets are a distinct departure from the old type. They have a rolling front which, when closed, excludes dust and presents an attractive appearance.

They are deeper than the old type, enabling a full packet of tickets, instead of only portion of a packet, to be inserted in the tube. This also conserves space in the cabinet.

The new cabinets also eliminate the boards fitted over each row of tubes to show the station names and fares. The fares are shown on the front of the tube, which is so designed that the full face of the ticket can be read at a glance by the booking clerk.

At Flinders-street, of course, the introduction of the new cabinets enabled staff adjustments to be made by permitting a full range of suburban tickets to be provided at each window instead of a supply for a limited number of lines as under the old arrangement. As a result, instead of having all the windows open all the time, the traffic during slack periods of the day can frequently be handled from one window.

The modernisation of the Spencer-street office, however, will not permit of staff economies, as the booking is handled by one clerk.

## Interstate Co-operation

**A**PPRECIATION of the helpful co-operation of the Victorian railways was recently expressed by the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner (Mr. G. A. Gahan) when referring to the growing popularity of the new fast goods schedule operating between Victoria and Western Australia.

Delivery of freight is now being effected in Perth eight days after leaving Melbourne. Rates have been reduced also, and the cheaper, faster service is increasing interstate traffic appreciably.

Mr. Gahan emphasises that the development of this valuable traffic has been contributed to in no small measure by the assistance of the Victorian railways.

## Coburg Substation

**R**APID progress has been made with the new automatic substation which is being erected at Coburg.

By the middle of last month, the building had been completed and the work of installing the necessary plant is now being pushed forward steadily. It is expected that the new substation will be in running by the end of this month.

## Farming Train Tribute

**B**EFORE returning to England last month, Rev. Dr. Lauchlan Maclean Watt, Turnbull Trust preacher for 1932, paid a particularly glowing tribute to the value of the Better Farming Train and the national work which it is performing.

"Its introduction was a stroke of genius," he declared. "The train is one of the greatest things in the world—an apostle of prosperity and enlightenment."

Dr. Watt was also highly impressed with the efficiency of the Victorian railways system generally.

## First "Through" Express

**A**USTRALIAN railway history was made on the 8th of last month when the Brisbane Limited Express arrived at the Central Sydney station after having made the first "through" run from the Queensland capital. It was the first time that a train from another State had arrived in Sydney direct.

Previously passengers had to leave the train at either side of the Clarence river, join a launch and make a train connection again. The completion of the bridge across the river at Grafton has filled the gap in the standard gauge lines.

# Changing to Automatic Couplers

## Steady Progress at Newport, Ballarat and Bendigo

EACH week, 128 sheep trucks are passing through Newport workshops—entering the shops equipped with screw couplings and leaving with automatic couplers fitted. Of these trucks, 44 are being completely converted each week, while the others, already fitted with transition gear, are having the coupler heads installed.

THE programme for the conversion was so planned that the whole of the 1224 "L" trucks on the register will be completed before June 30.

In addition, the conversion was timed to take place when the slack period of the sheep traffic enabled trucks to be withdrawn without inconveniencing stock consignors.

The first move was to withdraw from traffic 400 trucks which were converted to automatic couplings but fitted with transition hooks and screw couplings. These stock trucks must be tightly secured to avoid damage to animals, and the couplings were standard equipment prior to the introduction of transition gear. Consequently, for all other purposes, these 400 sheep trucks were similar to those remaining in traffic, and they were returned to service as converted.

### Limiting Inconvenience

Further 450 trucks were then gradually withdrawn from traffic and completely converted, including the conversion of automatic couplers. These trucks were stored at Newport until Saturday, April 23, when the whole batch was completed. They were then sent into traffic; the previous batch, already in traffic equipped with transition hooks, was returned to Newport to be fitted with coupler heads, 44 a week being attended to. Simultaneously, a straight-out conversion of ordinary sheep trucks was completed at the rate of 44 a week.

This meant that, by Saturday, April 7, there were available for traffic 706 trucks with complete automatic couplers—the minimum number required to handle the sheep traffic at the present time when seasonal fluctuations reduce the demand for trucks.

On this latter date, also, all sheep trucks still fitted with screw couplings were withdrawn from traffic. By this arrangement, the inconvenience inevitable from transition periods when two types of couplings are in operation, was limited to two weeks, during which the two groups were kept separate by allocation to different consignors.

### Welding Instead of Rivets

Incidentally, advantage was taken of the sheep truck conversion to weld instead of using rivets when making the necessary structural alterations. These trucks were treated as an experiment to obtain experience of this method of fabrication and of its performance under service conditions. The results have been satisfactory and a saving of 3 cwt. per truck has been made in the weight of the structural members.

On May 1, there were 6,283 broad gauge trucks fitted with automatic couplings; 1,672 were so equipped when being built and the other 4,611 had been converted.

The conversion work is proceeding steadily at both Ballarat and Bendigo workshops as well as at Newport. The country shops are each converting 16½ "I" trucks weekly, and Newport is handling 11 "I" trucks weekly in addition to the sheep trucks. The whole of the narrow gauge stock has been converted.

The Australian standard coupler is of the ARA type, and a commencement was made with the fitting of the couplers during 1926-27. Since then, all new vehicles have been equipped either with automatic couplings or with conversion drawgear—drawgear suitable for automatic couplers, but with temporary drawhooks.

### Reasons for Conversion

A number of considerations made it necessary for automatic couplings to be introduced. In the first place, the old drawgear had reached the limit of its strength, precluding the increase in loads which up-to-date locomotives were designed to handle, and which could be handled much more cheaply by the larger and more powerful locomotives. Further, as South Australia was already using automatic couplers, any failure of the Victorian system to install similar equipment would gradually bring about conditions tantamount to another break of gauge.

The cost of drawgear maintenance has already been reduced, and when all stock is equipped with automatic couplers, further savings will be effected by the elimination of side buffers. With the new coupling, the buffing shocks are taken by the coupler, and the underframe of the truck is suitably strengthened for this purpose.

Indicative of the improved operating results which follow the use of automatic couplings are the increasing loads which are now authorised over certain sections provided that all vehicles in excess of a certain number are fitted with automatic couplers and are marshalled together immediately behind the locomotive. Typical instances of this are the increase in the maximum load from Ouyen to Woomelang from approximately 950 to 1538 tons, and from Sate Mine to Nyora from 1107 to 1332 tons.

The full benefits of the automatic couplers cannot, of course, be secured until the conversion of all stock is

## Suburban Limit Fares

TO encourage the comparatively small long-distance traffic for Association football matches, the principle of limit-fares has been applied to Saturday suburban travel by Association football followers between 1 and 2.30 p.m.

BETWEEN those hours, passengers travelling from a station in the district of a visiting Association club to a station nearest the football ground visited, will not be charged more than 2/- and 1/6d. first and second return.

Over the longer distances, this concession amounts to a substantial reduction. The ordinary return fares between Williamstown and Sandringham, for instance, are 3/5½d. and 2/8½d., first and second return.

Where the ordinary fares are less than 2/- and 1/6d., no alteration will be made.

A 30 per cent. increase in patronage under these special concession fares will be required to balance the revenue obtained from this traffic at the ordinary fares, and if the reductions are not justified by increased traffic, they will be discontinued.

IT is to be hoped that the results will parallel the traffic increases which have been induced by the reduction in country football fares.

On one Saturday last month, 671 more tickets were sold for six country matches than for the same matches last year, and revenue increased by £63.

## Buffalo Chalet Ball

The second annual Buffalo Chalet Cabaret ball will be held on July 12.

THE Buffalo Chalet Cabaret ball, which was such a great success last year, will be repeated on July 12. It will be held again at St. Kilda, the only difference being that The Plaza has now reverted to its old name, The Wattle Path.

Tickets will again be 10/6d. Proceeds, of course, go to charity.

complete. It is, therefore, highly desirable that an active conversion programme be followed, and present conditions make this an opportune time to push steadily forward.

The reduction in the volume of traffic at present being handled enables rolling stock to be released without inconveniencing railway users; modern workshop equipment, freed from construction work, is available which, if not used, still carries heavy fixed charges; wages and material prices are on a lower level than for many years past; and an expert staff, specially trained in railway rolling stock construction and maintenance, can be kept together and in regular employment on reproductive works.

# Personal Postscript

## Record?

WHAT is probably an Australian record for length of railway service at one station has been established by Guard Hughie Raverty, who has just retired from Princes-bridge station with 44 years of service to his credit. For the whole of that time he was stationed at the Bridge, first as porter, then as cloak room attendant, and finally as suburban guard. Popular with railwaymen and the public alike, he was possessed of an inexhaustible stock of good stories. And he knew how to tell them. —C.

## New Man

JACK McCAHERY has succeeded Fred J. Thane as conductor in the Sydney Limited parlor car. He was appointed to the permanent staff in 1910, and has been located at Spencer-street for many years past, dividing his time between the sleeping cars and the tours of the Commissioners' train, with service on the "Reso" trains both for Victorian and overseas parties thrown in for variety. He is probably one of the most widely known railwaymen in the service. —A.R.

## Lived in a Tent

LONG and varied was the railway career of Asst. Supt. T. Sansom of the Melbourne yard, whose retirement was recorded in last month's *News-Letter*. He started as a porter, was for a time shunter at Woodend, and was then transferred to Scymour as goods guard. He went to Wonthaggi as passenger guard when the line was first opened, and became a prominent member of the colony of railway pioneers living in tents in the newly-settled locality. The Sansom tent had the reputation of being the cleanest in the district. A strenuous term as yard foreman preceded Mr. Sansom's final elevation to administrative responsibility in the Melbourne yard.—H.E.C.

## June Birthdays

CHARLES MULLANY of the Better Farming Train and Depot Foreman J. A. Gordon of Flinders-street, on the third; Transportation Staff Officer R. McClelland, Stationmaster C. Wadelton of Warrnambool, and Block and Signal Inspector C. H. Saunders of Ballarat, on the fourth; Phil. Maynard of the Transportation branch, on the fifth; Driver W. Ludge of Korumburra, on the sixth; Rolling Stock Staff Clerk Tom Coulthard, Engineer A. K. Bartel, Les. Barrett of Room 2, Auditor of Revenue D. H. Falconer, Bonding Foreman W. C. Pain of Flinders-street, and Guard J. G. Dick of Flinders-street, on the eighth; Guard P. H. Ross of Melbourne yard, Assistant to the Metro. Supt. T. Sullivan and Train Examiner J. Robertson of Maryborough, on the 10th; Goods Guard C. D. Elliott of Melbourne yard, on the 11th; Depot Foreman W. M. Ross and Yard Foreman J. Muller of Geelong, and Porter H. W. Jackson of Benalla, on the 12th; S. A. Rosier of the Rolling Stock Accounts and Boilermaker R. A. Flower of Traralgon, on the 13th; Advertising Sales Officer G. P. Mulcahy,

on the 14th; Special Officer J. McDowell of the Traffic Branch and Driver P. G. Ballantine of Seymour, on the 15th; Bookkeeper W. H. Tregoning of the Accounts Branch, on the 17th; Leading Engine Cleaner C. H. Pevit of Benalla and Shunter E. S. Adams of Benalla, on the 19th; Works Sub-Foreman A. F. Caven of Geelong, on the 20th; Asst. Chief Engineer Arthur Goudy of Way and Works and Guard B. G. Jones of Donald, on the 21st; Stationmaster W. H. French of Huon, on the 22nd; Guard A. R. Howlett of Melbourne yard on the 23rd; Works Foreman W. J. O'Connor of Maryborough and Porter T. B. Hovey of Heywood, on the 24th; Bill Brandy of the Transportation branch and Asst. Claims Agent P. A. Fankhauser, on the 25th; Reg. Wotherspoon of the Tourist Bureau, Railmotor Engineer T. O. Pugh and Fitter C. K. McKay of Benalla, on the 26th; Prosecuting Officer J. Hennessy, C. P. Golden of Geelong, Leading Shunter C. Rudd of Melbourne yard and Signal Supervisor L. Tarrant of Spencer-street, on the 27th; Signalman R. Wyatt of Warragul, on the 28th; Guard E. Campi of Ballarat and Signalman H. W.

## Naming V.R. Stations

No. 17: KINNABULLA

IN 1889 this place was owned by Mr. Stephen Laver. Wild cattle were numerous and destructive, and as they could not be approached by day, they were occasionally shot at night when coming to drink at a drain or watercourse. The blacks accompanied the whites on these occasions and were given part of the meat obtained. When hungry, they would ask Mr. Laver to go out and "kin-na-bulla" ("kill a bullock.") The word thus formed was adopted by Mr. Laver as a brand for his wool packs and later was applied to the locality.

Calder of Melbourne Yard, on the 29th; and Engineer J. Fowler of the betterment board, Block and Signal Inspector C. McIntyre of the safeworking office, Packer and Trimmer T. P. Regan of Traralgon and Depot Foreman W. J. George of Maryborough, on the 30th.

## Presentations

FORMER Metropolitan Supt. J. G. Lee, whose retirement was mentioned in the March issue of the *News Letter*, was recently presented with a wallet of notes by a representative gathering of all grades of railwaymen from the metropolitan and eastern divisions. Mr. H. E. Russell, present Metro. Supt., made the presentation in the Institute, and Mr. Lee has since purchased a grandfather clock which he will no doubt treasure as a lasting memento of the goodwill of his friends. A similar presentation was made to the popular superintendent at a recent officers' conference. —A.W.

## "Railways Backbone of Transport"—

Say Uncle Sam's Experts

THOSE people who infer that the railroad is an effete and obsolescent form of transport, by discussing the rail-and-road argument would do well to ponder the following considered utterance of Uncle Sam's Interstate Commerce Commission, authoritative and independent of which controls transportation in U.S.A.

"SOMETHING should be said of the railroad future and what can be done in a more enduring way to protect and stabilise it. The railroads not only furnish the backbone and, for that matter, most of the other vital bones of the transportation system of the country, and we believe this will be a situation for a long time to come.

"We are not impressed with the thought that they are doomed, in anything like the near future, to go the way of the stage coach and the canal.

## Pivot Retirement

CHEERFUL Jim Lynch, officer-in-charge of the Geelong Goods, has retired after 43 years of efficient service. For many years he was A.S.M. at Dandenong, later serving as Night Officer at Horsham. He was S.M.'s clerk at Flinders-street for a time and was subsequently appointed officer in charge of the Montague shipping shed when the big shed was opened. He was transferred to the Pivot four years ago.—H.E.C.

## Tests and Surveys

EDWARD CAREY, who retired from the Newport test laboratory, looks back on half-a-century of railway work divided equally between the Victorian test laboratory and the railway Construction branch. He assisted in the surveys for railways in many parts of the State, accumulating a rich store of anecdotes concerning life in the survey camps. As laboratory assistant, since 1907, he was well liked by colleagues who presented him with a clock on the eve of his retirement.—S.C.W.

## Brevities

LES. McARTHUR of the Transportation branch staff office was recently transferred to the committee of the Melbourne yard club.

Max. Rout, of the Accountancy branch who completed his commerce course at University last year, is sharing with a student the Kilmany Scholarship for fees in economic problems.

Jack Hawken, special class signalman in charge of Flinders-street "B" boxes, retired after 44 years service, spent at St. Elsterwick, old Princes-bridge and "B" boxes.

## Last Mile Post

STATIONMASTER Michael W. Bairnsdale, died last month. He has been a railwayman for 43 years, and was popular in the Gippsland district, where he spent the whole of his career. He was stationmaster at Moe, Morwell, Balmuccia, Maffra, Leongatha, Nyora and Bairnsdale. He was 68.

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Wholly set up and printed in Australia by the Victorian Railways Printing Works, 100 Collins Street, North Melbourne, for the Publication of the Victorian Railways Commissioners.

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# The V.R. News Letter

July, 1932

Issue No. 22

## TEAMWORK!

WHEN, early last month, the Executive of the Wednesday Football League was arranging a match between the League and Bendigo at Bendigo, a proposal that the money of the team and its supporters be made by road in charabancs was strongly supported, and the loss of the money by the railways to the road was inevitable.

BUT the Railway club had two delegates present who were determined that the traffic should not be lost without a struggle. One of them—Frank O'Dea of the North Melbourne loco. depot, who is president of the Railway club—got in touch immediately with the General Passenger and Freight Agent and the decision was quickly made to offer the League the special limit-fare of 8/- return, provided a party of at least fifty made the

THE excursion fare is 15/6 return, and the limit-fare would ordinarily have applied only to a party of fifty was guaranteed, the proposal was enthusiastically dropped by the League, and, as we go to press, the expectations are that at least 100 will travel by rail.

THESE railway footballers always were famed for their fine teamwork.

## Welcome Return

THE Fuel Conservation movement, which was discontinued some 18 months ago, is now to be re-established. District committees will shortly be functioning on the same basis as previously.

THIS news will be welcomed by railwaymen generally. The interest which employees in all grades and all branches have taken in the movement was reflected in the highly successful results which were achieved when the district committees met.

Very definite improvements have been realised since the fuel conservation meetings were commenced, and no doubt the same benefits will continue with the reinstatement of the movement.

## Passenger-Parcel

A SIX-YEAR-OLD passenger travelled from Melbourne to Sydney recently, wearing on the back of his overcoat a cardboard label addressed to a Sydney relative.

His father placed him in the care of the guard at Spencer-street.

## Experimental Bulk Handling of Wheat Big Consignment from Riverina Next Week

COMMENCING July 11, 200,000 bushels of wheat will be railed from Oaklands to Melbourne in bulk instead of being bagged as is the general practice in Victoria. This loading, which is being handled for Messrs. Kimpton and Sons, flour millers of Kensington, will require 345 16-ton trucks, and it is intended to despatch about 20 trucks daily.

A CONSIGNMENT of 10,000 bushels carried by way of experiment during October last proved that the wheat could be handled in bulk without difficulty and without structural alterations to the rolling stock. To avoid loss of grain by leakage en route, steel trucks were used, any small openings in the floor plates being suitably plugged, and aprons manufactured from old tarpaulins fitted across the doorways.

The silo at Oaklands has a capacity of 350,000 bushels and the transport facilities made available to that district by the construction of the border railway from Yarrowonga make it economical for wheat growers to despatch their grain to Melbourne instead of to Sydney. As Oaklands is

420 miles from Darling Harbor (Sydney) but only 200 miles from Melbourne, an appreciable saving can be made in the amount of freight paid by consigning to Melbourne.

When the trucks used for the experimental consignment were ready to receive the wheat, they were run alongside the silo, which incidentally is served by a three-rail system to accommodate trucks of either New South Wales or Victorian gauge. The grain was weighed inside the silo and discharged through a nozzle arrangement into the truck. Approximately seven minutes sufficed to load 15½ tons of wheat.

On arrival at Kensington, the wheat was discharged by a chute which was placed at the floor level of the truck and which directed the grain to an elevator within the mill. When the truck door was opened, the tarpaulin apron held the grain until the chute was placed in position and the lowering of the apron permitted portion of the load to flow automatically into the chute.

The remainder of the wheat was discharged by shovelling it into the chute.

## New Tourist Business Stimulated

VERY gratifying results have followed the activities of the organising officers attached to the Government Tourist Bureau in stimulating travel amongst school children.

With the State Electricity Commission's works at Yallourn as the attraction, no fewer than 22 special trains were run for groups of schools during the past 12 months. The passengers totalled 9,100 in all, and they paid £1,551 in railway fares and £481 for refreshments at the Warragul rooms.

New business was also developed amongst State and high school pupils by a conducted tour to Cowes, Phillip Island, during the May vacation. Two parties, each numbering approximately 60, took part in the tour.

Nor have the efforts of the tourist officers been confined to Victorian scholars. Mr. A. E. Williams, who represents the Victorian Bureau in Brisbane, has also been busy amongst the students and, as a result of his activity, a party of 61 children, teachers and adults arrived at The Chalet on June 27. After a full week in the National Park they will all travel to Melbourne.

Equally successful was the salesmanship of Mr. E. J. Jones, another Victorian bureau representative who busied himself selling Buffalo holidays amongst the Adelaide people. By the middle of last month, 51 had booked for a special tour.

Mr. L. J. Wright, representative in Sydney, has been consistently successful also in booking up numerous small parties of visitors.

## Flour for Russia

THE largest individual consignment, of flour ever despatched from a Victorian flour mill was railed last month from Messrs. Darling and Sons mill at Sunshine to Williamstown.

ALL told, 2,250 tons were loaded for export to Vladivostok, Siberia, by the s.s. *Dalcairn*.

A further 750 tons of flour from other Victorian mills was also forwarded to the same destination.

Other loading by the same boat included 4,750 tons—approximately 177,300 bushels—of Victorian wheat loaded at Williamstown and Geelong, and also conveyed to Vladivostok for Russian buyers

## The Month's Topic

### Early Birds . . . . and Wool

AS is well known, early birds seldom leave many worms for late arrivals.

Interpreted broadly, the remark holds good for the transport of Victoria's wool clip. Early bids for this big job will probably win a big proportion of the traffic.

Railwaymen accordingly should not delay in making contact with local wool-growers, explaining rail facilities and in other ways endeavouring to ensure that the grower uses the national transport system—his railways.

Talking points which railway salesmen will find helpful are:

**W**OOL will be loaded free of charge at railway stations. A deduction of 4d. per bale will be made from the freight charges when a grower loads his own wool at unattended stations.

There is no need for the grower to employ an agent to despatch his wool at the local station.

Expedition and reliable railway service is guaranteed.

When growers consign their wool by rail, they entrust it to the care of a responsible authority with whom they can always make contact and from whom they can always secure satisfaction should by any remote mischance some cause for complaint or claim arise. No other form of transport, it can be emphasised, offers this same guarantee of responsibility while carrying the growers' valuable wool consignments.

\* \* \*

**C**OMMERCIAL agents have already been actively soliciting business in the woolgrowing districts, and station staffs should not hesitate to get in touch with the General Passenger and Freight Agent if they have any knowledge of the possibility of a wool-consignment being lost to the railways.

We cannot afford—either Departmentally or individually—to lose the transport of a single bale of the season's clip, but that success cannot be achieved without the enthusiastic co-operation of all station staff in the woolgrowing districts.

And the earlier our canvassing begins, the more satisfactory will be our results.

### Down Half-a-Million

**A**T June 14, railway revenue had aggregated £8,833,423 since the beginning of the financial year, or £512,443 less than the earnings for the corresponding period of last financial year.

Decreases had been registered in every class of railway business.

## How "Mystery Hike" Arrangements Were Kept Secret

### Last-Minute Release of Circulars

**A**USTRALIA had its first "Mystery Hike" on the King's Birthday, when the Victorian Railways ran three special trains from Flinders-street conveying 1,700 passengers to unknown destinations. The novel outing was sponsored by the Sun News Pictorial.

The utmost secrecy had necessarily to be observed in the preparation of timetable schedules, and remarkable precautions were taken to ensure that the arrangements would be completed without any possible leakage of information in advance.

**O**NE train was sent to Belgrave, where the party detrained and followed a selected route to Clematis, where the train was rejoined. The other two parties walked from Wandin to Mt. Evelyn via the Silvan reservoir.

Tickets were printed in contrasted colors for the different trains, and passengers were permitted to travel only by the train for which their tickets were issued. Yellow tickets were available for the train to Belgrave and 500 passengers were booked; the other two trains carried 600 passengers each, one party holding blue tickets and the other red.

The hikers were permitted to retain their special tickets which were lettered—

#### HIKERS' MYSTERY EXPRESS

Flinders-street to X and return same day.

All tickets were sold at the Tourist Bureau and the first train was booked in four days. The 600 tickets for the second train were disposed of in less than two days, and third train was fully booked in less than four days. Parties of 10 were permitted to reserve compartments for the outward journey and 400 availed themselves of this facility. As the fare for the journey was 4/- return, the revenue benefitted to the extent of £340.

The Tourist Bureau was besieged with inquiries as to the destination of the trains, but no information was given other than that released in the press. Some passengers, seeking in a roundabout way to learn their destination, asked what suburban stations the trains would stop at, intimating that they would prefer to join at intermediate stations if their districts were being passed through. These people, also, were advised to watch the newspapers.

But the most serious difficulties in maintaining secrecy confronted the timetables office. The framing of the train schedules was a simple matter, but guile was necessary in ascertaining the capacity of sidings and making similar inquiries.

It was, of course, essential that track gangs be informed that special trains would be running, and a preliminary special train circular was accordingly sent out on Friday, June 3, to stations within a radius of 50 miles of Melbourne, stating baldly

that special trains would be run for hikers on June 6. The departure times from Melbourne and the arrival times on the return journey were given but there were no indications of the destinations. The staff were warned to be on the alert for the passage of these trains.

On the Saturday morning, the special train circulars were prepared and enveloped under the direct supervision of the officer handling the arrangements, instead of being passed through the regular channels. Everybody who normally receives special train circulars was notified.

The circulars for the stations which could not conveniently be reached in reasonable time on the Monday morning were distributed by the Sunday trains, but those for nearer stations were not released until about an hour before the trains were due to leave Melbourne. This meant that intending passengers would, in practically all cases, either be in the city or en route before the circulars were delivered.

The train crews were not told their destination until just prior to departure. They were instructed to pick up their trains at Flinders-street at a certain time in the morning and told that they would arrive back early in the evening. There was no necessity to provide relief crews.

Distinguishing head signals, used to indicate to signalmen en route the lines the trains would be travelling over, were not placed in position until immediately before the trains' departure. Head boards were not carried on the engines and the destination signs of the electric train which conveyed the first party to Upper Fernside Gully showed only "Special." The usual practice of chalking on the sides of the engines the destination and departure time of the train to which it was allotted was not, of course, carried out.

The trains were run express, stopping only at Box Hill, at which station sealed envelopes containing sketches, maps and details of the routes to be traversed were distributed to all passengers.

The whole of the arrangements were carried out without a hitch, the Sun attributing the "brilliant success" of the excursions to "ideal weather, beautiful scenery, and perfect railway organisation."

## 5-Ton Tractor Reduces Costs and Improves Northern Rail Services

SO satisfactory were the results obtained by the Railway Construction branch with a Fordson tractor which had been converted into a rail tractor for light haulage that a similar vehicle is being tried out for general traffic on the Kerang Stony Crossing line. Previously the service on this line was one train a week, but this has been increased by two return journeys a week between Murrabit and Kerang. The converted tractor will be used for these trips and also for clearing any loading on the down side of Murrabit as required.

If this vehicle proves satisfactory for operating regular services on the Stony Crossing line where the traffic is light consideration will be given to providing similar equipment on other branch lines.

Idea of using a Fordson tractor in this way was first developed by the Construction branch two years ago during the extension of the Redcliffs-Meringur line to Morkalla. As the depot was some distance from the extension, intermittent haulage as hauling rails, sleepers and other material would have involved a light loco, running. This was largely eliminated by the use of a Fordson tractor.

Since the line was completed, the tractor has been employed on the extension and on the Oaklands line. The vehicle on the Stony Crossing line is a replica of that belonging to the Construction branch.

One of its low power and light weight is the fact that only hand gears are fitted, the use of the vehicle on lines having minor gradients to widen its sphere of usefulness. Its auxiliary gear box is fitted with six forward speeds in addition to two reverse gears, and it is constructed for double-ended operation.

The speeds available are 1.5, 2.8 and 6.9 miles an hour.

miles an hour with the original tractor gear box. Power is transmitted to both axles by roller chains which eliminate the necessity for fitting side rods. Ordinary track wheels, 3 ft. in diameter, carry the unit. To facilitate transport from one line to another, the vehicle can be loaded into an "I" truck.

A light superstructure is built on the chassis to shelter the driver, and an automatic coupler and a ballast-spreading plow are fitted to the Construction branch machine. Driver and guard comprise the train crew.

At two miles an hour, a tractive effort of 2,500 pounds is developed and while loads of 150 tons can be handled over the track under favorable conditions, much greater loads can be dealt with during shunting operations in station yards.

During a trial run a load of 100 tons was taken from Kerang to Westby, a distance of 6½ miles, without any difficulty being experienced.

For general haulage purposes, a speed of 9 to 12 miles an hour is used, 25 miles an hour being the maximum speed when running light. The weight of the vehicle is five tons and the operating cost is about one-sixth of that of a steam locomotive.

## Rectifiers Cut Telegraph Costs

THE installation of rectifiers connected with the supply mains of the State Electricity Commission has enabled the main batteries used to supply current for the railway telegraph system to be withdrawn from many stations, and has resulted in a considerable annual saving in labor and maintenance.

SOME of the batteries previously in use had to be renewed at intervals of about six months. To eliminate this heavy maintenance expense, rectifiers of the well-known copper oxide type have been gradually introduced into the telegraph circuits until, at the present time, 25 of these devices have been installed.

The function of the new apparatus is to change the alternating current from the supply mains into direct current suitable for operating the telegraph instruments. Similar equipment is incorporated in up-to-date all-electric wireless sets. The rectifiers are fitted only at locations where a reliable supply of electricity is available, and, besides reducing the maintenance costs, their judicious placing has enabled the main batteries to be rearranged and greatly reduced.

For instance, at Bendigo, five rectifiers, installed at a cost of approximately £70, have not only released 20 cells previously located there, but have also enabled a further 180 cells to be withdrawn from intermediate stations for use elsewhere. There is practically no upkeep with the rectifiers.

On the Swan Hill line, one rectifier at Swan Hill, and one at Bendigo released main batteries from Swan Hill, Kerang, Mitiamo and Bendigo. Another advantage of rectifiers is the ease with which the voltage can be regulated, which means that greater flexibility can be obtained.

## Prospects of Record Season at Mt. Buffalo

EXCELLENT snowfalls have been reported from Mt. Buffalo in the past few weeks, promising conditions for snow sports. The enthusiasts have been slow to recognize this. The Chalet was fully booked out early in the fortnight of the Winter Carnival. This is the more gratifying because of the rival attractions at Hotham, where the Victorian Australian ski-ing champion will be decided at the same time.

The programme for the Buffalo Carnival, which is being supported by the Mt. Buffalo Alpine Club and the Chamois Club of Australia, covers the period July 29 to August 2, and events are listed for the benefit of both beginners as well as for expert skiers. The Chamois Club was formed at Mt. Buffalo last year by the guests in the chalet during the championships. The Chamois Club comprises a group of skiers, most of whom have been in the Alps, and is fashioned on the lines of the English Chamois Club. Its members are accustomed to

chasing the agile chamois from crag to crag in the Swiss Alps every winter.

Four types of ski contests will be decided at the Mt. Buffalo Carnival—cross-country treks, ski jump, downhill dashes and slaloms. The last-named term is the skiers' name for the "bending race," popular at gymkhanas, but, instead of horses, the contestants are mounted on skis. The idea is to develop speed in turning.

Facilities for skiers at Mt. Buffalo have been much improved for the present season. The Hump slope from the top of The Hump right down into the valley near the foot of The Horn provides a run of about one mile. Descending at an angle of about 30 degrees, the track is particularly fast, and it is doubtful if more than half-a-dozen skiers in Victoria can negotiate the full slope.

This is the best cleared ski run in Victoria. The jumping platform has been shifted to a new site clear of the track.

## New Watching System

MATERIALS, equipment and goods located at the various railway workshops and depots are of such a high value that a comprehensive system of watching is essential to safeguard them from fire and burglary during the periods when the regular staff is off duty.

Existing railway practice in this direction was recently reviewed by a committee, whose decisions for alterations and improvements have not only strengthened the old system but also effected savings of approximately £3,800 annually.

Under the old system, the watching at one or two workshops was attended to by firemen from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, but this work is now being done by selected railwaymen. The automatic fire protection and other equipment provided at workshops render the employment of skilled firemen unnecessary at night, railwaymen having been trained in the use of this apparatus.

# Personal Postscript

## Jack and Jim

ONE of the *News Letter* contributors went wrong last month. He mixed up Jack Lynch, who has just retired as officer-in-charge of the Geelong Goods, with Jim Lynch, who retired some months ago as officer-in-charge of the shipping shed. We apologise to both Jack and Jim for the confusion and thank the 33 'phone callers, 23 visitors and 17 writers who directed our attention to the error (up to the time of going to press).—E.D.

## Leaves Ken. Goods

KENSINGTON goods lost its Station-master, popular Jack Whykes, last month. He had been a railwayman since August, 1885. On behalf of the staff, Traffic Inspector Tom Mulcahy presented him with a crystal set and tray. Other spokesmen included Messrs. J. George, Theo. Wohlfahrt and J. Hanlon, old members of the S.M.'s staff, and Mr. O'Meara, his successor. Mr. Whykes, in his response, recalled that he had been particularly fortunate with his staffs during his railway career. "I never had to tell a man anything a second time, nor did I ever have to report a man?"—J.H.

## Lifesavers' Secretary

ERNE PLEYDELL, of the Claims Agent's office, was recently appointed secretary of the Royal Life Saving Society of Victoria, this distinction following upon several years of active organising work for sporting bodies. He is also vice-chairman of the Society and vice-president of the North Road (Brighton) Life Saving Club, and he holds every possible lifesaving award. Other interests of recent years have been with the Prahran football club as treasurer, with Brighton club for three years as secretary, and with the Elsternwick cricket club also as secretary. Organising for charitable appeals has helped to occupy his spare time but, in the future, the work of the life-saving society will keep him busy after office-hours. He joined the railways in 1916 as junior clerk at Toorak, and served at many suburban and country stations before being transferred to head office in 1920. He has been with the Claims Agent ever since.—S.C.W.

## July Birthdays

SUPERINTENDENT of Passenger Train Service Hugh Cooke and Storeman-in-charge J. H. Main of Maryborough loco. on the first; Block and Signal Inspector A. E. Colson of Flinders-street, Goods Agent W. N. Wortley and Guard J. M. Wright of Dimboola, on the third; Cleaner W. L. Davis of Mildura, on the fifth; Fitter A. Price of Bendigo, on the sixth; Roadmaster C. S. Walsh of Geelong, on the seventh; Ganger H. J. Emmett of Woori Yallock, on the eighth; Government Tourist Officer W. T. McConnell, Road Foreman H. H. Charman of Maryborough and Fireman F. Croucher of Benalla, on the ninth; Senior Chemist W. S. Macartney of Newport, Senior Clerk B. F.

Lamb of Bendigo and Guard M. T. Cleary of Benalla, on the 12th; Block and Signal Inspector A. W. Murfit of Flinders-street, on the 13th; Driver F. A. Chamberlain of Maryborough and Assistant Photographer Andy Reid, on the 14th; Guard Harry Lee of Melbourne yard, on the 16th; Bill Wotherpoon of Room 10, Driver G. Thomson of Donald, Running-gear Repairer V. Pinder of Benalla and Louis Corkill of the Way and Works Accounts, on the 18th; Outdoor Stores Superintendent H. Sergeant, on the 19th; Senior Foreman Alf. Jukes of Melbourne Goods and Yard Supervisor John Baker of Geelong, on the 20th; Fireman C. Kemmis of Geelong, on the 21st; Chief Clerk V. Letcher of the Secretary's branch, on the 22nd; Works Sub-foreman C. J. Profit of Dimboola, on the 23rd; Driver-in-charge T. H. Fitch of Warracknabeal and Assistant Shed Foreman R. Kennedy of North Loco., on the 26th; Train Despatcher Sep. O'Haire of Ararat, on the 27th; Superintending Engineer C. Fethney, on the 28th; Chris. Madigan of North Melbourne loco., Station-master T. Leyden of Peshurst and Clerk-in-charge F. Donohue of Oakleigh Way and Works, on the 29th; and Electrical Engineer J. W. L. Varey, on the 31st.—A.L.

## In Brief

RECENT retirements not previously mentioned in the *News Letter* include Shunter T. Bergin of Wangaratta, Parcels Porter A. G. Jones of Flinders-street, Station-master J. Miles of Upper F.T. Gully, Porter R. S. Milne of Spencer-street, Signalman G. Pavich of Footscray, Clerk J. P. Roucui of Sale, Watchman D. J. Shannon of the Melbourne goods, Lampman J. Smith of the Melbourne yard and—lone representative of the fair sex—Miss O'Grady, popular typist in the Metro. Supt.'s office.—A.E.W.

## Hiking Champion

In a recent hiking competition for Victorian scouts, Evan Prewett of the Cashier's office secured first place, entitling him to hold the shield for the next 12 months. It was a week-end hike through hilly country between Dandenong and Belgrave, and points were awarded for various phases of scoutcraft, including camp making, observation of natural features and map drawing to scale. Experience gained as lands officer's assistant in the Estate office stood him in good stead.—J.L.

## State Mine Identity

AFTER 42 years of railroading, the last 14 of which were spent at State Mine, Depot Foreman A. C. P. Banfield has retired. He joined up as a turner at Newport in 1890, transferring to Traralgon as leading hand fitter in 1912, and to Korumburra as fitter-in-charge five years later. Appointment to State Mine as depot foreman followed at the beginning of 1918.—P.G.

## Last Mile Post

JAMES ALEXANDER MILLER

THE death of Mr. J. A. Miller, secretary to Mr. Commissioner Molomby and secretary of the Railway Classification Board, came as a sudden shock early last month. He fell, cutting his face, about a week previously and contracted tetanus.

Although his whole railway career was spent in the Secretary's branch, which joined in 1907, the universally popular J. was widely known throughout the Department. For a time he was secretary to Mr. Clapp. He was educated at Geelong College and served with the A.I.F. from 1916 until end of the war.

The burial took place at the Geelong Necropolis General Cemetery and leading railway officials attended at the graveside. The casket was borne to the grave by Messrs. N. Quall, Beeching, L. Anderson and J. Mills of the Secretary's branch, and the pall bearers included Messrs. C. Miscamble (ex-Commissioner), E. C. Eyers (Secretary), J. Cameron (Chairman, Staff Board), P. Carolan (Special Staff Officer), V. Letcher (Chief Clerk), J. L. Timewell (secretary to Commissioners), H. J. Hodgins (secretary to Mr. Clapp), J. Hennessy, C. Davis and Fetherstonhaugh of the Secretary's branch and R. Ryan of the Telegraph office.

## WILLIAM HUNTER

MR. W. HUNTER, clerk in the Melbourne yard, died recently at the age of 57. He joined the service in 1890, and was stationed in the Melbourne yard for many years.

## WILLIAM JONES

AFTER living in retirement for three years at Stawell, Mr. William Jones, former passenger Guard, died recently.

He had had 44 years service in the railway and was widely known and very popular. Most of his railway life was spent at Stawell. He was 68.

## WILLIAM PAUL McCARTHY

MR. W. P. McCARTHY, late station-master at Ascot Vale, who had retired after completing nearly 47 years' service, died recently in St. Vincent's hospital.

He was buried in the old Melbourne cemetery, by a sad coincidence, on the day which his railway service would normally have terminated.

## Transfers

STATIONMASTER W. E. Mills of Melbourne was presented with a gold-mounted fountain pen by the station staff when transferred, on promotion, to Swan Hill. He had been at Maffra for four years.

After five years as clerk-in-charge of Kyneton goods, Mr. A. Chapman has transferred on loan to the Chief Secretary's Department. He was presented with travelling rug and gold sleeve-links.

Very appropriately, the staff at Yallock presented Assistant Stationmaster W. Morrison with an electric jug when he transferred from the station. He goes to Frankston.

After six years on the staff of the Betterment and Publicity board, Mr. R. F. Stanistreet went out as stationmaster again. Before proceeding to Maffra, he was given a farewell presentation by the staff.

Stationmaster Paterson of Glenloch has transferred to Kerang. He and his wife were the guests of the townspeople before departure.

Travelling case and fountain pen were farewell gifts of the railway staff at Castlemaine to Mr. W. Stewart, roadmaster's clerk, on transfer to Melbourne.—H.E.C.

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# The V.R. News Letter

August, 1932

Issue No. 23

## FICTION— AND FACT

MUCH misinformed criticism is frequently levelled at railway freights as a "burden upon industry." Actually, of course, freight costs constitute relatively the smallest parts of the total costs of production and distribution of most industries.

At the present time, when the railways are fighting hard to retain the traffic in the face of cut-throat road competition, it is particularly desirable that railwaymen generally should be informed of the actual facts concerning wool freight rates.

### Freighting per lb.

THE railway freight rate per lb. for wool for a distance of 100 miles is only 27/100ths of a penny, for 200 miles 2/5ths of a penny, for 300 miles a half penny, and for 400 miles 3/5ths of a penny. Last year the Department carried 79,119 tons of wool, earning £210,107 in freight. This represented only slightly more than freighting a pound.

### Low Percentages

It is true that increased working expenses have necessitated increased rates on wool—as on other commodities—since 1914. In that year the percentage of freight charges to the value of wool was two per cent. During the period of good wool prices, the percentage was even lower than this, falling to a little as one per cent. in 1924-25. However, when world prices fell last year (1931-32) to the low average price of 9.59d., the percentage was only

## 25,000 Pigeons Go West By Rail This Month

THE opening of the racing pigeon season on July 30 added a touch of novelty to the variety of freight carried on the Serviceton line. The first race was from Ballan, a flying distance of 45 miles; later races will commence from Trawalla (89 miles), Stawell (135 miles), Horsham (175 miles), Serviceton (240 miles), Tintinara, S.A. (298 miles), Murray Bridge (368 miles), Hamley Bridge (480 miles), Hammond (540 miles), and Tarcoola on the Trans-Australian railway, 740 miles distant.

A C.E. EXPRESS type van is used for transporting the baskets of pigeons from Melbourne, and about 170 baskets are required for the shorter distances. Some 25,000 birds have been registered this year and practically all of these will be contesting the earlier races.

As the season advances, the number decreases slightly until about 144 baskets are sufficient to carry the birds to Tarcoola.

One or two conveyors travel with the pigeons. Half parcels rates are charged and the baskets are returned free.

In previous years, half of the pigeon racing clubs raced their birds from the north-east from districts as far distant as the Queensland border, but they have now combined to race only from the north-west.

Earlier in the year, races for young birds are conducted from Ballan, Trawalla, Stawell and Horsham, and similar arrangements are made for their transport.

## Fares are Cut for Country Music Lovers

AN interesting development last month was the agreement between the Railways Department and Messrs. J. C. Williamson Ltd., to issue combination railway-and-theatre tickets at specially low rates for country visitors to Melbourne during the Williamson Imperial Grand Opera Season.

RAIL fares have been reduced by 50 per cent., and the theatre admission charge from 11/9 to 6/9, including full tax and booking fee for dress circle or front stalls.

The concession tickets are on issue at Bendigo on Mondays, Ballarat on Tuesdays, Geelong, Warragul and Sale on Wednesdays, and Albury, Wangarratta, Benalla and Seymour on Thursdays.

They are available on the forward journey by a certain specified train on that day, and for return by any train the next day, excepting the Sydney Ltd. and the Overland.

So that the theatre seats may be reserved, it is necessary for intending travellers to buy their combination tickets not later than 10 a.m. on the previous day.

## Rail Welding Continued

THE welding of rails on the St. Kilda line into 200-ft. lengths, as outlined in the *News-Letter* last December, has since been extended, and the "up" line has now been treated right through from St. Kilda.

A beginning has been made with the "down" track.



The heaviest and the longest sheep train ever run in Victoria—72 loaded trucks, containing 7,701 sheep, weighing 1139 tons and extending for more than one-third of a mile. Automatic couplers made the feat possible. Story on page 3.

## Advice of Railway Beauty Expert Is Eagerly Sought in the Country

THE expert advice of George Allan, railway landscape gardener, was sought by the Castlemeane people recently to ensure that the reserve surrounding the gold discovery memorial at Barker's Creek would be properly beautified, and that suitable trees and shrubs would be selected.

He had previously visited Castlemeane to supervise the horticultural activities of the local boy scouts, who have been planting trees and hedges around their hall.

Daylesford district has also benefited from Mr. Allan's experience, both during his period in charge of the Daylesford gardens before he

joined the railways, and also when he directed the layout of the gardens surrounding the Hepburn Springs and the new lake.

His official duties involve the supervision of all railway beautification activities, the judging of station gardens and the control of the Royal Park nursery.

## The Month's Topic

### Throwing Money Away . . . .

ALTHOUGH there was a substantial falling-off in traffic last year, the amount paid out in claims was practically the same as the total the year before.

Improvement this year is accordingly a matter of urgent necessity. For money paid in claims is money thrown away. And goodwill thrown away, too.

Never before has there been such pressing need for revenue and for the goodwill upon which we build increased revenue. Each claim lodged against the Department is not only a threat to our revenue, but a menace also to that goodwill.

To reduce those claims, to exercise the utmost care in the stowing of goods and the shunting of trucks, to handle all consignments as we would wish our own property to be handled, to enhance our goodwill and protect our revenue—these should be the unswerving aims of all railwaymen this year.

## Fuel Conservation

SO that the Fuel Conservation movement may be actively re-commenced, practically the same organisation as was developed in the past has been again established, and tentative dates have been drawn up for an inaugural meeting to be conducted in each district within the next few weeks.

SEVEN committees will be formed and meetings will be held at the points indicated:

Metropolitan district, Melbourne yard office; Seymour—Seymour, Wodonga and Shepcarton; Bendigo—Bendigo, Korong Vale and Echuca; Ballarat—Ballarat, Ararat and Dimboola; Maryborough—Maryborough and Donald; Geelong—Geelong, Colac and Hamilton; Eastern and South-Eastern—Warragul, Traralgon and Korumburra.

Each district committee will be representative of the district and drawn from grades connected with train running operations. The first committee will hold office for 12 months.

Meetings will be conducted on the same lines as previously, and all suggestions of a constructive nature will be accepted even though their relation to fuel conservation may appear remote.

For although the Fuel Conservation movement was, of course, originally designed with the view of reducing the fuel bill, a further advantage resulting from the friendly round-table discussion between the men and their supervising officers was the development of a fine spirit of teamwork.

Both of these benefits will be continued by the re-establishment of the committees.

## Railwaymen at These Stations are High Up in the World

THE highest railway station in Victoria is Shelley, on the Cudgewa line, which is 2,562 feet above sea level.

But a New South Wales station is the highest in Australia. Ben Lomond, between Glen Innes and Armidale, on the old Sydney-Brisbane main line, is 4,473 feet above the sea.

TUMOULIN, 3162 feet, near the terminus of the branch line from Cairns to Ravenshoe is Queensland's highest station although the adjoining stations, Turalka and Kaban, 3128 and 3153 feet above sea level, press Tumoulin close for first place.

South Australia's highest station is Belalie North, near Peterborough, 2,024 feet above sea level, while Guildford, on the Burnie-Zeehan line in Tasmania is one foot lower. So that there can be no dispute about the height of stations in South Australia, it is specified that the figures quoted show "the height of the rails above low-water mark (spring tides) Port Adelaide."

The new line built from Meekatharra to serve the Wiluna goldfield has the highest station in Western Australia. The station is Paroo, and it has an altitude of 1,916 feet.

Golden Ridge, 15 miles from Kalgoorlie, is the highest station

on the Trans-Australian railway, which traverses country generally regarded by those who haven't been there as flat desert at about sea level. Which makes it rather surprising to learn that Golden Ridge, 1,239 feet above the sea, is actually 237 feet higher than Bright, and 173 feet higher than Cudgewa. Kalgoorlie, the terminus of the line, is one foot higher than Golden Ridge.

Australia's altitudes pale almost insignificant compared with those of some overseas countries. The highest railway station in the world is La Cima on the Peruvian Central Railway between Lima and Oroya, which is 15,865 feet above sea level. More on the Collahuassi branch of the Antofagasta (Chile) and Bolivia Railway runs a close second with 15,800 feet.

### Europe's Highest

The highest station on the Alps railway of Europe is Jungfraujoch, terminus of the Jungfrau railway, 11,342 feet above the sea and within the region of perpetual snow and ice.

Timboroa station on the Kenya Uganda railway in East Africa is the highest in the British Empire. It is 9,000 feet above the sea, and, near the line attains an altitude of 9,100 feet.

## Railway Traffic Decline is World-wide

ALL over the world, the depression has seriously affected railway traffic, and the varying degrees to which the systems of the most important countries have suffered is clearly shown by the following table from *The Financial Times*. The figures show the percentage of decline in traffic, both passenger and goods, for the first seven months of 1931:—

	Percentage of Decline. Passenger Traffic.	Goods Traffic.
Switzerland ...	4.4	5.5
Sweden ...	4.5	16.0
France ...	4.9	9.6
Belgium ...	6.0	14.6
England ...	7.1	10.4
Austria ...	9.4	13.3
German Reichsbahn	11.4	16.9
Italian State Railways	13.7	—
Principal U.S.A. lines	23.3	17.9

THE passenger traffic on the Victorian Railways during 1930-31 was 19.5 per cent. less than for 1929-30, and the goods traffic declined 14.0 per cent. over the same period.

### Buffalo Chalet Ball Success

MORE than 1400 guests attended the highly successful second annual Buffalo Chalet Cabaret Ball which was held at Wattle Path, St. Kilda, last month. As a result the Lord Mayor's fund will benefit substantially.

## No Hiking on Uncle Sam's "Mystery Hike"

THIS "mystery hiking" craze has spread round the world.

GREAT BRITAIN is conducting regular rail excursions to well-known destinations. Both Sydney and Perth are now, with Melbourne, meeting the public demand for the novelty in Australia, and the latest world convert is Uncle Sam.

However, the Southern railroad, Ohio and Kentucky, which substituted a chicken dinner and motor-ride for the hike. The United States appears to be one of the countries in which hiking is outstandingly — and fashionably popular.

## Revenue Results

RAILWAY revenue returns close an inauspicious start to the new financial year. For the 14-day period ended July 14, approximate earnings were slightly less than £310,000, compared with more than £335,000 in the corresponding fortnight of last financial year. Passenger receipts fell by £2,300, £139,472, and goods and live stock receipts by £18,878 to £131,000.

# Striking Vindication of Automatic Coupler Policy

## New Records for Sheep Trains

**T**HE recent increase in the maximum weight of a sheep train over the ruling grade between Wodonga and Newmarket from 680 tons to 1139 tons, exclusive of the locomotives, is striking proof of the wisdom of the policy of equipping rolling stock with automatic couplers.

This maximum weight, setting a new record for a sheep train in Victoria, was first attained by a special test train which left Wodonga on July 3 and ran through to Newmarket.

In addition, the maximum number of vehicles was increased from 48 to 73.

**M**OST railwaymen are already aware of the superior advantages of automatic couplers. Modern equipment provides draw-ropes sufficiently stronger than the old equipment (which was stressed to the limit) of safety with relatively small increases to permit of the economical handling of larger train loads. Shunt efficiency is also improved as more work can be handled in the same time than with the old couplings.

Other advantages of automatic couplers include the eventual elimination of side-buffers, resulting in maintenance savings, and the reduction to a minimum of the amount of slack in couplings, enabling the driver to exercise greater control over his train, particularly over hilly country. Smoother operation is also achieved.

### Increased Train Loads

Concurrently with the introduction of the new couplers, more powerful locomotives were constructed to haul heavier trains that could safely be marshalled as the trucks were condensed. Permissible train loads have been increased accordingly, with the result that during the transition period, all loading above a certain amount shall be in trucks fitted with automatic couplers and marshalled together at the head of the train.

All sheep trucks have been equipped with automatic couplers, and advantage has been taken of this to build up trains carrying sheep from New South Wales to the maximum permissible load.

### 72 Loaded Sheep Trucks

The first test run with a maximum load was made on the night of July 3, although 60 trucks of stock of a weight of 920 tons were hauled through in one train from Tocumwal during the night of June 27.

The test train comprised 72 loaded sheep trucks, carrying no fewer than 100 animals, and a van and all the trucks were equipped with automatic couplers. It was 682 yards, or more than one-third of a mile, in length. Incidentally, all the sheep were from New South Wales, and many of them were, altogether, a distance of approximately 600 miles from stations in the northern part of central New South Wales.

Leaving Wodonga at 10.35 p.m. on Sunday, July 3, the train was hauled by two locomotives—an "N" and an "A2"—to Benalla, whence a "C" class locomotive brought it on to Seymour.

From Seymour to Wallan, over grades as heavy as 1-in-50, two locomotives were again necessary, and an "X" class and a "C" class were used. The "X" class locomotive then brought the train through to Newmarket, which was reached at 10.31 a.m., 14 minutes ahead of schedule.

### Bright Prospects

The average over-all speed for the 184-mile journey was thus 15½ miles an hour, although operating conditions made it necessary in framing the timetable to allow for the train to wait from 6.5 a.m. to 7.10 a.m. at Seymour.

A second train of the same composition was run a week later, the schedule providing for arrival at Newmarket at 10.30 a.m. on Monday instead of 10.45 a.m. as set out for the first train. This train left Wodonga 1¼ hours behind time, awaiting the arrival of the sheep, but it reached Newmarket only 44 minutes behind schedule, the bulk of the time being made up at Seymour.

Stock owners and drovers who accompanied the trains expressed their entire satisfaction with the transport provided, and it is understood that this improved service will be a factor in diverting to Newmarket a greater volume of New South Wales stock. A particularly gratifying feature of the sheep traffic is that it is anticipated that a similar train will be run each week-end for some weeks.

## Reduction in Mt. Buffalo Snow Season Tariff

**T**HE official snow season tariff of 17/6 a day at The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park, normally applies to the last week in July and the first three weeks in August.

This year, however, it will operate only for two weeks in August; from Friday, August 19, it will be reduced to the ordinary daily rate of 15/-.

The difference in the prices of the combination travel and accommodation tickets is 35/- — £8/10/- and £6/15/- per week.

## Increased Tourist Travel to Australia

**T**HE tide of travel is steadily turning towards the Pacific, and Australia seems bound to secure a much larger share of international tourist traffic. Australia's inclusion in the itinerary of the American cruise ship, "Malolo," for the past three years was the first definite indication of this new trend, but further evidence is steadily accumulating.

**A** PARTY of 12 American boys, touring Australia under the auspices of the Young Australia League, will arrive at Albury on Wednesday, August 3. After inspecting the Hume Weir, the boys will be met by graziers who will act as hosts for a tour through the Riverina to Echuca, which will be reached on August 11.

They will leave Melbourne by the Adelaide express on August 17, en route to Western Australia. Returning to Melbourne on September 14, they will spend four days at Mt. Buffalo on their way back to Sydney, whence they will leave for America on September 24. The boys arrived in Australia on June 23, and have already toured extensively through New South Wales and Queensland. They are travelling throughout by railway.

The Young Australian League is confident that this party will prove to be the forerunner of much larger parties.

Even more gratifying is the notification that the British cruise ship, s.s. *Ulysses*, will arrive at Cairns on October 17 and, after visiting all the mainland capital cities, will leave Fremantle on November 23. And, of course, the big Matson liners are now calling regularly at Melbourne.

## Publicity Programme

**D**URING the financial year just ended, the railway printing office was kept busily engaged producing the various media which form the ammunition of modern railway publicity.

Posters, booklets, pamphlets and handbills were all used to advertise sports gatherings, "back to \_\_\_\_\_" celebrations, train alterations and worth-while tourist resorts, and to tell the public why some things were done, why others couldn't be done, and why still others should be done in the big railway business.

In all, approximately one-and-a-quarter million pieces were prepared, comprising 9,000 pictorial posters, 8,500 letterpress posters, 17,000 electric railway bulletins, 450,000 handbills, and 750,000 booklets and pamphlets.

All this, of course, was in addition to the usual regular railway publicity in newspapers and magazines, and over the air.

# Personal Postscript

## Climbed

A PRACTICAL railwayman of the old school, Stationmaster J. C. Boyd steadily climbed the transportation ladder after a 20-year-old start as a porter in 1887. Two years service in this grade, nine months as shunter, and 16 years as operating porter preceded his appointment as S.M., Natimuk, in 1906. Promotion took him to Sunshine, Mildura, Newmarket goods, Hamilton and Seymour, from which station he retired last month.—H.E.C.

## Fireman to Foreman

WHEN Depot Foreman David McLellan Stewart retires from Traralgon towards the end of this month, he will sever a close association with locomotives which has lasted throughout the whole of his 43 years of practical railroading. Starting at North Loco. as engine cleaner in 1889, his first move was to Ballarat as fireman nine years later. Promotion to driver at the same location followed in 1908 and to enginemen's instructor in Melbourne 15 years later. Returning to North Loco. three years later, he had 12 months' experience as shed foreman before being appointed as depot foreman at Ararat. He has been at Traralgon since the beginning of 1929. —S.C.W.

## Parcels Veteran

PARCELS Foreman James Andrew of Flinders-street who retired recently had seen service as porter, parcels porter, passenger guard and goods guard since he became a railwayman at the end of August, 1888. He was stationed at Rigwood, Bendigo and Melbourne Goods before going to Flinders-street parcels office in August, 1917. Two months later he was made foreman.—S.

## August Birthdays

DISTRICT Engineer Evan Richard of Oakleigh, Tom Kennedy of Room 2, Traffic Inspector M. Lalor of the metro.'s office and Depot Foreman J. McIvor of Bendigo, on the first; Fitter's Asst. A. G. Rowley of Traralgon, Depot Foreman G. R. Critten of Ararat and Viv. Bishop, secretary to the Asst. G.S.T., on the second; Alec Wotherspoon of Room 1, Driver J. Lanagan of Geelong, Asst. Comptroller of Accounts A. Williams and Jim Langley of Spotswood, on the third; Driver L. W. Jackson of Bendigo, Asst. D.S. George Rogers of Maryborough, Asst. Train Running Officer W. Ries of Seymour, Driver A. A. Searle of Geelong and Railmotor Driver H. J. Ashton of Jolimont, on the fourth; Chief Eng. of Way and Works J. M. Ashworth, Chief Architect H. T. Stanley, Driver A. Lewis of Traralgon and Guard W. Warren of Bendigo, on the sixth; Block and Signal Inspector J. Mullins of Flinders-street and Works Ganger R. Homfray of Geelong, on the seventh; Signal Supervisor D. C. Beaumont of Bendigo, on the eighth; Ganger W. Edwards of Koowee-rup, on the 11th; Guard J. T. Mulligan of

Donald, Stationmaster H. G. Hooper of Warragul and W. and W. Engineer W. O. Brown, on the 12th; Asst. Printing Officer Bill Houston, on the 14th; Signal Supervisor W. Ewin of Dandenong and O.-in-C. Charles Corbett of the Melbourne goods perishable shed, on the 16th; Dist. Engineer A. J. Ward of Ballarat and W. and W. Engineer W. Stephen, on the 17th; Leading Shunter J. Emmerson of Bendigo and Leading Hand Fitter J. J. Young of Maryborough, on the 19th; Bill Hambridge of the R.S. driving office, on the 20th; Morgan Hayes of Room 9, Chief Train Despatcher A. H. Game of Geelong, Engineer Ralph Connolly of the Electrical branch and Asst. Stationmaster G. Kirk of Bell, on the 21st; Asst. Stationmaster R. W. Berry of Kangaroo Flat, on the 22nd; Dist. Supt. T. H. Maddern of Ballarat, Block and Signal Inspector David Beddoe of Flinders-street, Works Foreman D. Flynn of Ballarat and Stationmaster Alf. Stephens of Portland, on the 23rd; Driver E. Fitzpatrick of Wodonga and Mick Bourke of the W. and W. staff office, on the 24th; Cleaner A. R. Adkins of Warragul,

## Naming V.R. Stations

No. 18: KATAMATITE

THIS place is situated on the banks of a creek called the "Boosey," and the name is said by some to be a contraction of the question "Kate, am I tight?" To which the answer was, "Yes, you're on the boosey." This pleasantry was attributed to one of the early surveyors.

Clerk W. F. Gee of Benalla and Chairman Bert Kelly of the B. and P. Board, on the 28th; Special Officer R. G. Wishart and Manager Lindsay McClelland of the dining car depot, on the 30th; and Ganger A. R. Barty of Thorpdale and Electrician Monty Pearl of Batman-avenue garage, on the 31st. —A.L.

## Forty-four

AFTER 44 years in the Transportation branch, Billy Davenport has retired. Most of his time he was stationmastering at Redesdale Junction, Clyde, Lake Boga, Guildford, Violet Town, Coleraine and Mentone, but he put in his last seven years at Melbourne goods. —H.C.

## Rail Flyer

FLYING Officer D. A. Gibson, who recently passed his final examination at Point Cook, and is to proceed to England to train with the Royal Air Force was formerly a railwayman. He was attached to the Electrical Engineering branch as apprentice testing electrician on January 14, 1925, and celebrated his first year with the railways by winning the Harold

W. Clapp prize at the Institute. Completed the educational training for apprentices the following year, he was awarded a departmental scholarship to the Workingmen's College enable him to study for the diploma of electrical engineering. Early in 1928, arranged to pay the additional cost for scholarship to be transferred for the Melbourne University course for the Bachelor of Electrical Engineering degree. He resigned from service in January last to accept appointment to a commission with the air force.—T.B. "Feathery"

POPULAR Bill Featherstone—"Feathery" to his friends—has retired with 44 years of service behind him. He joined up as a porter at Dunstons, opened Allans station with S.M. Andy Johnson (just retired from Ballarat), and as a guard at State Main ran the first coal train to Nyora. He was a time guard on the Overland. Off the job he conducted a highly popular social club for railwaymen—Featherstone's club. —H.E.

## Ill-Health

OWING to ill-health, Stationmaster L. Ferguson has resigned with 30 years efficient service to his credit. He was Narre Warren for nine years and Cohuna three.—A.E.W.

## Presentation

MR. T. SANSOM, former Asst. Supt. Melbourne yard, whose retirement was mentioned in the May issue of the *Neas-Lane* was recently presented with a travelling and smoker's outfit by his colleagues. Supt. A. W. F. Smith handed over the gifts. Mr. Sansom, in acknowledgement, expressed the hope that his friends would feel as pleased and hearty as he did when their turn came to retire. —M.

## Transportation Gleanings

THE following clerks have recently transferred to the Taxation Department: G. L. Chapman (Hughesdale), T. A. Flett (Williamstown Pier), E. M. Gronn (Ballarat Dist. Supt.'s office), C. H. Costello (Melbourne Park), G. F. Rutter (Camberwell) and E. Condon (Melb. goods). L. G. Comer Spotswood has gone to the Health Department.

Recent retirements included Special Clerk T. H. Clark of Flinders-street, Clerk A. Morris of Melbourne goods, Stationmaster L. W. Cooper of Colbinabbin, and Guard J. O'Connell of Melbourne yard. —A.

## Last Mile Post

JOHN CECIL BOYLE

THE death of Mr. J. C. Boyle has removed one of the most popular members of Government Tourist Bureau staff.

He had five years' service at Camberwell and Flinders-street as junior clerk before going to the Bureau at the beginning of 1925. With the exception of four years with the Bureau overseas, he remained with the Bureau until his death.

## AN ILL WIND

FLOOD waters in the Orbost district following the exceptionally heavy rain in Eastern Gippsland during the early part of last month, brought additional revenue to the railways by inundating some of the paddocks.

A special train of 13 trucks was ordered on short notice and ran on July 12 to dispose of cattle from the flooded areas to Newmarket for the following day's sales.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to railwaymen in the service. Personal papers and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publicity Board, Head Office.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia by the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston Street, North Melbourne, for the Publication of the Victorian Railways Commissioners.

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# The V.R. News Letter

## Traveller Jumps Through Window

WHEN the Goulburn Valley train was speeding between Nagambie and Mangalore one day last month, passengers were startled by the sound of breaking glass, and on investigation found the body of an unknown traveller huddled on the floor of the carriage corridor beneath a broken window.

THE traveller, who was dazed but apparently only slightly hurt, held no ticket for the journey and refused to answer questions, but it was surmised that he had swung himself from one of the trees beside the line through the window of the moving train.

Although he had broken several windows—as well as the window—immediate action was taken against him, and he was liberated at the next stopping station.

It was, so far as is known, the first opossum to board a Victorian train in this way.

The incident recalls an account, which appeared in an eminently respectable American railway magazine some time ago, of a deer which was caught in a railway cutting by a fast moving train. The deer tried to run up the steep face of the cutting but lost its footing and fell back on to the locomotive, crashing right on to the engine, where its frantically lashing antlers broke an arm of the astounded driver.

## Latest Revenue Figures

UP to August 14, railway earnings since the beginning of the financial year had aggregated approximately £964,000, or some £100,000 less than the earnings for the corresponding period of last year.

Goods and live stock receipts had increased by more than £38,500 to £1,000,000, although a welcome improvement was being registered in passenger receipts for the last fortnight, and passenger receipts had decreased by more than £11,500 to £412,000.

## Dried Fruit Record

THE largest consignment of dried fruits ever despatched from Victoria by one ship was loaded on the s.s. *Canadian Highlander*, which departed Victoria Dock for Canada on August 4.

The fruit was railed from packing sheds at the Mildura and Swan Hill stations and comprised 110,226 boxes and approximately 2,755 tons.

## March of Progress Mr. Clapp Reviews V.R. Improvements

IN an address last month, Mr. H. W. Clapp made interesting references to the changes and improvements which have been taking place in Victorian railway methods and practice during the past few years.

HE pointed out that country goods and passenger trains have been accelerated and timekeeping substantially improved, and that the big Pacific locomotives have made the Sydney Limited the fastest train in the Southern Hemisphere, and have also helped to reduce operating costs.

The tractive effort of our most powerful goods locomotive ("X" class) is now 80 per cent. greater than the standard of 15 years ago ("A1" class), and—thanks largely to the automatic couplers—the average goods

### 100 Per Cent. Wage Cut

A 100 PER CENT. wage cut has been put into effect by the Kansas City Southern Railroad Co. at Texarkana station. Only one "employee," however, is the victim of this drastic slash—"Texarkana Tom," the only cat ever actually carried on a railroad payroll.

Four years ago the cat was "hired" for one and a half dollars a month to catch rats which were destroying hundreds of dollars worth of freight in the company's warehouse. The cat's "salary" was spent for milk and other feline delicacies with which to top off its heavy "meat diet."

The depression, however, numbered Tom among its victims, and last week his name was crossed off the payroll. He doesn't know it, though, and he's still "working." But the only pay he'll get from now on is the rats he kills.

train load hauled is now 35 per cent. greater than it was 10 years ago and 72 per cent. greater than 20 years ago.

We are now hauling with a single locomotive train loads considerably in excess of 1,000 tons.

That latest form of railway locomotive, the petrol rail motor unit, has been introduced on a number of lines to provide a better service at lower cost.

A modern service of insulated motor vehicles has been arranged for the transport of butter from the Cool Stores to the ship's side, thus putting money into the pockets of the primary producer.

Other changes include the development of the train control system, the co-ordination of road motor services with the railway system, and the use wherever practicable of containers for the carriage of parcels and goods.

## Railway Fruit Bill is £22,000

DESPITE a decrease in the sales of fresh and dried fruit, fruit drinks, and raisin bread from railway stalls and refreshment rooms during the last financial year, the Department was still a good customer for the fruit grower, the amount paid for supplies aggregating £22,224 compared with £25,022 for the preceding year.

AT the end of June, 27 special fruit and fruit-drink stalls were conducted by the railways throughout the State. Citrus, in the rind and in the glass, was easily the most popular fruit. No fewer than 21,237 cases of citrus, including grape fruit, were purchased during the year at a cost of £9,155. More than 852,000 fruit juice drinks were disposed of at railway stalls, where 86 extractors were in use at the end of the year.

### 13 Tons of Dried Fruit

Dried fruits were used for raisin bread manufactured at the departmental bakery and were sold in packets from fruit stalls. Nearly 10 tons of fruit were stirred up in the ingredients for the 111,339 loaves of raisin bread baked during the year, and a further three tons were sold in the shape of 41,174 packets of raisins and sultanas.

The usual publicity to stimulate the consumption of fruits was continued during the year by means of posters, calico signs, and recipe booklets. Berry fruits, potatoes and onions were all featured by recipe leaflets or pamphlets, and sales benefitted accordingly.

### Wheat in Bulk

THE final truckload of the 200,000 bushel consignment of wheat despatched in bulk from Oaklands to Kensington reached its destination on August 5. In all, 5,359 tons of grain, representing 335 truck loads, were carried.

Total revenue from this loading was £3,988, of which £680 was credited to the new line between Yarrowonga and Oaklands.

### Snow Sports Popular

THE exceptionally favorable conditions for snow sports at Mt. Buffalo National Park have been reflected in very satisfactory bookings at The Chalet.

From the beginning of July until the time of going to press, there was an average of approximately 150 guests at the Chalet daily.

## The Month's Topic

### Progress—and a 78th Birthday

**T**HE Victorian Railways will be 78 years old on the 12th of this month. On that day in 1854, the first train to run in Australia was hauled from Flinders-street to Sandridge (Port Melbourne) by the first steam locomotive to be built in Australia.

The seven-league strides of progress which the State has made since then have been mainly along the steel tracks of the railroads. Railway expansion has made possible the development of the far-flung resources of Victoria, and has played as big a part as water conservation in the transformation of the Mallee.

Indispensable to progress 78 years ago, the railways are still indispensable today. Primary production would be impossible without them. In normal times, the State looks to them for approximately half its revenue . . . .

Victorian railwaymen can take pride in the fact that, although the inescapable commitments of £10,000 a day in interest charges have caused another deficit, the financial return of the Victorian railways on property investment in the two leanest years in history have been superior to the results of either the British or American railways.

For the financial year just closed, the Victorian return on the railway capital investment was 4.14 per cent.—better than for the previous year, for which the return was 3.09 per cent. Few businesses are showing better results today.

So—many happy returns of the 13th! Perhaps happy *traffic* returns would be a better expression.

### Changes at Caulfield

**T**HE final touches are now being given to a new combination booking and parcels office at Caulfield, which will be brought into use about the middle of this month.

**C**AULFIELD station comprises an island platform between two single-faced platforms, but the bulk of the traffic is handled from the island platform, where the available accommodation is being re-arranged to provide improved facilities for the public and to secure greater efficiency in working the station.

The new office has been built fronting the subway to replace the existing office at the head of the ramp serving platforms Nos. 2 and 3. Five roll-front ticket cabinets of the latest type, each of 216-tube capacity, have been installed and provision has been made for three booking windows instead of two.

## No Other Signal-box Like This One

North Fitzroy "A" Box Had Five Safeworking Systems

**M**ESSRS. E. L. NUNN, G. E. Moriere, C. L. Hooper and C. J. Donovan are signalmen holding a unique position. They are stationed at North Fitzroy "A" box, where they are regularly called upon to control train operations under four different systems of safeworking.

No other signal-box in Victoria incorporates so many systems.

**T**RAINS to Whittlesea, Clifton Hill, Royal Park and on the Fitzroy goods line are all controlled by this box, a different system being used for each track.

Whittlesea line trains are run on the electric staff; double line block is installed on the Royal Park side; the goods line is operated under staff and

ticket conditions; and the suburban track to Northcote junction is governed by lever locking and track control.

Incidentally, this last system was brought into operation from the 1st of last month, replacing the tablet system so that during the last couple of months there have actually been five systems of safeworking in use.

Under the old system, the driver of a train entering the section between North Fitzroy "A" box and Northcote junction was required to hold a tablet as authority, but this has now been dispensed with. The signalmen at both ends of the section now require to co-operate in operating the electrically-controlled signals governing the entrance of trains to and from the section.

## Striking Tribute to Rail Service

The following interesting letter was received last month by the Chairman from Mr. Cyril Steele, a prominent Melbourne business man:

**H**AVING just returned from a trip round the world, and having experienced railway travel in many countries, I take this opportunity of saying how favorably rail travel in Victoria and New South Wales compares with that of other parts of the world.

"When we reached Sydney, we were met on the boat by a representative of the N.S. Wales railways, who handed out tickets to us in a most satisfactory and courteous manner.

"Our journey from Sydney to Melbourne was all that could be desired in comfort and service. The smooth stopping and starting of the train was

particularly noticeable after the severe jolting experienced on all trains from New York to Vancouver, when it was difficult to stand up or even get to sleep.

"The breakfast provided on the Victorian train was the cheapest and best we had received on any train since leaving home, and the Victorian observation car was much superior to the car on the C.P.R. that one has heard so much about.

"The only trains comparable to ours, in my opinion, are the English ones, which are indeed excellent.

"It affords me great pleasure to write this letter to you, knowing that in the thousands of transactions with my company has with the railways each year, everyone seems out to be us in every possible way, and a sincere appreciation should do much to further improve such a very wonderful service.

## Goods Traffic Shows Improvement

**F**AVORABLE auguries in the railway goods business recently included increases in revenue of £3,491 and £6,900 for the weeks ended August 7 and August 14 (as compared with the corresponding periods last year), an increase in firewood loading and an increase in the timber traffic.

The increases in revenue are particularly gratifying as they followed a series of weekly drops of as much as £20,000 since the new financial year began.

**T**HE wool season has begun and indications are that the quantity to be railed this year will appreciably exceed last year's loadings.

Improvement in the building trade has been reflected in a greater tonnage of sawn timber despatched from country mills. Sustenance organisations, by distributing supplies of firewood, have been largely responsible for the growth

in this class of traffic.

Outwards loading has also improved the number of loaded trucks despatched from the Melbourne goods sheds each day being slightly in excess of the truckings for the corresponding period last year.

### More Work for Type-writer Mechanics

**T**OWARDS the end of last year when the railway typewriter mechanics were being rationed because of the reduction of work arrangements were made for the maintenance of all State public service typewriters to be carried out by the department.

This added 929 typewriters to the 725 railway machines and has kept the mechanics fully engaged.

## Relief Funds Devoted to Rail Works

### Employment Provided for Nearly 2,000 Men

AS the result of representations made by the Commissioners, the Government, on the recommendation of the Employment Council, recently approved of £132,000 being allocated from unemployment relief funds to carry out various railway works, the estimated cost of which is about a quarter-of-a-million pounds.

The amount allocated by the Government represents the labor proportion of the cost of the works and the balance—representing the cost of materials—will be found by the Commissioners.

It is anticipated that employment will be provided for approximately 1,840 men for an average of six months, 1,140 being required for works in the country and the others in the suburban area. Most of the men will have been engaged before the end of August.

In addition to the funds provided by the Government, the bulk of the cost being found by the Commissioners represents direct labor. Approximately £60,000 will be paid to

be divided broadly into four classes, viz., relaying, re-sleepering, re-conditioning and draining tracks, and cleaning and draining station pits. Reduced maintenance costs for both the rolling stock and the track will result from these works, which will also assist in minimising electrolysis troubles.

Proposed re-sleepering and re-balancing works in the country are in accordance with the policy of bringing the lighter tracks up to the standard neces-

## RAIL TRUCKS WITH MOVABLE ROOFS

As an experiment, the Kenya and Uganda railway company has purchased 10 wagons fitted with a movable roof, the invention of a Swedish engineer.

The problem of empty wagon mileage is a very serious one in East Africa, the demand up-country being almost entirely for closed vehicles, whilst at the coast the most popular is the large open wagon. It is considered, therefore, that this new device will increase the interchangeability of rolling stock. Successful trials have been made with loading of cased sisal, and the great advantage is that traffic can be loaded by means of manual labour.

The method by which a van is virtually converted into an open wagon is ingenious one. The roof is divided

lengthways into two portions, and a shaft on the top of the vehicle operates upon a gear rack, being connected by a bevel gear to a vertical shaft which is rotated by a crank fitted at the end of the wagon and connected to the shaft by a worm gear. The vehicle is opened by releasing the locking device and rotating the crank handle at each end, the two halves of the roof being thereby split apart.

The invention has already been examined by representatives of the British railway companies, who decided that conditions in this country did not call for its adoption as a standard. Nevertheless, it was considered that wagons so fitted might well be used between selected points. To private siding owners, also, the invention might be the means of effecting economy in time and labour.

cutters and a further £25,000 to be allocated.

The proposed works comprise re-laying of the line between Ararat and Seawell, between Benalla and Werronga, and at various points on the northern line, and improvements to the permanent way on country and suburban lines. All the works are considered desirable from the point of view of efficiency in railway opera-

All the men required for the extra works are being engaged through the Government Labor Bureau and its branches in the country. Only married or single men whose domestic circumstances place them in the same category as married men, are engaged, and they are being utilised on laboring work only, any skilled work necessary being carried out by regular railway employees.

The work in the suburban area can

sary to carry the heavier train loads which are now being hauled. In consequence of the building of more powerful engines and the installation of automatic couplers, goods train loads have been substantially increased in recent years, the average goods train load in 1931-32 having been 15 per cent. greater than in 1925-26.

The reduction of train mileage is one of the most important factors in efficient railway working and substantial operating economies have been effected on many lines by handling traffic in larger train loads.

Increased efficiency will also result from the regrading works.

Works carried out with unemployed relief funds in the past include the painting of the exterior of the station buildings at Flinders-street and Princes-bridge, the repairing of roadways, re-conditioning of tracks, cleaning and draining of pits, and cleaning up of yards at various stations.

## More Fare Reductions

TO combat the loss of railway passenger traffic to motor services, day return tickets at holiday excursion fare, were introduced to and from stations within 20 to 27 miles of Melbourne from the first of this month.

THE new fares represent reductions of 21 per cent., first class, and 13 per cent., second class, as compared with the previous return fares between Frankston and Melbourne. Periodical fares have not been affected as they were already computed on the equivalent of the extension of the suburban scale and were much lower than the general mileage scale.

Stations concerned on the various lines are Frankston, Cranbourne, Berwick, Selby, Coldstream, Hurstbridge, Whittlesea, Beveridge, Sunbury, Melton and Manor and those closer to Melbourne. Mt. Evelyn and Beaconsfield, although just beyond the 27-mile zone, have also been granted the concession.

In addition, return tickets are being issued at arbitrary fares between Mornington and Melbourne. These tickets are available for return for one week and the fares are 9/- first, and 6/- second-class return, as compared with the previous return fares of 13/8d. and 9/2d.

A similar facility has been extended to Healesville, Warburton and Gembrook, holiday excursion fares being charged for tickets available for return for one week. The fares to these terminal stations will, of course, be the maximum charged from intermediate stations to Melbourne.

It is confidently expected that these concessions will materially assist not only in stemming the drift of passenger traffic to the roads but also in regaining some of the lost business.

## Mt. Buffalo Souvenir

THE latest addition to the list of tourist booklets published by the Department is a de luxe souvenir album of photographs featuring Mt. Buffalo National Park.

Placed on sale at 1/- a copy at The Chalet during the latter part of July, the booklet proved so popular that 335 copies were disposed of in the first 10 days. These brisk sales are being maintained.

The publication comprises 32 pages of magnificent photographic studies, a double-spread map of the plateau and brief articles descriptive of the National Park and its geological history.

The souvenir was printed at the railways printing office at North Melbourne, and copies are on sale at The Chalet, the Government Tourist Bureau and at railway bookstalls.

# Personal Postscript

## Delivered The Goods

**THOMAS RICHARD LUKE SEXTON** is a railwayman who has drunk deep of the Pierian spring of transportation knowledge since he started as a junior clerk at Echuca in 1885. Cramped into his first 34 years of railroading was experience at stations, in the Seymour District Supt.'s office, in the staff office, and in Room 1. While at Prince's Bridge as s.m.'s clerk he was one of the founders and first secretary of the railway band. He relieved the refreshment services chief, the ambulance officer, and the transportation stores officer and supervised the railway fire-fighting appliances and the operations of the original footwarmer plant. He undertook special investigations into the cost of operating the suburban railways with steam locos. when electrification was being talked of, and he was the first officer-in-charge of ticket collection. Then followed periods as Asst. District Supt. at Ballarat and at Bendigo, in the train running room, and as S.M. at Castlemaine before he became District Supt. at Maryborough. The remaining 13 years were spent as Melbourne Goods Supt., from which position he is about to retire.—C.S.

## New Supt.

**MR. JACK HEARLE**, who has been in charge of the truck supply section, in Room 10, has taken over from Mr. Sexton as Goods Supt. He joined the Transportation branch as junior clerk in 1897, and for many years was attached to the truck supply division. He was transferred to the Secretary's office in 1920 as secretary to Mr. Commissioner Miscamble and later to Mr. Commissioner Molomby. He returned to the Transportation branch in 1926 and has since been in charge of his old room. Mr. Pym. Goode, who has followed Mr. Hearle as officer-in-charge truck supply, has been a railroader since 1901, and is another Room 10 veteran.—"Weet."

## September Birthdays

**FIREMAN J. CLANCY** of Bendigo, Cecil Widdop of Room 2 and Fireman H. P. Tomlinson of Geelong, on the 1st; Asst. Manager J. Taylor of Newport and Phone Engineer E. G. Godfree, on the second; Night Depot Foreman E. W. Ford of Maryborough, on the fourth; Train Examiner T. Orchard of Seymour, R.S.M. Tom Mulcahy and District R.S. Supt. E. Hinds of Ballarat, on the sixth; Secretary for Railways E. C. Evers and Asst. Chief Mechanical Engineer A. C. Ahlston, on the eighth; Optg. Porter M. T. Wighton of Stony Point, Shunter T. A. Grierson of Wangaratta and Night Depot Foreman T. Bates of Bendigo, on the ninth; Claims Agent J. Southam and Senior Time-keeper Tim O'Donoghue of North Loco. depot, on the 10th; Donald McDonald of Room 9, Leading Porter Martin Young of Ararat and Guard W. B. Williams of Ballarat, on the 11th; Supt. A. W. F. Smith of Melbourne yards, Driver A. Hunt of Geelong, Porter J. F. Kelly of Warragul, Works Subforeman M. Higgins of Warrnambool and

Signalman R. Macklan of Benalla, on the 12th; District R.S. Supt. Frank Boodle of Seymour, on the 15th, Elect. Fitter in Charge J. Hammond, of Dandenong and Elect. Fitter J. Finch of Bendigo, on the 16th; Tom Doyle of the Rolling Stock drawing office and Traffic Inspector R. S. Phillips, on the 18th; Photographer W. Howieson, Driver A. E. Dent of Korumburra and Driver J. Ingoldby of Ballarat, on the 19th; Works Foreman W. J. Beanland of Sale, on the 20th; Asst. General Supt. W. Thomas, Signal Engineer Colin Young and W. and W. Materials Clerk Jim Duncan, on the 21st; District Engineer E. B. Slater of Geelong, on the 22nd; Train Examiner W. Oliver of Warragul and Jock Jory of the W. and W. correspondence room, on the 23rd; Signals Maintenance Engineer W. Forrest and Signal Adjuster E. S. Bishop of Dandenong, on the 25th; Printing Officer Milton Gray, on the 26th; Fireman C. Tait of Ararat and Fitter R. G. Elliott of North truck shops, on the 28th; and Fireman R. E. James of Ararat, on the 29th.—A.L.

## Naming V.R. Stations

No. 19: BARRAPORT

**THIS** was formerly "Barrapoort," a name constructed by a resident of the locality. "Barrapit" was the native name of the place, and the nearest post office was at Boort. Taking "Barra" for the native name and "oort" for Boort, the resident added "p" and thus produced "Barrapoort." An "o" was subsequently deleted.

## Flinders-st. Pair

**TWO** Flinders-street veterans terminated long careers last month—Signalman Paddy O'Neill, who has been in charge of Flinders-st. "E" (the State's busiest junction) for the past 12 years; and "Colonel" Jack McDonald, who has been head-portering at Flinders-street for the last three years. Both of them started at Prince's Bridge as porters the best part of half-a-century ago, but while Paddy remained in the signal-box, Jack exchanged lever-pulling for platform patrolling, and became head porter at Spencer-street, where he remained for 10 years before coming to Flinders-street.—H.E.C.

## Passed with Credit

**DURING** his 32 years as a railwayman, Bill Piggott who retired recently from the position of examining officer in the Way and Works branch, won the lasting friendship of railwaymen from one end of Victoria to the other. A thoroughly practical permanent way man, he was 12 years as a repairer, nine years as ganger, and three years as special ganger before his appointment as examining officer in 1924. No greater tribute to his popularity could be found than the fact that his railway friends clubbed together to present him with a wallet containing £120 in notes, an electric

wireless set, a handbag for Mrs. Piggott, a dressed doll for his granddaughter, J. M. Ashworth, branch chief, made presentation, supported by Asst. C. Engineer Goudy, Supt. Engineer Fethi, District Engineer Evan Richard, Chief C. Easterby, Staff Clerk Way, Mr. Ford representing the signals section, and R. Foreman Campbell, Special Ganger Kilman, Ganger King, and Repairer Martell, representing the outside staff. All grades of Way and Works branch to the number of assembled to wish him good health. A forerunner to the presentation, Mr. Piggott was entertained at a dinner and theatre party by the Way and Works Staff Office social club the preceding evening. He takes this opportunity of thanking all those who generously contributed, and particularly whom he will not be able to thank personally.—S.C.W.

## Good Scout

**FOURTEEN** years in the Traffic branch and 29 years in the estate office compare the railway experience of Charles Middleton who retired at the end of last month. He is widely known and well liked as a railwayman but he was even more widely known because of his spare time activities in the scout world. He had been in turn asst. scoutmaster, district scoutmaster, and chief scout commissioner, from which office he retired four years ago. He has since been commissioner for the Camberwell district.—P.

## W. and W. Veteran

**WORKSMAN E. J. HAINS** of North Melbourne retires early this month after 44 years of railway service to his credit. He started as carpenter in 1888, became foreman in 1900, district foreman in 1911 and worksman nine years later. He was at Seymour for some time before going to North Melbourne.—

## Trans. Gleanings

**STATIONMASTER E. BIESKE** of Bendigo has retired after 44 years service. He joined as a porter, and was Stationmaster Willaura, Newlyn, Cressy, Nyora, State Mine Donald and Stawell before entering first-ranks at Benalla some six years ago.

Suburban Guard J. Wookey of Launceston retired last month.

Clerk W. H. Davenport, well-known member of the Melbourne goods staff, retired recently.

## Last Mile Post

GEORGE H. BROOME

**AFTER** a brief illness, Mr George H. Broome, General Manager of the State Coal Mine, died at his home at Wonthaggi August 9.

He was widely known as a coalmining expert not only in Australia but also in New Zealand and Canada, and had been in charge of State Mine since its inception in 1909.

The township of Wonthaggi is a monument to his engineering and organising ability in developing the mine.

## JAMES A. HANRAHAN

**GENIAL** old Mr. J. A. Hanrahan, who was clerk in the stationmaster's office at Flinders-street, died recently, following a long illness.

He was a well-known stationmaster of an old school, and was for some years on special train staff of Room 2.

## THOMAS B. COOK and ALBERT WATKINS

**TWO** retired railway safeworking experts died recently—Mr. T. B. Cook, metropolitan block and signal inspector, retired about 11 years ago; and Mr. Albert Watkins, one-time asst. safeworking expert who retired two years ago.

Both men had long service in the Department.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to railwaymen in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Progress Board, Head Office.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia by the Victorian Railways Printing Works, Launceston street, North Melbourne, for the Publication of the Victorian Railways Commissioners.

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# The V.R. News Letter

October, 1932

Issue No. 25

## Victoria is Losing its Longest Viaduct

VICTORIA'S longest viaduct, which crosses the Yarra-river and its low-lying flats between the stream and Yarra Glen for 7,365 ft., is to become an embankment. The openings in the viaduct are being gradually filled in.

THE original viaduct comprised 502 openings, of which 10 were closed previously. Work is now proceeding with the filling-in of another 362 openings. When the work is completed, seven bridges (totalling 1,365 ft.) will remain, the two largest comprising 38 openings over the central river channel and 58 openings over the principal flooding occurs.

Two bridges at the Melbourne end, each consisting of four 15-ft. openings, and a bridge of three 15-ft. openings at the Yarra Glen station end, serve as under-crossings for stock.

A drag line excavator, specially manufactured to meet railway conditions, is being used to reduce costs to a minimum. In fact, without the assistance of the mechanical excavator, the work would not have been undertaken as the cost of filling by other means would have been prohibitive.

The excavator was obtained 3½ years ago and was designed for carriage of railway trucks without dismantling. Loading and discharge can be effected from trucks by the machine's own power in station yards, at level crossings, at occupation crossings, or at points where level ground adjoins the track. The machine works on a caterpillar track and has a 35 ft. jib to enable the grab to work over a wide area.

The grab has a capacity of five-eighths cubic yard of earth and will be required to shift 140,000 cubic yards on the Yarra Glen job. To furnish suitable filling, additional land has been acquired to extend the railway reserve to a width of three chains.

The filling will be completed in a couple of years' time and approximately another two years will elapse before the last of the existing superstructure will be removed from the sections now being filled. Improved track conditions and a reduction in maintenance expenses will result and the remaining openings will be of sufficient capacity to provide a get-away for all flood waters.

Filling work on bridges is continually being carried on along railway tracks as experience has shown that a number of the bridges provided more than sufficient waterway, due in many instances to the development of the country. During the last ten years, between seven and eight miles of bridges have been closed, but there still remain approximately 62 miles of railway bridges in Victoria.

The drag line excavator is used only for filling openings of bridges which are too high to make it economically possible to carry out the work by hand or work-train. Its first task was on the Yea river bridge at Yea, followed by work on the Goulburn bridge at Molesworth, the Kiewa bridge at Wodonga, four bridges on the Yarrowonga line near Tungamah, and the Goulburn bridge at Murchison, from which last location it was transferred to Yarra Glen.

## 3YB Leaves Road for Rail

MOBILE Broadcasting Station, 3YB, which, for the past year or so, has been touring Victorian country districts in motor coaches and broadcasting musical selections and advertising matter from the more important centres, will in future travel by rail.

TO accommodate the broadcasting equipment and to provide living quarters for the attendants, the mobile car has been chartered by the company, a collapsible aerial has been fitted, and minor structural alterations have been made to the car.

The Melville car, which was for-

merly a State car, is self-contained, comprising two saloons separated by a section containing lavatory, shower and small kitchen. Sleeping accommodation for three attendants is provided by couches and bed chairs, and a table and chairs converts the larger saloon into a comfortable living room.

Broadcasting will be carried out at Camperdown station from September 29 to October 4, Colac, October 5-8, Seymour, October 17-22, Murchison, October 24-26, Shepparton, October 27-November 5.

Railway propaganda will be broadcast each night from the station as part of its regular programme.

## 1931-32 in a Nutshell

Gross Revenue	... £9,530,812
Working Expenses	... £6,401,519
Net Revenue	... £3,129,293
Interest and Exchange	£4,099,643
Deficit	... £970,350

## Pounds and Pence

AS usual, Spencer-street station earned most revenue during the last financial year—£1,203,224 from all sources. Flinders-street was runner-up with £291,945, and the Government Tourist Bureau filled third place with £164,130.

S POTSWOOD with £157,640, beat Yallourn (£147,487) for fourth place, and the only other station whose earnings ran into a six-figure total was Footscray with £118,451.

Ballarat was seventh on the list with £94,121; then came Geelong (£84,846), Wodonga (£82,516) and Bendigo (£80,230).

On the other hand, five stations on the Buninyong line failed to earn a single penny in revenue for the year. Woodburn, on the Daylesford line, had two passengers in the 12 months and earned 1/-; Stopping Place, No. 27, on the Yelta line, earned 1/2; Pispah, on the Waubra line, earned 1/7; and Miakite, on the Casterton line, earned 1/8.

Three other stations failed to reach 5/- for a year—Fielder, on the Gembrook line, 2/6; Skehan, on the Whitfield line, 3/-; and Stopping Place, No. 19, on the Koroit-Hamilton line, 3/11.

Refreshment services and dining car revenue contributed £276,296, rentals £139,989, mails £74,653, bookstalls £57,348, and advertising £42,424.

## Oil or Grease?

THE oiling of wheel flanges and rails on curves to reduce wear is proving satisfactory and economical, and the system is being extended.

Waste crank-case oil is generally used, but a device is at present on trial which applies a good-grade grease on the wheel flanges of trains passing over the viaduct between Flinders-street and Spencer-street.

Satisfactory results have been secured with the use of grease, but sufficient experience has not yet been obtained to enable the economics to be determined.

## The Month's Topic

### Bright Side of Annual Report

**D**ESPITE stagnant conditions, dwindling traffic and another big deficit, the annual report of the Commissioners for last year has a bright side to it.

First, there is the fact that the percentage of working expenses to gross revenue was only 61.68, which is the lowest for 20 years.

This helps to explain why the return on our capital investment was very much better than the average either of the four principal British railway companies or of all the leading railways of U.S.A. The average return for the year 1931 on the English investment was 2.82 per cent., and on the American railways 1.98 per cent. On the loan liability of the Department at June 30, 1932, our return was equal to 4.14 per cent.

### Achievements

Then, increased train loads were authorised on 35 sections, improving our average goods and live stock tonnage per loaded truck mile; and the general scheme of stores reorganisation, begun 10 years ago, was brought to finality in gradual stages, enabling a further reduction of £133,406 to be effected in the stores stock.

The percentage of suburban electric trains on time surpassed the 1930-31 record, advancing from 96.99 to 97.36; and although on paper the timekeeping of country passenger and mixed trains retrogressed, the trouble was primarily due to the drastic rearrangement in country schedules and the use of mixed trains for roadside shunting not provided for in the timetables.

There was an improvement, too, in claims payments for damaged and delayed consignments, the percentage of claims paid to revenue earned being 0.23, compared with 0.24 in 1930-31 and 0.31 in '29-30. . . .

### Staff's Efforts

All these improvements were clearly due in large measure to the special efforts of the railway staff to meet the most disheartening set of circumstances ever confronting the Department.

In acknowledging the "excellent service" of the staff, the Commissioners say that railwaymen "have responded freely to the call to put forth their best efforts. There are many evidences—including numerous letters of appreciation—of the co-operation between the employees and the patrons of the Department, and of the recognition by the staff of the need for them to function as active business-agents for the organisation rather than to confine themselves to the routine performance of their duties."

## Railwaymen to the Fore in Sport

**I**N a previous issue of the *News Letter* mention was made of the active part which Victorian railwaymen play in the field of sport. Typical happenings last month presented some evidence of the continuance of that interest in the administration of sport as well.

**F**OR the first time in the history of Victorian tennis, a church tennis association won its way last month into the final of the L.T.A.V. "A" grade premiership—the Methodist Tennis Association.

The achievement is of interest to railwaymen because three railwaymen are prominent members of the church association's executive. They are Mr. T. W. J. Cox, Superintendent of Goods Train Service, who is a vice-president of the association; Mr. J. Gilchrist, Service Engineer, who is a trustee, and Mr. A. W. Cobham, clerk to the

Claims Agent, who is the general secretary.

The other evidence of railwaymen's predominance in sport administration comes from northern Victoria and relates to football.

Railwaymen hold key executive positions in no fewer than four of the eight teams competing in the Korong Vale Football League. Mr. H. Bush, stationmaster, is secretary of the Quambatook club; Mr. Foster, stationmaster, is president of the Charlton club; Mr. T. J. Grant, stationmaster, is president of the Wedderburn club; and Mr. A. E. Gibson, train examiner, is president of the Korong Vale club.

*The News Letter would be glad to hear of similar examples of railwaymen's association with sporting administration in Victoria.*

### Siamese Twins: One Ticket or Two?

*If you were booking passengers at a country station and "Siamese twins" wished to travel, would you require them to hold one ticket or two tickets for their journey?*

**A**MERICAN railway legal officers are pondering over this problem, but their opinions are conflicting. One school of thought contends that, although Siamese twins are two persons and possess individual faculties, they are one inseparable human entity; they are so joined together that when one dies, the other must die; and wherever one goes, the other must go also. Consequently, one fare should cover their transportation by railway.

The other side avers just as strongly that two tickets are required because the subjects are designated "twins," and have all the physical characteristics of separate individuals. It is further urged that the original Siamese twins married and, probably, owned separate property. Clothing for two and meals for two would be required by the twins, and the merchant or restaurant proprietor supplying them could not be expected to be satisfied with payment for one outfit of clothing or one meal. In the same way, railways rendered the same service in seats and meals and transportation as for two separate persons. Age is the only governing factor in calculating the fares and, consequently, two tickets are required.

No decision has been reached by the American railways up to the present.

So far as the Victorian Railways are concerned, the official ruling is that, if the twins are over 14 years of age, two tickets are required; from 4 to 14, one full fare ticket is sufficient; and under 4 years, free travel would be granted.

Of course, Victorian booking clerks have never yet been confronted with this problem, but, should it arise in the future, they will know how to deal with it.

### Three Don'ts

*Don't grab sheep and lambs by the wool when discharging a truck stock—*

*Don't prod the animals with sticks—*

*Don't use untrained dogs—*

**R**AILWAYMEN engaged in the handling of stock should exercise the greatest care in loading and unloading operations.

Roughness in the handling of stock or neglect of the "three don'ts" mentioned can injure the appearance of the carcasses and definitely reduce the value of our export trade.

### Excursions to Yallourn

**T**HE Spring series of conducting excursions of school children to the State Electricity Commission's works at Yallourn started very auspiciously with a party of 400 who travelled through from Ballarat early last month.

From now until the end of the year there is hardly a week during which a school tour to Yallourn has not been arranged, and prospects are bright for breaking the record of 22 special trains carrying 9,100 passengers during the excursion season of last financial year.

### Appreciation

*The following letter of appreciation was received last month by the Chairman from Dr. W. L. Potter of Port Melbourne:—*

"I RECENTLY had to go to Tocumwal to meet a patient who was very ill. It was a bitterly cold day and it was a long way to the Stationmaster invited me to sit at his table and showed me other courtesies. When the train from Narrandera arrived, he and his staff were most courteous, considerably obliging in transferring the patient's case—to the van of the Melbourne train. The conductor of the train was especially attentive to the patient, her sister and I, and was exceedingly obliging to me also. "I would like all those officers to be formally notified that their care and gentleness and courtesy were greatly appreciated."

# Analysing the Year's Work

## Commissioners' Views on Slump in Traffic

**P**RICIMARILY the serious loss in working is due to continued stagnation of trade resulting from the world-wide economic crisis.

A further important factor contributing to the unsatisfactory financial results is the loss of business due to active and increasing road competition from both private and commercial vehicles.

"The railways cannot under these conditions earn sufficient net revenue to meet the interest charges arising from a capitalisation which was built up in years when the traffic was steadily increasing and which renders them incapable of handling a much greater volume of business."

With these words, the Commissioners preface their annual report for the year 1931-32.

THE Commissioners point out that the year's operations resulted in a deficit of £970,351—£508,214 more than in the previous year. Omitting the interest charges on capital and the cost of exchange (£441,000) on the interest charges, the betterment for the year, as compared with the previous year, was £809,750.

The revenue from all sources, £9,530,812 was £559,072 less than the preceding year, and £2,557,201 (27 per cent.) less than in 1929-30—marking retrogression. Not since 1920-21 has so low a revenue been obtained and in that year fares and freight rates were appreciably lower, and in the meantime the mileage of lines open for traffic increased by 10 per cent. and the population of the country by nearly 20 per cent. With these factors operating, a substantial increase in the volume of business would naturally be anticipated. There has been a great slump in the country passenger traffic. Up till 1922-23, 10,947,000 passengers were carried in this class of traffic showed a fairly steady increase, but since then it has steadily declined, almost without break in its downward course, to 8,200,000 passengers in 1928-29—this must be regarded as pre-depression—and to 5,142,000 in the year just closed.

Expressed in terms of money, the decrease in the revenue from the country passengers between 1923-24 and 1928-29 was actually £263,000, making the natural increase into

account, it was probably in the vicinity of £500,000. Between 1923-24 and 1931-32, the decline in this traffic (not allowing for any natural increase) represented a loss of revenue of £1,335,000.

If to this is added the loss of goods and live stock revenue, the total is a staggering one.

Commenting on these figures, the Commissioners declare that so long as the railways remain the indispensable medium of transport of this country—and the time cannot be visualised when they will not be indispensable—they must obviously be maintained in an adequate state of repair and operated at a standard acceptable to railway users. In present conditions, it is impossible to balance the expenditure (including interest on capital) with the revenue, and the difference must be met by direct taxation.

"No thinking person," the Commissioners add, "can believe that this country can prosper unless its railways function efficiently. The community, however, is being asked to pay too great a price for a service which is essential to its welfare. The position is so serious that further delay will be positively dangerous. The enactment of legislation to regulate unrestricted commercial road competition and to bring about a system of co-ordination in place of the duplicate transport facilities which now exist, has become a matter of most urgent necessity."

## Stamps and Locomotives

**C**OLLECTION of railway pictures—particularly of locomotives—is a popular hobby with many enthusiasts, and The International Railway Picture Club has been established in New York purely to assist its members to extend their collections.

The club is sponsored by *Railroad Magazine*, 280 Broadway, New York City, and has several thousand members all over the globe. Membership is free and is not limited to readers of the magazine.

Other collectors find interest in the gathering of postage stamps featuring railway work. One stamp catalogue lists no fewer than 352 railway postage stamps, including 160 depicting steam locomotives, 12 showing electric locomotives, and 38 featuring the inauguration of railways.

One stamp—a U.S. Pan-American issue of 1901 with a train placed up-side down by mistake—is catalogued at 2700 dollars a copy.

Another curiosity is a Guatemalan engine-picture stamp overprinted for air post service.

## Pith of the Report

**T**HE railway revenue from all sources, for the year was £9,530,812—£559,072 less than the earnings of the preceding year and £2,557,201 (or 21 per cent.) less than in 1929-30.

\* \* \*

The gross earnings per traffic train mile were 12/3/69d., compared with 12/6/64d. in 1930-31, 13/7/01d. in 1929-30 and 14/7/73d. in 1928-29.

\* \* \*

The percentage of working expenses to gross revenue was 61·68, which is the lowest in 20 years and compares with 72·43 in 1930-31 and 75·94 in 1929-30.

\* \* \*

Country passenger journeys totalled 5,142,078 (a decrease of 12·9 per cent. and the lowest for 25 years); and suburban passenger journeys totalled 120,848,507 (a decrease of 6·1 per cent.).

\* \* \*

Goods and live stock traffic showed an increase of 86,771 tons (or 1·4 per cent.) over the previous year, but the revenue decreased by £14,327 (or 0·3 per cent.).

\* \* \*

The percentage of trains on time in each of the last two years is:—

	1930-31	1931-32
Country passenger trains	... 90·74	89·81
Country mixed trains	... 84·59	81·64
Suburban electric trains	... 96·99	97·36

\* \* \*

The Spring Vale poultry farm provided 33,926 dozen eggs, and poultry valued at £1,049 for use in refreshment rooms, dining cars and The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park.

\* \* \*

The Departmental butchery, which purchases nearly all of the meat required for the refreshment services, handled 490,221 lb. of beef, mutton, pork and other meat of a wholesale buying value of £7,827. The butchery manufactured 30 tons of sausages for refreshment service patrons.

## Revenue Record

**C**OMPARED with the same period of last year, aggregate railway revenue up to the time of going to press, was more than £30,000 in arrears.

From July 1 to September 14, earnings were approximately £1,695,000; last year they were £1,725,000.

Goods and live stock receipts (£789,000) were down nearly £21,000, and passenger receipts (£696,000) were down some £6,000.

## Cup Fare Reductions

**T**HE usual big cuts will be made in country railway fares to Melbourne for the Melbourne Cup.

On October 26 and 27, cheap excursion fares will be issued, subject to the limit-charges of 60/-, first, and 40/-, second-class.

# Personal Postscript

## Bridge Builder

CHIEF Engineer for Railway Construction Charles H. Perrin reached the retiring age on September 30, after a lifetime as a railway engineer. Educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, and Dublin High School, he entered the railways in 1885 as engineering student. Survey work, field work in connection with the construction of new lines, and the design of bridges and other works occupied him until 1904, when he was transferred to the Way and Works branch to assist in the preparation of designs for the Flinders-street station buildings and associated works. Returning to the Construction Branch in 1907, he carried out the design and supervised the work of strengthening the road bridge over the Murray at Tocumwal, to make it suitable for railway traffic. The designing and the supervision of construction work of all bridges between Bairnsdale and Orbost, Gheringhap and Marooana, and on other lines were also undertaken by him. As designing engineer from 1918 to 1920, he was responsible for all stations, buildings, bridges, water supplies and other works on new railways. For the next three years he was asst. chief engineer for railway construction, securing promotion to chief engineer on August 20, 1923. During the nine years he was in charge of the construction branch, the 425 miles of new railways and the many important bridges built cost £3,900,000.

A wireless set and a hall lamp were presented to Mr. Perrin by the Railways Commissioners and the heads of branches, and at the time of going to press the Construction branch staff was preparing to make him a second presentation.—S.C.W.

## October Birthdays

ASST. Distribution Engineer W. Coe (Electrical branch) and Stationmaster E. C. Wade of Lockington, on the first; Shunter H. Phillips and Dist. R. S. Supt. J. Noonan, both of Geelong, on the second; Fireman S. Murrell of Orbost, on the third; Driver H. Cottier of Warrnambool, Signals Special Officer E. R. Roberts and Travelling Stationmaster H. J. Lennon of Morkalla line, on the fourth; Superintending Engineer H. N. May of Newport Workshops and Bill Frilay of the Melbourne goods, on the fifth; Driver L. H. Lawford of Ararat, on the sixth; Bill Spencer of Room 9 and Metro. Supt. M. A. Remfry, on the seventh; A. P. Burdeu of the train running room and Fireman L. Bennett of Warragul, on the eighth; Engineer Gordon Massey and Driver Paddy Zinnow of North loco., on the ninth; Stores Reclamation Officer H. G. Molloy and Guard E. P. Tyde-man of Oakleigh, on the 10th; Engineer Ronald Harvey and Fireman A. Fraser of Benalla, on the 11th; Johnny Barklamb of Seymour, on the 12th; Reg. Hunt of the metro. supt.'s office, Supt. of Refreshment Services W. D. Bracher, Driver F. W. Corrie of Ararat and Ganger E. F. McLean of Tarwin, on the 13th; Conductor Joe Keppel of Ballarat and Goods Guard R. H. Spiers of Bendigo,

on the 14th; Chief Clerk Tom Neal of Seymour, Tom Slattery of the W. and W. branch, and Train Despatcher T. R. Collier of Ballarat, on the 15th; Guard J. T. Sheehan of Melbourne yard, on the 17th; Railmotor Driver W. L. Spears of Yarram, on the 18th; Leading Shunter T. Cowdell of Geelong, on the 19th; Clerk R. H. Twose of Shepparton, Stationmaster Andy Larkins of Euroa, Fireman A. Tweedale of Ballarat and Dan Connell of the W. and W., on the 20th; Signalman A. Moverley of Melbourne Yard, on the 21st; Signalman W. Canning of North Fitzroy, Leading Shunter B. F. Lowday of Maryborough, and Train Despatcher L. K. Missen of the metro. supt.'s office, on the 22nd; Hall Officer Wally Wedgewood, on the 23rd; Guard F. Nash of Colac and Signal Supervisor C. Bass of Ararat, on the 24th; Guard R. Rowland of Maryborough and Ganger L. J. Eldridge of North Geelong, on the 26th; Porter J. Streeter of Stawell, on the 27th; Stationmaster D. R. Rees of Orbost, Guard R. P. Greaves of Geelong and Works Inspector F. Caudwell of North Melbourne, on the 30th; and Chief Clerk F. C. Campbell of the Refreshment Services, on the 31st.—A.L.

## Hiking Harkins

HIKERS accompanying the mystery trips organised by the Tourist Bureau have the privilege of being guided by a walking enthusiast who knows the tracks and trails of Victoria better than most Melbourneites know the city streets. Maurice Harkins of the G.P. and F.A.'s office, a railwayman with 11 years service, is the mystery hiker's friend. For some years, he has been spending his week-ends and holidays on the wallaby with Melbourne Walking Club parties, and the first-hand knowledge gained has stood him in good stead in conducting Tourist Bureau parties to Mt. Wellington and Lake Tarl Karg, across the Bogong High Plains, and to other little-known parts of the State.—S.O.S.

## Maryborough's Last D.S.

AFTER seven months as metro. supt. and 46 years as railwayman, Mr H. E. Russell has retired. He started at the bottom of the ladder as a porter in 1886 and was appointed stationmaster 13 years later. He had charge of several suburban stations, and had experience in western Victoria, Gippsland and the far north before coming to Shepparton in 1923. He was appointed dist. supt. at Seymour a year later and then went to Maryborough, where he remained until February of this year.—H.C.

## Opened Dandenong Box

RAILWAYMEN throughout the State will regret the necessity for retirement of Relieving Signalman W. Aiton, who has closed 42 years of service because of ill-health. Signalman Aiton ("Bull" to his many friends) opened the old Dandenong "A" box, and has been 20 years on the relieving staff, including spells in the busiest boxes of the State.—H.E.C.

## Melbourne Yard Identity

SENIOR Asst. Supt. John James of Melbourne yard is about to retire after more than 43 years' service. Essentially a practical man, he gained his knowledge of railroading in the hard school of experience serving in the varied roles of porter, labour number taker, shunter, leading shunter, goods guard before graduating as asst. foreman in the Melbourne yard in 1911. Five years later, he went to Bendigo as yard foreman, returning to the Melbourne yard in 1916 as asst. superintendent.—M.Y.

## 44 Years of Figures

BOOKKEEPER FERGUS TOWERS of Spotswood Storehouse, will sever ties with the railways on October 13 after 44 years' association with railway accounts. He started in the Accountancy branch in 1917, transferring to the Stores branch at the end of 1917. He has seen the Spotswood storehouse develop to its present high stage of efficiency, recording as he has the movement of the millions of pounds worth of material which have passed through since its establishment some seven years ago.—B.C.

## Record?

MICK MAHARDY, Armadale's popular s.m., has just closed what is perhaps a record for length of service at a suburban station. He came to Armadale over 20 years ago and remained there until his retirement last month. All told, he had 44 years service. His fare-giving him a presentation at a farewell party in the city.

## Civic Head

CIVIC honors have recently fallen on the shoulders of Milton Gray, chief controller of the department's primary activities at North Melbourne. Member of the Malvern Council for the past four years, he has now been elected mayor of their district for the next 12 months.—H.

## In Brief

ON behalf of the Murrumbidgee railway staff and the Flinders-street train running room, Stationmaster J. Lamb recently presented a travelling rug to Mr. R. E. Hender, who has been transferred to the Police Department.

Mr. and Mrs. P. H. Carey, ganger and caretaker at Merton were farewelled by district residents on the occasion of their transfer from the station. Mr. Carey was presented with a wallet of notes and Mrs. Carey with a handsome fruit-stand and silver sand tray.

## Last Mile Post

GEORGE DUNDAS BROWN

THE death of Mr. G. D. Brown, who died of double pneumonia, after a brief illness, has removed one of the most promising young men of the Transportation branch.

He joined the railways as supernumerary in 1913 and saw service in the Spencer telegraph office, whence he transferred at the end of 1916 to wireless operating duties on the troop ships Ormonde and Orford. He was appointed to the permanent staff in 1920, and was located in the Melbourne goods yard until 1923 when he was selected because of his accountancy qualifications to establish and develop a branch accountancy system. He was engaged on that work until his untimely death.

## JAMES MAGREE

THE death occurred at Ararat last month of Mr. James Magree, a retired railway veteran. Mr. Magree retired at Ararat as roadmaster, and had filled that position at Kilmore and Korong Vale. He was 96.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to railwaymen in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publicity Board, Head Office.

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# The V.R. News Letter

November, 1932

Issue No. 26

## THE WORM TURNED

**T**HIS is a story of a worm that turned—and turned and turned until it coiled its nine feet of moderate length into a six-inch package.

It was the first giant worm to leave Victoria alive. (Others, of course, have gone overseas but they have been preserved in oil). It was consigned to the Spencer-street to Adelaide for display at a Field Naturalist's Exhibition next month.

The railway staff anticipated the arrival of an attenuated, wire-drawn package containing the outstretched body of a nine-ft. passenger, they were disappointed, for a very ordinary-looking package—6 in. by 4 in. by 2 in.—was delivered for transport. In this the little traveller had coiled his giant length, and in this he slumbered peacefully and safely until arrival at his destination.

## New—Yet Old

**A** NEW automatic substation was required at Coburg. It might be thought that this would necessitate the importation of some expensive plant from overseas, but the rotary converter and its transformer—remnants of the earliest days of the electrification—were brought from the Brighton substation, and Spotswood Storehouse yielded a travelling crane and various odds and ends of switchgear and relays.

With these as a nucleus the engineers of the Electrical branch designed and constructed a complete automatic substation equipment which is now operating quite satisfactorily.

## Last of the T.P.O.'s

**V**ICTORIA'S last travelling post office disappeared with the recent abandonment of the Seymour-Melbourne service on the score of economy. Until a few years ago, similar facilities were provided on the Geelong, Bendigo and eastern Victorian lines, but these have also been abandoned.

The postal vans—"BDSE" cars, as they are known officially—are converted second-class carriages and contain sleeping rooms, the postal section occupying about half of the accommodation.

Several of this type of van have recently been converted into regular second-class carriages and the same awaits the newly-released vehicles.

## New Dynamometer Car Being Built from Salvaged Material

**F**INISHING touches are now being given to a dynamometer car which has been constructed for the joint use of the Victorian and South Australian Railways.

**T**HE car was designed by South Australian engineers, and was built at the Islington Workshops in South Australia. The equipment was supplied by Alfred J. Amsler and Co. of Switzerland, which company has a world wide reputation for the manufacture of apparatus of this kind.

The body work is largely renovated material salvaged from the Callington derailment, but the Australian craftsman's skill has built it into a strong and handsome car fit to house the valuable testing equipment.

The car is a self-contained testing unit ready to show in black and white the performance of all classes of rolling stock, from the immense power exerted by a heavy freight locomotive to the

friction in the bearings of the flying wheels of the Sydney Limited.

The engineer, without actual tests under service conditions, can only estimate the power of locomotives by calculations. He can measure the effort exerted by the steam in the cylinders, but he cannot tell the actual pull at the tender draw bar.

The dynamometer car is the link connecting tractor and useful load, showing the effort which can be exerted and the effort required to be exerted. The latter is the train resistance and depends on many factors. The dynamometer car will facilitate separate measurement of these under varying conditions, such as train speed, air temperature, wind velocity and direction.

The accurate knowledge of all these factors will enable train working to be more scientifically regulated and thus tend towards increased operating efficiency.

## Novel Christmas Holiday Tour

**A** NOVEL holiday tour—the first of its kind in Australia—has been planned by the Railways Department for this Christmas season.

**A** CHRISTMAS Holiday Train will tour the north-eastern district leaving Melbourne in the early morning of Monday, December 26, visiting Nagambie, Wangaratta, Wahgunyah (Corowa), Albury and Beechworth, and returning to Melbourne on Monday night, January 2.

At each of the places visited, accommodation will be reserved for the travelling holidaymakers and a day or more will be spent enjoying to the full an attractive and varied programme of amusement—motoring, sightseeing, picnicking, swimming, golf, tennis and bowls during the day time, and dancing, pictures and gala entertainment during the night time.

Then the Holiday Train will carry the happy party on to the next stopping-place of the tour.

The itinerary has been carefully planned to include features that will appeal to all tastes.

The all-inclusive cost, covering accommodation, travel, sightseeing and entertainment has been fixed at the moderate price of £9/13/6. Booking is open at the Government Tourist Bureau.

## Determining Value of Mail Freight

**L**AST month, the biennial weighing of mails was occupying the attention of a staff representing railway and postal interests.

Mails are carried by rail at half parcels rates, based on the rates operating at the beginning of 1917, with a percentage increase to cover the higher operating costs since that time.

Consequently, every second year, on 26 specified weighing days, each bag of mail despatched from each station on the system is weighed and recorded, and particulars are forwarded to the central staff, who determine the annual amount to be paid on mails for the two succeeding years.

## 25,000 Cup Day Picnickers

**M**ELBOURNE Cup holiday is a busy day for railwaymen.

Country racegoers flock to the city to join the thousands thronging the special trains to the showgrounds.

The holiday is also the biggest picnic day of the year for scores of suburban Sunday Schools.

At the time of going to press, more than 100 Sunday school picnic parties ranging in numbers up to about 450, had arranged to travel by rail to all parts of the outer suburbs. It was anticipated that, in all, about 25,000 children and parents would travel.

## The Month's Topic

### Railway Freight Rates

**R**AILWAY freight rates have been in the public eye lately, sundry self-appointed critics having subjected our rating system to verbose if vague denunciation.

The principle underlying railway rating systems is broadly the same the world over. The low-grade commodities are carried at the low rates necessitated by their relatively low value, and the more valuable commodities are charged higher rates. The creation of apparent inconsistencies in freight rates by this fundamental principle has led the recent critics to urge that some attempt should be made to effect "more reasonable uniformity" in the classifications.

This could be done, obviously, only by reducing some charges and raising others, which would naturally extinguish most of the low-grade traffic. Certainly, the more valuable traffic, such as general merchandise and drapery, would then enjoy lower rates representing only a very small proportion of its value; but there would then be very little of that traffic to carry, because with the extinction of low-grade traffic—primary produce and the like—there would be little business for anyone in any other direction.

### Low Average Rate

Last year the average railway rate for all classes of commodities, including high-rated and low-rated, was under 1½d. per ton per mile. Of the total tonnage of 6,186,081 tons, 3,833,547 tons consisting chiefly of primary produce, firewood, timber and so on, were carried at not more than this average rate. Approximately 2,728,000 tons were carried at not more than 1d. per ton per mile.

The rates on all this low-rated traffic—which, especially in existing conditions, is unable to bear high freights and still exist—would have to be increased in order to reduce the rates on traffic which is best able to stand the higher charges and upon which, unlike primary produce, the effect of railway freights upon the cost of marketing is relatively negligible.

The principle underlying the present rating system is not only the most equitable, but the only one possible if the most important industry in this country—primary production—is to be encouraged; if, indeed, it is to exist at all.

### Record of the Revenue

**F**ROM the beginning of the financial year until October 14, Victorian railway revenue was approximately £2,493,580, or some £26,500 less than the earnings for the corresponding period of last year.

## Railwaymen As Sport Executives

### Baseball, Cricket and Tennis Leaders

**B**ASEBALL and cricket can be added to tennis and football, as mentioned in last month's News-Letter, when considering the sporting interests which railwaymen are actively assisting to foster.

**T**HE key position in the baseball world is held by Jack Ellis of the Accountancy branch. He has been on the executive of the Victorian Baseball Association for the past five years; he has been chairman of the permit and umpire committee for three years; he is chairman of the Association's social committee; he represents the Association on the Australian Baseball Council and on the National Sports Promotion Council; he plays for South Melbourne; and he has captained the interstate side for the past four years.

The opening of the cricket season, too, finds two Transportation branch men doing their bit to help the game along.

Ken. Donald of Room 1 is president of the North Suburban Cricket Association which, with 98 clubs, is the largest in Australia. He founded the Associa-

tion and has been president for 16 years. He has also been an official of the Victorian Football Association for the past 24 years, and is on the committee of the Brighton Football club and the Brighton District Cricket Association of which last he is also a playing member.

Another cricketing enthusiast, Roy Rewell of the Asst. General Superintendent's office is honorary general secretary of the Eastern Suburbs Cricket Association.

A country nominee is Operator Porter T. V. Dwyer of Redcliffs, who is secretary of the local cricket club and also of the Redcliffs District Cricket Association which controls 10 teams and 250 registered players.

A well-known figure on the tennis courts at Kooyong is Engineer E. F. McIver of the Way and Works branch. He is a member of the Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria and, on numerous occasions, has competed with official teams in important county tournaments. He has also been prominent in interstate railway tennis circles.

## One Way of Describing a Locomotive

### "Something Fearsome and Prehistoric About It"

**H. L. Mencken** of the *American Mercury*—one of America's leading publicists—has penned a forceful description of the steam locomotive. His language, while not precisely that of the engineer, loco. man or shunter, is worth reading:—

... For what other machine ever seen on earth is as stupendous as a locomotive thundering down a long stretch of track, with black smoke bursting from its stack and its mighty drivers pounding the rails? Where is there another such sight, at morning, noon or night? What other contrivance of human hands is so stately, so regal, so overpowering?

A great ocean liner, at sea, is appallingly trivial looking; it thumps the imagination only when it is tied safely to a dock. A Zeppelin is a floating sausage. An airplane is not

even a bird, but only a bug. An electric locomotive remains a toy, though it weighs a hundred tons.

But even a lowly yard engine, there be steam in it, somehow fills the delights the eye. It belongs to a noble company of massive and gorgeous creatures—the elephants and the mastodons and behemoths, monarchs of land and sea. There is something fearsome and prehistoric about it; it is nearer to the dinosaur than to any living animal. It breathes flame like a volcano and it rumbles like an earthquake. When one stands by the trackside as it thunders by, belching its smoke, every sense is arrested—sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. It stuns the mind and coagulates the marrow of the bones.

It is not a mere thing. It is a work of cosmic event.

## Turks Barter "Puffs for Puff-Puffs"

**M**ODERN TRANSPORT recently carried the interesting story that negotiations were proceeding between Turkey and Poland for the exchange of 3,000,000 kilogrammes of Turkish tobacco for railway material from Poland, where apparently the locals have a weakness for tobacco.

On the basis of the prices ruling at a recent tobacco sale in Melbourne, the Turkish tobacco would be valued

at more than £1,000,000. So there were Victoria a party to the barter railway equipment supplied to the tobacco-wealthy Turks could compare the following:—

Twenty "A2" and six Pacific locomotives; six petrol-electric rail cars; five seven-car electric trains; 10 first-class and 20 second-class country cars; 100 40-ton and 705 16-ton trucks.

Rather expensive smoking for the Poles, it would seem.

## More Rails to be Arc Welded

BOTH the "up" and "down" tracks on the 4-mile St. Kilda line have now been equipped with rails built up of short rails welded together by the Thermit process.

The results have been so satisfactory that similar work will shortly begin on the Williams-down track at South Kensington this month, and the extension of the process to country lines is contemplated.

The Australian standard rail length as supplied by the mills is 45 feet, but rails welded into 225-foot lengths are installed in the St. Kilda line and, despite shade temperatures as high as 109 degrees (the highest for 20 years) and grass temperatures as low as 28 degrees, the track has not been adversely affected.

The rail joint is, of course, the weaker portion of the track so that the smaller number of joints the lower the maintenance costs. In addition, the elimination of joints by the welding process makes train travelling more comfortable and also reduces the stock maintenance costs.

Still further economy can be secured

by cutting off the battered ends of old rails which are otherwise serviceable and then welding them into 225-foot lengths. By this means a track of the highest order can be obtained, as experience on the St. Kilda line has proved.

Welding of the rails at Flinders-street platforms into long lengths is also being carried out but, instead of using the Thermit system, test sections are being welded by means of the electric arc. The electrical energy necessary is drawn from railway mains, keeping the cost to a minimum.

Before the welding operations are commenced, the whole of the joint is heated to ensure that temperature cracks will not develop. The pintsch gas which is available in the station yard for train lighting purposes is used for heating the joint.

In the design of welded joint approved for Flinders-street, a base plate is fitted under the ends of the rails and welded to them, the rail heads are solidly welded together, and the webs are welded by means of a shim, three-eighths of an inch thick.

## Record-breaking Butter Shipments

VICTORIAN dairying is still looking up. So—as a matter of course—is railway butter freight revenue.

In the 1931 dairying season, the railways hauled the greatest aggregate tonnage of butter ever recorded, but this record is now being eclipsed by the present season's figures.

For the fortnight ended October 8, last year, 258 trucks containing 2,491 tons of butter were run to Melbourne. During the corresponding period of this year, these figures rose to 321 trucks and 3,437 tons. The bulk of the butter produced this year has been a potent factor in helping to swell the general export trade. Here again last year's figures have been exceeded by nearly 100 per cent. From July 1 to October 8, 1931, 10,000 tons of butter were exported, compared with 8,739 tons during the same period of this year, when the total tonnage incidentally, while final butter production figures for this season are not available, it is of interest to recall that last season Victoria's contribution to Australia's total production of butter was 104,619, or 31 per cent.

The beneficial influence of the practical advice imparted from the Better Farming Train is plainly evident in the advance made by the dairying industry as a result of the impetus given to the herd testing movement. In 1924, when the Better Farming Train began its tours, there were eight dairymen's associations; now there are 24, of which 93,000 cows are being tested.

Many of the associations show an increase of over 100 lb. of butter fat per cow, and there are six associations with an average production of over 400 lb. of fat per cow. The average production of cows throughout the State is now 187 lb.

## "Ulysses" Here

FIRST British cruise-ship to include Australia in its itinerary, the s.s. "Ulysses" with 111 tourists from the United Kingdom is now in Australian waters.

The ship has already visited Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef, Brisbane and Newcastle, and is now moving on to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle, staying from two to six days at each port, where shore excursions have been arranged.

While the boat is at Melbourne, an endeavor will be made to organise a day trip for the tourists to Camperdown and Colac, including a view of a special round-up of kangaroos.

## Cheaper All-liners

SUBSTANTIAL reductions were effected in all-lines tickets last month.

The new reduced fares for the all-lines tickets are:—

Yearly, £100, first-class, and £75 second-class; half-yearly, £55 and £42; quarterly, £30 and £22/10/-; monthly, £12 and £9 14-days, £7/10/- and £5/10/-

## Writing-off Problem Special Committee

OF special interest to Victorian railwaymen was the appointment last month by the Minister for Railways (Mr. R. G. Menzies) of an expert committee to enquire promptly into the much-vexed question of writing-off railway capital.

MATTERS upon which Mr. Menzies has asked this committee to report are as follows:

1. What amount, if any, should be transferred out of the Railway's capital account to make that account represent only "live" and productive assets? A comparison is desired between the capital sum upon which interest is now charged against the Railways, and a sum that would truly represent the reasonable capitalisation of the Victorian Railways, regarded as a going concern in normal modern circumstances.

2. Assuming such transfer to occur, what annual provision would be needed in the future in the Railways accounts for such matters as depreciation, reserves, or any other matter for which, in the opinion of the committee, it would be proper to make provision?

3. Assuming such transfer, what alterations, if any, in the payments now made to the Railways by the Treasury should be made?

4. Apart from possible reduction of capital, does the committee suggest any other changes in the relationship now existing between Railways finance and the general finances of the State?

5. Assuming such reduction, can the committee offer any suggestion as to the provisions which should be made for the amortisation of the capital debt so transferred to the State's general account?

The committee comprises Messrs. E. V. Nixon, prominent public accountant, E. C. Evers, Secretary for Railways, and T. F. Brennan Comptroller of Accounts.

## Quick Ticket Work

WHEN the Royal Agricultural Society made its last-minute decision to reduce its admission charge for the last day of the Royal Show from 2/- to 1/-, the small staff in the railway ticket supply office were given an opportunity of showing how expeditiously and efficiently they could hustle.

WORD of the change was received by the ticket supply division of the Accountancy branch at 10 o'clock on Friday, September 23.

Two new issues were necessary—first and second class combined rail and admission tickets. The new ticket—20,000 of them—had to be supplied by the Government Printing office, split up into tens, checked, enveloped and despatched as value letters in time to reach the 180-odd suburban stations for issue first thing the following day.

And, of course, the necessary accounting work had to be attended to simultaneously.

Every station had its supplies the same night.

# Personal Postscript

Mick Enright Goes—New Metro.—First T.S.M.—25 Years at the Show

## Showgrounds Specialists

ONCE a railwayman has assisted in handling the Melbourne Show traffic at the showgrounds, there is a tendency for him to return again and again and to become an expert in the specialised requirements of the show people. Mark Rilen, who retired a couple of years ago, was at the showgrounds for 35 years, finishing up as goods sub-foreman. Albert Matthews was associated with Mark for many years as goods checker and, when he retires this month, he will have 43 years of railroading to his credit. For the past 25 years, he has been stationed at the showgrounds during the show period. Another showgrounds veteran is Ish Williams who has 23 shows to his credit. He is a signalman who already has 46 years of railway experience behind him and a couple more to go. But Ish has an advantage over his colleagues on the goods side—he returns each November to signal the cup trains to and from the racecourse platform.—“Weet.”

## November Birthdays

STATIONMASTER H. H. Perry of Geelong, on the first; Signals Engineer C. Melhuish, Repairer J. Kiely of Learmonth, and Fireman A. Carroll of Seymour, on the second; Stationmaster E. Cassell of Balranald, on the third; Yard Foreman F. Ring of Melbourne Yard and Asst. Stationmaster H. S. Mitchell, care Metro. Supt., on the fourth; Clerk H. G. Jones of North Loco., on the fifth; Driver W. H. Bishop of North Loco. on the sixth; Chairman D. Cameron of the Staff Board, on the seventh; Senior Clerk F. W. Millane of Oakleigh W. and W. on the eighth; S.M. Bill Killeen of Port Melbourne, on the ninth; Lad Porter R. Mason of Benalla, on the 11th; Percy Maher of Room 2, on the 14th; Guard H. W. Bowman of Ballarat, Shunter O. Blewett of Melbourne Yard, Telegraphist J. Curran of the Metro. Supt.'s office, and Fireman F. T. Rolfe of North Loco., on the 15th; Storeman-in-charge Sam Turner of Oakleigh W. and W. and Enginemaster's Instructor D. Morganti of Geelong, on the 16th; Dist. Supt. A. G. Fletcher of Geelong, Asst. Supt. of Refreshment Services A. W. Keown and Signal Supervisor C. Blee of Flinders-street, on the 18th; Sub-Foreman Bill Roberts of Newport, on the 20th; Porter J. Kenny of Benalla and Harry Poulton of the Secretary's branch, on the 23rd; Block and Signal Inspector W. J. Pearson of Geelong, on the 29th; and Clerk S. L. Greer of Melbourne Goods, on the 30th.—A.L.

## V.R. Beautician

GEORGE ALLEN, first landscape gardener in the railways, retired last month after spending 27 years beautifying railway stations and tracks. He learned his trade in England, and was in charge of the Daylesford gardens for some years before

Sir Thomas Tait, then Chief Commissioner, invited him in 1905 to exercise his talent in adding beauty to railway surroundings. In his capacity of judge in the station garden competitions, he was one of the most widely known railwaymen in the service; while shrubs and trees from the railway nursery, which he established and supervised, remain in station grounds and around departmental houses throughout the State, as a living testimony to his love of beauty. Nor were his artistic leanings confined to gardening, as he is also keenly interested in painting, old furniture and old china. A visit to Central Australia next winter is one of the pleasures he has promised himself now that his time is his own.—C.S.

## Another Step Forward

OUTSTANDING administrative ability, service in four branches and experience as a member of a government transport committee are among the qualifications of M. A. Remfry, new Metropolitan Superintendent. Commencing as a junior clerk in the Accounts branch in 1901, he transferred four years later to the Way and Works branch as engineering student and graduated as Bachelor of Civil Engineering. Two years drafting work from 1910 preceded his appointment as engineering assistant, followed by promotion to district engineer in 1918. When the district engineers were located in their districts at the end of 1921, he went to Oakleigh, where he remained until the Transportation branch claimed him in 1925 for service as relieving district superintendent. After travelling around the State, he came to rest at Seymour in 1929, remaining there until his recent transfer to the Metropolitan-Eastern district. He served as the Commissioners' representative on the Board of Discipline in 1927 and was a member of the Commonwealth Transport Committee which reported on the co-ordination of transport in Australia for the Commonwealth Government in 1923.—S.C.W.

## First T.S.M.

JUST retired after 48 years' service, J. H. Olsson, Principal Rates Clerk in the Traffic branch, was the first Travelling Stationmaster in the Victorian railways. He was given a roving commission in charge of the stations between Leongatha and Foster. He was also one of the Traffic branch's earliest special officers, being appointed some 27 years ago. Subsequently he became Chief Special Officer and Supervisor of Weighing, and was intimately associated with the detailed preliminary investigations into proposed railway lines in all parts of the State. In 1930, he was appointed Principal Rates Clerk, taking charge of the goods and weighing divisions of the branch. His retirement was the occasion for the presentation of a grandfather clock by his fellow-officers.—D.E.

## Anti-suicide Traps

ANTI-SUICIDE traps are being constructed at railway stations on the new tube extension Cockfosters (London), according to the *London Daily Telegraph*. The traps, it appears, consist of a trench beneath the rails running the length of the station platform.

The paper explains that a man jumping from the platform will fall into the trench out of harm's way from an oncoming train which will pass over his head. Then "when a train has passed, he will be able to get back to the platform."

And, presumably, have another

## Linked Boat and Rail

PRACTICAL experience and hard work were the factors that helped Mick Enright through his railway career until he became commander-in-chief of the Williamstown line in 1926. He is now about to retire after 40 years of railroading, during which he served in the varied roles of porter, signalman, shunter, goods foreman, clerk, assistant stationmaster, stationmaster, traffic inspector and train running officer. And, as he served in every district, including a number of years on the relieving staff, he can count railway friends by the thousands.—A.P.

## Presentations

CHIEF Engineer of Railway Construction C. H. Perrin, whose recent retirement was mentioned last month, was presented by the staff of his branch with an illuminated address album of photographs of important events carried out during his long association with the railways. A clock for Mrs. Perrin was also presented.—L.

Railwaymen gathered in force last month at the District Engineer's office, North Melbourne, to say good-bye to Workmaster J. Hains, who has retired after 48 years' service. Mr. Bye presented Mr. Hains with a set of diamond dress-studs, shaving outfit and a pair of razors in case, with the sincere hope he would retain his "present exuberant health and live long enough to wear the presents"—J.S.

Some 200 people farewelled Asst. Stationmaster T. O'Halloran of the Melbourne Yard, V.R. Institute recently, ill-health having compelled that popular railwayman's retirement. Speakers included ex-Commissioner of Railways, Mr. J. H. Mitchell, Messrs. B. Fitzpatrick, Geo. J. Jackson and other prominent retired railwaymen. A presentation had been made previously.—H.E.C.

Driver Ted Newton said good-bye to the chime whistle the other day after 12 years' service at Newport power house and 42 years' service. Engineer-in-charge A. Horton presented him with the staff's farewell gift—a travelling rug and bag and wallet for Newton, and the yard staff appropriately presented him with a neat model locomotive.—A.E.R.

## Last Mile Post

GEORGE McCONVILLE

MR. G. McCONVILLE, retired driver, died recently at Stawell. He had 55 years' service and was known and highly respected throughout the Western district. He drove the 30th express for many years.

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to railwaymen in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publicity Branch, Head Office.

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# The V.R. News Letter

December, 1932

Issue No. 27

## English Cricketers Score £396/10/10 for Victorian Railways

### TEST SCORES:

England	... £396/10/10
Australia	... £141/6/8

**L**UCKILY, scoring runs is not the same as scoring Victorian railway revenue. Otherwise England's Test team would already have the ashes safely in its keeping.

For while the Australian players' contribution to Victorian railway revenue in Test match travel is less than £150, the English team puts nearly £400 on the revenue score board.

**T**HERE are 29 persons in the English Test team's party—20 players and officials, five visiting pressmen, three Australian pressmen and the wife of one of the party.

In the course of their travels between the various capitals, they will pay £396 10 10 in revenue to the Victorian railways. This respectable total, which will not be affected by super-fueling or unexampled fielding, will

comprise the following scoring shots:

Rail fares in Victoria	... £256 16 7
Seat reservations	... 9 1 3
Vic. proportion of sleeping-berth charges	... 85 16 0
Meals (dining car and refreshment rooms)	... 44 17 0
	<b>£396 10 10</b>

**A**USTRALIA'S very moderate revenue score is an estimate, as the personnel of even the first Test team was not known when we went to press (although the editorial staff held no uncertain views on the matter).

However, it appeared likely that the Victorian railways would earn the following approximate revenue from the travel of the Australian test players in and through this State:

First Test (Sydney)	... £23 11 0
Second Test (Melbourne)	... 23 13 6
Third Test (Adelaide)	... 40 11 0
Fourth Test (Brisbane)	... 30 0 2
Fifth Test (Sydney)	... 23 11 0
	<b>£141 6 8</b>

## Railway Chiefs Confer

**T**HE Commissioners of the Australian railway systems met in Sydney in the second week of last month to confer on Australasian railway practices.

Normally, these conferences are held each year, the place of meeting being Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney in rotation. Because of the unsettled conditions of the last few years, however, there has been no meeting since June, 1929 (in Adelaide).

**A**LL State railways were represented except Tasmania, while the unfortunate death of the New Zealand representative on his way to the conference left the Maoriland railways unrepresented.

There were 200 items on this year's agenda, the matters under discussion ranging from tourist traffic to permanent way details and from locomotive matters to freights and fares.

A conference of officers representing the different phases of railway working, precedes the Commissioners' conference, and the recommendations of the former group comprise the bulk of the items on the Commissioners' agenda.

The object of the conferences is to secure as far as practicable standardisation and uniformity of practice on the Australian and New Zealand railways.

## Would 10 Pennies Stop a Locomotive?

**S**OME time ago, "Believe-It-or-Not" Ripley presented a statement with one of his famous questions to the effect that 10 pennies will stop the most powerful locomotive ever made.

**H**IS theory was that if a penny were placed on the rails against each of the 10 wheels of a steam locomotive, the locomotive would be unable to start because it would first have to lift its entire weight. This, he contended, would keep it from developing sufficient motive power to make a start.

A newspaper man, however, doubted Ripley's theory, and with the help of the Southern Pacific Railroad, succeeded in disproving it. A "600-horse" locomotive, under steam, was brought to a terminal station and there, before a large audience, the newspaper man placed 10 pennies under the drive-wheels of the huge locomotive.

The locomotive proudly lifted its 20,000 lb. bulk, with its 572,000 lb. fuel tank, on top of the 10 perfectly good pennies, immediately disproving Ripley's theory and badly embarrassing the coins.

The theoretical engineering view is that Ripley's contention did not take

into account the relative distance through which the tractive force of a locomotive acts compared with the height the locomotive is lifted.

The tractive force of a locomotive

### RAILWAY STATION MARRIAGES

"**MARRIED** in haste" took on a new meaning at a Canadian settlement in the far north last month, when Archdeacon Fares of the Anglican church performed a double ceremony in less than four minutes while passing through station "Mile 214" on the Canadian National's Hudson Bay way freight.

Arrangements had been made by wire, and when the train arrived the archdeacon put the question to the two couples in rapid-fire order.

There is no time for hesitation in a wedding service at that particular point on the Hudson Bay line, where there may not be another minister along for three months.

is from 20 to 25 per cent. of the weight on the coupled wheels. Assuming 20 per cent., then so long as the distance through which the tractive force acts is more than five times the height the locomotive is to be lifted, the engine will move.

In these conditions, theoretically, a locomotive with 4 ft. 9 in. coupled wheels should lift itself on to blocks 2 in. thick; with 5 ft. 10 in. drivers, 2½ in. blocks should be surmounted.

## Berry Season Opens

**W**ITH berry fruits of excellent quality available in large quantities, orders are coming in freely through stationmasters in all parts of the State. Supplies of strawberries and gooseberries were available from the middle of last month; loganberries, raspberries and red currants will be supplied during December, blackberries in January and cape gooseberries in February.

**L**EAFLETS giving details of prices and arrangements for ordering supplies are being distributed by stationmasters. The prices range from 4/6d. a dozen pounds for gooseberries to 8/- a dozen pounds for raspberries and include rail freight to any Victorian station.

The leaflets are being handed out with parcels at many stations and at others they are being placed in returned cream cans at butter factories.

Convincing evidence of the wide field covered in the distribution of the leaflets lies behind the request from a station last season for a consignment of fruit to be forwarded by a particular train. Inquiries revealed that the fruit was ordered for a customer living some 30 to 40 miles from the station and served by a coach service running on only one day each week.

## The Month's Topic

### Suburban Finances . . .

THERE is nothing surprising in the fact—the recent comment of a section of the press notwithstanding—that the Department is unable to separate particulars of suburban railway finances from the general financial results of the system as a whole.

It is, and always has been since the various services were intermingled, quite impracticable to allocate with any satisfactory degree of accuracy capital charges debitable solely against suburban passenger services, or items of working expenditure incurred exclusively in suburban operations.

The problem is one that has been closely studied the world over by authorities with the highest qualifications but no satisfactory formula on which separate calculations could be based has yet been found.

This was made abundantly clear in Victoria by the significant comment of the special committee of accountants which investigated the financial results of the suburban railways in 1909.

"We have given some consideration to the practicability of maintaining separate accounts in the books with the object of showing the profit or loss in connection with the suburban passenger service and are of opinion that, owing to the manner in which the various services are necessarily intermingled, it could only be done in regard to a large portion of the working expenses by a series of approximations more or less arbitrary in their incidence. The same remark may be made in connection with the allocation of capital cost and the consequent interest charge."

Later in its report, the committee, in referring to the method of allocating the capital expenditure debitable against the suburban passenger service, remarked that "this is almost entirely a matter of opinion and is surrounded by many difficult considerations."

It is obvious, therefore, that any conclusions reached on such bases would be utterly valueless as an indication of the true results of operating the suburban passenger services. The considerable labor and expense involved in making the elaborate and inconclusive analysis would most certainly not be justified.

### The Record of the Revenue

UP to the time of going to press, railway earnings since the beginning of the financial year had aggregated £3,284,943 (July 1—Nov. 14), or nearly £41,000 less than the aggregate for the corresponding period of last financial year.

# A Railway Scrapbook

## Being Oddities and Strange Facts from the World of Railways

### Tree Stump as Railway Terminal

Crowes railway line ends at a tree stump, relic of a forest giant, which forms a natural buffer-stop beyond the station yard.

Crowes, incidentally, is the "farthest south" railway station on the Australian mainland.

### Crookedest Railway in the World

The crookedest railway line in the world is the Mount Tamalpais scenic line in California.

In its total length of slightly more than eight miles there are 260 curves aggregating nearly five miles.

### Veteran Locomotive Half-a-Century Old

The oldest locomotive still on the V.R. register is R. 321, now stored at Ballarat North. It is 50 years old, having been built at the Phoenix foundry in 1882. It has run a total distance of 1,185,040 miles.

That distance, however, is surpassed by the mileage record of E. 380, still in service at Newport. It has run 1,311,921 miles since it was built in 1889—more than five times the distance to the moon.

### Railway with Single Rail

A single rail railway is operated in the State of Patiala in India.

The vehicles are mounted on two double-flanged wheels of small diameter which roll along the top of the rail, while a balanced wheel, mounted at the outer end of a substantial outrigger, rolls along the ground.

Coolie, animal, steam or petrol power are used, according to traffic requirements.

### Four Bridges in Half-a-Mile

Between Eltham and Diamond Creek, the railway line crosses the creek in no fewer than four places in a distance of half-a-mile.

### "As-The-Crow-Flies" Railway

Mariquita is about 200 miles from Manizales in Colombia (South America). But the railway which links these two towns is less than 50 miles long.

It is an aerial railway—the longest in the world.

It has a capacity of 200 tons in each direction daily, and was built to handle coffee.

### Station Built over Creek

Walhalla station is built over Stringer's Creek. During floods the water foam and swirl beneath the station buildings.

Walhalla line has no fewer than 220 curves in its 26 twisting miles, 190 being of less than 10 chains radius. The others range down to two chains radius. In the last six miles of the journey, there are more than 100 curves.

### The World's Most Northerly Railway

Scandinavia operates a line of rail track which lies completely within the Arctic Circle, which is the most northerly railway in the world and on which the snow-plough works in summer.

It is the Narvik-Riksgrænsen-Kiruna railway serving territory in both Norway and Sweden.

### Hobson's Bay Veterans

The patriarchs of the Victorian rolling stock world are not locomotives but a couple of workmen's sleeping cars, dating back to 1855.

These in their heyday carried passengers over the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay railway line between Melbourne and Sandridge (Port Melbourne) and were no doubt the pride of the line.

### Christmas Holiday Tour

IN addition to the Christmas Holiday Train, two other vacation tours have been arranged by the Govt. Tourist Bureau for the Christmas holidays.

There will be a trail ride over the Bogong High Plains and a mountain hike across the unmapped country between Mansfield and Wangaratta, both for men only.

THE trail riders will leave Melbourne on December 24, and return on January 2. The inclusive fare of £20 covers first-class rail travel to Bairnsdale, and return from Bright, a scenic motor tour of 100 miles and trail riding on picked horses across the Bogong High Plains.

The party will be in the care of Mr. J. C. Dickson of the Tourist Bureau and George Fitzgerald.

The mountain hikers on the second tour will traverse much wild and uninhabited country of magnificent scenic beauty. Mr. Buller and Mr. Cobbler will be climbed.

Mr. M. J. Harkins will lead the party.

# Salter Committee Advocates Regulation of Road Motor Transport

WITH unregulated road-motor vehicles competing strongly—and unfairly—with the railways, the findings of the Salter Committee which recently investigated the vexed problem in England are particularly interesting to Victorian railwaymen.

The committee was appointed by the British Minister of Transport in April last and comprised four representatives of the big railway companies, equal representation of road transport interests, and an independent chairman, Sir Arthur Salter, K.C.B.

The matters referred to the conference for consideration may be summarised briefly as follows:—

- What would be a fair basis of competition and division of function between rail and road transport of goods;
- The facts relating to the incidence of highway costs in relation to the contributions of different classes of mechanically propelled vehicles; and
- The nature and extent of the regulation which should be applied to goods transport by road and by rail.

The nature of the report submitted that all the recommendations of the conference were unanimous which is particularly significant in view of the wide representation of the committee. The personnel was:

- Railway representatives**—Sir Herbert A. C.C.B., Chairman, General Managers' Railway Companies' Assoc., and Manager, Southern Railway; Sir Wimp, G.B.E., Chairman, L.M.S.; Sir Ralph Wedgwood, C.B., C.M.G., General Manager, L.N.E.R.; Sir James S.L., General Manager, G.W.R.
- Road transport representatives**—Mr. C. ... M.I.A.E., Past President, Commercial Motor Users' Assoc.; Mr. P. R. Turner, ... National Road Transport ... Mr. W. H. Gaunt, O.B.E., ... Manager, Messrs. J. Lyons & Co.; ... Graham Guest, J.P., M.A., B.Sc., ... Scottish Commercial Motor Users'

- Secretaries**—Mr. G. Cole Deacon, Railway Companies' Assoc., and Bristow, C.B.E., F.C.I.S., General Commercial Motor Users' Assoc.

## Licence Fees

An important conclusion was that motor vehicles were not paying a proper proportion of road costs, and the recommendation was made that a scale of licence fees, representing reasonable increases for heavy commercial goods vehicles, be introduced. Examples are:—

Weight (Gross Tyres)	Present Fee	Proposed Fee
2 tons ...	£25	£26
3 tons ...	£32	£36
4 tons ...	£38	£54
5 tons ...	£43	£73
6 tons ...	£48	£108

The average mileage per annum, average laden weight, average fuel consumption and average tonnage were all taken into consideration in determining the basis of payment. The recommendations include a system of licensing of road vehicles

requiring not only the payment of an appropriate contribution towards road costs, but also the observance of proper conditions as to fair wages and conditions of service, and the proper maintenance of the vehicles. The licensing regulations would apply not only to motor carriers but also to owners using their own vehicles in the course of trade and in the case of the carriers, the question of a possible excess of transport facilities and of actual or prospective congestion or overloading of the roads would also require to be investigated. Owners of private vehicles would, however, be prohibited from carrying for reward any goods other than their own outside a radius of 10 miles from their place of business.

## Commonsense

The report represents a commonsense attempt to determine a basis for the future development of road and rail transport which will be acceptable to the opposing interests. Both sides recognise that there is real need for both classes of transport if the community is to be served adequately.

In fundamentals, Victoria's transport problem is the same as that of Great Britain and other overseas countries, but the urgency of the trouble here is accentuated by community-ownership of the States' railways, combined with the fact that the system represents the largest individual asset on the State's balance sheet. A further complication is the developmental aspect of the operations of the Australian railways which, generally, were provided to open up country in advance of settlement.

## Costly Duplication

Briefly, the position in Victoria at the present time is that road transport services are being conducted in competition with the railways for a volume of traffic which is insufficient even to keep the railways fully employed. The community is being called upon by means of increased taxation to make good the losses on railway operations resulting from this wasteful duplication of services, and these uneconomic conditions will remain until legislation is enacted to substitute for the present wasteful duplication a sound co-ordination of rail and road transport in the best interests of the community as a whole.

# New Season's Wheat First Loadings

FIRST deliveries of the new season's wheat were made at Merrinee and other stations on the Morkalla line early last month and, at the time of going to press, wheat was being delivered at stations in the Ouyen-Pinnaroo and other northern Mallee areas.

ANTICIPATING the call for trucks for the wheat-loading, advantage was taken of the heavy traffic in cornsacks and agricultural machinery to retain as many empty trucks as practicable in the wheat area. Ample supplies were thus available to meet these early requirements.

Estimates of the wheat yield range around 45,000,000 bushels, and the prospect for a good season were reflected in the loadings of machinery and sacks. Seasonal conditions were also favorable to a continuation of the heavy traffic in butter and frozen meat for export. Wool and flour loading too, was well maintained.

## Influence of Mice

Incidentally, while the goods and livestock revenue for the new financial year until November 14 was £52,374 less than for the corresponding period of 1931-32, this decline was brought about by the heavy falling-off in the quantity of wheat railed. And this reduced wheat loading was, in turn, a reaction from the mice plague period shortly after Christmas, when the wheat was rushed from country districts to the seaboard.

For the period referred to above, approximately 2,500,000 fewer bags were carried by rail this year which, on the basis of the 1931-32 wheat loading, represents a revenue of approximately £150,000. Consequently, assuming that the loading schedule had not been disturbed by the mice plague and that other conditions had remained unchanged, the revenue would have shown an appreciable increase over last year's figures.

# Track Work Slows Trains

RECONDITIONING of tracks and reggrading works carried out by relief workers are largely responsible for swelling the number of temporary speed restrictions from an average of less than 20 in the early part of the year to more than 60 of recent weeks.

Bridge renewals are responsible for slowing down trains to a maximum of ten miles an hour at a number of other locations.

The relief works are carried out with money made available from unemployment funds to cover the labor charges, any materials necessary being furnished by this Department.

# Personal Postscript

Farewelled Six Times—Suburban S.M.'s Go—Ironwork Inspector Retires—Yarram Veteran

## Pen Mightier Than—

**T**RAIN Register Checker Harry Swires of Flinders-street, who retired recently after 45 years of active railroading, is a railwayman who abandoned the signal levers for the pen. He joined up as a porter but after becoming signalman changed over to clerical work. He was a great worker for the V.R.M.B.S. —C

## 6 Good-byes

**G**ENIAL Mick Enright, whose retirement as officer-in-charge of Williamstown Pier was recently mentioned in the *News Letter*, must be the "most farewelled" railwayman who ever left the Department. He was accorded six separate and distinct presentations, including one from city shippers and merchants using the Pier and one from the stevedores who loaded the wheat that was discharged from rail trucks under Mick's supervision. —H.C.

## '89 Veteran

**S**TATIONMASTER James Parry of Prahran, who entered the service in 1889, has retired. He had eight years on the relieving staff and was in charge of Prahran for the last nine years. The staff made him a presentation. —J.C.

## December Birthdays

**D**RIVER F. M. Holt of Geelong, Fireman S. Marks of Traralgon and M. Brennan of the Powers machines, on the first; Live Stock Agent W. Robert and Guard L. H. Young of Stawell, on the second; Signalman A. J. George of Geelong, on the third; R.S. Engineer R. R. Cannington and Metro. R.S. Supt. W. H. Deasey, on the fourth; Driver T. H. Gronn of Ballarat and Trans. Despatchman Gus Harvey, on the fifth; Relyg. Stationmaster H. Neilson, on the sixth; R.S. Clerk S. C. Jones, Harry Hodgins of the Commissioners' staff and Porter G. H. Crocker of Flinders-street, on the seventh; Jim Meares of Room 2 and Night Depot Foreman W. House of Seymour, on the ninth; Dist. R.S. Supt. Eric Jackson of Geelong, Chemist Cyril McTaggart of Newport laboratory and Leading Car Builder A. Deakes of Bendigo, on the 10th; Leading Shunter P. J. Green of Melbourne Yard and Guard T. Danaher of Donald, on the 11th; Inspector of Ironwork T. F. Clarke, on the 12th; Les. Wright of Sydney Govt. Tourist Bureau and Goods Foreman S. Taylor of Geelong, on the 15th; Driver F. N. Palmer of Maryborough and Clerk Ted O'Loughlin of the W. and W. staff office, on the 18th; Repairer J. Vaughan of Geelong and Clerk W. S. Lawler of Traralgon, on the 19th; Clerk H. C. Easterby of the W. and W. accounts, on the 21st; Guard B. B. Pollard of Warragul,

on the 22nd; Dist. Supt. W. Tredinnick of Bendigo and Porter R. Penrose of Benalla, on the 23rd; Lighter-up T. Zock of Seymour, Road Foreman J. Ryan of Oakleigh and Subforeman Bill ("the Wizard") Jones of Spotswood workshops, on the 25th; Supt. of Loco. Running Albert Stamp and Fireman W. S. Ward of Ararat, on the 26th; Advertising Artist Harold Jack and Road Foreman H. Lane of Bendigo, on the 27th; Asst. Supt. W. Arundel of the Melbourne Goods and Guard H. Lawry of Geelong, on the 29th; Chief Accountant T. F. Brennan, Loco. Storeman C. L. Kuffer of Maryborough, Relyg. Stationmaster T. E. Devine and Driver W. Rampling of Maryborough, on the 30th; Clerk J. L. McArthur of Room 9, Roadmaster W. G. Collins of Ballarat and Ganger J. E. Rickard of Middle Brighton, on the 31st. —A.L.

## Yarram's Loss

**K**INDLY Ted Fitzgibbon, Yarram's popular s.m., has retired with 45 years' service to his credit. Starting as a porter, he was for some years a.s.m. at Officer, followed by a term as r.s.m. Then came location as s.m. at Rupanyup. Hoptetoun, Serviceton, Birregurra and Casterton and finally transfer to Yarram some six years ago. His readiness to help others, combined with his unfailingly cheerful disposition, won him a large circle of friends. —H.E.C.

## '88 plus 44

**W**ITH 44 years of transportation experience behind him, Stationmaster John Walsh will retire from North Brighton this month. He began as porter in 1888. As stationmaster he has been located at Dobie, Allansford, Jumbunna, Cranbourne, Rushworth, Middle Brighton and North Brighton. —C.S.

## Ironwork—

**A**FTER nine years as Inspector of Ironwork, Edwin Rees is about to retire. His railway service began in 1897 when he joined up as a fitter in the W. and W. branch at Spencer-street. Periods as leading hand fitter, foreman fitter, and shop foreman preceded his appointment as inspector in 1923.

## —and Woodwork

**F**OREMAN T. J. Tyler of the Spotswood workshops retires concurrently with Inspector Rees. He joined the railways as carpenter in 1900, graduated to leading hand in 1923 and to foreman the following year. At different times he has been stationed at Flinders-street, Spencer-street, Hamilton, Arden-street, Oakleigh and Spotswood, so that he has left his mark on much of the Department's woodwork. —S.C.W.

## Centenary of . . . Great Scientist's Death

**T**HIS year is the centenary of the death of Sadi Nicolas Leon Carnot, the distinguished French physicist, whose theories in the field of thermodynamics have profoundly influenced locomotive construction design right up to the present time. Although he was only 36 at the time of his death, Carnot ranks among the immortals of science.

**I**N 1824, Carnot wrote his celebrated essay *Reflections sur la puissance motrice du feu et sur les machines propres a developper cette puissance*, pointing the way to improved steam locomotion.

Here for the first time is laid down the principle that the work obtainable from a given quantity of heat is the ideal locomotive, dependent on the temperatures at which heat is received and rejected.

The importance of working at high boiler pressures and temperatures and a low exhaust or condenser temperature was revealed in the essay while the stress which he laid on the grave disadvantage of the temperature drop between the furnace gases and the boiler contents pointed indirectly to the internal combustion principle as the more promising line of development from the point of view of efficient heat utilisation.

## In Brief

**A**MONG those who have retired are Tally Clerk J. E. Ellis of Melbourne, Goods, Supervising Telegraphist J. L. Goods, Guard P. Quirk of Melbourne, Goodsyard Porter J. B. Johnston of Stawell, Telegraphist J. B. Johnston of Stawell and Guard C. Shugg of Williamstown. Transfers to other Departments: J. C. Robertson of Hughesdale to J. Arthur of Ascot Vale and Clerk R. Dungan of Balacraula have gone to the Department, and Clerk F. H. Park of Melbourne Yard has gone to the Department of Agriculture.

## Last Mile Post

**WILLIAM McCracken**

**M**R. WILLIAM McCracken, one of the Victorian Railway signalmen, will live long to enjoy the retirement which 44 years of service so richly merited. He retired last year and died suddenly last week. Mr. McCracken spent no fewer than his 44 years of railroading in signal work. He was on the relieving staff for 20 years, spent another 20 in Flinders-street box. He had the distinction of making his first acquaintance with signal levers in a class box—the old Princes-bridge cabin staff at that time comprised two notable identities, Messrs. Miscamble and B. There will be many to mourn the loss of a good railwayman, a good friend and fellow.

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