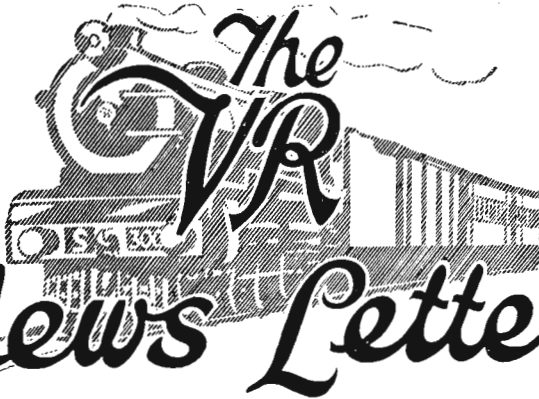


The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to every railwayman in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions for inclusion in the News Letter should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment and Publicity Board, Head Office.



THE MONTH'S THOUGHT

Business is like a wheelbarrow—you have to push it to make it go.

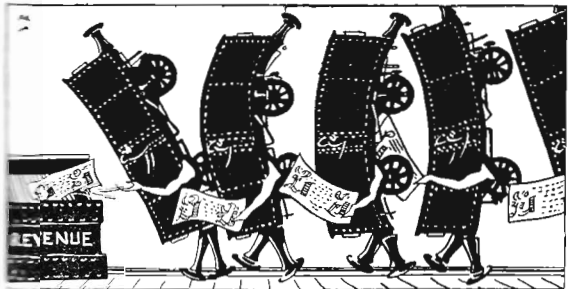
Issue No. 4

News Letter

January, 1931

WITH the revenue still falling, 1930 was making a very gloomy exit as we went to press with the New Year issue of the *News Letter*. Latest figures available at the time—for the nine days ended November 30—disclosed an average decrease in revenue of almost £8,000 a day, compared with the same period in 1929. This was the heaviest drop over any similar period in the current financial year, and the accelerated decline, if maintained at that rate, would have swollen the total decrease in revenue to £1,000,000 by the time this issue was printing. It was hoped, however, that first deliveries of the season's wheat would stem the drift to a certain extent. All classes of

REVENUE DECREASE OF £8,000 A DAY



The net earning capacity of a truck is £1 a day

business suffered in the slump, goods and live stock dropping more than £43,000 over the nine days, passengers £20,000 and refreshment services £3,000.

A REVISED estimate of the Victorian wheat harvest by the Superintendent of Agriculture (Mr. Mullett), early in December, was 52 million bushels, some northern and central Mallee crops having failed to realise earlier anticipations. The manager of the Victorian Wheatgrowers' Corporation (Mr. Judd) was even more cautious, putting the yield at 50 million bushels. And since then heavy rains have provided further cause for concern. Previously, it was confidently expected that 1915's record crop of 58 million bushels would be exceeded, some optimistic estimates ranging from 60 to as high as 80 million bushels. Whatever the estimate and whatever the actual yield, however, Victorian railwaymen are certainly booked for a very busy time during the next two months, and some good solid co-operative effort will be needed if our objective of an average daily haul of 35 miles and average load of 12 tons for each wheat truck is to be achieved—or even approached.

AND while we're on the subject of trucks, a reminder about the importance of keeping truck books accurately posted at all times wouldn't be out of place.

Our truck supply can meet most demands promptly if careful supervision is exercised over truck movements. But if the truck books are not properly posted, one of the most valuable checks on overtime trucks fail. And the average net earning capacity of a standard open truck is £1 a day.

WATCH THE TRUCK BOOKS

TALKING about wheat yields, it is interesting to recall that the record number of bags of wheat ever loaded at any station in Victoria for one season is 359,643. Yarrowonga was the despatching station and 1925 the season. Minyip is the only other station which has ever loaded more than 300,000 bags—321,140. Then, fairly close together, come Wail (248,147), Jung (247,347) and Sheephills (245,792). Last season, Yarrowonga had only 66,150 bags. Rainbow headed the list with 129,592 bags, followed by Lillimur (125,577) and Jung (108,586). This season?

WHEAT RECORDS OF THE PAST

ACCORDING to the representative of a big English travel agency, who arrived in Australia last month, the work of the Australian National Travel Association is already bearing fruit overseas, and there are bright prospects of a regular flow of tourists to Australia commencing in two or three years time. English people, it seems, are losing their insular habits and are going farther afield for their holidays every year. Trips to South America and South Africa are becoming increasingly popular, and the compelling publicity of the A.N.T.A. is now directing attention to the tourist attractions of Australia. The question of chartering liners for big cruising parties is already under serious consideration. And, of course, American visitors are expected to become more numerous when the new Matson liners reduce the sailing time across the Pacific to 15 days. All of which will mean, among other things, increased tourist traffic on the Australian railways.

OVERSEAS PUBLICITY BEARING FRUIT

THE Doncaster railway is not to be built. Reversing its 1928 report, which recommended the extension of the Kew line to Doncaster, the Railways Standing Committee says:—

The economic outlook now is vastly different from that in 1928. The committee feels that, in view of the most serious situation which confronts the State, it cannot confirm the recommendation of 1928. It appreciates the delay in development that this will cause in the district, much of which is eminently suitable for residential purposes. When the financial position of the State improves, and when there is a prospect of the land served, most of which is taken up by single block holders, being used for residential purposes, the proposal should be submitted for reconsideration. In the meantime, residents must be satisfied with the present bus service, which, it is recognised, will not be likely to lead to any great development.

NO RAILWAY TO DONCASTER

If Names Made Cricketers

IF names made a cricket team, the Victorian Railways would have a tight grip on the Ashes for many years to come. The nominal wealth of cricket talent which is compressed on to the departmental payrolls would provide any board of Test selectors with a bewildering embarrassment of riches.

CONSIDER the bowling strength, for instance.

In the Department there are five Blackies, three Tates, four Gregorys, seven Walls, 95 McDonalds, three Hurwoods and one Thurlow—to say nothing of three Ernie Joneses and four Rhodes.

Wicket-keepers, past and present, are represented by two Oldfields, 38 Ellises, 37 O'Connors, 57 Kellys and 59 Walkers.

There isn't a Bradman or a Woodfull in the service, but plenty of runs should be forthcoming from four Hobbses, four Ryders, 32 Jacksons, two Bardsleys, 44 Hills, one Macartney, 10 Andrews, three McCabes, 22

World's Smallest Loco.

THE smallest working steam locomotive in the world was recently exhibited in London. It is only 2½ inches long, but it pulls a train weighing two ounces along a quarter-inch gauge railway.

The engine was built in one of his useful moments by a professional saxophone player.

Richardsons and three Riggs; while the appointment of the captain would involve consideration of the claims of 14 Armstrongs, five Graces, four Nobles, 13 Douglasses, four McLarens, three Warners and 16 Chapmans.

Then the side would find itself equipped with a Batt, 10 Balls, two Bayles, six Fields and five Coynes, and the solitary Scorer, after reference to the railway nominal rolls, could mark down one Bowler, six Byes, one Over and one Duck straightaway.

The names certainly sound good enough to win the Ashes—rather, to hold them, seeing that there are already two Ashes in the service.

—“G.G.”

The Year's Work—

1930 in Retrospect

NINETEEN-THIRTY was a year of steadily declining business in the Victorian Railways, and the imperative need for strict economy in all branches of the service resulted in a practical suspension of the rolling stock construction programme, the stringent curtailment of maintenance work (consistent, of course, with approved margins of safety) and a State-wide reduction of train services.

ONE section of new line only was opened during 1930—the Eastmalvern-Glen Waverley five-mile extension on May 5.

Locomotive construction comprised the completion of a fourth “S” class locomotive and two of a batch of 10 “N” class locomotives. Other rolling stock built during the year included eight petrol electric rail motors and five trailers, and 300 open trucks of the standard “IZ” type. The newly built trucks were all equipped with automatic couplers, as also were 793 older trucks.

Replacement work involved the construction and equipment of new boilers to 16 “A1” (saturated) and 13 “A2” (superheated) locomotives. A further 51 boilers for replacement purposes, in addition to those required for new locomotives, are under way. The total number of superheater locomotives in the service was increased to 308 by the conversion of 13 saturated locomotives.

* * * *

Thirty-four “Casey Jones” motors were manufactured at Spotswood and allotted to various lengths.

Essential maintenance work necessitated the relaying of 48 miles of track, the renewal of approximately 290,000 sleepers, the reconstruction of 140 miles of fencing, and the use of 29,000 cubic yards of bluestone ballast.

Satisfactory progress was made with the new locomotive erecting shop at Newport, and work on the Tottenham gravitation and marshalling yards was sufficiently advanced to enable a considerable area to be made available in time for the more economical handling of the new season's wheat. Seven manually operated substations were completely equipped with high-speed circuit breakers.

Nine single-storey lock-up shops were built on railway property at Footscray and four at Spencer-street. All have been let at satisfactory rentals.

* * * *

Railway communications were improved by the installation of an automatic telephone exchange at Geelong, and the introduction of the Selector system in five country sections. Power signalling was provided at Dandenong and other suburban locations, interlocking gates were installed at Coburg, Narre Warren and Pascoe Vale, and 57 level crossings were remodelled.

In the refreshment services branch, 1930 saw numerous changes, ranging from the withdrawal of the Adelaide express dining car to the commencement of the sale of workmen's sixpenny lunches on the concourses of the metropolitan stations. Depots were established for the sale of lunches, tobacco and sweets to railway employees in head office and at Jolimont, Bendigo and Ballarat workshops, control was assumed of the Nyora refreshment room, and a new tobacco and confectionery stall was opened on Flinders-street concourse.

—S.C.W.

Comparison of Australian Railway Statistics for Last Year

| | Commonwealth | New South Wales | Victoria | Queensland | South Australia | West Australia | Tasmania | Total |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Miles open | 2,145 | 5,974 | 4,713 | 6,447 | 2,536 | 4,111 | 664 | 26,590 |
| Revenue: | | | | | | | | |
| Coaching (passengers, parcels, mails, etc.) | £195,000 | £8,449,000 | £5,428,000 | £2,378,000 | £820,000 | £928,000 | £178,000 | £18,876,000 |
| Goods (including livestock and minerals) | £134,000 | £9,377,000 | £5,599,000 | £4,780,000 | £2,259,000 | £2,523,000 | £311,000 | £24,983,000 |
| Miscellaneous | £75,000 | (Included above) | £974,000 | £144,000 | £220,000 | £208,000 | £18,000 | £1,639,000 |
| Total revenue | £404,000 | £17,826,000 | £12,001,000 | £7,302,000 | £3,299,000 | £3,659,000 | £507,000 | £44,998,000 |
| Expenditure | £555,000 | £14,962,000 | £9,119,000 | £5,946,000 | £3,696,000 | £3,113,000 | £535,000 | £37,926,000 |
| Expenditure per cent. of earnings | 137.23 | 83.93 | 75.99 | 81.43 | 112.04 | 85.07 | 105.52 | 84.28 |
| Passenger journeys | 124,000 | 147,892,000 | 157,119,000 | 24,441,000 | 17,862,000 | 14,175,000 | 2,243,000 | 363,856,000 |
| Total freight (tons) | 93,000 | 12,151,000 | 7,514,000 | 4,528,000 | 2,669,000 | 3,530,000 | 676,000 | 31,161,000 |

It will be noted that Victoria's expenditure per cent. of earnings was the lowest of all the railway systems.

Two Lines Opened New Year's Day

SEVENTY-SIX years have elapsed since Victoria's—and Australia's—first railway was opened for traffic, but during all that time only two new lines have been opened in this State on a New Year's Day.

They are the Lal Lal racecourse line (opened January 1, 1886) and the Barrumbeet racecourse line (January 1, 1904).

ALL told, 12 sections of new line have been opened for traffic during the 76 months of January which the calendar has recorded since the first steam train in Australia puffed its way fussily to Port Melbourne.

Of these 12, the longest single section to be opened was the 68-mile link between Woomelang and Hattah, which supported the weight of a railway train for the first time on January 15, 1903. The same day in 1891 saw the opening of the Redesdale line (16 miles).

January 19, 1887, was an important date in Victorian Railway history: on

This Man Wanted a Job

COPY of an application for employment from a foreign gentleman to an overseas railroad:

"I have the pleasure of writing to you as I have wrote before and you didn't answer my reply. If you would have a work if you will give I never got her. As I am now in your best attention of answering their line to me, if you have a hand of work by now I will be able to have a try to go to her if you will give me a start of laborer. When you have the job I will go when she starts if you have wrote to my reply in answer so no more."

that day both the Dimboola-Serviceton line (63 miles) and the North Creswick-Rocky Lead section (12 miles) were opened.

Gippsland lines which began to earn their working expenses during the first month in the year were the Darlimurla-North Mirboo extension (January 7, 1886), the Leongatha-Port Albert section (January 13, 1892) and the Yallourn line (January 11, 1922).

Incidentally, since the Yallourn line was built, no other line in Victoria has been opened for traffic in the month of January.

Other lines which were opened in January are:

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Warracknabeal-Beulah | January 5, 1893 |
| Chillingollah-Manangatang | January 28, 1914 |
| Linton-Skipton | ... January 17, 1916 |

—A.R.

January Suggestions Drive

THE subject chosen for the 37th Suggestions Drive, which will be held during January, is:—

Regarding Locomotive Smoke Boxes and Fittings

Suggestions should be submitted to the Betterment and Publicity Board in the usual way. Suggestions on any other subject will, of course, also be accepted.

How Nature Built Mt. Buffalo

"LONG before the Egyptian monarchs hewed granite monoliths, the natural ones on the Buffalo mountains stood like sentinels on their lofty pinnacles," writes Mr. E. J. Dunn, F.G.S., in his geological survey of Mt. Buffalo, which has just been reprinted by the Victorian Railways Commissioners.

Mr. Dunn explains interestingly how Nature's system of "jointing" helped to sculpture the physical features of the famous National Park, "leaving the truncated wreck of a mountain as it now stands."

THE great granitic boss of the Buffalo range towers a couple of thousand feet above the tops of the surrounding slate and sandstone mountains because granite offers so much more resistance to denuding forces than do the sedimentary rocks. At one period, the highest portion of the granitic mass was covered with sedimentary beds, which have since been removed together with perhaps thousands of feet of the granite itself.

When the Buffalo mountains were thousands of feet higher than they are now, the bed rock along the Murray and along the Ovens-river was bare. The bed rock is now over 300 feet below the surface, the whole of the material filling the old valleys to that depth having been washed down from the Buffalo and other mountains. This process is still actively at work.

* * * *

The principal element determining the present features on the Buffalo mountains is the "jointing" of the granite. There are two sets of more or less vertical joints intersecting at an angle of 87 degrees. In their first stage these joints cut through the rock, and although the fissure is so fine that it looks like the scratch of a needle point, it cuts right through the granite mass. The distances between the parallel joints vary widely. In some cases, they recur at a few inches of interval, in others they are many feet apart. The whole mountain mass is jointed from end to end and from top to bottom.

Where the joints are close together, the granite decomposes without leaving conspicuous blocks, but where the joints are wide apart, the grandest examples of tors and the like exist. Some of the belts can be traced, in which there are few joints, and along their courses occur groups of gigantic tors and massive isolated blocks. The influence of the jointing can be studied, beginning with the needle-like scratch on the solid rock and so on to the final stage, where such perched blocks as the Egg Rock have been carved out of the solid mass, all the surrounding mass bodily removed, and the hard core left standing on a perilously small base on another mass of rock, which itself projects many feet above the surrounding rock level.

* * * *

A variety of degrading forces are ceaselessly at work, employing different methods but all tending towards undoing the bonds that chemically bind together the mineral constituents of the granite, unloosing the particles of matter that make up the rock, or tearing these particles away from the mass and transporting them to more or less distant localities. Engaged in this destructive work are heat, cold, frost, rain, streams, wind, lichens and mosses, shrubs, trees, decaying vegetation and so on.

—C.S.

If You Know a Better Way—

BUSINESS continues briskly in the suggestions section of the Betterment and Publicity Board, 2,387 ideas being submitted for consideration last year. Of this number, 476 were adopted.

CONSIDER the following typical suggestions which were adopted:

That seats be booked on the "up" trains at Bairnsdale.

Many passengers from Lakes Entrance arrived early at the Bairnsdale station, and after depositing their luggage, went into the township. By enabling seats to be booked, it was not necessary for them to return to the station until a few minutes before train departure time. This inconvenienced passengers and returned additional revenue to the department.

That locomotive little end brasses be cast in one piece to cheapen the machining cost.

These brasses were formerly cast in two pieces and, after certain of the machining had been completed, the halves were sweated together. The machining was completed after marking off. Under the new method, the primary machining and sweating is eliminated and a more accurate job results.

To secure economy in cutting closure rails.

This work was previously closed out by contract, but, since the suggestion, it has been undertaken at Spotswood workshops at a much reduced cost.

A very appropriate New Year resolution for each Victorian railwayman would be "To submit at least two suggestions to the Betterment Board in 1931."

Railwaymen of the Month

Old Hand Leaves

A TRANSPORTATION branch man all his career, Stationmaster Harry Binns, of Warracknabeal, has retired with 43 years of service behind him. He was night officer at Seymour for many years in the old days, and was stationed, among other places, at Ferntree Gully, Burnley, Heywood, Mt. Evelyn and Wyche-
proof. He was in charge of Warracknabeal for more than three years.

—H.E.C.

Bendigo Identity

A LL sections and grades of the Bendigo Rolling Stock branch were represented at the send-off last month, to Senior Clerk J. J. McMahon of the depot foreman's office. Chief Clerk H. L. Dickinson made a special trip from Melbourne to say good-bye to his old friend. He pointed out that Mr. McMahon had been a railwayman for nearly 42 years, and a Bendigonian for 37. District Rolling Stock Superintendent J. McLeod presented Mr. McMahon with an inscribed silver coffee service.

—B.A.

In the Swim

MR. J. A. JAMIESON, father and president of the Institute swimming club, is preparing for another busy season, and will be forming railway classes for the *Herald* "Learn to Swim" campaign, to be held between January 17 and February 7. In the last campaign 14 enthusiastic instructors, of whom Mr. Jamieson was one, took classes at the club's headquarters—the Batman-avenue baths.

—C.S.B.B.

January Birthdays

A MONG those railwaymen who start a new calendar year and a new year of life concurrently is a good sprinkling of well-known engineers. These include Water Supply Engineer H. Willett on the third, Way and Works Engineer Geo. Luttrell on the fourth, Assistant Chief Electrical Engineer C. G. H. McDonald on the seventh, Engineer Horton in charge of Newport power house on the 12th, Bendigo District Engineer Tom Coakley on the 17th, and Signal and Telegraph Engineer E. F. McIver on the 23rd. Others who qualify for good wishes during the month are:—

Depot Foreman Bob White of Geelong, on the first; Wally Bunker of Room 10 (at present organiser for the State Relief Committee), on the third; Chief Clerk Charles Dunstan of Ballarat goods shed, on the sixth; Jack Featherstonhaugh, secretary to Mr. Commissioner Shannon, and Driver C. E. Murtett of Dandenong, on the eighth; Commercial Agent W. Middleton and Lands Officer A. H. Rogerson of the Estate Office, on the ninth; Supervisor of Road Transport Cecil Walker and Shunter A. E.

Coles of Warragul, on the 12th; Fireman J. O'Farrell of Ballarat, on the 14th; Leading Shunter J. Palmer of Hamilton, Manager W. J. Thornton of the car and wagon shops, and Stationmaster E. W. Procter of Dandenong, on the 15th; Fireman J. E. Floyd of Warrnambool, on the 16th; Goods Foreman W. Ellis of Bendigo, on the 19th; Jim Miller, secretary of the Classification board, and Train Examiner McIntosh of Traralgon, on the 20th; Travelling Audit Inspector J. G. Moore and Bonding Supervisor W. W. Tunn of Flinders-street, on the 21st; Traffic Inspector Alf. Giles of the Metro's office, on the 22nd; Fireman J. Pollock of Bendigo, on the 23rd; Electrical Superintendent Alec. McLean, on the 25th; Block and Signal Inspector Ted Anderson, on the 26th; Betterment Board Member Lance Bromilow, and Ticket Maker George Oakley of the Stores branch, on the 28th; Leading Shunter C. O'Halloran of Melbourne Yard, Fireman R. Sampson of Swan Hill and Enginemen's Instructor W. H. Hillis, on the 29th; and Driver W. Busbridge of Geelong, on the 31st.

Railway Cuttings as Home Sites

"ROOFS" may be built over all railway tracks running through London and the reclaimed land used for building purposes.

This proposal is being given serious consideration by the London County Council. Advocates of the plan point out that all of the tracks are in deep cuttings and could easily be "roofed" in a manner to make them absolutely safe areas on which to erect houses.

Such a plan has been found successful in certain parts of New York and Chicago.

There is a serious housing shortage in London, and reclaiming the "tops" of the railway tracks would make 540 more acres available for homes, said Alfred E. Bossom, architect and M.P.

At Ararat for 26 Years

IN his 26th year at Ararat, Head Porter Sam Welch has been transferred to Ballarat. Sam started as a block-boy in the Princes-bridge signal box in 1887. The three signalmen who were working the levers in that box at the time were Messrs. Miscamble, Blazey and Robertson—truly a distinguished trio of railwaymen. Sam went to Castlemaine two years later, and with the late Fred. Sutton, opened the "B" box at that station. Surrey Hills afterwards knew him as signalman for some time, and he also held down the job of leading porter at Benalla and Bendigo, before transferring to Ararat in 1905. Both he and his wife received gifts from their Ararat friends on their departure for Ballarat.

—"Mag."

Pelmanism

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Dudley-street's Loss

DUDLEY-STREET signal box has lost its ruling spirit. Signalman-in-charge Henry Thompson has gone on final annual leave before retirement. He had 44 years service and was well-known all round the State.

—S.P.

A Short Shift

AFTER several years at Marnoo, Engine-driver Con. Power has been transferred to Murtoa. A veteran of 42 years service, he is due to retire next May. He was most popular in the district.

—G.C.

Saying It with Silver

MR. DAVE BLACKIE, whose retirement from the position of special officer in the Transportation branch was mentioned in last month's *News Letter*, was presented with a beautiful tea and coffee service, early last month, by the officers of the branch.

—A.W.

Last Mile Post

ARTHUR MORRISON

MR. ARTHUR MORRISON, clerk in the Way and Works branch, at Geelong, died last month. He had been a railwayman since 1900 and, before going to Geelong, was in the South Melbourne and Port Melbourne districts.

He was aged 49 years and leaves a widow and two young children.

FRANCIS HODGES

TRAGICALLY sudden was the death, last month, of Mr. Frank Hodges, running gear repairer at Ballarat. He collapsed and died while at work in the shops.

He was a very popular resident of Ballarat and a keen pigeon-fancier, being president of the Ballarat Homing Club.

He leaves a widow and family.

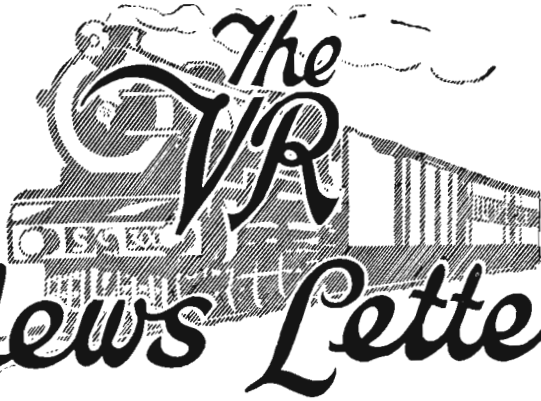
CHARLES E. BAYNES

MR. CHARLES BAYNES, retired stationmaster, who has been living at Castlemaine, has died at the age of 76 years.

During his career, he was in charge of Guildford, Barnawartha and Buninyong.

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

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THE MONTH'S THOUGHT

The stone that is fit for the wall does not lie long in the ditch.

Issue No. 5

News Letter

February, 1931

When a Spider Stopped a Substation

ALTHOUGH, as elsewhere, there are at times unavoidable failures, the remarkable freedom of our metropolitan electrified railways from breakdowns and serious operative troubles is a tribute to the efficiency of the overhead and distribution sections of our Electrical Engineering branch.

Moreover, of recent years there seems to have been a closer observance of "safety first" principles by misguided birds and insects whose unauthorised interference with electrical equipment in the past occasionally resulted in traffic dislocation.

IN the early days of rail electrification, rats sometimes committed suicide by gnawing through the insulation of power cables, but the circumstances of their subsequent electrocution appear to have since been made widely known in the rat world as such trouble has now disappeared.

Birds, too, have built their nests on overhead masts in past seasons and their use of old pieces of wire for structural reinforcements often caused short-circuiting. This trouble is now considerably less frequent. And there has been no recurrence of the shut-down caused by a big spider that once crawled leisurely over the equipment in an automatic substation. Its long legs short-circuited a delicate piece of apparatus, immediately disintegrating the spider and throwing the machine out of commission.

And, talking about disintegration, a huge rat, disturbed by a workman at a substation, once rushed headlong into an electric motor that was driving

The Record of the Revenue

AS we go to press, the decline in Victorian railway revenue is 17.70 per cent., compared with the similar period of last financial year.

THAT percentage decline was based on the actual revenue for the first five months of the financial year (July to November inclusive) and an approximation of the returns for December and the first week of 1931. . . .

It is interesting to note that the total decline of the operating revenues of Class 1 railways in America for September, 1930 (compared with September, 1929), was more than £20,000,000, which is equal to 17.6 per cent.

For the nine months ended September 30 last, compared with the corresponding period in the previous year, the American decline was £144,000,000, or 14.6 per cent.

Wheat Going Forward

TRANSPORTATION of the long awaited wheat harvest is now well under way, and up to the time the *News Letter* went to press, a total of 2,111,237 bags had been railed to the seaboard. For the same period last year, the total was only 1,061,317 bags.

At the time of writing, also, the number of bags stacked at stations was 1,545,583. The northern and north-western districts, with 461,000 and 465,000 bags respectively, had most wheat on hand.

Acting under instructions from the principal shippers, who desire to limit rail consignments to the loading capacity of steamers, farmers in the Bendigo district were curtailing loading operations last month. This action was apparently responsible for an unfounded rumor that the railways were unable to cope with the rush of new season's wheat. Actually, of course, the Department has the requisite facilities and rolling stock available to meet, promptly and effectively, all demands which the harvest has made, or is likely to make, on the railway service.

HOW DO YOUR DIMENSIONS COMPARE WITH THESE?

ACCORDING to the Victorian Railways clothing inspector (Mr. H. Peel), the tallest railwayman fitted with a uniform in Victoria is 6 ft. 4 in. high, while the shortest is 4 ft. 6 in. The largest chest covered is 52 in. and the largest waist 56 in., the smallest chest being 27 in. and the smallest waist 26 in. The largest uniform cap issued is size 7½.

circulating water pump. The motor immediately rejected the rat in some hundred flying pieces. It is claimed to have been the most spectacular death on record.

* * * *

ORDINARY substation flashovers have at times been accompanied by humor. A flashover is, of course, more terrifying than dangerous, but the non-technical man who witnesses one is apt to conclude that the end of the world has arrived.

One cleaner, confronted with his first flashover at Jolimont, blinked suddenly at the sudden roar and severe flashing from the affected machine and then noticed the shift electrician dashing helter-skelter along the operating gallery to attend to his switches. He immediately came to the conclusion that the electrician was making for safety and decided to follow his example. The cleaner's spitted retreat was in turn observed by a startled gang of bricklayers in the substation, who also wheeled as one man and stampeded into the open. The commotion resembled the flight from Pompeii.

"I thought it just as well that one of us should be left alive to tell the tale," explained the cleaner afterwards.

Stationmasters Help the Fruitgrower

AS a direct result of the assistance volunteered by country stationmasters, orders for approximately 3,000 buckets of berry fruit were placed in country districts throughout Victoria. No doubt, because of their cheapness, gooseberries were easily the most popular variety of berry fruit, representing one-third of the total sales.

In addition, some 1,200 boxes of Tasmanian black currants were disposed of and quantities are still being ordered.

There was a fine response from stationmasters, also, to the Goulburn Valley fruitgrowers' appeal for assistance in the disposal of apricots. One hundred and eighteen stations sold 335 cases, despite the fact that the fruit was ripe before sales publicity was started.

Largest individual orders came from Serviceton (29 cases), Merino and Dumosa (14 cases each) and Nullawil (10 cases).

Results of the sale of peaches, pears, quinces and grapes in the same way are awaited with interest.

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 1.—TEMPY

THIS was formerly a temporary siding, and in railway waybills and memos, the word "temporary" was abbreviated to "Tempy."

In that form the word was eventually adopted as the name of the present station.

Australia Eats More Oranges

EACH Australian is now eating five lb. more oranges a year than he was four years ago. Last year, the average consumption was 25 lb. of oranges per head of population. In 1926-27, it was 20 lb.

This latest figure shows that Australia consumes more oranges than any other country in the world. In America the average consumption is 23 lb. a year, while Great Britain and Canada are each credited with 19 lb.

It would be interesting to know to what extent the increased consumption of citrus fruit in Victoria is directly attributable to propaganda with which this Department has been so closely associated.

February Suggestions Drive

THE subject chosen for the 38th Suggestions Drive, which will be held during February, is:—

Tarpaulins and Their Handling

Suggestions should be submitted to the Betterment and Publicity Board in the usual way. Suggestions on any other subject will, of course, also be accepted.

Non-paying Lines— How They Are Financed

RAILWAYMEN should know something of the general policy governing the financial operation of non-paying lines in Victoria. The position is here explained simply and briefly.

UNDER the Railways Act of 1896, provision was made that, where Parliament authorises the construction of any new line of railway which fails to produce sufficient revenue to cover the interest on its cost of construction and the expenses of its maintenance and operation, the annual loss will be recouped to the railways from consolidated revenue. For the last financial year, payment of £199,929 was made in this connection. This amount represents the loss on lines constructed since 1896, although some lines built before that date are also non-paying. The first claim made under this arrangement was submitted for the 1917-18 financial year.

In every instance, the construction of the line has been for the purpose of developing and opening up country which until then had been more or less unproductive. Nor was it anticipated that the new lines would immediately, or for some time after construction, pay full working expenses and interest.

The construction of new railway lines in Victoria is, of course, outside the jurisdiction of the Railways Commissioners. Preliminary investigations into the desirability of building new lines are carried out by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, the construction work is carried out under the direction of the Railways Construction Branch of the Board of Land and Works, and the completed lines are handed over to the Railways Commissioners for operation.

A QUESTION which arises when payment by the Government to the railways on account of non-paying lines is mentioned is the equity of taking money from consolidated revenue for the benefit of a particular section of the community. There are three practicable methods by which the loss on these lines can be made good—

- (a) By imposing local rates, the users of the line being thus required to pay relatively higher charges than other railway users;
- (b) By spreading the loss over the whole of the railway users by means of a percentage increase in all fares and freight rates; and
- (c) By recouping the loss from the consolidated revenue, thereby spreading it over the whole of the taxpayers.

The first method, by placing an additional tax on the producers in the district concerned as compared with producers more fortunately situated as regards freight charges, would hinder settlement instead of encouraging it. The second method is inequitable as it taxes the railway user who is not even remotely interested in the construction or otherwise of the line.

The third method is equitable as it charges to consolidated revenue the loss after local users have paid for the service received in the same proportion as other railway users. By this method, the whole community shares in the cost of developing the whole of the country and in the further production of wealth which results.

Railway Plant for Treating Wet Sugar

POPULAR opinion associates the lost property store in Flinders-street extension with a musty collection of kit bags, suit cases, umbrellas and all the other whatnots that forgetful people are apt to leave in railway carriages or cloak rooms and never bother to inquire for. Not many would expect to find a plant for treating damaged sugar on the premises. There it is, however—housed in an annexe to the main building.

From various causes, it is inevitable that an occasional consignment of sugar will be slightly damaged by rain or other soakage. Such sugar can be perfectly dried and rehabilitated by a simple and inexpensive process, and by this means claims expenditure can be offset to some extent.

Before the sugar is emptied from the bags, all traces of dirt are removed from the outside. The sugar is then spread out on trays which are placed in a suitably designed dryer. An electric heating element is placed at one end and a blower drives the heated air all round the sugar trays with the result that surplus moisture is soon removed.

From the dryer, the sugar is emptied into a bin and fed through a grinder to reduce it to the size of ordinary sugar. It passes on through a sieve to a receiver from which it is removed and bagged in new bags.

The plant has also been used on occasion for treating flour, but sugar is the usual commodity handled.

—A.B.C.

Things we are Talking About

Two Tickets in One—Lighter Wheat Freight Critics Discover Mare's Nest

FOLLOWING the recent cuts and rearrangements in train schedules, timekeeping results have retrogressed and subsequent analyses of cause-and-effect indicate that some of the delays which have occurred are attributable to lack of forethought and insufficient preparatory organisation at stations and depots. The necessity for having parcels trolleys

BRAKES ON TIMEKEEPING

in readiness for prompt handling when a train reaches the platform has been frequently emphasised in the past, but personal inspections have shown that in some instances the platform staff have not met this necessity and apparently do not appreciate the importance of watching every second in train running. Another annoying brake on country train running has been the all too frequent failures of some members of the staff to supply live stock trucks at the time ordered. As a result, trains have been delayed waiting for the stock to be loaded.

ANTI-RAILWAY propaganda broke out in a fresh spot last month when motor interests sought to prove that "excessive rail freights" were responsible for the high cost of petrol in outlying districts.

OFF THE TRACK

An imposing array of figures was advanced to show that the railway freight on petrol was "58 per cent. greater than on beer." The effectiveness of this comparison was spoiled only by the fact that the figures on which it was based were utterly incorrect. The freight on a ton of beer from Melbourne to Swan Hill, for instance, was declared to be 54 3d., compared with 82 6d. for a ton of petrol. Actually, the beer freight should have been 86 8d., or more than four shillings in excess of the petrol rate. In the same way, the freight on a ton of beer from Melbourne to Orbost was placed at 56 7d., instead of 92 1d. Indisputably, you can prove anything with figures if you don't know what the figures are that you're using.

SUBURBAN stations are now issuing special tickets to travellers by the early Sunday morning trains to the city. Previously it was necessary for railway excursionists on Sunday to purchase separate tickets for suburban travel and country travel. The new Sunday ticket, however, will be an inclusive one, which will cover the travel of the purchaser from the suburban station right through to the country destination. The destination stations concerned are Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Daylesford, Queenscliff and intermediate stations.

SPECIAL SUNDAY TICKETS

RAILWAY staffs in the wheat districts are probably aware that much of this season's wheat is lighter than the general average of 12 bags to the ton, and agents have already brought under notice the fact that

LIGHT WHEAT THIS SEASON

the weight of the prescribed number of bags loaded is frequently less than the truck load minimums applicable to wheat. Nevertheless, a reminder to officers-in-charge that the loader should be advised to check the average weight of a few bags will not be amiss. The loading diagrams exhibited at stations provide for a specified number of bags of average weight, but this number may be increased so long as the principles of safe stowing are observed. Railwaymen, however, should satisfy themselves that the weight of wheat loaded is not in excess of the authorised carrying capacity of the truck.

WE quote the following paragraph from the editorial columns of a recent issue of the *Railway Gazette* because of its particularly appropriate application to existing Victorian conditions:

SELLING THE RAILWAYS

Although "selling the railways to the public" may sound a strange sort of slogan, yet it is the one which railwaymen of every grade have to keep constantly before them. Just as the grocer sells his wares, and the butcher supplies the public with meat, so has the railwayman to be ever on the alert to sell train transport, both for passengers and goods. Even in large centres, but especially in smaller places and outlying districts, every member of the staff can help in selling the railways. In the case of the stationmaster (who is, so far as his station is concerned, "the general manager"), besides courtesy and willingness he has to be ready and willing to answer multitudinous questions on all subjects connected with his railway. He must be able to quote chapter and verse in the matter of fare and freight rates, and he must do his best to see that his customers are satisfied in their dealings. Further, he must needs make his station as attractive as possible, and, when special announcements are made, it is up to him to display them as attractively as possible. All round, in fact, there is still room for improvement in this "selling the railways" move. Employees should realise that every effort to please the public must help to improve business, and they should do everything in their power to attract the public back to the railways.



... this "selling the railways" move

SINCE Mr. H. C. Fenton, London representative of the Australian National Travel Association, put up his brass-plate in Trafalgar Square six months ago, more than 100,000 folders, booklets and posters descriptive of Australia's attractions for the investor, settler and tourist have been distributed in Great Britain, Ireland and on the Continent, while window displays and press publicity have been arranged and direct contact established with nearly 400 travel agencies, which have become additional points for the dissemination of information about Australia. Last month Mr. Fenton talked Australia to 300 members of the London Rotary Club, and he has also addressed other meetings as far apart as Perth, Bristol and Burnley. The efforts of the Association to put Australia on the map overseas can be expected to reap a new harvest for us in the near future.

PUTTING AUSTRALIA ON THE MAP

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THE value which other nations are today setting on the tourist traffic is best gauged by the extent to which the rivalry for the tourist's favor has developed. A French tourist organisation, for instance, is reported to have recently persuaded a number of French hotel-keepers to quote fixed inclusive prices for the entertainment of American visitors. As is usual in France, the terms included wines at luncheon and dinner. The outcome was that, as soon as the tariffs and inducements were published in America, a rival European country launched a campaign in the American press against the pernicious French attempt to inveigle sturdy American prohibitionists into alcoholism!

COMPETITION FOR THE TOURIST

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Railwaymen of the Month



Admiral of the Pier

WILLIAMSTOWN Pier has become the focal point for a steady stream of the new season's wheat *en route* to the markets of the old world. And for the fifth successive year, Mick Enright is to be found directing operations in the midst of the seasonal bustle. Since he joined the railways at the beginning of 1889, Mick has been porter and signalman, goods foreman and district superintendent's chief clerk, assistant stationmaster and stationmaster, guard and shunter, booking clerk and goods clerk, traffic inspector and train running officer, and his experience has been gained on every line of the system.

—“Mag.”

Bushranging Days Recalled

PROBABLY the only surviving member of the party connected with the capture of Ned Kelly at Glenrowan in 1880, Jesse Dowsett, ex V.R. guard, recently celebrated his 87th birthday. In his 36 years of service with the Victorian Railways, one incident stands out in his memory, and that is the occasion when he was guard of the special train conveying police to Glenrowan where the Kellys made their last stand. He is now living at Glenhantly and numbers among his most treasured possessions the revolver he took from Ned Kelly and one of that worthy's boots. —A.P.

February Birthdays

OF those railmen who will be celebrating another birthday during this month are three who will also commence their 27th year of railway service. Joining up on February 7, 1905, Messrs. George Curtis, A. Abbott, and H. P. Colwell have since graduated to the responsible positions of manager of the Bendigo workshops, metropolitan roadmaster, and chief electrical engineer respectively, with birthdays, in their turn, on the 11th, 24th and 28th of the month. Others who are due for congratulations during the month are:—

Fireman J. Pilkington of Traralgon, on the second; Driver G. Padgett of Benalla, Guard R. McKee of Warragul, and Enginemen's Instructor W. L. Hosking of North Melbourne, on the fourth; Boilermaker's Help W. F. Mayne of Traralgon, on the fifth; Clerk H. V. Hardy of the Geelong D.S.'s office, on the seventh; Worksmaster J. W. Ashton of Oakleigh, on the eighth; Guard O. C. Healey of Dimboola, on the ninth; Road Foreman W. Cashen of Flinders-street, on the 11th; Dave Little, secretary to the Medical Officer, and Alf. Gilmore, secretary to the C.M.E., on the 12th; Engineer W. Bromby, on the 15th; Estate Officer Rankin, Ambulance Officer Fred. Kaiser and L. H. Upholsterer E. L. Stainer of Dudley-street, on the 16th; Railways Medical Officer John Gordon, Engineer J. J. Gilchrist, Driver V. A. Collins of Bendigo, and Cleaner A. J. Sheppard of Warragul, on the 18th; Driver Bert Rachinger, Shedman A.

Bolitho of Bendigo, and S.M. John Hutton of Sale, on the 19th; General Passenger and Freight Agent J. McClelland, on the 20th; Roadmaster E. Collins of Cressy, on the 21st; Rolling Stock Superintendent John McLeod of Bendigo, and Leading Hand W. H. Fewster of Newport signal shops, on the 23rd; Leading Shunter E. J. Green of Dandenong, on the 24th; Chief Clerk Dick Easterby of the Way and Works Branch, on the 25th; W. Enderby of the Betterment and Publicity board, on the 26th; and Chief Train Despatcher W. R. Price and Ganger A. Gaylard of Oakleigh, on the 27th.

Maryborough's Loss

MARYBOROUGH lost a good citizen and District Superintendent Russell his right-hand man by the recent transfer of Jack Roberts to the truck records room in head office. During his ten years as chief clerk at Maryborough, he took a prominent part in public affairs, being a borough councillor, mayor and a commissioner of the water trust. In addition, he was vice-president of the league football club and a representative of the League of Victorian Wheelmen at the annual Highland gathering and other local sports meetings.

—M.A.

—And Another One

ON the eve of his retirement from the service a week or so ago, Mr. Robert Dawson, depot foreman at Maryborough, was the centre of a representative assembly of his railway and other friends who gathered in the Institute rooms to wish him a long and happy retired life. To remind him of the associations of his 41 years of railroading, Bob was presented with a handsome *secrtaire* and a travelling rug.

New Workshops Manager

ENGINEER George A. Curtis has been selected to fill, in an acting capacity, the position rendered vacant by the recent retirement of Manager Percy O'Neil of the Bendigo North workshops. George commenced his engineering training as an apprentice fitter at the Phoenix Foundry, Ballarat, in 1902, transferring three years later to the Newport workshops as apprentice fitter and turner. Theoretical training at the Workingmen's college was then coupled with his practical work. In 1914, after three years as a journeyman, he was appointed draftsman in the rolling stock drawing office. With the establishment of the suggestions board in 1921, he was selected to act as engineering member, and, seven years later, he took charge of the rolling stock drawing office during the temporary absence of Mr. T. D. Doyle in America. More recently, he had charge of the tests for the first Pacific loco., S300, acted as Superintendent of Loco. Supplies, managed the Bendigo workshops, and filled a number of other positions for shorter or longer periods.

—C.S.

What's In a Name

ENTHUSIASTIC walkers are often the sworn enemies of motorists, who, it would appear, delight in smothering them in clouds of dust, but there are at least two railway Walkers whose interests are intimately bound up with the motor side of the department's activities. They are Messrs. C. G. and H. G. Walker, respectively supervisor of road transport and supervisor of motor transport services. Appropriately enough, during C. G.'s period of annual leave last month, H. G., who until the end of 1929 was assistant stationmaster at Bendigo, was called upon to keep the tired wheels moving.

—S.C.W.

Three Veterans

WELL-KNOWN stationmasters who have retired recently include Stationmaster A. T. Booth of Horsham (35 years service), Stationmaster A. H. Harrison of Eltham (41 years) and Stationmaster A. Mitchell of Castlemaine (42 years). —H.E.C.

At its January meeting, the Council of the Victorian Railways Institute appointed a sub-committee to consider ways and means by which railway help for the Blind Institute's appeal for £50,000 might be organised.

This appeal will be launched by the patron, Lord Somers, from Government House on Monday, February 2, at 3 p.m.

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

CASH

Means Contentment

Provide for it

NOW

by enrolling in

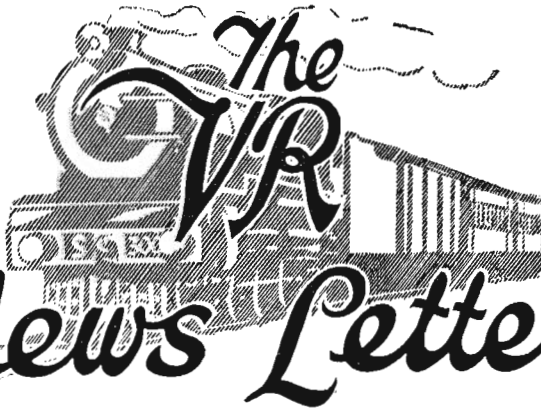
The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society's
Group Provident Plan

FOR

Victorian Railways Employees

WATCH THIS SPACE

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

You cannot build a reputation on the things you are going to do.

Issue No. 6

News Letter

March, 1931

When Is a Train a Long Train? Two Miles Between Van and Loco.

PRESS mention last month of the passage of "a train of 70 empty trucks through Williamstown" is a reminder of the fact that the maximum number of vehicles that can be hauled in one train in Victoria is 75.

As circumstances demanded, it has been our practice for many years to operate trains of 74 trucks and a van between Newport and Geelong, and on certain other easily-graded sections. On those sections any of our main line locomotives can haul these attenuated trains.

IN Victoria the maximum permissible gross tonnage of a freight train, exclusive of the locomotive, is 1,599 tons. This load can be hauled on certain sections between Stawell and Dimboola by "C" class locomotives. The vehicular limitation, of course, remains 75.

Heavy trains can also be run from Woodend to Melbourne, on which section a tonnage of up to 1,364 can be hauled by the one locomotive. Such a train might represent approximately 850 tons paying load.

The "S" class locomotives operating on the north-eastern line can haul passenger trains of up to 480 tons, this loading representing 11 express type cars and a van. The maximum number of empty passenger cars which may be hauled in one train is 15 bogie vehicles or 30 of the small fixed-wheel cars. Trains of this length have been operated from time to time between Melbourne and some of the provincial cities to provide the necessary car stock for picnics and other special traffic. . . .

Tourists returning from America frequently quote the huge freight trains of 7,000 tons gross weight which are operated in that country. The performances of Victorian freight trains apparently suffer by comparison.

But such superficial comparisons are misleading as they ignore the fundamentally different conditions existing in the two countries.

The exceptionally favorable condition of the tracks in America—particularly the absence of steep gradients—pronouncedly increases the capacity of the American railways to operate long and heavy trains. Other elements are the huge population, the intense industrial development and the remarkable richness of the natural resources, all of which contribute to the operation of locomotives of considerably greater tractive power and the construction of tracks of larger carrying capacity.

THE following figures are illuminating. For the last financial year, the average gross train load in Victoria was 407 tons, of which 166 tons was paying traffic, and the average number of vehicles for all trains was 18 loaded and seven empty vehicles. The Class I railways of U.S.A., during the year 1929, averaged 48.6 freight cars per train, with gross and net tonnages of 1,866 and 804 respectively.

Incidentally, a recent American newspaper describes a Great Northern goods train of 176 trucks—nearly two miles long—that passed through Minnesota a few weeks back.

The newspaper points out that, when the train stopped at its destination, the locomotive was at the depot but the guard's van was so far back that the guard hailed a passing motorist on the parallel road and "hitched" a ride into the town at which the train had halted.

WHEAT MOVING BRISKLY

THE transport of the new season's wheat continues briskly.

Figures available up to the time of going to press (the middle of February) showed that no fewer than 5,810,250 bags of wheat had been transported, while a further 6,290,505 bags were stacked at country stations.

At three bushels to the bag, and allowing five million bushels reserved for seeding purposes, this would represent a harvest of more than 41 million bushels.

Wheat was still being carted to the country stations in large volume, however, and, as the quantity delivered on the last day of the period referred to, was 214,000 bags, there is every indication that the 41 million figure will be considerably exceeded.

The quantity of wheat stacked at country stations is the greatest for the past six years. In addition, over one million bags were in stacks at Williamstown and Geelong, these stocks having accumulated because of the shortage of ships.

The railway arrangements have been entirely satisfactory to the wheat growers. Mr. Judd, manager of the Victorian Wheatgrowers' Corporation, recently paid public tribute to the efficient co-operation of the railwayman in moving the wheat to the seaboard.

NOWINGI LINE AGREEMENT

A REGISTERED company has been granted the right to operate a service for the haulage of gypsum along portion of the unused Nowingi-Millewa South railway.

Extensive deposits of gypsum, ranging from 2 ft. 6 in. to 4 ft. in thickness, exist at a point some 10 miles from Nowingi, and the company's service will operate between that point and the main line.

Clauses in the licence provide that the company shall be able to transport gypsum for any person, over the section of the line in question, at the ordinary V.R. freight rates, that it must provide its own motive power, and that it must pay a certain amount to meet the maintenance costs of the line, which has not yet been completed through to Millewa South.

Influence of 13!

IF anxiety concerning the baneful influence of the evil number, 13, is any guide, Victorian railway travellers certainly aren't as superstitious as Americans.

In Uncle Sam Land, train No. 13, seat No. 13 and berth No. 13 are often found masquerading as No. 14, the devil's number having been discarded altogether. Occasionally, danger has been avoided by the substitution of No. 113. These changes have been found necessary because of the disinclination of many Americans to venture under 13's sinister shadow.

Experience at Spencer-street, on the other hand, has shown that only about one Victorian passenger in 50 will ever request not to be placed in a seat or berth numbered 13, and there has certainly never been any official move to recognise superstition by altering the number wherever it occurs in berth or seating accommodation.

Sleeping berth No. 13 is, in fact, a popular berth with interstate travellers, as it is a lower one near the centre of the car.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there are several Victorian country trains numbered 13 in the timetables, whose timekeeping needs special watch-

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 2—CONDAH.

THIS station should really be called Condah, that having been the original name of the lake nearby after which the station took its title.

But when the newly-arrived owner of a cattle station in the vicinity was told, in 1855, that "Condah" was the native word for the black swan which infested the lake, he changed the name to Lake Condah.

Later on, he found that he had been misinformed, but thought it unnecessary to revert to the old name.

So Condah the lake remained and Condah, in turn, the local railway station became.

ing, although train running officers give the blame to other reasons than the number.

The 6.30 a.m. north-eastern, for instance, is a No. 13 train, which sometimes has difficulty in adhering to schedule, but its troubles are based on crossings with the Sydney expresses and connections *en route*.

Other No. 13's over which our t.r.o.'s keep close check are the 12.40 p.m. Bendigo-Swan Hill goods, the 12.12 p.m. Bendigo-Kulwin passenger, and the 7.10 a.m. Ballarat-Dimboola passenger.

MARCH SUGGESTIONS DRIVE

THE subject chosen for the 39th Suggestions Drive, which will be held during March, is:—

Economical Use of Stores and Materials.

Suggestions should be submitted to the Betterment and Publicity Board in the usual way. Suggestions on any other subject will, of course, also be accepted.

Statistics in Railway Operation

STATISTICS are seldom very popular with the average man-in-the-street. He generally prefers to absorb the information which figures impart when it is distinguished by colored illustrations. He would sooner read that "were all the rails in use on the Victorian railways placed end to end, they would stretch from Pernambuco to Timbuctoo by way of Croajingolong" than study a detailed statement setting out the actual mileage in each district to six or seven places of decimals.

But statistics have a very definite place in modern railroading, and no administration can afford to ignore their precise and coldly efficient help.

PARTICULARS of the number of passengers carried, of the tonnage of goods hauled, and of the revenue obtained from these two sources, on the one hand, and a statement of the operating costs involved, on the other hand, are the fundamental railway statistics. But, interesting though these figures are for superficial comparisons of one period with another, they must be elaborated to be of further practical use. To ascertain the work which has actually been performed and so afford an effective comparison with previous periods, the data is extended to include passenger and goods train mileages, passenger miles, ton miles, and car and truck miles.

Passenger miles are, of course, the number of passengers carried, multiplied by the average journey per passenger, and the other units are computed similarly.

Care must be exercised in the application of these operating statistics. Train mileage, in particular, is a ready guide to the traffic carried as, normally, it will increase or decrease in accordance with the traffic if the same efficiency is secured. For the same volume of traffic, an increase in the train loads is reflected in a reduced train mileage and, conversely, increased train mileage is the result when trains are lightly loaded.

Ton miles are, therefore, a more reliable guide to the railway officer. Train miles divided into ton miles gives the average load per train mile and enables a comparison to be made with the capacity load for the locomotive. Similar comparisons may be made of the actual and capacity loads per vehicle on the trains and of the ratio of paying load to the total load hauled, including the weight of vehicles.

Failure to employ trucks to the best advantage, either through unnecessary haulage of empty trucks or because of light loading, is made apparent by these figures, and action can then be taken to improve the position.

A GAIN, the subdivision of ton miles into commodity ton miles enables each class of traffic to be examined and its fluctuations noted. In this way, the desirability or otherwise of increasing the supply of any particular type of truck can be readily determined.

A unit of cost can be obtained from train and engine hours, as the expenditure for enginemen's wages, fuel, oil and the like, varies in proportion to engine hours incurred. This unit draws attention to all unproductive time of the locomotive, thus indicating possibilities of reducing operating costs.

Train miles per train or engine hour provide another check on the efficiency of train working. A decrease in the train miles per engine hour may indicate, for instance, that trains are being delayed awaiting connections, that excessive time is being taken for shunting movements *en route*, or that locomotives are being overloaded or not worked to best advantage by the drivers. Investigation of such delays generally shows where a remedy may be applied and so leads to increased efficiency.

Statistics are particularly valuable in showing the effect of increases or decreases in rates or fares on the volume of traffic and the revenue. The effect on the revenue of such changes must, of course, be borne in mind when comparisons are being made between the results for different periods.

Africa Beats Australia: World's Railway Mileages

DURING the past 14 years, the world's railway mileage has increased 13 per cent. Africa holds the record for growth during the period, the Dark Continent's mileage having increased 48 per cent. Australia is second with an increase of 40 per cent.

Further back comes Europe (17 per cent.), Asia (15 per cent.), and North and South America (six per cent.). The increase in the U.S.A. was only

one per cent.

In mileage of railway track, the systems of the five great geographical divisions of the world compare as follows:—

| | 1927 | 1913 | Increase |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| North and South America | 376,747 | 353,467 | 23.28 |
| Asia | 76,913 | 67,051 | 9.80 |
| Africa | 40,631 | 27,472 | 13.11 |
| Australia | 30,777 | 21,950 | 8.81 |
| Europe | 231,766 | 214,665 | 37.10 |
| Total | 776,834 | 684,614 | 92.22 |

Things we are Talking About

WHEN Britannia weakened, crumbled and collapsed last month, Australia's disintegration could no longer be deferred. And, inevitably, Architecture, Engineering, Education, Commerce, Pasturage and Agriculture were involved in the scenes of destruction which ensued. The result is that the eight symbolic statues which guarded the three portals of the railways head office for 40 years, are now missing from their lofty pedestals. They were condemned as dangerous a few weeks ago, and removed by the Way and Works branch. Each figure was 8 ft. 6 in. high and weighed more than a ton. Britannia and Australia reclined over the main entrance, with the grave figures of Architecture and Engineering towering behind them. Education and Commerce overlooked the southern entrance, and Agriculture and Pasturage the northern entrance. The gnomes still wheel puzzledly around the vacant spaces.

DESTRUCTION AT HEAD OFFICE

Each figure was 8 ft. 6 in. high and weighed more than a ton. Britannia and Australia reclined over the main entrance, with the grave figures of Architecture and Engineering towering behind them. Education and Commerce overlooked the southern entrance, and Agriculture and Pasturage the northern entrance. The gnomes still wheel puzzledly around the vacant spaces.

A BOARD which was uncovered when the statues were demolished gave the date of erection of the figures as March 10, 1891. It read; "These figures were fixed by H. J. Bourne and A. Gooch in the year 1891, March 10. Modelled by

ANCIENT HISTORY

Mackennal. E. A. Garry, contractor of plastering. James Moore, builder." The Mackennal mentioned was the father of Bertram Mackennal, the famous Australian sculptor. In the hollow interior of one of the figures, a bottle was also discovered containing a written message, but, on exposure to the air, the paper powdered to dust before the writing could be read.

IT was announced last month that the winter tariff at The Chalet during the snow sports season at Mt. Buffalo National Park would be reduced from £11 a week to £8 10s., a cut of nearly 25 per cent. The £8 10s. rate will operate between July 24 and August 20. It will also apply during the Christmas fortnight, instead of the old rate of £10 a week. At other times, the £6 15s. rate will be in force. All these charges, of course, include first class return rail and motor travel and meals en route as well as accommodation at The Chalet.

CUT IN BUFFALO WINTER TARIFF

The £8 10s. rate will operate between July 24 and August 20. It will also apply during the Christmas fortnight, instead of the old rate of £10 a week. At other times, the £6 15s. rate will be in force. All these charges, of course, include first class return rail and motor travel and meals en route as well as accommodation at The Chalet.

IN the troublous times which we, in common with the rest of the world, are at present experiencing, the tendency is in the direction of pessimism. To-day's difficulties are being permitted to overshadow yesterday's achievements and to obscure the brighter hopes of tomorrow. Accordingly, the sentiments of the following message from an overseas railway administrator to his staff are of very real local interest:

WITH RENEWED FAITH AND COURAGE

overseas railway administrator to his staff are of very real local interest:

"The year which has just closed has been, in many of its aspects, a most unusual and unsatisfactory one. The reduction in business, from which all lines of industry, and particularly the railroads, have suffered, has likewise affected the lives and fortunes of many of our people. Necessary curtailment of expenditure has everywhere invaded the prosperity of the country and forced economies, which have involved the happiness of individuals and homes, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to avoid this distressing situation. The history of our country, however, is one of constant progress, and the recurring periods of depression have invariably been followed by a return to prosperity, and the restoration of our hopes, ambitions and dreams. There is no reason to doubt that history will repeat itself. The strength and optimism of a progressive nation will displace the clouds which now surround us and the sunshine of a better period make us forget the trials and tribulations of the present. Let us enter the new year with renewed faith and courage and with the belief that the resourcefulness and vision of our people will succeed in finding a way out of our present difficulties, and that the railroad, of which we are a part, will be one of the first among those instrumental in again establishing the peace and prosperity so necessary to our happiness and to the well being and content of our dear ones."

IT is not often that a railway slogan revives the vanishing memory of a schoolroom ballad, but when this year's "Eat More Fruit" signs appeared on the Flinders-street and Spencer-street stations, many elderly travellers found their thoughts winging back to the good old days of blackboard, slate and cane. For the exhortation "Bite Bigger, Billy," is lifted from a poem which appeared in the primer on issue in Victorian State schools two score or more years ago. It described, with all the high-sounding moral eloquence of the late Victorian period, the philanthropy of a crossing-sweeper who picked up a battered apple in the snow and offered it to a friend. The friend's timid bite brought this generous encouragement from the finder:

BILLY'S BITING BIGGER

"Bite bigger, Billy—bigger yet;
You're welcome, that you know."

Thousands of suburban Billies are now absorbing that encouragement daily.



... the philanthropy of a crossing-sweeper who picked up an apple in the snow.

FOLLOWING last year's successful Australian tour by a large party of New Zealanders, arrangements have been made for a 19-day tour of Maoriland by Australian tourists. The party will leave Sydney by the *Aorangi* on April 2 and return on the 28th. The tour will be conducted on the same lines as the Reso tours which have been so popular in Victoria. Wheat lands, agricultural colleges, industrial plants, the principal cities in both islands, the boiling springs and geysers of Rotorua, Lake Wakatipu, Mt. Ruapehu, the Wanganui river and sundry Maori villages will all find a place in the itinerary of the comprehensive tour. Sheepmen whose thoughts are turning to the dual-purpose sheep will find that their interests occupy a prominent place in the tour programme, and there will also be opportunities for studying New Zealand's progressive dairying methods. The inclusive charge per passenger from Melbourne is £98/10/—lady or gentleman.

RESO TOUR OF MAORILAND

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JUST a reminder for the month: a little point which becomes the cause of more than a little delay, inconvenience and loss, if it is not carefully watched, is the matter of full and proper addresses on perishable consignments. A missing street-

WATCH THE ADDRESSES

name on an address label can easily mean a spoiled consignment. For delivery of an unclaimed parcel cannot be effected at the destination if the label does not show the addressee's full name and address—and 'phone number, if any. If railwaymen at the receiving end will carefully check the addresses on parcels when accepting them, and have any missing particulars inserted, things will be a whole lot easier for the parcels staff at the destination station.

Railwaymen of the Month

Another Degree

BY securing his degree of Bachelor of Commerce at the Melbourne University, Mr. Ronald E. B. Lee, who is at present engaged in accountancy reorganisation work for the Commissioners, has further increased the imposing array of initials that bristle beside his name—or that would bristle if he could be induced to put them there. He is a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society (London), member of the National Association of Cost Accountants of New York, member of the Commonwealth Institute of Accountants (Melbourne), and Licenced Companies Auditor. Mr. Lee had several years accountancy experience abroad and was lately associated with the reorganisation of accounting methods at Melbourne goods book-keeper's office and Newport workshops. —D.B.

March Birthdays

MARCH is apparently a popular birthday month with the superintendents of the service. General Superintendent Canny begins a new year of life on the third, Assistant Goods Superintendent Simon Cudgigan on the fourth, Superintendent of Goods Train Services T. W. J. Cox on the sixth, Metropolitan Superintendent J. G. Lee on the 18th, and Superintendent of Loco. Supplies Ed. Dillon on the 28th. Other well known railwaymen who will also be celebrating during the month are:—

Poultry-farm Manager Tom Harding and Fitter A. T. Twells of Geelong, on the first; Fireman A. E. Dawson of North Loco., on the second; Traffic Inspector Alex. McLean of Bendigo, Staff Board Member T. F. Brennan and Clerk M. Stanistreet of Room 2, on the third; Chief Foreman W. T. Cornish of North Loco. and Frank Lilley of the wires counter at Spencer-street, on the fourth; Driver G. E. Nelson of North Melbourne and Shunter W. J. Lacy of Melbourne Yards, on the fifth; Block and Signal Inspector J. T. Nolan of Seymour, on the sixth; Driver S. Parker of Colac, Accts. Chief Clerk Norman Lester and Train Examiner P. Gill of North Melbourne, on the seventh; Rolling Stock Clerk A. J. Paul of Ararat, on the eighth; Assist. Electrical Engineer-in-Charge John Lang of Newport Power House, on the ninth; 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 L.H. Fitter Mudge of Geelong, on the 12th; District Engineer Tom Bye of Seymour, Provadore L. C. Brown of the Refreshment Services, and Man Power Officer F. P. O'Dea, on the 13th; Electric Train Driver D. P. Ryan of Jolimont, on the 14th; Fireman G. Mitchell of Ultima, Carpenter A. Horbury of Bendigo, Assist. Transportation Staff Officer Paddy Meares, Fitter W. J. Lonsdale of Ballarat and Guard C. A. Potter of Traralgon, on the 16th; Commissioner T. B. Molomby and Works Foreman E. G. Armstrong of Ballarat, on the 17th; Signal and Telegraph Engineer J. A. Malan, on the 20th; Cleaner A. G. Clements of Traralgon, Clerk Les. Phelan of Head Office and Road Foreman T. Smyth of Bendigo, on the 22nd; Boilermaker R. Hill and Signal

and Telegraph Supervisor N. S. Smyth, both of Ballarat, and Way and Works Clerk Jack Norris of Head Office, on the 23rd; Staff Clerk Dave Way of the Way and Works and Jack Roberts of the truck records room, on the 24th; Train Examiner J. W. Humphreys of Ballarat and Lineman P. Hyde of Bendigo, on the 25th; Chief Clerk H. L. Dickinson of the Rolling Stock branch, Comptroller of Stores C. W. J. Coleman and Train Examiner Purtle of Dandenong, on the 26th; Foreman W. Turner, in charge of railway scales, Driver F. H. Dwyer of Warragul, and Leading Porter T. O'Brien of Bendigo, on the 27th; 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; Driver C. Crick of Ararat and Conductor Billy Lynch, on the 30th; Advertising Artist Angus Mac, Jack Cordwell of the General Superintendent's Office and Signalman P. J. Fogarty of Caulfield, on the 31st.

Oakleigh Veteran Retires

AFTER 11 years at Oakleigh, Worksmaster John William Ashton has passed his 65th birthday and has retired to a well-earned rest. He has had a lifetime of service in the Way and Works branch. Joining up as a carpenter at Seymour early in 1888, he was transferred to Wangaratta as foreman nine years later. After three years, he returned to Seymour as foreman of the works depot. Then followed periods at Ararat and Geelong until 1914, when he was appointed metropolitan district foreman with headquarters at North Melbourne. Twelve months later, he moved to Maryborough as worksmaster, transferring to Oakleigh in the same capacity at the end of 1919. And from first to last his departmental record was unblemished. —C.S.

WHEN "THE RAILWAY KING" REIGNED

THE first English financier to make and lose a fortune in railway speculation was George Hudson, the anniversary of whose birth occurs this month.

He was born in York in March, 1800, inherited £30,000 at the age of 27 and immediately invested in the newly-built North Midland railway, having been quick to realise the possibilities of money-making in railway building ventures. He pushed through the construction of a line to York, initiated the Newcastle-Darlington line, and with George Stephenson planned and carried out the extension of the Midland railway to Newcastle.

By 1844, Hudson had control of more than a thousand miles of railway and was known far and wide as "The Railway King." Although he had won a colossal fortune for himself by his speculations, those who had gained by following his lead gratefully presented him with £20,000. When he was elected M.P. in 1845, a special train travelling at the unheard-of speed of 75 miles an hour rushed the news to London.

"Big Swollen Gambler"

Then came the disclosure of the Eastern Railway frauds and Hudson lost fortune and reputation at a single stroke. He lived on a small annuity granted him by some of his friends until his death in 1871.

Although he was savagely attacked by the financial world after his failure and insolvency (Carlyle called him "the big swollen gambler,") Hudson always had an honest faith in his schemes, and more than any other man was responsible for overcoming the powerful landed interests which delayed the adoption of railways in England long after the time of their introduction into America. —E.B.

Mildura to Dimboola

THERE was a full muster of the railway staff at Mildura on the night Stationmaster S. Jones left with his wife on transfer to Dimboola. Good wishes and *au revoirs* accompanied the staff's farewell gift of a shaving outfit and pipe for the S.M. and a tray for his wife. Mr. Jones declared that his main regret at leaving was the enforced separation from the railwaymen who had worked with him during his 18 months at Mildura. Stationmaster Tillson succeeds him. —S.D.

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

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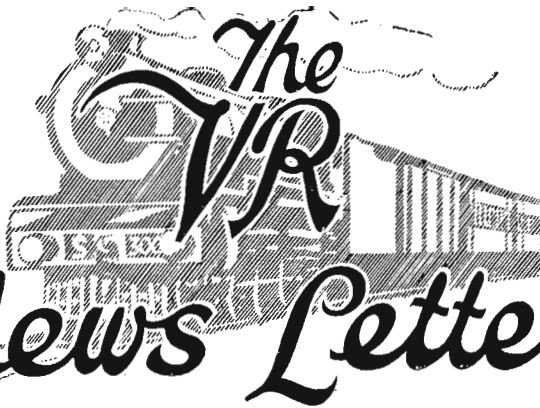
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The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to every railwayman in the service. Personal paragraphs and other brief succinct contributions for inclusion in the News Letter should be addressed to the Editor, Betterment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

THE MONTH'S THOUGHT

"Improvement" begins with "I."



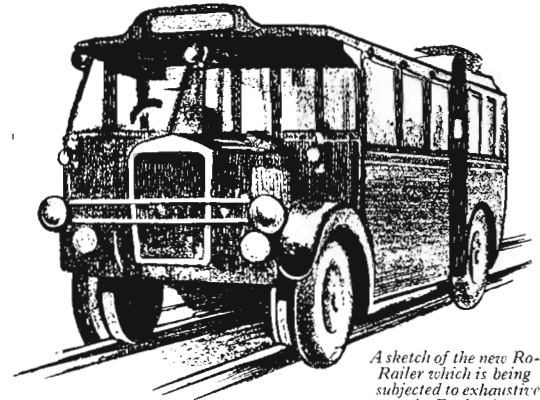
Issue No. 7

The V.R. News Letter

April, 1931

Victorian Rail Chiefs Discuss the Ro-Railer

THE Ro-Railer is something entirely new in railway coaches which, according to last month's cables, has been put to work on the London, Midland and Scottish railway. The vehicle can run on either the road or the railway track, being equipped with two sets of wheels—flanged and rubber-tyred. The Ro-Railer is the first attempt to combine in one vehicle the safety and cheap operating cost of rail haulage with the door-to-door transport of the road vehicle.



A sketch of the new Ro-Railer which is being subjected to exhaustive tests in England

TWO of the vehicles—one for passenger traffic and the other for light goods—were constructed by Messrs. Karrier Motors Ltd. to the requirements of Mr. J. Shearman, road motor engineer of the L.M.S. railway. The motor engine develops a maximum horse power of 120, and is fitted with a supplementary gear box which enables increased speeds to be obtained with low engine speeds when long railway runs are being made. Seating accommodation is provided in the passenger car for 26 persons.

The trials of the passenger car were carried out on a branch line on which, in places, train speeds are limited to 12 m.p.h. In addition, there were some stiff gradients. According to the cables, in spite of the bad condition of the track, and the severe gradients, a maximum speed of 50 m.p.h. was attained in each direction, and there was no need for gear changing *en route*. On well-laid and properly maintained tracks still higher speeds are anticipated.

The change-over from the road to the rail is a simple procedure, occupying just over two minutes. No special equipment other than that incorporated in the design of the vehicle is required except that, at the point where the transfer is made, the ground must be made up to the level of the rail top for a few yards similar to the conditions at level crossings.

The car, it is said, is merely driven into position and backed on to the rails, this action raising the road wheels off the ground. An eccentric device, incorporated in each road wheel and operated by a hand lever, enables the road wheels to be raised into a higher position so that they cannot foul the points at railway cross-overs. It is claimed that the change can be made by two men—driver and conductor—in 2½ minutes or, if four men are available, in 1-minute. Provision has also been made for couplings at the rear so that a trailer can be hauled if required. . . .

DISCUSSING the vehicle, Mr. A. C. Ahlston, Assistant Chief Mechanical Engineer and general supervisor of rail motor operation in Victoria, said, "I know nothing of the machine apart from what has been published in the papers. I am very sceptical of the reliability and efficacy of the lever device used when changing from rail running to road running. Prolonged tests under actual working conditions will be necessary before any opinion of its possibilities can be expressed."

General Superintendent M. J. Canny said, "From the press picture, it appears a most interesting vehicle and one that, because of its adaptability for both road and rail running, might be very suitable for certain classes of cross-country traffic. It is questionable, however, whether we have a demand for this class of joint utility motor conveyance for passenger traffic under the conditions operating in this State.

"At the same time, we shall have to watch it very closely because it may be a development which will be of valuable service to Victoria. The transport of light goods by such a vehicle offers much greater possibilities."

A Fine Record!

RAILWAY station staff established a fine record in January. No station in the State submitted a late return—"C" sheets, parcels abstracts, account currents, and all the rest of the routine returns for the month from the six districts were received at headquarters "on time."

"I am very pleased to see we have attained our objective—all returns on time," writes General Superintendent Canny, to his district officers. "This result reflects great credit on all concerned, and I want you to tell them so."

Anzac Day Concessions

FOR the first time, tickets at cheap excursion rates will be issued at country stations on April 24 and 25 to outback returned soldiers and their wives and children, who travel to Melbourne for this year's Anzac Day celebrations. In addition, any soldier travelling more than 200 miles to the city will not be charged more than the fare for 200 miles.

If the soldier is a member of the R.S.S.I.L.A., he will present a special certificate signed by the local secretary at the booking window; if not a member, his certificate of discharge or of service, will be his authority.

The cheap excursion tickets will be available for return for one month.

As usual, of course, the general public will receive the concession of holiday excursion fares at country stations on the 24th and 25th.

Things we are Talking About

NOTHING is more disheartening than the unabated drift in railway finances. Despite all efforts to avert it, the slump continues and the strictest economy cannot reduce working expenses sufficiently to

THE DRIFT IS UNCHECKED

counter-balance the dwindling receipts which were declining at the rate of nearly £9,000 a day when we went to press. For the week ending March 7, railway revenue was £213,523 or £61,500 less than for the corresponding week last year. Although the wheat traffic (304,608 bags) was more than twice that of the earlier period, goods revenue declined nearly 25 per cent. Passenger receipts fell from £136,000 to £108,000. Not since the week ended December 14, when a decline of more than £65,000 was recorded, has the weekly return of revenue been so unfavorable.

ALL told, railway revenue, from the beginning of the financial year into the first week of last month, amounted to £6,821,406, a decrease of nearly 1½ million pounds, compared with the corresponding period of the last financial year. The decrease in goods revenue, £666,000, was the largest individual factor.

AVERY disquieting feature of the drop in goods traffic was the substantial decline in the tonnage of fertiliser carried. Available figures showed that, so far this season, only 23,000 tons of super. have been railed to country centres in Victoria. For the same period last year, the tonnage was 120,000.

BIG SLUMP IN SUPER. TRAFFIC

RECENTLY a Brunswick resident had a 'phone conversation with a traveller on the Sydney Limited an hour after the express had left Spencer-street. When he asked the exchange to put him through to the passenger on a trunk-line call, inquiries disclosed that the express was then approaching Seymour, and arrangements were immediately made for the Brunswick man to be switched through to Seymour station and for the passenger to be summoned from the train on arrival. This was the first occasion on which such a call has been put through in Victoria.

'PHONING THE LIMITED

ALTHOUGH free classes of instruction in first aid are held regularly at Melbourne and certain railway centres in the country, the attendances generally are not what they should be. Every railwayman, no matter in what branch of railway work he is engaged, should take the opportunity of qualifying in first aid. Once that knowledge is acquired—and it is not so difficult that it cannot be learned in a comparatively short time—it is "no weight to carry" and may possibly result in the saving of human life.

DOES THIS CONCERN YOU?

AYEAR or two ago, a large party of Australian Scotsmen made a pilgrimage to the land of their fathers. So successful did the tour prove that the Victorian Scottish Union is sponsoring a reciprocal tour from Scotland. The delegation, which will probably comprise as many as 250 members, will reach Perth on December 10, and will remain in Australia for a little more than two months. Of this time, 25 days will be spent in Victoria. In addition to a stay in Melbourne, the haggis-eaters will make a wide tour of the State and will stop for a short while at The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park. At each stopping place in the tour, an inspection of the

SCOTTISH DELEGATION TOUR

surrounding districts will be arranged. Special trains will be used for transport throughout Australia, and the various local Scottish societies are arranging special entertainment programmes. The booking arrangements overseas are in the hands of Burns Philp and Co., Ltd., who are also attending to the shipping reservations.

"WHEN the London financial barometer accords us a status of a South American republic, it is time to sit up and take a look at ourselves," said Mr. Clapp last month, speaking as chairman of the

MR. CLAPP ON NATIONAL ADVERTISING

Australian National Travel Association before the Australian Advertising Convention in Sydney. Australians, he said, were misunderstood because of a lack of continuous and favorable publicity. Adequate publicity in the past would have saved us from our present financial position in London. We had let Australia down in national publicity, had permitted criticism of Australia to go almost unanswered overseas, and had been mute when the magnified story of our misfortunes had been circulated abroad. The prestige of a country, knowledge of its resources and sentiments, had a definite value when it came to obtaining overseas markets and floating loans. Australia had lost millions of pounds because she had not advertised.

POINTING out that other nations were sowing the seeds of national publicity to obtain their share of the world's tourist harvest, Mr. Clapp said that Americans alone spent £200,000,000 abroad each year, and that some countries balanced their

MONEY IN IT

budgets on tourist spendings. Hawaii spent about £50,000 a year in national advertising and received in return £2,000,000 from visitors. Australia, which had been without any national advertising before the formation of the National Travel Association, received at present £2,000,000 from tourists. Now was the time, Mr. Clapp emphasised, to develop a strong national outlook and to support national advertising

INCIDENTALLY, the Australian National Travel Association was responsible, last month, for the interesting suggestion that Jack the Kookaburra should be added to the list of Australian artists who have recorded for the gramophone. The deep-throated guffaw of the bird has accordingly been preserved, and is now on sale at 4/- a record at the Government Tourist Bureau. The bird which has been immortalised is the property of Mrs. Jury of Healesville, and his mirth has often been heard from broadcasting stations. Besides the laugh, each record reproduces some amusing "patter" and, on the other side, a description of the bird and Australian fauna generally by Dr. Brooke Nicholls. Altogether, a very suitable gift for a friend overseas.

JACK KEEPS ON LAUGHING

AERIAL advertisements are not allowed to be flown within 300 yards of railway boundaries in the electrified area. A special by-law gives the Railway Commissioners authority to take action against any person offending in this way. Railwaymen should instantly report any breach of the by-law which comes under their notice as, apart from the probability of damage to the railway overhead equipment, there is possibility of danger to the men manipulating the advertisement. Only recently an advertising company attempted to display a sky sign, supported by three kites, in the vicinity of the Jolimont electrical sub-station. Two of the kites became interlocked and fell on the sub-station and the third nearly fouled the overhead wires.

SKY SIGNS BANNED

Tours to Central and North Australia

ENCOURAGED by the success of the tours conducted to Central Australia during the winter months of 1930, the Australian Railways Commissioners have arranged a further and still more attractive series of tours for the 1931 season, embracing both Central and North Australia.

ONE itinerary provides for a comprehensive survey of the principal scenic attractions and other features in the areas surrounding Alice Springs, another covers a journey across the continent to Darwin and return, and a third includes a visit to Tennant's Creek in North Australia, as well as inspections of some of the outstanding features closer to Alice Springs.

The heart of Australia is becoming widely recognised as possessing an ideal winter climate. The air is crisp and clear and delightfully invigorating. The days are invariably bright and pleasantly warm, although low temperatures are recorded at night.

Another, and perhaps even wider appeal, is the striking contrast in the

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 3 FLEMINGTON BRIDGE

THERE is some difference of opinion as to the derivation of this station's name.

Some authorities say that the suburb was named in compliment to Bob Fleming, a retail butcher who settled in the neighborhood in the early days; but the most popular theory is that the place was named by a Mr. Watson (of Watson and Hunter, early pastoralists) in memory of his wife, whose father was manager of a Flemington estate in Scotland.

conditions by comparison with those in other parts of Australia. This contrast is accentuated by the remoteness of the region and its complete isolation from the centres of civilisation. The scenic attractions of the interior, also, are of a remarkable character.

The facilities available on these tours enable participants to visit in comfort, and for a moderate charge, areas which previously were accessible only to those who could afford to organise private expeditions with their attendant worry and expense. These parties, in addition, will have the benefit of the extensive experience of the tour managers in conducting parties through these areas.

The first tour will commence from Adelaide, on Thursday, May 21, and subsequent parties will leave at fortnightly intervals. This will enable each party to spend a clear 15 days in the interior. Bookings will be received from both ladies and gentlemen, each party being limited to 16 persons, who will be accompanied by an escorting officer to relieve them of all worries during the tour.

When Is a Pacific Not a Pacific?

WHAT'S the difference between a passenger locomotive and a freight locomotive?
And when is a "Pacific" not a "Pacific"?
These questions are briefly answered in the following short article, which may be of interest to non-technical railwaymen.

PASSENGER locomotives are provided with a four-wheel leading truck, for security in rounding curves at high speeds, and two, three or four pairs of driving wheels of large diameter, while a two-wheel trailing truck is frequently added to give wheel-base flexibility or to carry a proportion of the weight of the rear end of the boiler.

Freight locomotives, on the other hand, have a two-wheeled leading truck and driving wheels of a relatively smaller diameter. The weight of the rear end of the boiler is supported on a separate rear frame or cradle which is carried on a two-wheeled truck or an extension of the frame.

The greater proportion of the total weight thus resting on the driving wheels of freight locomotives helps to provide the increased adhesion and tractive effort necessary to haul the heavier freight trains now operated.

Some of the more important types of locomotives in use on the world's railways are:

- "Mikado" ... 2-8-2 type, was first built in Japan, hence the name. Victorian "N" class is of this type
- "Santa Fe" ... 2-10-2 type, was introduced in 1903 for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway
- "Mogul" ... 2-6-0 type, was so named because when first built it was a great advance on any other type of engine then in use
- "Consolidation" ... 2-8-0 type, was introduced shortly after the amalgamation of the Lehigh railway and Mahanoy system in U.S.A. and was named in honor of consolidation of the two roads. Victorian "C" class is of this design
- "Decapod" ... 2-10-0 type, derived its name from the fact that it had 10 driving wheels
- "Atlantic" ... 4-4-2 type, was so named from the fact that it was first used on the Atlantic Coast division of Philadelphia and Reading railway in U.S.A.
- "Pacific" ... 4-6-2 type, was first introduced on New Zealand railways, and derived its name from the fact that New Zealand is a Pacific possession of the British Empire. Victorian "S" class is, of course, a Pacific
- "Mountain" ... 4-8-2 type, was first used on the mountains of Natal, South Africa
- "Columbia" ... 2-4-2 type, was named in honor of the World's Columbian Exhibition held at Chicago in 1893

Other well-known types of locomotives are the 2-6-2 "Prairie," the 4-4-0 "American," the 4-10-0 "Mastodon" and the 4-8-4 "Pocono."

The figures which describe the type of each locomotive indicate the arrangement of the wheels of the locomotive. For instance, 2-8-2 means that the "Mikado" has one pair of leading wheels, four pairs of driving wheels and one pair of trailing wheels. This numbering system is English practice and is known as the Whyte method of identification. The titling is American practice.

Wheat Figures Still Mounting

THE stream of wheat is still flowing freely to the country railway stations, and already deliveries have attained figures which have not been approached since the bumper harvests of 1915-16 and 1916-17.

Returns available at the middle of last month showed that 7,138,164 bags had been railed and that a further 7,431,747 bags were in station stacks. In other words, 43,709,733 bushels have been hauled from the farms to the railway which, with the conservative estimate of 5,000,000 bushels

retained for seed, indicates a harvest of approximately 49,000,000.

As large quantities of grain are still coming along, the final figures bid fair to exceed the present second greatest crop of 51,162,438 bushels, harvested in 1916-17.

Plague of Mice

THE Commonwealth Railways have received news of a plague of mice along part of the East-West railway route.

They invaded the stationmaster's office at Loongana and gnawed, among other things, the ends of a roll of one-pound notes, which were rescued before serious damage had been caused.



Railwaymen of the Month



"Fresh Woods and—"

FORMER Magazine-writer Cliff Cheong, who went back to his old job in the Advertising division when the Mag. temporarily ceased publication last year, has found "fresh woods and pastures new" as secretary and organiser of the railway sub-committees, which will work for the Railway Queen in the big charity carnival on behalf of the blind appeal. He brings youth, energy and organising capacity to the position.—"Dig."

10 Supts.

ONE of Ballarat's oldest railway identities was Head Porter M. J. Taffe, who retired last month. He had worn the head porter's cap since 1916, and had had more than 30 years experience at Ballarat, acting as shunter, guard, parcels porter and head porter. He served under no fewer than 10 different district superintendents at the western centre. He has three sons in the service—all well up in the Transportation branch. An amateur gardener of no small note, he has won several horticultural prizes, including the Ballarat championship, with his exhibits.—"Mag."

Enginemen Go

TWO Rolling Stock branch veterans who were farewelled by friends last month were Driver W. Curlett, of Castlemaine, and Driver Arthur Leslie, of Ararat. The former was going on transfer to Williamstown, and the latter going out of the service on retirement after 45 years in the railways.—B.S.

April Birthdays

A GREATER number of V.R. administrative chiefs and their assistants celebrate their birthdays during April than during any other month of the year. Chief Mechanical Engineer Norman Harris starts the ball rolling on the 10th, Assistant Chief Storekeeper W. D. Morgan follows on the 21st, Commissioner W. M. Shannon and Assistant Chief Engineer for Railway Construction Fred Box on the 27th, and Chief Engineer of Signals and Telegraphs S. P. Jones on the 28th. Others who will pass another mile post during the month are:—

Driver A. Pevitt of Beechworth, on the first; Bookstalls Manager E. J. Letcher and Frank Coombes of the Livestock, on the second; Clerk Ed. Rosman of the Signals and Telegraphs and Frank Adams of the Secretary's branch, on the third; Shunter E. Pitcher of Geelong and Works Foreman Guilfoyle of Dimboola, on the fourth; Manager S. H. Evans of Newport signal shops and Vanman J. F. Coffey of Woodend, on the sixth; Fares

Clerk Jack Reilly and Loco. Running Officer W. E. Maynard of North Loco., on the eighth; Pym. Goode of Room 10, on the ninth; Train Lighting Inspector W. A. Chipper, on the 11th; Conductor Dick English, on the 12th; John Arthur Russell of Room 2, on the 13th; Driver T. Pearce of Colac, on the 14th; Electric Train Driver John Gault of Coburg, Inspector of Ironwork W. Watson and Guard R. Roberts of Korumburra, on the 15th; Fitter's Assistant J. Thyne of Bendigo loco., on the 16th; Fitter-in-charge O'Shea of Wodonga, and Stores Chief Clerk Geo. Farrelly, on the 18th; Yard Foreman R. Long of Newport, Leading Porter G. L. Tolliday of Warragul, Train Examiner G. E. Harris of Ballarat, and Storeman E. J. Cooper of Oakleigh, on the 19th; H. D. Agg, Stores sales officer, on the 20th; Chief Ticket Inspector Geo. Johnson and Clerk W. J. Thompson of Traralgon, on the 21st; Senior Yard Foreman G. Calder of Melbourne Yard on 22nd; Cleaner G. Tweddle of State Mine, and Shunter W. McCrorey of Melbourne Yards, on the 23rd; Jack Ramsay of the dining car depot and Train Examiner J. P. Desmond of North Melbourne car and wagon shops, on the 25th; Safeworking Officer Tom Edwards and Manager Alf. Steele of the Spotswood Store, on the 26th; Driver F. Bacon of Geelong, on the 28th; and Leading Shunter G. W. Franklin of Maryborough on the 29th.

Uni. Free Place

HAVING secured his diploma of engineering at the Footscray technical school, Apprentice Fitter and Turner J. C. Bendall has been nominated by the Commissioners for a "free" place at the University, where he will undertake the course for the degree of Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering. The principal of the Footscray technical school, writing to the Commissioners, said, "Bendall has been with us now for some years after he got his Leaving at Scotch. This Leaving exempted him from some of the early mathematics, and he has tackled the rest both during

the night and day, and has now completed his full diploma course. He has proved himself one of the finest students that have gone through this school, and it is with great pleasure that I write certifying to his success.—C.

Spencer-st. Veteran Retires

AFTER more than 47 years service Frank Lilley, one of Spencer-street station's old identities attained the retiring age early last month. He joined up as a lad telegraph operator at Spencer-street on November 7, 1883, and remained at that location until August, 1887, when he moved to Bendigo, or Sandhurst as it was then called. Twenty-four years later, he returned to Spencer-street as telegraph receiving clerk retaining that position until his retirement.

—And Another

CONDUCTOR Dick English known to all travellers on the Albury express for many years past, will reach his 65th birthday this month, and will in future travel by rail as an ordinary passenger. He commenced his railway career as a laborer on February 5, 1889, and five months later, he graduated to the position of porter. His next step was to the grade of suburban guard in the middle of July, 1908, but, less than three weeks later, he was appointed conductor with Spencer-street as his headquarters. From that time Spencer-street has been his official address and the Albury express his particular care.—S.C.W.

First Lady

FIRST member of the railway feminine staff to break into the columns of the *News Letter* is Miss Meadows, who has been attached to the staff of the dining car depot for the past eight years. Last month she was presented with an eight-day clock as a wedding-gift from the staff. Manager Lindsay McClelland made the presentation.—H.E.C.

APRIL SUGGESTIONS DRIVE

THE subject chosen for the 40th Suggestions Drive, which will be held during April, is:—
Suggestions Regarding Loco. Boilers, Mountings, Etc.

Suggestions should be submitted to the Betterment and Publicity Board in the usual way. Suggestions on any other subject will, of course, also be accepted.

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

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THE
MONTH'S THOUGHT

That time is never lost that is devoted to work.

Issue No. 8

News Letter

May, 1931

Special Trains for All Occasions When and Why They Are Run

LAST month, the Gilbert and Sullivan opera company, now playing in Melbourne, finished its Adelaide season and transferred from the theatre to the sleeping cars of a special train waiting to convey the company and its effects to Melbourne without delay. A week or two earlier, a locomotive, hauling a State car, drew into the platform at Spencer-street and a silent gathering stood reverently by while the casket containing the body of Dame Nellie Melba was removed. These two incidents indicate the variety of circumstances which dictate the scheduling of special trains in Victoria. Let us consider a few more.

A BAND of entertainers, in a different sphere from that of the comic opera company, who charter a railway travelling home each year in Victoria is Wirth's circus. On Wirth's last tour, which was practically continuous from October 13 until March 1, the special train, which provides living accommodation for the troupe and transport for the whole party, the animals and the incidental equipment, covered 3,706 miles.

Another hardy old special train annual is the angling excursion conducted by a leading Melbourne sports outfitters to the Exford Weir near Melton. The train, generally conveying from 600 to 700 ardent fishermen, is drawn up at a point close to the lake and the cars are emptied in record time as the eager anglers make for the best points of vantage on the water.

Perhaps the most notable special train of recent years was that prepared for the Duke and Duchess of York, early in 1927. It comprised the pick of the department's rolling stock, the State cars and the Commissioners' inspection car, and was hauled by a suitably decorated locomotive, with a pilot engine preceding it and a second engine following.

During the warmer months, school picnics from the country to the seaside or the zoo, and excursions by large commercial undertakings frequently necessitate the scheduling of special trains; while, all the year round, the meetings of race clubs in the country and the suburbs involve the chartering of special trains for the transport of horses, trainers and punters.

More than one-and-a-quarter million passenger journeys were made on picnic and race tickets in the metropolitan area alone last financial year, representing a revenue of £51,820.

* * * * *

On the freight side, many special trains, such as the coal and wheat trains, are really regular trains which handle a sufficiently large volume of one class of traffic to enable them to be reserved solely for that loading. The State Coal Mine, for instance, requires up to 200 trucks for the transport of its daily output to the city, while the briquetting factory at Yallourn filled 1,000 trucks during the first 16 days of last month, the maximum loading for any one day totalling 92 trucks. This traffic is handled by trains carrying only coal or briquettes respectively.

In live stock business, the Department's best special train customer is the Metropolitan Board of Works, which purchases store sheep and cattle in large numbers for stocking its Werribee farm. These consignments are frequently handled in special train lots. During drought times, too, as many as 5,000 odd starving sheep have been carried by special train for one owner.

Then there are special trains for football matches in all parts of the State, for military trainees travelling to and from Seymour, for Resonians, for peak traffic at holiday periods, and occasionally for the carriage of mails.

Not to mention the dramatic circumstances in which private special trains have sometimes been hired to bring a doctor post-haste to a sick bed or a patient to a properly-equipped hospital.

Simplifying Booking at Flinders-street

TICKETS for all suburban stations can now be bought at any booking window at Flinders-street station. The "separate-windows-for-separate-lines" system has been discarded.

The new arrangement came into operation on the first of this month.

Rail Sedan Charges Reduced

BIG reductions have been made in the hire charges for our rail sedan, which is available for small parties of travellers who wish to journey together under conditions of the greatest possible comfort. The charge per mile is now 1/- instead of 1/6, and the minimum charge for one day is £3 instead of £5.

These reductions should add to the popularity which the sedan already enjoys.

Help the Railway Queen

REPRESENTATIVE of all branches and sections of the service and of all railway unions and industrial and welfare organisations, an active committee is working energetically for the Queen of Railways (Miss Mollie Sullivan) in the big charity carnival on behalf of the blind appeal for £50,000.

Books of 20 threepenny tickets are being sent to each railwayman in the service, who is requested to dispose of the book and remit a minimum sum of 4/- to the committee's headquarters. It is confidently hoped that the response will repeat the history of Victoria's last queen carnival (in aid of the Women's hospital), when the Queen of Railways was crowned Queen of Charity.

Functions which have been arranged for May and for which tickets may be secured from the social committee secretary (T. G. Lewis, Room 95, Head Office) are:

- Friday, May 1.—Dance and card party at Unity Hall (2/-).
- Tuesday, May 5.—Ball at Ormond Hall (5/-).
- Monday, May 11.—Hampton Musical Society's concert at Institute (2/-, and 6d. reservations).
- Wednesday, May 13.—Dance and card party at Institute (2/-).
- Tuesday, May 19.—Dance and card party at Unity Hall (2/-).

Putting Sand on the Rails

WHEN railway trackmen in northern Victoria are confronted with sand-buried tracks during the summer months, their forceful criticism of the position would not encourage a belief that sand could ever be put to any profitable use on track rails.

BUT approximately one thousand tons of sand are deliberately and carefully spread on the steel rails of the Victorian railway track every year.

For sand is regularly carried on locomotives to assist in starting with heavy loads when the rails are frosty or greasy. It is spilled through pipes

When a Rail Journey was a great Adventure

AS a contrast to the comfortable railway travelling facilities which are now so universal, it is interesting to read a copy of the rules for travellers on the first railway, a document still preserved among the archives of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, the centenary of which was observed in England a short time ago.

"(1) Any person desiring to travel from Liverpool to Manchester, or vice versa, or any portion of the journey thereof must, twenty-four hours beforehand, make application to the station agent at the place of departure, giving his name, address, place of birth, age, occupation and reason for desiring to travel.

"(2) The station agent, upon assuring himself that the applicant desires to travel for a just and lawful cause, shall thereupon issue a ticket to the applicant who shall travel by the train named thereon.

"(3) Trains will start at their point of departure as near schedule time as possible, but the company does not guarantee when they will reach their destination.

"(4) Trains not reaching their destination before dark will put up at one of the several stopping places along the route for the night, and passengers must pay, and provide for, their own lodging during the night.

"(5) Luggage will be carried on the roof of the carriages. If such luggage gets wet, the company will not be responsible for any loss attached thereto."

from special containers on to the rails in advance of the leading pair of driving wheels to restore lost friction between wheel and rail.

The sanding gear is duplicated on electric locomotives as they are driven from either end, and the sand must, of course, be fed to the rails ahead of the driving wheels when the locomotive is travelling in either direction.

It is essential, of course, that the sand be coarse, gritty and clean. It must be perfectly dry, also, as damp sand clogs in the boxes and will not run into the pipes, rendering the sanding gear useless until it has been cleared.

Special ovens are installed at locomotive depots for drying the sand, which is afterwards passed through a sieve to remove dirt and anything else likely to cause blockages in the sand pipes. It is then stored in bins from which it is conveyed to the engine sand boxes as required.

Our sand is mostly obtained from contractors at Seaford, Ballarat East and Cranbourne.

No Need to Worry About Luggage!

MANY concessions and privileges offered by the Department for the handling of travellers' luggage are not as widely known as they might be.

All railwaymen—whether station staff or not—should be able to explain these facilities for the benefit of uninformed travellers who may be inclined to favor road transport under the impression that they will avoid the luggage bothers of a railway journey—bothers which are, in fact, non-existent.

ARRANGEMENTS can be made for luggage to be picked up by carrier at any address in Melbourne, Geelong, Bendigo or Ballarat or suburbs and despatched through to the station to which the passenger has booked whether in Victoria or in another State. If travelling to any address in Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, Melbourne, Sydney or Adelaide or suburbs, the traveller may have his luggage booked through from door to door.

Similar facilities exist for the transport of luggage from any station in Victoria or from Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide or Perth to any address in Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo, or Geelong or their suburbs. The charges for this service, calculated on the gross weight of the luggage, are quite nominal.

Again, passengers travelling on tourist tickets, available for a journey through Melbourne, and who propose to break their journey in Melbourne on both the forward and return journeys, may have the whole or portion of their luggage booked through to their destination station. Passengers holding tourist tickets entitling them to break their journey at any other station may have their luggage booked similarly. This provision removes the necessity for tourists to book their luggage to the station at which the journey will be broken, claim it there and subsequently rebook it to their destination station.

* * * *

A further convenience, available at all manned stations, enables passengers to lodge their luggage in the cloak room for 24 hours for a charge of four pence or for longer periods on payment of additional charges. By an extension of the system in Melbourne, passengers travelling by early morning trains may save themselves trouble by depositing their luggage at the cloak room after 7 o'clock the preceding night and directing that it be placed in the van of the train by which they will be travelling. It is necessary only to produce the rail ticket for the journey when a luggage check is issued, and without any further trouble the luggage may be claimed on arrival at the destination station the following day.

Most travellers know already that, if they do not wish to be bothered with their luggage on the journey, they can at all times have it safely carried in the van to the destination station.

The World's Busiest Station

FROM time to time, the statement is made that Flinders-street station is the world's busiest passenger terminal. The following figures, which show the average number of

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Flinders-street (Melbourne) | ... 241.1 |
| Liverpool-street (London) (L.N.E. Railway) | ... 233.6 |
| Baker-street (London) | ... 161.0 |
| St. Lazare (France) | ... 150.0 |
| Waterloo (London) | ... 146.1 |
| Pennsylvania (New York) | ... 114.4 |
| Grand Central Terminal (New York) | ... 108.8 |
| Flatbush Avenue (Brooklyn) | ... 105.2 |
| then follow Victoria (Manchester), Broad-street (London), Chicago and North West (Chicago), Euston (London), Broad-street (Philadelphia) and Spencer-street (Melbourne). | |

The Better Farming Train Never Carried a Bull Like This

ONE of the most unusual freight consignments ever transported over a railroad was carried by the Pennsylvania from New York to Chicago recently.

An immense stone bull, once the property of the ruler of Assyria in 1800 B.C., and weighing 20 tons, rode on a flat car from New York to Chicago to be added to the University of Chicago's Oriental museum. This "largest stone bull in captivity" was only part of a total consignment of stone amounting to 210 tons which the University of Chicago made. Packed in 85 cases and crates, the stone was transported in five trucks. Four of them were able to pass through the Pennsylvania tunnels between New York and Chicago, but the fifth, loaded with Sargon the Second's stone image of a bull, was too large for a modern tunnel. The car on which it travelled had to be detoured 1,500 miles before reaching Chicago.

passengers passing through the barriers at the world's most important stations, give "chapter and verse" for that statement:

As the figures in this table were compiled from tallies taken a few years ago, the Flinders-street total quoted is that for 1922. The latest figures for Flinders-street show that 317,393 passengers used that station daily, so that it is reasonable to assume that it has not lost its position at the head of the list of busy railway terminals.

Eggs on Ice

COUNTRY egg producers appreciate the recent decision of the Railways Commissioners to provide ice in trucks conveying eggs from distant country centres.

A small charge will be made for the service.

Things *we* are Talking About

Could We Do Without Railways?—Preparing for the Citrus Traffic—Another Grampians Guesthouse—Phases of Locomotive Construction

ACCOMPANYING this issue of the News Letter is a personal message from the Commissioners to the staff, which every railwayman should read, mark and inwardly digest. It sets out, simply and briefly, the plain unembellished facts of a situation **OF VITAL URGENCY!** which is of deep personal concern to each member of the service. It should be absorbed by all of us.

ACROWDED conference of the Institution of Engineers of Australia listened last month to an interesting lecture by Chief Mechanical Engineer N. C. Harris on "the trend of locomotive and rolling stock design."

WHERE IS DESIGN TENDING? Mr. Harris explained that, under normal conditions, there was a natural increase each year in the tonnage of freight handled on the railways. This growth usually involved the need for the construction of locomotives of larger haulage capacity. During several phases of the development of the modern steam locomotive, efforts had been directed towards increased thermal efficiency. The first phase, towards the end of last century, was compounding. The second, widespread in 1910, was superheating. The third, comparatively recent, was characterised by closer attention to detail in design. The fundamental features of the locomotives which Stephenson designed, Mr. Harris considered, would not be discarded. They were the water-cooled furnaces, the multitubular boiler and the exhaust steam blast.

THERE is interest for railwaymen in the report that prospects for this year's citrus crop are excellent.

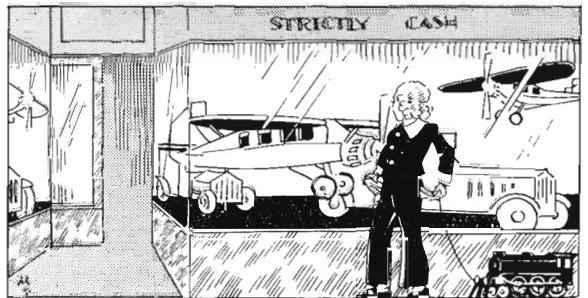
The crop is expected at least to equal last season's, when 500,000 bushel cases of oranges, mandarins and grape fruit, and 200,000 bushel cases of lemons were produced in Victoria, in addition to another 125,000 cases of all varieties of citrus which were forwarded to the Victorian markets from the border districts of Perriemoota, Barham, Curlwaa and Barooga. The estimate for this year's crop is 520,000 bushel cases of oranges, mandarins and grape fruit and 180,000 bushel cases of lemons. Two-thirds of the output is expected to come from the Swan Hill, Rochester, Shepparton and Cobram groves.

ACIRCULAR which we received the other day from an overseas railway company puts a pretty good case for wider recognition of the railways as a national asset. "The acid test of the importance of anything in life," it runs, "is to consider what life would be like without it. Applying this test to the railways gives an impressive idea of their important place in our national life."

THE ACID TEST Without the railways, travel and all that it means in the way of family, social and business contacts would be sadly handicapped. Only railway service offers travellers dependability in all seasons and under all weather conditions, combined with speed, safety, comfort and moderate prices. Without the railways, the nation's commerce would be strangled. The railways handle, speedily and economically, anything in any quantity going anywhere at any time. This all-inclusiveness of service is unshared by any other freight carrier or combination of freight carriers. Substitute services might be

utilised in limited measure, but always at a sacrifice of some of the qualities that characterise railway service. For the most part, commerce would revert to the primitive conditions of a century ago or be put to staggering difficulties, inconvenience and expense, if it had to do without the railways. Prudence suggests that an asset so important to the country should be safeguarded. This calls for liberal patronage of the railways and a sympathetic public interest in their welfare." The sentiments are nowhere more applicable than in Victoria.

THE same line of argument was developed, in characteristically stimulating fashion, by Chairman Burt Kelly of the Betterment and Publicity Board,



If we could afford these super-services

writing for a Victorian primary producers' paper last month. "If we recognise that this is a country of primary production," he concludes, "we are bound to recognise also that in this country at any rate railways, far from being obsolete, are absolutely indispensable, notwithstanding the outstanding developments which have taken place in motor transport. Yet, although I hope I am not one of those persons who stand out in the dark and cry 'boo!' I see grave dangers of their efficiency being seriously impaired unless there is a more general awakening to the fact that what hurts the railways must inevitably hurt every one of us. And it must hurt the primary producer most of all. Road services are affecting, to an increasingly important extent, the railway revenue, and air services are also becoming a factor to be reckoned with. Both of these, where they are directly competing with the railways, are of the nature of super-services. If we could afford these super-services, well and good; but I should say that quite a lot of people nowadays will be prepared to agree that the expenditure on transport super-services could very well be devoted to more essential purposes."

SUPER-SERVICES CAN'T BE AFFORDED

LAST month the foundation stone of a new Chalet was laid at Henham, on the Southern extremity of the Grampians. The Manager of the Government Tourist Bureau, Mr. W. T. McConnell, represented the Commissioners at the ceremony. The new Chalet, which will be completed in about six months time, will have accommodation for some fifty people.

NEW GRAMPIANS CHALET

Railwaymen of the Month

Time Table Veteran Retires

FOR John Arthur Russell, April 13th marked the celebration of his 65th birthday and the severance of his official connection with the service. He had spent the preceding 46 years in the transportation branch. This period included a number of years at stations and in the office of the district superintendent at Seymour before he graduated, 30 odd years ago, to the timetables section in head office. There he settled and remained being, at the time of his retirement, in charge of the special trains section of the office. A keen timetables man during office hours, his tastes inclined towards the classics as a hobby in his leisure hours—a hobby which, doubtless, will now receive greater attention than hitherto. —M.

Another Veteran

ARCHIE TULLOCH left Room 9 last month after 42 years service. He started as a porter, was appointed S.M. in 1910, and had charge of Maroona, Pirron Yallock, Bullarto, Loch, Moreland and North Williamstown before ill-health forced him into a clerical position in head office in 1923. The staff farewelled him with a gift of crystal ware.—T.J.

May Birthdays

GUARDS and signalmen, shunters and porters, yard foremen and despatchmen, and several other grades of the transportation branch, scattered from one end of the State to the other, will be celebrating their birthdays during this month. A good sprinkling of railwaymen from other

on the 12th: Acting Workmaster R. Syme of Bendigo, Acting Workshops Manager Harry James of Jolimont and Yard Foreman J. O'Dea of Bendigo, on the 13th; Driver A. Lambden of Seymour, Works Foreman W. Pullen of Wangaratta and Guard J. S. Reece of Korumburra, on the 14th; Guard S. Craig of Tallangatta, on the 15th; Driver Chas. Jordan of North Melbourne loco. and Leading Shunter Kent of Ballarat, on the 16th; Special Officer Ern Hawken of the traffic branch and Enginemen's Instructor Ted Burnell of Seymour, on the 17th; Alex. MacDonald, who signs all the interstate leave passes, on the 18th; Works Foreman H. Wilson of Wangaratta, on the 19th; Packer W. R. Clecucci of Bendigo, on the 20th; Guard-in-Charge Frank Woodford of the Navarre line, on the 21st; Yard Foreman Alex Robinson of the Melbourne Yard and Audit Chief Clerk J. A. Mactaggart, on the 22nd; Head Porter A. E. Lyons of Benalla, Way and Works Shops Manager Leslie, Driver C. W. Bullock of Bendigo, and Signalman J. V. Smith of the Melbourne Yards, on the 24th; Signals Engineer Jim O'Connell and Station Director H. Kidd of Spencer-street, on the 25th; Les Timewell, secretary to the Chairman, and S.M. F. F. Bobsein of Flinders-street, 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; and Driver T. A. Williams of Traralgon, on the 31st.

Flinders-street's Loss

IN charge of Flinders-street for six years, Stationmaster G. S. Macnochie has gone on final retiring leave. He has been with the Department since 1884, controlled many stations as S.M., and was traffic inspector for four years. —H.

Successful Students

AT the recent conferring of degrees at the Melbourne University, Railwaymen W. J. Johnson and P. L. Allnutt received the degrees of Bachelor of Electrical Engineering

and Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering respectively. The former student joined the service as an apprentice electrical fitter in 1921 and, in 1924, won a departmental scholarship entitling him to continue his studies at the Workingmen's college, where he secured his diploma of electrical and mechanical engineering three years later. He was allowed to proceed to the University and successfully completed his course at the December examinations last year. Mr. Allnutt

Naming V.R. Stations No. 4: Ballarat

"BALLARAT" is the native term for "resting place" or "resting on the elbow." Balla means "elbow."

The centre was formerly known as Yuille's Swamp, portion of Yuille's pastoral station including the present location of Lake Wendouree.

was appointed an apprentice fitter and turner in the rolling stock branch at the beginning of 1926 and, because of his educational qualifications, he entered on the second year of the course at the Newport technical college, gaining top place in his class each term during the year. He was accordingly granted a free place to enable him to study mechanical engineering at the University and also completed his course last year. —C.

Like a Shot

THE recent Easter holidays were an exceptionally busy period for L. H. Cannon of the train lighting depot at Dudley-street. A sprinter of no mean ability, he made a tour of the country sporting carnivals, competing in the "gifts" at Stawell, Bendigo and Warracknabeal. That he has strong claims to be regarded as one of Victoria's best runners is evident from the fact that he finished respectively fourth, third and second in the finals of these races while, in the Colac "gift" a week or so later, he ran into third place. —S.L.

The Month's Anniversaries

LINES opened for traffic in Victoria during the month of May include the St. Kilda line on May 13, 1857; the Queenscliff, on May 21, 1879; the Yarrowonga, on May 6, 1886; the Kerang-Swan Hill, on May 30, 1890; and the Beetomba-Cudgewa, on May 5, 1921.

branches will also share in the good wishes, those qualifying for congratulations including:—

Guard H. Fisher of Maryborough, on the first; Rolling Stock Accountant W. J. Bustelli and Ganger R. James of Warragul, on the second; Discipline Board Chairman Harry Clark and Distribution Engineer Steiger of the electrical branch, on the third; Jack Barrie and Fred Fewster, both of the transportation despatch office, on the fourth; Signalman W. Ferguson of Camberwell, 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 Bagley of Wodonga, on the eighth; Dick Stanistrey of the betterment and publicity board, on the ninth; Porter W. P. Byrne of Warrnambool, on the 10th; S.M. Ted Hally of Essendon and Bruce Longfield of Room 4,

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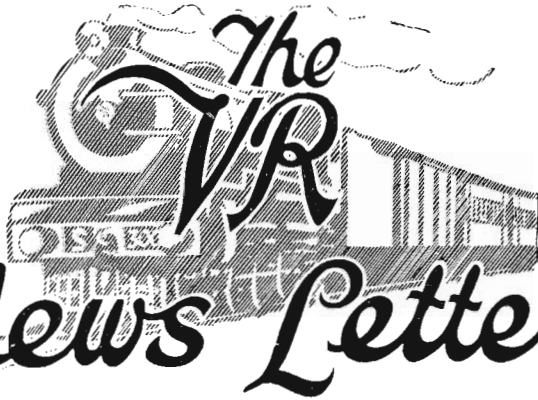
May Suggestions Drive

THE subject chosen for the 41st Suggestions Drive, which will be held during May, is:—
Flood Measures and Precautions

Suggestions should be submitted to the Betterment and Publicity Board in the usual way. Suggestions on any other subjects will, of course, also be accepted.

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THE
MONTH'S THOUGHT

Most of the things we think we can't do are the things we have never tried to do.

Issue No. 9

June, 1931

News Letter

Forgotten Railway Tracks in Victoria

WITH the removal from the centre of Flinders-street Extension of the rails, which, for close on 40 years, have linked the Melbourne Yard with the old Government Cool Stores and the Fish Market, another section of Victorian rail track has been pushed into compulsory retirement.

It is in the nature of things that Victoria should have the same experience as other countries, and should discover as settlement progresses that developmental trends will necessitate occasional closures of sections of railway track as well as almost constant additions to the system.

DELVING back into history, we find that, on December 19, 1859, the St. Kilda and Brighton Railway Co. opened a line running from St. Kilda across Albert Park to Windsor and continuing on to Brighton. The subsequent opening of the existing line from Melbourne to Windsor, via Richmond, however, resulted in the closing of the St. Kilda-Windsor section and, although the track between Windsor and Punt-road was used as a siding for some time, no trace of the original line can now be found.

Incidentally, this same company was authorised in 1861 to extend its line to Brighton Beach, to construct a tunnel under the beach road and to build a pier, sheds and wharves for shipping at that point. The extension was completed in December of the same year, but the development of the anticipated port did not eventuate, and only the tunnel now remains to pique the visitor's curiosity.

August 22, 1890, marked the construction of lines between Dunkeld and Kororoit, via Peshurst, and between Hamilton and Peshurst. The Dunkeld-Hamilton line had been opened 13 years earlier. The Dunkeld-Peshurst section, a distance of nearly 16 miles, was considered unnecessary after some eight years of operation and was dismantled.

The land boom period, culminating in the crash of 1893, saw the construction of several railway lines which later died of exposure in the chill wind of the depression that followed. Perhaps the best known of these lines are those which comprised the "outer circle line," linking Oakleigh and Fairfield Park by a comparatively direct route.

* * * *

A line from Burnley to Oakleigh was opened on March 24, 1890, and a second line, built from Camberwell, linked up with it at Waverley-road on May 30, of the same year. A third line, opened on March 24, 1891, was constructed between Fairfield Park and Riversdale, connecting with the Camberwell line. At the present time and for many years past, the only portions of these lines in use are those between Burnley and Darling, and between Ashburton and Deepdene. More recently, passenger traffic between East Camberwell and Deepdene, with extension to East Kew, a station on the original line, has been handled by departmental motor 'bus. The Darling line, of course, has also been extended by the opening of the section to Glen Waverley.

The Fawkner-Somerton line, opened late in 1889, was another land boom line that failed to justify its construction. It was closed in 1903 but, following upon a direction by the Government, it was reconditioned for rail-motor operation and a service instituted three years ago.

Still another line, built about the same time, was the 18-mile connection between Kilmore and Lancefield, opened for service in 1892. This line died in its 'teens and was eventually dismantled during the war.

Then there was the Rosstown railway, a private undertaking, which served a sugar mill long since defunct, and which connected Elsternwick and Oakleigh. This line dates back to boom days, but traces of it can still be located. If you know where to look.



DON'T WASTE WATER

Familiarity with a dripping tap often breeds contempt for a wastefully running one

The Revenue is still Falling

WHEN we went to press, rail revenue was down £1,812,934, compared with the same period last year. Revenue for this year (up to May 14) was only a little more than £8,500,000, compared with more than £10,000,000 for the same period in 1929-30.

Lengthening a Rail Bridge

ONE of the few constructional jobs now in hand is the lengthening of the railway bridge over Mt. Alexander-road, Essendon. The work has been necessitated by the decision of the Tramways board and the Essendon council to double the width of the narrow bottle-neck roadway which passes under the bridge, and which has been the scene of many accidents.

Buffalo Chalet Ball

RAILWAYMEN may have the opportunity of broadcasting news of the Buffalo Chalet cabaret ball, which will be held at the Plaza, St. Kilda, on July 14.

Tickets at 10/6d. are obtainable from the hon. secretary, Mr. H. J. Hodgens, Railway head offices, Spencer-street, and all proceeds will be devoted to charity.

Things *we* are Talking About

SO now we know what the harvest was. Figures which were made available by the State Statist last month, showed that the appeal to Victorian farmers to sow an additional million acres was more than realised. For the season, the acreage, in fact, was 4,788,560 acres, compared with 3,731,699 acres in 1929-30. However, the produce from more than 188,000 acres was cut for hay last season, which reduced the area for grain to 4,600,200 acres, as against 3,566,135 acres for grain the year before, when less than 166,000 acres produced hay. The wheat yield for grain was 53,814,369 bushels, compared with 25,412,587 bushels in 1929-30. The four Mallee counties of Millewa, Weeah, Karkaroo and Tatchera had the largest increase in acreage and yield.

THOSE counties produced only 3,700,000 bushels from 1,800,000 acres in 1929-30, but in 1930-31 their yield rose to 20,200,000 bushels from 2,350,000 acres. The Wimmera, comprising the counties of Lowan, Borung and Kara Kara, had a yield of 16,600,000 bushels from 1,160,000 acres compared with 8,400,000 bushels from 850,000 acres the harvest before. Northern was the other large producer, including the counties of Gunbower, Gladstone, Bendigo, Rodney and Moira, which had a total yield of 11,200,000 bushels from 800,000 acres, compared with 7,500,000 bushels from 650,000 acres in 1929-30. According to the Statist, Victoria's requirements for seed and consumption will be approximately 14 million bushels this year.

BRIGHT news in these days of gloom is the cabled assurance from Great Britain that a big Australian trade drive in England is having remarkably successful results. The news has increased interest for Victorian railwaymen by reason of the fact that the campaign is being directed by Mr. Arthur E. Hyland, a former railwayman from this State. As a result of his enterprise and stimulating publicity, sales of Australian primary produce are rapidly increasing. Denmark, New Zealand and Ireland still lead in the butter market, but Australia is determinedly accepting the pace set by these doughty competitors. Australian fresh and dried fruits, frozen meat and wines are also selling well; Australian burgundy, for instance, is now a well-established wine on the British market, and the consumption of Australian raisins has been doubled in the last five years.

JUDGING by the number of advance bookings which have already been made at the Government Tourist Bureau, all available accommodation at The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park, will be filled during this winter's snow sport season (July 24 to August 20). So far, more than one hundred reservations have been made, the period during which the Ski club sports will be held (July 31-August 14) being particularly popular.

GETTING IN EARLY An unusual feature of the advance booking has been the reservation of the Mt. Feathertop bungalow (now conducted, of course, by The Chalet manager) by a party of 22 skiing enthusiasts for 10 days, from August 28. No doubt the reduction in the weekly inclusive charge from £11 to £8/10/- during the four weeks of the official snow season has contributed largely to this increase in the number of early reservations.

PROBLEMS of intersystem railway communication were discussed in Melbourne last month at a conference of traffic experts of the State and Commonwealth Railways. The Commonwealth Railways department has been developing goods traffic between the eastern States and Western Australia, and has recently arranged for the inauguration of banana traffic between Queensland and the West. The provision of connecting train services and the rates to be charged for this traffic were among the items which the conference discussed, while various other matters affecting freights and fares and intersystem train schedules were considered.

CONTINUING their policy of encouraging tourists and holiday-makers to "See Australia First," the Victorian, New South Wales and Queensland Railways Commissioners are now promoting a tour to the little-known coral islands of the Great Barrier Reef. The tour has been arranged to commence from Melbourne on Monday, July 13, the return journey being completed on August 4. Members of the party will thus spend the depth of the winter in the warmth of the tropics. Travelling by train to Mackay, 1,800 miles north of Melbourne, the party will transfer to Lindeman Island, which will be their headquarters during the nine-day encampment. A full programme of tours to neighboring islands and the outstanding points of interest will be carried out. The blue lagoons, coral gardens, brilliant hued fish, giant clams, huge turtles, strange bird life, feathery palms and other tropical vegetation, make the reef one of the wonders of the world. It is a paradise for the fisherman. Groper weighing up to 300 lb., swordfish, trevally, mackerel and bonito are all caught on hand lines, and red emperor, bream, cod, salmon and numerous others are hooked in large numbers. For contrast, a lazy day may be spent bathing in the warm waters that surround the islands, and basking in the sunshine on the wide beaches. The inclusive fare of £54 from Melbourne covers all transport accommodation and other services during the tour. Railwaymen are invited to make the tour as widely known as possible, and to inform anyone interested that further details may be obtained from the Government Tourist Bureau or the Chairman of the Betterment and Publicity Board, where applications for inclusion in the party may also be lodged.

IN its fourth report on the proposal to deviate the main Gippsland line, between Moe and Morwell through Yallourn, the Standing Committee on railways has recommended that the work be put in hand, subject to the provisos that unemployment relief funds be used for portions of the work and that no additional mileage be charged for fares and freights from stations east of Yallourn. Thrice previously since 1920 the committee had declined to recommend the proposal and it explains its altered attitude by pointing out that it has now been proposed "to lighten the capital cost by a contribution from the unemployment relief funds. It is also understood that the production of briquettes at Yallourn will be increased by nearly 100 per cent." The proposed deviation will involve the construction of slightly more than eight miles of track, which will cost between £107,500 and £118,000.

From the Commissioners to the Staff

THE Railways Commissioners have issued the following message to the railway staff. It is of direct personal concern to each railwayman in the service.

CONSEQUENT upon orders made by the Governor-in-Council, and directions given by the Minister of Railways, we have to announce the disbandment of the Fuel Conservation Committees, and the abolition of the policy of paying awards for suggestions by the staff adopted for the betterment of the service.

In expressing our regret that these decisions have been considered necessary, we wish to take the opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all of the many members of the staff whose immediate and sustained response to both these movements has produced most gratifying results. Undoubtedly the Department would today be in a worse position financially but for the many improved methods introduced as a direct result of the suggestions and the fuel conservation schemes.

We wish to pay a special tribute to the Fuel Conservation Committees, whose unselfish and enthusiastic spirit

IT HELPS DISCIPLINE

ADVICES from Moscow state that under recently-acquired powers to shoot delinquent transport officials, the Soviet Railway Court has sentenced a station-master named Rakhmania to death for negligence leading to the derailment of a train.

has brought about very substantial savings in coal consumption and important improvements in many other directions.

In the knowledge of what has been achieved, we are confident that the railway team—whose interests individually and collectively are, of course, closely linked with the success of railway operation—will continue in the spirit of co-operation which has so strikingly manifested itself in the past, and that no effort will be spared to uphold that ideal of service which has earned for the Victorian Railways so high a reputation.

We look to all railwaymen with the interests of the service at heart—and, we repeat, the interests of the service are the interests of every individual—to continue to send in suggestions which may bring about an improvement in any direction.

During times like these, it is more than ever necessary that every effort should be made and every avenue explored in an earnest endeavor to improve the serious financial position.

Remember always that increased efficiency and more satisfactory working results cannot fail to react to the benefit of each individual railwayman.

Harold W. Clapp, Chairman
W. M. Shannon, Commissioner
T. B. Molombay, Commissioner

Canada's Rail Problems Parallel Victoria's

"RAILWAYS are the barometers of national prosperity," said Mr. G. F. Johnston, Australian representative of the Canadian National Railways, in an interesting press interview last month. "If railway business is depressed, if freights fall off, and people cease to travel, it is an unfailing sign of business depression."

MR. JOHNSTON was discussing the difficult conditions at present confronting great railway systems all over the world.

"The United States, Canada and Australia are all essentially railway countries," he said. "It is impossible to conceive them without railways. That being the case, their great railway systems must be conserved for the use of the people, vast sums of whose money is sunk in them."

"To meet the competition of motor buses in Canada, we are concentrating on faster trains and on the development of electric motor equipment, designed to run the services at a greatly reduced cost. Freights and fares have not been reduced."

Mr. Johnston said that there was at present great agitation among railway managers, shareholders and employees in Canada and U.S.A. for more equitable taxation of motor transport. "This was urged on the ground of the great costs incurred by the people in building developmental railways which had made the country rich and productive."

"We feel," said Mr. Johnston, "that there should be some way to compensate the railways, and to safeguard their interests when they have taken the risk of developing land which would otherwise have had to wait another generation."

Mr. Johnston added that a co-operative system by which employees and managers work together had had "wonderful results" both in Canada and the U.S.A.

Victoria's Mushroom Train

RECORD loading in mushrooms has been weighting the wheels of the evening mixed train from Maroona to Geelong lately. Probably no train in Victoria has handled so many cases of mushrooms in two trips as this train did on May 11 and 15 last.

On the 15th it reached Geelong with more than 400 cases on board, 85 having been forwarded from Wingeel alone. On the 11th, Wingeel contributed 100 cases, and the train again reached the Pivot with a six-wheeled louvre packed to the doors with mushrooms, and with the guard displaying a cramped but satisfied smile through the window of a van also piled high with boxes of the succulent fungus.

The Mushroom Limited would be a very appropriate title.

A Five-Year Plan to Sell Australia

THAT national advertising was essentially an obligation of citizenship was the theme which Mr. Harold Clapp, Chairman of Railways Commissioners, stressed in a recent broadcast talk, explanatory of the aims and ideals of the Australian National Travel Association.

ALTHOUGH Australians had excelled themselves in the art of enjoying themselves, in growing wheat and wool, and in building up monumental secondary industries, Mr. Clapp maintained that they had never developed a national pride strong enough to insist that their country was properly advertised abroad.

"We have made a beginning with the formation of the A.N.T.A.," he proceeded, "but it will be a heavy up-hill task for the first five years. We appeal for the whole-hearted support of every Australian who has the welfare of his country at heart. We want all Australian business interests to allocate automatically a very small percentage of their advertising vote to the cause of this national advertising."

The Month's Anniversaries

INES opened for traffic in Victoria during the month of June include

The Geelong line, on June 25, 1857; the Sale-Morwell section, June 1, 1877; the Lancefield, June 7, 1881; the extension from Wodonga to the Murray-river, June 14, 1883; and the Heidelberg-Eltham, June 5, 1902.

The present critical period, the Chairman pointed out, had created a desperate necessity to bring the true Australia to the notice of people of other lands, with a view to removing the misunderstandings that existed, and to cause the stream of world travel to flow in our direction.

"Travel represents one of the largest industries in the world today," Mr. Clapp said. "It is based on selling the attractions of a country. They cost nothing to produce and, if properly serviced, the stock-in-trade never diminishes. The visitors' spendings, which are assessed in millions, represent new money involving neither repayment nor interest. And travel to Australia will increase in ratio to the amount of money intelligently spent on national advertising, and the nature of the welcome and the quality of the service extended to the visitors."

In conclusion, Mr. Clapp explained that the Australian National Travel Association, formed in July, 1929, had planned a five-year campaign of overseas publicity, towards the cost of which £87,000 had been subscribed by banks, shipping companies, trading interests and patriotic individuals. Much more financial support, however, was needed.

Railwaymen of the Month

Signal Career

DROYEN of Victorian Railway signalmen, Bill McCracken retired last month. Of his 44 years of service, no fewer than 42 were spent in signal boxes. He was relieving for 20 years, and spent another 20 in Flinders-street "A" box. He had the distinction of making his first acquaintance with signal levers in a first-class box—the old Princes-bridge cabin. Two notable railway identities, Messrs. Miscamble and Blazey, comprised the staff at the time. There isn't a smudge on the official McCracken record.—H.E.C.

Fourth Time

CHIEF Accountant T. F. Brennan, just appointed member of the board which will investigate the finances of the State coalmine, has, of course, had considerable experience in financial inquiries outside his normal range of work in the Victorian railways. He was a Royal Commission which investigated the affairs of an Australian life insurance company in 1911, he was specially appointed to examine Tasmanian railway accounting methods in 1913, and he was a member of the commission which reported, last year, on the possibility of economies in the public service.—"Mag."

June Birthdays

APPARENTLY June is a favorite anniversary month with the foremen of the service, as no fewer than five of them celebrate birthdays during the month. Depot Foreman J. A. Gordon of Benalla, on the third, is the first; Bonding Foreman W. C. Pain of Flinders-street, follows on the eighth; Depot Foreman W. M. Ross of Maryborough and Yard Foreman J. Muller of Geelong, dead-heat on the 12th; and Works Foreman W. J. O'Connor of Maryborough, on the 24th, bring up the rear. Other June-ites are:—

Charles Mullany of the Better Farming train on the third; Transportation Staff Officer R. McClelland, Stationmaster C. Wadleton of Warrnambool and Block and Signal Inspector C. H. Saunders of Maryborough, on the fourth; Phil. Maynard of the General Superintendent's Office, on the fifth; Driver W. Ludge of Korumburra, on the sixth; Signals Chief Clerk Jack Ford, on the seventh; Rolling Stock Staff Clerk Tom Coulthard, Engineer A. K. Bartel, Les. Barrett of Room 2, Acting Auditor of Receipts D. H. Falconer, and Guard J. G. Dick of Geelong, on the eighth; Guard P. H. Ross of Melbourne Yard, Tom Sullivan, the Metro's right-hand man, and Train Examiner J. Robertson of Maryborough, on the 10th; S. A. Rosier of the Rolling Stock accounts office and Boilermaker R. A. Flower of Traralgon, on the 13th; Travelling Audit Inspector Bill Davidson and Advertising Sales Officer Gil. Mulcahy, on the 14th; Special Officer Jim McDowell of the Traffic and Driver P. G. Ballantine of Seymour, on the 15th; Ac-

countancy Bookkeeper W. H. Tregoning, on the 17th; Leading Engine-Cleaner C. H. Pevitt of Benalla, on the 19th; Way and Works Assistant Chief Engineer Arthur Goudy and Guard B. G. Jones of Donald, on the 21st; Guard A. R. Howlett of Melbourne Yard, on the 23rd; Bill Brandy of the Transportation and Assistant Claims Agent P. A. Fankhauser, on the 25th; Reg. Wotherspoon of the Tourist Bureau and Railmotor Engineer T. O. Pugh, on the 26th; Prosecuting Officer Jim Hennessy, Chief Clerk 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 F. Campi of Hallarat and Signalman H. W. Calder of Bendigo, on the 29th; and Betterment Board Member J. Fowler, Block and Signal Inspector C. McIntyre of Bendigo, and Packer and Trimmer T. P. Regan of Traralgon, on the 30th.

Naming V. R. Stations

No. 5: GEELONG

GEELONG was christened by Governor Bourke, 1837, from the native name for the hill upon which the town was built.

There is considerable doubt as to the real meaning of the word. One authority interprets it as "the place of the cliff," another as "white sea bird or curlew," a third as "swampy plains, resort of native companions." Geelongites can make their choice.

43 Years Service

ALBERT EDWARD LYONS, who retired last month from the position of head porter at Benalla, has crammed a great deal of varied experience into his life. Prior to joining the service as a repairer in 1888, he had had experience in farming, butchery, boat building and bridge construction. He served later under the signal engineer on the Whittlesea, Warrnambool, Port Fairy, Ingliston and Hamilton lines and, subsequently,

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became a first class signalman. As a result of a nervous breakdown, however, he was transferred to Flinders-street as head porter, relieving in the same capacity at Hamilton, Ararat, Maryborough and Castlemaine, before securing his appointment at Benalla. His hobbies include philately, sketching, taxidermy, and horticulture, his interest in the last-mentioned being reflected in the attractive appearance of the garden at the Benalla Institute grounds.—S.C.W.

Lamp Foreman Goes Out

AT a smoke social tendered him in Unity Hall, last month, Mr. P. F. Murphy, who retired recently from the position of metropolitan lamp foreman, was presented with a wallet of notes. A particularly appropriate thought was the gift, as souvenirs, of a small model of a lamp car and a miniature oil tin. Mr. Murphy, who joined the service on August 2, 1886, took a keen interest in public life and was mayor of Port Melbourne in 1924-25.—C.S.

Father of the Locomotive

THE ninth of this month is the 150th anniversary of the birth of George Stephenson, designer of the "Rocket" and father of the steam locomotive.

In his boyhood he was a cowherd and he afterwards drove the harness at a colliery. He did not learn to read until he was 18, but his innate genius triumphed over the tremendous disadvantages of his environment. In 1813 he built his first steam locomotive which he called "My Lord," and in 1822 he was appointed engineer of the Stockton and Darlington railway, "the first railway in the world over which passengers and goods were hauled by a locomotive."

He also constructed the Liverpool and Manchester railway, and in 1829 won the famous Rainhill trials with his "Rocket." Later, he acted as engineer for many other important English railways, and consultant engineer for the earliest Spanish and Belgian railways.

There has been considerable controversy as to whether Stephenson or Sir Humphrey Davy first devised the miner's safety lamp. Stephenson's design was put to practical tests in 1815, when Davy was producing his lamp. The invention, it appears, was worked out independently, although simultaneously, by both engineers.

—E.B.

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

The V.R. News Letter is issued monthly by the Victorian Railways Commissioners to every railcayman 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

You can build no to-morrow without to-day's foundations.

Issue No. 10

News Letter

July, 1931

IF WINTER COMES—

How the Buffalo Chalet Staff Prepare for the Snow Season

MT. BUFFALO—a white winter . . . the exhilaration of ski-ing, skating and tobogganing . . . the glow of exercise and healthy jollity in the crisp snow and champagne-like air . . . and the blazing log fires, epicurean meals and ballroom gaiety in The Chalet itself. . . .

But there's another side to the picture. That is the vast amount of domestic organisation which must be carried on behind the scenes at The Chalet in preparation for the advent of winter.

FIRST of all, there must be no doubt about the ability of The Chalet's very efficient heating system to keep the building warm. Large reserves of wood are accordingly built up during the early months of the year to ensure that there will be plenty of fuel for the furnaces.

Then there is the matter of meals. The Chalet's reputation for unexcelled cuisine must be safeguarded. "Safety first" is the policy, and all stores except meat, fish and other perishables are augmented during May and June. They certainly need augmenting, for during the winter, when from 150 to 200 guests will be in regular residence, as many as 18,000 meals are prepared and served each month. Besides morning and afternoon teas and suppers.

The following records of food consumption, for a typical winter month last year, indicate the extent of the work undertaken by the kitchen staff—600 lb. of butter, 400 lb. bacon, 170 lb. of ham, 110 lb. of coffee, 170 lb. of tea, 6,720 eggs, 270 gallons of milk, 2½ tons of meat valued at £200, £50-worth of fish, and £150-worth of poultry.

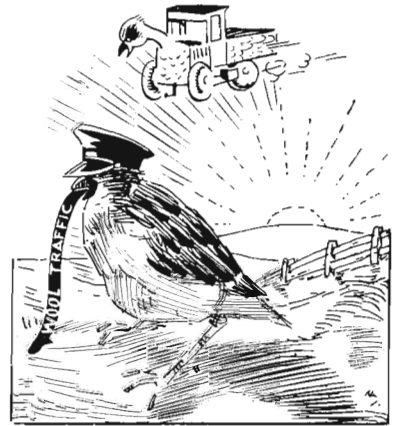
The sportsroom, of course, is an extremely busy centre in the snow season, and even before Lake Catani freezes. The whole of the gear must be in readiness for strenuous service, and the wide range of equipment, which must be overhauled, includes 73 pairs of skates, 154 pairs of skis, 16 toboggans, nine flexible flyers, six skeeboggans, four sledges, and five sleighs, besides 52 snow capes, ski-ing, skating and snow boots, aggregating 74 pairs, 43 pairs and 207 pairs respectively, and 101 alpenstocks.

* * * *

SO that communication with the railhead can be maintained the snow-plough and the tractor, which propels it, are overhauled and kept in readiness for service as required. As the plough functions only when the snow is soft, the Chalet manager must keep a watchful eye on the conditions of the road. The tractor is also used for drawing a special sledge, laden with skiers, to the ski-ing ground at the Hump, where a run of 800 yards can be made. Riding for miles over the snow in a horse-drawn drosky, as used in Russia, is another of Buffalo's winter attractions.

But although the winter season spells hard work for the staff, and the equipment at The Chalet, the first fall of snow commences a holiday for a four-footed section of the staff. The donkeys, so popular in summer, are spelled in winter, and journey down from the plateau to warmer grazing grounds while the snow lasts.

Only a donkey, of course, would voluntarily leave the Buffalo Chalet in winter-time.



The Early Bird

IT'S not too early to get on the job for this season's wool traffic.

NOW—not when the wool clip is being baled—is the time to get in touch with the district woolgrower, to show an interest in his anticipated clip, to explain rail facilities, to offer thoroughly satisfactory service, and to ensure that the wool-grower uses his own transport system—the railways.

The wool traffic is *OUR* job!

Nearly Two Millions Down

TO June 14 last, the railway revenue for this financial year was £9,297,441, a decrease of more than £1,900,000 compared with the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Passenger revenue fell £900,000 to £3,775,946, and goods revenue £800,000 to £4,443,461.

The decline for the week ended June 14 was £24,500.

One Bright Spot

ON the King's birthday the weather for once proved kind to the railways, and the holiday traffic was one bright spot in the gloomy revenue returns which are the fashion these days, there being a welcome jump in the number of travellers to the seaside and the hills. Passengers on the suburban, Frankston and Stony Point lines increased from 20,500 last year to 25,800 this year.

Altogether, £1124 was taken in fares at Flinders-street—an increase of nearly £200.

Railwaymen Whose Job Is ONE LONG PUZZLE

LOCATED in a top-floor room of the head office is a small staff of railwaymen whose job is one long puzzle.

They are constantly seeking trucks which are required at short notice for special loading like piles, and other bulky consignments, for Westinghouse brake tests and technical examinations and so on. Their only clue is the truck's identification number.

How is it done?

THE guard's truck sheet is the basis of the system. Each sheet shows particulars of the train, the class and number of each truck, the class of loading, the station from which each was despatched and its destination, besides details of all vehicles added to the train or detached at intermediate stations. As a carbon copy of every truck sheet is filed in the truck record room particulars are readily available of the day-to-day movement of each truck in service.

As they arrive, the truck sheets are sorted into district order for the up and down journeys, and then into section and date order, each month being kept separate. The office is then ready for any query that may arise.

Suppose the Advertising division requires particulars of the movements of a louvre truck displaying an advertisement over a period of two or three months. The search is begun by a 'phone call to the Melbourne Yard, where records show the date each vehicle last left the yard and the station to which it was despatched. It is discovered, let us say, that the truck was loaded out from the Melbourne Yard for Wodonga on a certain date. To trace its movements, the appropriate guard's sheet for the section from Melbourne to Seymour for that particular date is first located. If there be no record of the detaching of the truck *en route*, the sheets for the next section, Seymour to Benalla, are then obtained, and the truck located. The Benalla-Wodonga sheets are then scrutinised and the arrival of the vehicle at Wodonga is noted.

The next step is to ascertain, from the sheets for trains leaving Wodonga about that date, when the truck was again despatched. Further diligent thumbing of the guards' sheets then tracks it to its next destination. And so on *ad finem*.

If the truck has been detached at an intermediate station *en route*, the truck sheets for subsequent trains passing through that station are examined until the vehicle is again discovered on the move, and followed through progressively once more from section to section.

* * * *

TROUBLE is sometimes experienced, however, through the number of a truck being wrongly recorded either on the truck sheet or on the waybill.

For instance, a waybill may show a certain truck as having been loaded at a country station with firewood for Footscray, when actually it may never have been at that country station, or, perhaps, it may have been loaded with wheat for Williamstown. The truck sheet and the waybill would therefore be showing conflicting information, and inquiries by 'phone or telegram would be necessary to clear up a mistake which ordinary care would have easily avoided.

It has also happened that a truck, after being reconditioned, has been given the wrong number at the workshops. This may mean that two trucks are in running with the same number and, while this may not cause any immediate inconvenience, difficulties arise should it be necessary at any time to follow up the movements of either truck. Should this happen, the two trucks would be sent to the workshops and the correct numbers ascertained from workshops markings.

* * * *

THE fact that much of the eastern portion of the South Australian railways is of the same gauge as the Victorian tracks, and that trucks loaded with interstate freight cross the border each day, adds further to the complexity of the work in the truck record room. A close check on all Victorian vehicles passing into South Australia, and of South Australian vehicles entering Victoria, is essential for two purposes. First, it is necessary that a record be available of the vehicles which have passed out of the State, and, secondly, a charge is levied on those vehicles according to the time they remain on the far side of the border.

Serviceton and Pinnaroo are the two border stations concerned, and each forwards a daily return setting out the class and number of each Victorian vehicle entering and leaving South Australia, and the time it crossed the border. A similar return is supplied for South Australian trucks. These particulars are then abstracted on a large sheet in such a way that a glance shows just what trucks are outstanding at any particular time. . . .

The system, therefore, is a simple one, although its reliability, very clearly, depends to a large extent on the accuracy and legibility of the information entered on the truck sheet.

"Impracticable!"

THAT a reduction of freights and fares was absolutely impracticable at the present time was "the definite and emphatic but not arbitrary" statement of the Chairman of Commissioners at a conference recently convened by the central council of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Progress Associations.

ON this year's figures," said Mr. Clapp, "a 10 per cent. reduction would mean £1,000,000 less revenue. To offset that, we would need an increase of 11 per cent. in traffic, which I cannot see available."

Mr. Clapp introduced the subject by saying that the discussion which he had heard on the need for a reduction had been no different from the discussions which took place in the railway offices every day. The railways had cut their costs 33 per cent. in 2½ years, but the revenue this year would be £2,000,000 less than last year. The Commissioners hoped for some relief in the loan conversion, but they feared that it would be swallowed up by the exchange on interest payments abroad.

THE MONTH'S ANNIVERSARIES
LINES opened for traffic in Victoria during the month of July include the Sunbury-Woodend, on July 8, 1861; the Castlemaine-Maryborough and the Ballarat-Creswick, on July 7, 1874.

"The Commissioners," Mr. Clapp concluded, "will favor reductions as soon as reductions are possible, but the people who are entitled to first consideration in this direction are the primary producers."

It was pointed out at the conference, incidentally, that this year's railway deficit will represent a charge of £10 against each taxpayer in Victoria (assuming that there be the same number of taxpayers this year as last year, which is more than doubtful). But bad as the position of the Victorian Railways is, the railway load on the taxpayers in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia is heavier.

Railway Help for Charity

RAILWAYMEN subscribed more than £1700 in support of the Queen of Railways (Miss Mollie Sullivan) during the recent Blind Appeal.

The sub-committee which organised the railway drive now expresses its deep appreciation of this response, which was a practically unaided railwaymen's effort.

The first of this month, incidentally, will see the launching of a special appeal for funds by the Alfred Hospital. The Department is granting the hospital authorities poster space on stations and also a site for a calico sign on Princes-bridge.

Things we are Talking About

Bringing Buffalo Chalet to St. Kilda—More Station Shops — 90,000 Yearling Trout — Wheat Records

ANOTHER 10 miles of track and two stations were added to the Victorian railway system last month when the Meringur-Morkalla extension from Redcliffs was opened for general traffic. The stations are Karween and Morkalla, distant

FACTS ABOUT NEW LINE

397½ and 402¾ miles respectively from Melbourne, and the country which the line traverses is of a typical Mallee character. With settlement, the district should eventually increase the wheat productivity of north-western Victoria. The addition of this line now brings the State's route mileage to 4,722.

TALKING about wheat, all records for the carriage of Victorian grain to the seaboard have been broken this year at Geelong. Before this season, the record for Geelong was 4,073,184 bags, railed in 1925, but up to the middle of last month more than 4,220,000 bags had been handled at the Pivot, of which only 362,000 were in stacks. During the month the average

WHEAT RECORDS

delivery had been 120 trucks a day, and wheat was still reaching Geelong at the rate of 70 trucks daily when we went to press. Three steamers were then loading at the Cunningham-street pier, and another was awaiting a berth. These figures provide a striking contrast with 1928, when the total wheat handled at Geelong was 425,120 bags.

THE annual restocking of Victorian streams with yearling brown and rainbow trout has just been completed, 89,800 of the young fish being liberated during May and June. Practically every permanent stream in the State has received its quota, and large consignments have been despatched to centres as far removed as Dargo and Toora in Gippsland, Warrnambool and the Campians in the west, and Castlemaine, Benalla and Mansfield north of the Divide. These trout were forwarded from Ballarat and Geelong hatcheries, where they had been bred and carefully reared for twelve months. Last year, 75,800 yearling trout were distributed, while the totals for 1928 and 1929 were 64,000 and 100,000 respectively. In addition, trout fry—one-inch infants—were also released in large numbers throughout the State. This year's hatching season is just beginning, but last year 174,000 fry were freed, 506,000 in 1929, and 439,000 in 1928. Consignments of fry are railed from hatcheries at Traralgon, Yarram, Studley Park, Warburton, Bright and Kyneton.

GOOD NEWS FOR ANGLERS

RESONANS and the Ski club are co-operating with the committee which is making arrangements for the first "Buffalo Chalet" cabaret ball, which will be held at The Plaza, St. Kilda, on the 14th of this month. Sales of the 10s. 6d. tickets at the Government Tourist Bureau are proceeding briskly, and all indications point to a highly successful function. Special provision is being made for non-dancers, and many interesting novelties will be staged. Although the ball is intended primarily to be a reunion of former Chalet guests, others may, of course, attend. All proceeds will be devoted to the Lord Mayor's fund. Some co-operation by railwaymen who may have the opportunity for broadcasting news of this function, would greatly assist the committee.

MT. BUFFALO REUNION

THREE lock-up shops which are being constructed on the main concourse at Flinders-street station will be completed early this month. Work began a few months ago and involved the reconstruction of the ladies' waiting-room on a new concrete decking over the tracks at the rear of the shops. The reconstruction is in brick with terra cotta partitions between the shops. The style of the shop fronts will be decided by the tenants. Each shop has a frontage of approximately 16 feet by a depth of 25 feet, and two have already been let.

BALLARAT railwaymen have now raised nearly £9000 for the Ballarat Orphanage. A cheque for £175, the result of last year's collections and donations, was handed over to the president of the orphanage last month by representatives of the local railwaymen, who expressed their determination of contributing at least £200 this year, and thus passing the £9000 mark. This organised charitable work has now been carried on by the local railwaymen for 39 years, and the depression has served only to intensify their zeal. The new president of the railwaymen's committee is Mr. D. Quayle, and the energetic secretary is Mr. R. J. Caddell.

HELPING THE CHILDREN

THE latest facility extended to railway users in an endeavor to make train travelling more popular, is the convenience of purchasing country periodical and all-lines tickets on any day of any month of the year, the month or other period being reckoned from the date of purchase. For example, a monthly ticket may now be purchased on June 25 and will be available for travel until July 24. This eliminates the old objection of having to pay for the period from June 25 to July 31 in instances where the ticket would not be required after

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RAILWAYS STILL SAFEST

RAILWAYS are still the safest form of travel, the world over, and aeroplanes the most dangerous, according to recent statistics. The order of safety is

| | Accidents per million passenger miles |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Railways ... | 0.003 |
| Maritime ... | 0.015 |
| Motor Cars ... | 0.3 |
| Aeroplanes ... | 0.8 |

July 24. Other concessions which have been granted of recent months include the extension of the alternative route privilege to enable the holders of Sunday excursion tickets to make cross-country journeys, and return from stations on other lines on the same excursion ticket, the rearrangement of the booking office windows at Flinders-street station to permit of the issue of tickets for all suburban stations at every window, the liberalising of the availability of Saturday-Sunday excursion tickets, and the reduction of the winter tariff at the Buffalo Chalet from £11 to £8/10/- weekly.

SHOPS AT FLINDERS-STREET

THREE lock-up shops which are being constructed on the main concourse at Flinders-street station will be completed early this month. Work began a few months ago and involved the reconstruction of the ladies' waiting-room on a new concrete decking over the tracks at the rear of the shops. The reconstruction is in brick with terra cotta partitions between the shops. The style of the shop fronts will be decided by the tenants. Each shop has a frontage of approximately 16 feet by a depth of 25 feet, and two have already been let.

Railwaymen of the Month

Climbed the Ladder

ENGINEER Jim O'Connell, who retired from the Signal and Telegraph branch recently, had gained a wide knowledge of railroading in the hard school of experience. He joined the service at the age of 21, and was allotted to engine cleaning duties. Two years later, he started firing, and in 1900 became a qualified driver. His next move brought him from the smoke and tumult of the running sheds in 1905 to the Bunsen flames and quietude of the laboratory. In 1911, he was promoted to the grade of engineering assistant, in 1918 to assistant engineer, at the beginning of 1923 to fully-fledged engineer.—C.S.

Like a Bradman Score

WITH an aggregate of more than 160 years of service between them, four railway veterans retired last month. They were Drivers E. J. Duggan and W. Eaton of Seymour, and Signalmen E. Taylor and Dan Williams of No. 1 Box, Melbourne Yard, and "B" Box, Flinders-street, respectively. Good wishes and presentations accompanied each popular veteran.—H.E.C.

July Birthdays

OF the representative gathering of railwaymen who will pass another of life's mileposts this month, few are more widely known than Jim ("Heavyweather") Clarke. The 27th of this month is the 65th anniversary of his birth, and his last day

TO THE POINT

An American paper reports that a Kansas confectioner who consigned a keg of ice-cream by railway endorsed the label, "If not delivered in five days, never mind."

as a railwayman. He joined the service as a cleaner, early in 1884, and drove his first engine seven years later. Since that time, among other important trains, he has driven the special for the Duke and Duchess of York in 1927, as well as the Reso. train on its first and several later tours. But it is as the driver of the Better Farming train that he is best known; he has been on the footplate for every one of its 32 tours, and the "college" train will hardly seem the same without him.

Fellow railwaymen who will also be celebrating birthdays during the month include:—

Superintendent of Passenger Train Service Hugh Cooke and Loco. Storeman in charge J. H. Main of Maryborough, on the first; Block and Signal Inspector A. E. Colson, Goods Agent W. N. Wortley and Guard Wright of Dimboola, on the third; Fitter A. Price of

Bendigo, on the sixth; Road Foreman C. S. Walsh of Geelong, on the seventh; Ganger H. J. Emmett of Traralgon, on the eighth; Tourist Bureau Manager W. T. McConnell, Road Foreman H. H. Charman of Dimboola and Fireman F. Croucher of Benalla, on the ninth; Ganger A. Barnard of Dimboola, on the 11th; Senior Chemist W. S. Macartney of the Newport Laboratory and Senior Clerk B. F. Lamb of Bendigo Way and Works, on the 12th; Block and Signal Inspector A. W. Murfitt, on the 13th; Driver F. A. Chamberlain of Maryborough, on the 14th; Guard Harry Lee of the Melbourne Yard, on the 16th; Bill Wotherspoon of Room 10 and Driver G. Thomson of Donald, 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. F. Letcher, 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 Melbourne Loco. on the 26th; Train Running Officer J. S. O'Haire of Ballarat, on the 27th; Superintending Engineer C. H. Fethney, on the 28th; Chris. Madigan of North Melbourne Loco., on the 29th; and Electrical Engineer J. W. L. Varey, on the 31st.

"Fore"-ty-six Years

RAILWAY golfing circles lost an enthusiast with the retirement a few weeks ago of Con. Lynch of the Rolling Stock branch. One of the old identities, he joined the railways as a clerk in 1885, thus having 46 years of service to his credit. For several years past, he had been in charge of his branch's correspondence room. He was ever an ardent golfer and was largely responsible for the formation of the V.R. golf club, and the institution of regular interbranch contests.—B.L.

THE LAST MILE POST—

JESSE DOWSETT

MR. JESSE DOWSETT, who was guard of the special train which rushed the police to Glenrowan for the final round-up of the Kelly Gang in 1880, died at his home in Dandenong last month.

The special train of which he was the guard was travelling to Beechworth where Aaron Skeritt had just been shot

Name V.R. Stations

No. 6: NHILL

SOME authorities say that "Nihill" is the native term for "red clay." Others say that the name originally supplied by the blacks was "Nyell," meaning the "abode of spirits."

On the other hand, a more prosaic interpreter says that the name is derived from the wooden pegs used by the blacks for pegging out opossum and other skins.

dead by the gang. The Kellys, anticipating the rush of police to Beechworth, came along the line to Glenrowan, held up the town and, with the aid of their prisoners, tore up the rails near a curve. They then waited for the train to be wrecked on its passage through to Beechworth.

But their plans went astray, the engine crew were warned, the train pulled up at Glenrowan and the police besieged the hotel in which the gang had taken refuge. Ned Kelly was shot down in his desperate sortie from the hotel, and Guard Dowsett was among the first to reach the fallen outlaw.

THOMAS EDWARDS

SHORTLY after passing his 60th birthday, Safeworking Office Tom Edwards died recently at a Camberwell private hospital.

He was associated with safeworking operations for the whole of his 43 years as a railwayman. Joining as a porter early in 1888, he was appointed signalman before the end of the year, and held this position until 1916, when he graduated as a block and signal inspector. His next step was to safeworking clerk at the end of 1922 followed by promotion to assistant safeworking officer on July 1, 1923 and to safeworking officer four years later.

Mrs. Edwards, two daughters and son, survive him.

The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited

has again achieved

a Record Year

in the ORDINARY Department

Firstly.—By issuing Policies for the largest amount of Assurance in any year since its establishment in 1873.

Secondly.—By making available for distribution the greatest surplus in the Society's history.

The Society's Group Policies (for Railway Employees)

are issued under

ORDINARY Department Conditions.

DO NOT DELAY

Write to the Society for particulars

NOW

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

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

One must draw back in order to leap further.

Issue No. 11

News Letter

August, 1931

Which Fruit is the most Popular ?

SOME twenty different varieties of fruit are sold in season at railway fruit-stalls in Victoria—ranging from tomatoes to cantaloups and pine-apples to strawberries.

On the figures for last year, oranges are easily the most popular fruit.

NEARLY 25,000 cases of oranges were disposed of by the railway refreshment services last year. Apples filled second place in the Popularity Stakes with approximately 20,000 cases. Strawberries (7,000 boxes) and lemons (5,500 cases) were also well in demand, easily out-distancing such well-established favorites as bananas (3,500 cases), pears (2,500 cases), peaches (2,000 cases), apricots (1,000 cases) and passion-fruit (less than 200 cases).

Besides oranges and lemons, the Citrus family was represented by 350 cases of grapefruit and 1,500 cases of mandarins. Two thousand cases and 45,500 cartons of grapes were disposed of.

The variety in least demand was the humble quince—a mere 12 cases.

Of course, the popularity of the orange is largely due to the popularity of the fruit juice drink stalls, where the sale of orange drinks in proportion to lemon drinks is about 2 or 3½ to 1—a ratio which has not varied much during the last four years.

Early Snow at Mt. Buffalo

HEAVY and early falls of snow at Mt. Buffalo National Park have ushered in what promises to be The Chalet's most successful snow season. By the second week in July, there were drifts three feet thick on the Horn, and a mantle at least 12 inches deep all over the plateau, and the snow-plough had been pressed into early service to clear the road from The Chalet to Porepunkah.

Lake Catani was frozen before the middle of the month also.

10 Points in Fuel Conservation

DURING 1929-30, the fuel used by Victorian railway locomotives cost nearly £700,000.

This amount has since been considerably reduced, owing to the drastic curtailment of train services rendered necessary by the depression, while the close attention given to fuel conservation principles has also assisted in reducing operating costs.

EFFORTS in this direction have already resulted in a direct saving in fuel consumption, and still greater economies are possible by a continuance of close co-operation between the Transportation and Rolling

EAST-WEST RAILWAY ACROSS AFRICA

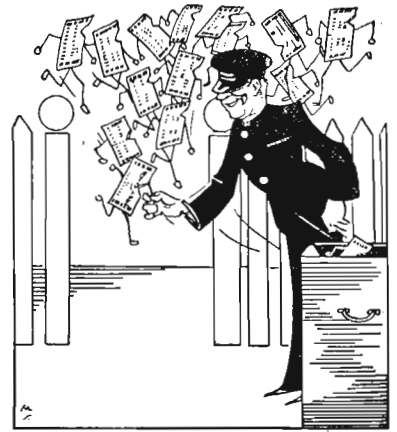
AFRICA can now be crossed from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean by rail by way of the new railway from Lobito Bay (Portuguese Angola) to the main system through Belgian Congo.

The opening of the line, 1180 miles long, was celebrated on July 1.

Stock staffs engaged in train running.

The following ten points suggest themselves as essentials in efficient train running:—

1. Punctual departure from depot with properly prepared and roadworthy locomotive
2. Prompt release of locomotives and avoidance of delay in working them between trains and loco. depot and vice versa
3. Proper marshalling of trains, timely examination and "on time" departure will minimise roadside delays and enable crossings to be effected to schedule
4. Avoidance of stops or checks at fixed signals or on account of track or bridge repairs
5. Preparation for minimising train time at stations by having van goods on trolleys and trucks waybilled, carded and loaded in marshal order
6. Early advice to "Control" of the train work required to be performed and of any anticipated delay
7. Timely advice to enginemen of the duration of any known blocks will permit of fires being regulated accordingly
8. Encouragement and advice from the driver will materially assist



GRAB THEM ALL

Let's make August a record month for ticket collection.

ACCORDING to figures recently compiled by the Auditor of Revenue for the month of April, several stations recorded excellent performances in ticket collection.

During the month, 553 tickets were issued to Swan Hill; not one was missed in collection. Benalla missed only eight out of 1,248 and Shepparton six out of 1,016.

Other stations which recorded 100 per cent. collections included Little River (293), Woori Yallock (283), Werribee (247), Clunes (246), Chiltern (232) and Clyde (215).

the fireman, who knows that the driver once handled the shovel himself and who therefore regards him as a pupil does his tutor

9. Proper regulation of the fire when nearing the train destination and due observance of authorised procedure when over pit and when stabling locomotives
10. Lastly, an active participation in team work, co-operation, co-ordination or any other term which expresses that "big family" feeling of helpfulness and due regard for the other fellow and the part he plays in economical train operation.

It is interesting to note, incidentally, that of the 689,490 tons of coal purchased by the Department in 1929-30, no less than 530,209 tons were supplied by the State Coal Mine. At the present time, of course, the use of Wonthaggi coal is being extended wherever practicable.

Things *we are* Talking About

DESPITE the recent heavy rains and widespread floods in the Riverina, railway communication between Melbourne and Sydney was only once seriously disturbed, and even then re-routing of the Limited

RAILWAY THE SAFE WAY

safely through the muddy waters and across the border to a waiting special which landed them in Melbourne 18 hours late. This was the first time the Limited has run through Tocumwal. For the greater part of the flood-time, however, the dailies regularly announced that "the only sure means of travel through the district is by rail." A washaway near Cope Cope necessitated all-night work by railway gangs to keep the service in normal running, and on sections of other lines—like the Ballanald—special precautions were taken to safeguard the track.

SPECIAL arrangements were made by the Victorian railways to ensure that the mail matter on the Melbourne Limited that was re-routed would not miss the mail steamer at Fremantle. A special train—consisting of locomotive, sleeping car and van—was despatched from Melbourne, as soon as the 18-hour late train had arrived, to overtake the East-West express, then well on its way to connect with the *Orsova*. The special cut 2½ hours off the usual

SPECIAL CHASES EXPRESS

travelling time between Melbourne and Adelaide and then, continuing its chase, caught the Express at Riverton, 62 miles north of Adelaide.

| NAMING V.R. STATIONS | |
|---|--|
| No. 7: FRANKSTON | |
| <p>THE township was named in 1854 in memory of Charles Franks, who was killed by aborigines at the Werribee-river 18 years previously. Frankston once formed part of Mr. Charles Wedge's pastoral station and it is not improbable that he suggested the name, as the station of the Messrs. Wedge, at the Werribee, was near to that of Franks and Armytage, where Franks was killed.</p> | |

SHUNTERS and enginemen scarcely need to be told that trucks of explosives and loaded oil tanks demand extra-special care in shunting operations. Loose shunting is unthinkable—either of the truck or tank itself or of other trucks near them. But

EXPLOSIVES AND OIL

another point which must never be forgotten during shunting operations is the imperative need for using at least one truck as a safety-buffer between the locomotive and a loaded oil tank or truck of explosives.

THE first "Buffalo Chalet" cabaret ball, held at The Plaza, St. Kilda, on July 14, proved such a huge success that there are hopes that it will develop into an annual reunion. So effectively was the atmosphere of The Chalet introduced

SNOW AT ST. KILDA

into the ballroom that the 1,200 dancers had every excuse for imagining they were back on the snow-mantled plateau. Around the ballroom, snow-covered foliage decorated pergolas which bore the name of a beauty spot at Mt. Buffalo; at the far end, a drop scene depicted a view of The Chalet in its winter garb between two tall and real eucalyptus trees; and, in the centre of the dancing space, a giant snow-man with blinking eyes of electric light and

fitted with an amplifier, announced the various attractions. These included ski-ing on the floor by the orchestra, a snow ballet scene and a realistic snow storm with thousands of flakes fluttering from the ceiling.

EACH of the two stations, Karween and Morkalla on the recently opened railway extension from Meringur derived its name from the local parish in which it is situated. These parish names were originally

"NIGHT" AND "FIRST MAN"

selected from native dialects and euphonious words were chosen rather than names with descriptive or other application to the particular portion of the Mallee through which the line passes. Morkalla means "night" and Karween offers a choice between "crane" and "first man." Interesting facts concerning the line disclosed in the press last month were that it would carry 86,000 bags of wheat this season and that it would save settlers £1,300 in freight charges on that wheat.

HAVE you ever tried to read a pencilled address on brown paper? If you have, you will understand why guards are forced to crane their neck and strain their eyes when they are confronted with faint markings on the face of one of our brown

HELP THE GUARDS

correspondence envelopes. Gummed slips have been specially provided for use as address-seals on these envelopes and should always be made the white background for the address. Besides helping the guards, they help economy by enabling the one envelope to be used several times.

INCREASED railway tourist traffic in Australia is foreshadowed by the second annual report of the Australian National Travel Association. Thousands of attractive posters featuring Australia are now exhibited

MORE TOURISTS EXPECTED

in practically every country of the world, whilst tourist literature is being circulated in every English-speaking country. Publicity issued from the head office in Melbourne includes 1,400,000 folders and booklets, 100,000 posters, 4,000 photographs and 2,700 maps of Australia in folder form. The American representative (Mr. O'Connor) advises that he is receiving 150 enquiries a day about Australia. His latest letter reads: "Last week 928 enquiries were received. In six months we have had more than 7,000 letters of enquiry, and booklets with a letter have been despatched to each person by way of reply. My wireless talks have caused unusual interest, and many addresses before clubs have led to invitations to address other groups. Through our magazine advertising, we have brought Australia to the notice of millions of people."

MR. FENTON, the British representative, states that gradually increasing results will follow the Association's efforts in national advertising in Great Britain and on the Continent. A director of one of the leading British shipping lines

TELLING THE WORLD

told him that Australia's attractions have never before received the arresting publicity they were getting today. The Association's report mentions subsidiary projects in which it co-operated—a book on Australia by the London author and photographer, Mr. E. O. Hopp, soon to be on sale throughout the world, and a phonogram record of the kookaburra's laugh, which is used as preliminary to broadcast talks on Australia by the overseas representatives.

Revenue Still Falling

THE unparalleled slump in Victorian railways revenue will apparently mean a deficit of £1,491,000 on the year's work when all accounts are finally balanced.

Exchange on railway interest, paid in London, amounted to £184,000, and although expenditure, apart from interest and exchange, was reduced to nearly two million pounds less than the previous year, revenue fell away and kept on falling.

There was a bad start for the new year, further, the revenue for the first fortnight of 1931-32 being nearly £38,000 less than for the corresponding week last year. The total receipts during that period were £325,625. Passenger revenue decreased by £35,000, and goods revenue by £12,000.

Railway Officer's Dash Saves Life

WHEN an urgent request was made to the Bendigo hospital authorities one day last month for serum to be sent to Gunbower (22 miles north) for a dangerous case of infantile paralysis, it was found that the roads had been rendered impassable by the floods.

Railway help was sought, and Traffic Inspector A. McLean made a rushed trip to Gunbower in the district superintendent's rail motor, carrying the serum with him. He left Bendigo at 7.15 p.m., was in Gunbower at 9.10 p.m., and back in Bendigo at midnight.

The patient is now making a complete recovery.

Bureau to Remain in Queen's Walk

A SUBSTANTIAL reduction having been secured in the rental of the existing premises in Queen's Walk, the Government Tourist Bureau will not now be transferred to Flinders-street.

For the remaining year of the present lease, the rent has been reduced from £4,000 to £2,500, and the lease will be extended for a further two years at this low figure.

Passenger Services Discontinued

PASSENGER services on the Mortlake and Timboon lines have now been discontinued. Goods trains will run on the Mortlake line on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on the Timboon line on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Connecting passenger services are being provided by private road contractors.

N.S.W. Rail Deficit

THE loss on the New South Wales railways for the last financial year is estimated to be £4,290,006. That figure, further, takes credit for £800,000 paid from consolidated revenue for losses sustained on developmental lines.

Wool Traffic Will Soon Be Moving: Talking Points for Railway Salesmen

PRELIMINARY estimates of the Australian wool clip for the 1931-32 season indicate an increase of 200,000 bales over last season's clip. Victoria produces approximately one-sixth of Australia's wool and should therefore contribute a substantial portion of the increase.

And this higher yield should be reflected in greater revenue from the railway wool traffic.

BUT the business must be protected by effective salesmanship. Competition by road vehicles will be keen in many places, and the Department cannot afford to lose a single bale of the season's clip. Every opportunity should be availed of by all railwaymen to ensure that graziers will consign their wool "the best way"—the rail way.

Commercial agents are already out in the early-shearing districts, explaining what the department has to offer the wool-grower in the way of prompt despatch, careful handling and complete responsibility. Many Stationmasters are also performing effective work in this direction, but there yet remains much to be done. Some of the principal points in favor of rail transport of wool are summarised here for convenient reference:

1. Only trucks free from grease and dirt are used, avoiding all possibility of damaging the wool or staining the packs.
2. Wool is loaded free of charge. Where loaded by the grower, a deduction of 4d. per bale is made from the freight charges.
3. There is no need for the grower to employ an agent to attend to the despatch of his wool at the local station.
4. Two or more tarpaulins are used to cover each truck of wool during transport.
5. Wool is carried at Commissioners' risk, which represents a guarantee against loss or damage *en route*.
6. Wool is not subjected to the possibility of damage by dust from country roads.
7. Wool loading is given expeditious transport through to its destination.
8. Growers are granted concession rates for carriage of fodder during droughts, of stock from drought districts to agistment areas, and
9. Provided they use the railway for their other transport requirements, they are entitled to a concession in the rates charged for the carriage of fertilisers for top-dressing their pastures.

In addition to these advantages, there is the further consideration that, as any losses resulting from railway operations must be met by the community generally, it is to the wool-grower's personal interest to use the railways wherever possible.

Victoria's Remotest Station

WITH the extension of the Morkalla line, Meringur has lost its proud six-year-old distinction of being the remotest railway station in Victoria.

Meringur is 393½ miles from Melbourne, Morkalla is 402¾ miles.

THE other outposts of the Victorian railway system are Woodside to the south-east (154½ miles), Orbost to the east (230½ miles), Cudgewa to the north-east (255 miles), Tocumwal to the north (156¼ miles), Serviceton to the west (287 miles), Rennick to the south-west (279½ miles), and Crowes to the south (139 miles).

Crowes, incidentally, is the "farthest south" station on the mainland.

In 1857, Geelong was the remotest railway outpost south of Melbourne; in 1859, Sunbury was the farthest

northern railhead; and just a year later, Essendon had become the north-eastern terminal.

Echuca is easily the oldest existing outpost station in Victoria, the line having been completed through from Melbourne to the Murray in 1864. Serviceton has been an outpost station since 1887, and Tocumwal, the other border outpost, has been on the railway map for 23 years.

Merbein was the most remote outpost in the north-west from 1910 until 1924, when the Redcliffs-Werrimull line was opened.

Bairnsdale was the State's eastern outpost for 28 years, but was superseded by Orbost in 1916. This eastern line is the only main line on which construction commenced simultaneously at both ends.

Railwaymen of the Month

Commsr. Molomby Reappointed

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. Commissioner Molomby on the extension of his term of office until April, 1933. His appointment in August, 1924, as Commissioner, *vice* Mr. Miscamble, placed him on the top rung of the Transportation man's ladder of promotion, a ladder which he has steadily mounted since his appointment as junior clerk at Geelong in 1883. Service on the relieving staff, in the staff office, and with the timetables section paved the way to his appointment as Superintendent of Passenger Train Service in 1908. Six years later he went abroad to investigate overseas railway practice, and the following year he assumed the responsibilities of General Superintendent of Transportation. His expert knowledge of railway working, gained through a lifetime of practical experience, places him amongst the foremost railway authorities in Australia.

Uncle Tom

KNOWN from one end of Gippsland to the other, Guard Tom Boyle handed in his green flag and kit bag last month and went into retirement. Thirty-five of his 42 years of service were spent in Gippsland, where he was known far and wide as "Uncle Tom." He missed only one week through illness during his whole career. —T.J.

August Birthdays

BIRTHDAY good wishes will be the order of the day amongst railwaymen at Geelong this month. Natal anniversaries will be celebrated by Driver J. Lanagan, on the third; Assistant District Superintendent George Rogers and Driver Searle, on the fourth; Block and Signal Inspector J. Mullins and Works Ganger R. Homfray, on the seventh; Works Foreman R. R. Roberts, on the 13th; Chief Train Despatcher A. H. Game, on the 21st; and Acting Crane Driver S. Patterson, on the 23rd.

Others who will be celebrating include:—

District Engineer Evan Richard of Oakleigh, Tom Kennedy of Room 2, Stationmaster M. Lalor of Dandenong, and Depot Foreman J. McIvor of Bendigo, on the first; Fitter's Assistant A. G. Rowley of Traralgon and Depot Foreman G. R. Critten of Ararat, on the second; Alec Wotherspoon of Room 1, Assistant Chief Accountant A. Williams, and Rope Splicer Jim Langley of Spotswood storehouse, on the third; Driver L. W. Jackson of Bendigo and Assistant Train Running Officer Ries of Seymour, on the fourth; Chief Engineer 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; Signal Supervisor D. C. Beaumont of Bendigo, on the eighth; Guard J. T. Mulligan of Traralgon, Stationmaster H. G. Hooper of Warragul, and Way

and Works Engineer W. O. Brown of Oakleigh, on the 12th; Senior Train Despatcher J. P. McKenna and Assistant Printing Officer Bill Houston, on the 14th; Signal Supervisor Ewin of Dandenong and Officer-in-Charge Charles Corbett of the Melbourne Goods perishable shed, on the 16th; District Engineer A. J. Ward of Ballarat, on the 17th; Leading Shunter J. Emmerson of Bendigo, on the 19th; Engineer W. Hambridge of the Rolling Stock drawing office, on the 20th; Morgan Hayes of Room 9, Ganger A. J. Knight of Ballarat and Engineer Ralph Connolly of the Electrical branch, on the 21st; Depot Foreman D. McL. Stewart of Traralgon, on the 22nd; District Superintendent T. H. Maddern of Ballarat, Block and Signal Inspector David Beddoe of Flinders-street, and Works Foreman D. Flynn of Bendigo, on the 23rd; Driver E. Fitzpatrick of Wodonga, on the 24th; Cleaner A. R. Adkins of Warragul, on the 28th; Special Officer R. G. Wishart and Manager Lindsay McClelland of the Dining Car depot on the 30th.

Ninth

NINTH Ballarat guard to retire in the last 10 years, Henry Peard has gone out on superannuation with service going back to 1889. Messrs. W. Williams, H. W. Bowman, McKay, Watkins, Gilbert, C. Williams and D'arcy were among the speakers who voiced regret at Mr. Peard's departure. A presentation was made of a watch and a silver sugar basin for Mrs. Peard. —B.C.

Star-gazing

THE Astronomical Society of Victoria recently appointed as treasurer, Mr. J. C. Hewitson, telegraphist of the Spencer-street telegraph office. Astronomy first interested him as a hobby when he was serving with the navy during the war. The

glory of the skies, on clear tropical nights, caught his fancy, and a conversation with Mr. Michie, who is well-known to railwaymen, from his associations with the Victorian Railway Institute and the old V.R. Magazine and who was the previous treasurer of the Astronomical Society, influenced him to join that organisation, of which he has since become a most enthusiastic member. Incidentally, Mr. Hewitson will be happy to furnish full information concerning the society and its activities to any railwaymen who may be interested in astronomy. —S.C.W.

First Train to Wonthaggi

AFTER a decade of head-portering at the busiest passenger station in the world, Lawrence Gagero has gone into retirement. He was a railwayman for 43 years, joining the service as a porter at Bendigo under Stationmaster Franks and District Superintendent Clem Stevens. "Manure" guard at Yarraville for 12 years, he also had the distinction of running the first through passenger train from Melbourne to Wonthaggi. —H.E.C.

Paid in Millions

RETIRING early last month on account of ill health, Walter Jones has at last moved from the atmosphere of high finance. He joined the Traffic branch in April, 1888, and transferred eight years later to the Accountancy branch. Service in practically every section of the branch preceded his appointment in 1926 as travelling auditor of disbursement. Three years later he took charge of the pay office where he remained until his retirement, supervising the distribution of some six million pounds each year in salaries and wages. We join with his hosts of railway friends in wishing him an early improvement in health. —S.C.W.

The
Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited

has again achieved

a Record Year

in the ORDINARY Department

Firstly.—By issuing Policies for the largest amount of Assurance in any year since its establishment in 1873.

Secondly.—By making available for distribution the greatest surplus in the Society's history.

The Society's Group Policies
(for Railway Employees)

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DO NOT DELAY

Write to the Society for particulars

NOW

The Last Mile Post—

MICHAEL QUINLAN

ANOTHER old Hobson's Bay railway veteran has passed his last milepost—Mr. Mick Quinlan, who was a passenger guard when the private company was taken over by the Government.

He and Jim Morrow—still alive and bright—were the only passenger guards permanently on Suburban trains at that time.

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

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

On the great clock of
time there is only one
word—NOW!

Issue No. 12

The GVR News Letter

September, 1931

Swift Handling of Long-Distance Stock Consignment

A REMARKABLE example of expeditious handling of a special long-distance consignment of live stock passed comparatively unnoticed recently. Nearly 400 young cattle were transported from Orbost to Wetuppa, in the New South Wales Riverina, a distance of close on 450 miles, between 7.24 a.m. on a Tuesday morning and the early afternoon of the next day.

WITH the volume of freight and passenger traffic handled by the railways steadily shrinking, the comparatively bright showing of the live stock business is doubly welcome. Certainly there has been a decline in the stock traffic this year as compared with 1930, when large numbers of starving stock were carried, but the stock now being carried is well up to the standard of a normal year.

Considerable business has been done in recent months in railing store sheep and cattle to agistment areas to be fattened, and heavy yardings of "fats" are reported from Newmarket and other sales. Following, too, upon the wonderful rains and consequent improvement of outlook in our north-western and northern districts, and also the southern Riverina, after a run of indifferent seasons, there has been a considerable influx of sheep and cattle from other districts to stock-up the properties.

This general movement of stock was responsible for the recent spectacular long-distance journey referred to. An Orbost land-holder who also has a property at Wetuppa, on the border railway between Kerang and Stony Crossing, chartered a special train to transfer a consignment of 377 young cattle to his New South Wales estate. The Department rose to the occasion, the special train left Orbost on a Tuesday morning, 444 miles of railway were traversed, and the cattle were in their new paddocks on the Wednesday afternoon.

By scheduling the consignment right through in one continuous journey, the Department not only enhanced its reputation for swift and effective service, but also considerably reduced operating costs by obviating the necessity for off-loading the animals at intermediate points for watering and other purposes.

* * * *

THIS movement of store stock in large consignments is a regular source of railway revenue. The best individual customer of the Department in this regard is the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, which purchases cattle in New South Wales and Queensland and transfers them in train loads to be fattened on its property at Werribee. Up to 55 trucks, carrying as many as 1,000 store cattle, are handled in one train load. The loop line between Broadmeadows and Albion, in conjunction with the Sunshine loop line, has enabled these special loads to be run quickly through to Werribee without reversing the train and without traversing the inner suburban area.

Special train loads of sheep are now run with as many as 68 trucks, this number of vehicles frequently comprising stock trains from Tocumwal. Such a train would carry up to 8,000 sheep. The use of the higher-powered locomotive—the "N" class for light lines and the "X" and "C" classes for the main lines—has enabled the stock to be moved forward in larger loads than formerly.

At the present time, the movement of livestock is very brisk, this being largely attributable to the fact that the new season's lambs are now being marketed. On Monday, August 17, 673 sheep trucks had been ordered to convey sheep to Newmarket for the following day's sales. Of this number, 450 trucks were from Riverina districts, which indicates clearly the important effect which this region has on the Victorian railway livestock revenue, particularly as the haul involved is appreciable.



77 Years Old on the 13th!

SEPTEMBER 13 is the 77th anniversary of the birth of the Victorian railways. On that day in 1854, the two-mile link, connecting Flinders-street with Port Melbourne, was opened—the first line to carry a railway train in Australia.

Let's hope for many more happy returns of the day—and if they're improved traffic returns, all the better!

Flour for New South Wales

UNDER the new Flour Acquisition Act, all flour consumed in New South Wales is now subject to special taxation.

This legislation is of interest to Victorian station staffs, as detailed advice is required of all consignments of flour sent from Victorian stations to any address in New South Wales. This advice should be sent to the Superintendent of Goods Train Service at the same time as the consignment is waybilled.

Tie Ropes Wanted

TIE ropes and packing material are nearly as scarce as gold sovereigns in the Melbourne goods sheds these days.

All available material of this kind should be promptly and regularly collected in sheds and sidings at all stations and despatched posthaste (fully addressed and waybilled) to the Goods Superintendent.

We are Talk **THINGS** ing About !

REASONS why a reduction in railway freights and fares is impracticable, are set out in a pamphlet which has just been issued by the Victorian Railways Commissioners. It is pointed out that if a 10 per cent.

REDUCED FARES BIGGER DEFICIT reduction were made, an increase of roughly 11 per cent. in traffic would be required to preserve the existing position of railway finance. No such substantial increase in business could be looked for, and the only result of any general reduction in charges would be an increased deficit. Reduction of costs to the railway user would consequently necessitate heavier taxation of the community generally. No one who is now using his motor car for his travel would be induced to keep the car in the garage because of a 10 per cent cut in railway rates; nor is it likely that a reduction of 4d. a week in the cost of 3/5d. workmen's weekly ticket from a suburb, six miles distant from the city, would have any appreciable influence in the matter.

TO the argument that there should be no discrimination in regard to the fares upon which railway charges are fixed in the suburban area, the Commissioners reply that the lower rates, which are applicable on certain

WHY FARES VARY lines which have to meet the competition of an excellent tramway service, are necessary to enable the railways to retain a share of the traffic. If these arbitrary "competitive" rates were generally applied, the result would unquestionably be a huge loss of revenue; while, if the ordinary mileage scale were charged in the areas where there is tramway competition, it is just as unquestionable that the railways would lose the traffic which they are now obtaining from those areas. The ultimate outcome would inevitably be an all-round increase in the general mileage rates to offset the loss. Thus it can be said that the operation of the lower rates in "the competitive areas" is not prejudicial, but on the contrary actually beneficial, to the districts which complain of discrimination.

"My Definite View . . ." **PRIMARY** production is so vitally important to this country that anything which adversely affects it cannot fail to react against the interests of the whole community, and my definite view is that it should be given consideration prior to any other interest whenever a reduction of railway charges can be contemplated as within the realm of practicability."
—HAROLD W. CLAPP

REFERENCE is again made to the absence of an adequate depreciation fund in railway working. If the whole of the Victorian railway property were new, the amount required to meet the annual depreciation

LOST £16,000,000 would be something like £300,000 a year more than is now being provided. So far, the non-provision of this fund has resulted in a loss of value to the property of not less than £16,000,000. It has, of course, been the view of the railway administration for years past that this lost value should not continue to be a charge against present-day railway users, but is a fair and proper charge against the community as a whole and should therefore be transferred to the Public Account. If this were done, the interest charges would be reduced by approximately £750,000 per annum. While the Commissioners agree that this would bring nearer the practicability of reduction in freights and fares, they emphasise "that nothing should be permitted to overshadow the importance of placing the railway finances on a proper basis by the establishment of a depreciation fund adequate to meet the loss of value in the property as it accrues."

SUPPORTING the proposed Melbourne centenary celebrations, the chairman of the Australian National Travel Association (Mr. H. W. Clapp), suggested last month that the year 1934-35 should be made a great carnival year for Australia and

CARNIVAL YEAR FOR AUSTRALIA New Zealand. "If Australia and New Zealand co-operated to that end," he said, "the attraction of a trip to this part of the world would be greatly enhanced. Many people who have had hazy ideas of making a tour at some time or other might be definitely induced to call on us during the carnival year." Invitations to the Prince of Wales and the President and Mrs. Hoover to visit Australia, to the various powers to send fleet units into Australasian waters during that year, and to Rotary and other groups to hold their international conferences in Australia during the same period, were also proposed by Mr. Clapp. He considered that the Melbourne centenary could never become more than a subsidiary appeal in an effort to persuade people 13,000 miles away to visit Australia, although it would be an excellent event to advertise, along with the other attractions of Australia, in order to stimulate travel.

Negligible . . . **RAILWAY** charges have a relatively negligible effect upon the cost of commodities. Actually, a reduction of 20s. per ton would represent about 1d. for every 10 lb. of merchandise, or one-tenth of a penny for a lb. of butter, one-fifth of a penny for a tin of jam, and about a halfpenny for a suit of clothes.

WILL the railway man who submitted a suggestion to the Betterment and Publicity Board "regarding the electro-copper plating of locomotive boiler crown stays at the firebox end" kindly say who he is and where he is? His suggestion was received

WHO IS HE? some little time ago, bearing neither signature nor address. The idea has been investigated and the Board is now anxious to get into communication with the unknown suggestor. In the past, unsigned suggestions have occasionally been found amongst the many thousands of bright ideas received by the Board, but the mystery of the forgetful suggestor's identity has usually been cleared up by a search for the same handwriting in a previous suggestion amongst the files of suggestions in the Board office. This, however, is apparently the latest unknown's first suggestion and with no further advice from him arriving in the Board's big daily signed mail, the problem of his identity remains unsolved. Will he please regard this paragraph as an invitation to take two paces to the front?

IN our last month's summary of talking points on the wool traffic, we referred to the free loading of wool by railway staff and its carriage at Commissioners' risk. Few railwaymen—if any—will need to be told that carriage at Commissioners' risk

SALESMANSHIP AND WOOL naturally implies payment of the special rate covering that risk but there is the further point that wool is accepted at Commissioners' risk from unattended stations only on payment of the cost of providing a tally clerk from another station. It has been suggested that some younger members of the staff might possibly be in doubt regarding the circumstances in which an allowance of fourpence is made on each bale of wool loaded by the grower himself. This concession applies only to caretaker and unattended stations where no arrangements for loading have been made by the Department. Then, too, growers who forward their wool by road are liable to be charged higher rates for fertilisers.

Attractive Fares for Show Visitors

A LIBERAL fare concession will be available for the many country residents who will be travelling distances to Melbourne for this year's Royal Show. Incidentally, it makes a good selling line for country station staffs to push in their districts. Respective of the distance covered, travellers will not be required to pay more than 40/-, first-class return, or 20/-, second-class return. The substantial nature of this concession will be realised by a comparison of this fare-charge with the cheap excursion

RAILWAY SOLD FOR LESS THAN THREE DOLLARS

It has been generally considered that but few individuals could afford to buy a railroad property. It was done in July, however, and the price paid was two dollars and ten cents.

C. P. Corrigan was the purchaser of the Denver, Venus, Mars and Juno-road, popularly called the "Celestial Line," at a sale at Palm Beach.

This is not a planetary system but an electric railroad connecting the Florida villages named.

which would be ordinarily charged, say, 300 miles—70/-, first-class, and 45/-, second class.

This concession—together with the general application of cheap excursion fares from all country stations to Melbourne—will operate on September 16 and 17, the latter date being the opening day of the Show.

Returned soldiers and their families, railwaymen will remember, were offered the concession of a maximum fare as an inducement to travel from remote settlements to witness and participate in the last Anzac Day parade. As a result, more than 350 passengers travelled distances of over 200 miles to the city.

OH, OL or WB ?

RAILWAYMEN are reminded of the need for properly describing the type of butter-box used when endorsing particulars of a consignment of butter on the covering envelope. The instruction lays it down that the abbreviation OH (ordinary heavy box), OL (ordinary light box) or WB (wirebound) must be printed on the bill.

These particulars are required for checking purposes by the Revision Bureau attached to the Powers Machine Division.

A Little Shunting Problem

HERE is a little problem used in college psychology courses overseas, which a practical railwayman should be able to solve in less than two minutes.

A one-track railway has a siding which will hold 25 trucks and an engine. This siding is connected at each end with the main line. Two trucks trains, each having but one engine, meet and must pass at this

The Shifting Sands of the Mallee

RELENTLESSLY, sand is drifting in from the cultivated fields in the Mallee, blocking roads, clogging water-channels and threatening railway tracks.

During the past six years, the State Rivers and Supply Commission has spent no less than £360,000 in clearing irrigation channels. Heavy expense in keeping tracks and roads cleared has also been incurred by the Railways Department and Mallee Shires.

IN existing conditions, a wind-storm will cover the railway track with a heaped sea of sand within a few minutes. Close inspection of the track is accordingly imperative at all times, and delays to trains can be reduced to a minimum only by the willing and sustained work of the Mallee track gangs.

Very little trouble was experienced by the railways prior to 1925, but tracks now affected, or likely to be involved in the near future, include practically the whole of the system from the Yanac line across to the Murray and stretching from Donald and Dumosa northwards to Redcliffs and Manangatang. The causes are apparently closely bound up with the settlement and cultivation of the Mallee areas. The first action of the settlers in clearing their holdings for cultivation purposes was to grub the native mallee scrub and clear other vegetation, thus allowing the wind full play upon the exposed surface of the soil. The soil is composed of very light particles which are readily carried by the wind, particularly where summer fallowing is practised. The position is aggravated by drought conditions and by the inevitable disappearance of the protective belt of scrub alongside the lines.

The sand suspended in the atmosphere is deposited whenever the velocity of the carrying wind is reduced. Obstacles like fences or bushes and "dead air" pockets such as railway cuttings have this effect, and the sand is consequently deposited at those points, in quantities varying with the size, shape and height of the obstacle. In due course, the fence or bush is overwhelmed by the sand and eventually a hillock is formed running parallel to the prevailing sand-shifting winds, which in the Victorian Mallee are from the west. This activity is so pronounced in some sections that tracks, which previously were slightly banked above the level of the country, now run through cuttings formed by the sand drifting against scrub.

* * * *

MANY different methods have been adopted to check the sand, but none has yet proved effective, although some have delayed the drift. The belt of scrub on the railway reserves is generally far too narrow to make a lasting and effective break. Trees and shrubs like blue gums, pepper trees, and bamboos generally die, while the survivors merely form a fence over which the sand builds up. Owing to their slow growth, mallee seedlings are of no practical use, and the grown mallee cannot be transplanted. Scrub fences have proved valuable as a protection for cuttings; their value lies in the fact that they cause the sand to be deposited in situations where it can be scooped away at regular intervals instead of drifting across the running track. Marram grass and "pig's face" are successful in anchoring moving sand dunes, but are useless against wind-driven sand.

When it is realised that 3¼ million acres of the Mallee country are devoted to agriculture, yielding, among other products, 14 million bushels of wheat in a normal year, while a further 2½ million acres are used for pastures which carry 56,000 horses, 27,000 cattle and 719,000 sheep, the value of this district to Victoria becomes apparent. Special interest attaches, therefore, to work of the representative committee which will shortly investigate all aspects of this problem of the shifting sands.

It is clear, however, that the contest between the forces of Nature and the ingenuity of man will prove both long and costly.

Second-hand Railway Watches

SECOND-HAND watches are available at the present time from the Comptroller of Stores at prices ranging from 6/- to 20/-.

The timepieces may be inspected on application at Room 109, Head Office. Although they are "used models," we understand that they are all in good working order and reliable timekeepers.

RAILWAYMEN of the MONTH

First Gully Train

WITH 44 years of solid service to his credit, Guard George Walmsley of Spencer-street has called it a fair thing. As guard at Ringwood in the early days, he ran the first train to Ferntree Gully. He also had 15 years experience at Korumburra and was at Colac and Benalla for some time. —H.E.C.

Veteran Conductor

POPULAR old George Lewis has retired after unbroken service for 30 years as conductor on the Adelaide express. He was in charge of the royal train which sped the Duke and Duchess of York to Canberra for the opening of the Federal Parliament. Some of the friends he made on the Adelaide express gave him a farewell dinner in the South Australian capital and presented him with a set of pipes. —B.B.

September Birthdays

MANY happy returns of the day to the following railwaymen:

Fireman J. Clancy of Korong Vale, Cecil Widdop of Room 2, and Fireman Tomlinson of Geelong, on the first; Assistant Manager James Taylor of Newport Shops and 'Phone

SELLING LOCOMOTIVES ON THE INSTALMENT PLAN

NOW locomotives are to be sold on the instalment plan!

The executive committee of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia (U.S.A.), is considering an elaborate scheme to stimulate business for privately owned equipment concerns and to correspondingly decrease the amount of work done in railway shops.

The Baldwin idea is to organize finance companies which will purchase locomotives and other equipment from the Baldwin company and then lease them to the railroads.

How the Interstate Commerce Commission will regard the new scheme is not known.

Engineer E.G. Godfree, on the second; Goods Superintendent T. R. L. Sexton, on the third; Workmaster Ed. Hains of North Melbourne and Night Depot Foreman Ford of Maryborough, on the fourth; Train Examiner T. Orchard of Seymour, R.S.M. Tom Mulcahy and Rolling Stock Superintendent E. Hinds of Ballarat, on the sixth; Rolling Stock Clerk W. Gilligan of Seymour on the seventh, Secretary for Railways E. C. Eyers and Assistant Chief Mechanical Engineer A. C. Ahlston, on the eighth; Night Depot Foreman F. Bates of Bendigo, on the ninth; Claims Agent James Southam and Senior Timekeeper Tim. O'Donoghue of North Melbourne Loco., on the 10th; Donald McDonald of Room 9, Leading Porter Martin Young, of Ararat, and Guard W. B. Williams of Ballarat, on the 11th; Superintendent A. W. F. Smith of the Melbourne Yards, Driver A. Hunt of Geelong, Shunter J. F. Kelly of Warragul, and Works Sub-foreman M. Higgins of Geelong, on the 12th; Rolling Stock Superintendent Frank Boodle of Seymour, on the 15th; Electrical Fitter-in-charge J. Hammond of Dandenong and Electrical Fitter J. Finch of Bendigo, on

the 16th; Tom Doyle of the Rolling Stock drawing office and Metropolitan Traffic Inspector Phillips, on the 18th; Photographer W. Howieson, Driver A. E. Dent of Korumburra and Driver J. Ingoldby of Ballarat, on the 19th; Assistant General Superintendent W. Thomas and Signal Engineer Colin Young, on the 21st; District Engineer E. B. Slater of Geelong, on the 22nd; Train Examiner W. Oliver of Warragul, on the 23rd; Signal Maintenance Engineer W. Forrest, Percy Sheeran of the Refreshment Services, and Signal Adjuster Bishop of Dandenong, on the 25th; Printing Officer Milton Gray, on the 26th; Fireman C. Tait of Ararat and Fitter R. G. Elliott of the North Melbourne truck shops, on the 28th; Fireman R. E. James of Ararat, on the 29th; and Chief Engineer for Railway Construction C. H. Perrin, on the 30th.

Operatic Star

ESCORTING Officer Gordon Peart of the Government Tourist Bureau made a reappearance in opera at the Theatre Royal last month. He was a member of the 1924 Melba-Williamson Grand Opera Company, and there met and studied with the

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 8: TYNONG

A MR. McKEOWN took up land at Koo-wee-rup, adjoining Batt's Island, and gave it the native name for the locality, "Tynong." This means "plenty of fish."

Italian baritone Apollo Granforte and Frank St. Leger of the Chicago Opera House. Another of his tutors was the late Mansley Greer, formerly conductor of the Royal Victorian Liedertafel. Following the 1924 season, he took Melba's advice and went

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abroad. In his recent return opera, he took the parts of Valentin in "Faust" and Angelotti in "Tosca." —P

Geelong Good-bye

GEELONG railwaymen said good-bye to Ganger Denyer of the North Geelong yard last month presenting him with a travelling and complete shaving outfit and leather wallet for his wife. He had 45 years service and was a ganger for 12 years. —G.A.

LOCOMOTIVE CHASES WOULD BE MURDERER

A STRANGE scene was recently witnessed on the railway in Alberta (Canada), when a railway engine which had been detached from a passenger train, pursued a man along the line. The man, a 35-year-old miner named Zugofow, was travelling in the train when suddenly he attacked his estranged wife and tried to murder her with a knife. Her screams brought the train crew to the rescue, whereupon the man jumped from the train and fled down the track with the engine, which was hastily uncoupled, in close pursuit.

The chase ended as dramatically as it began, for when the engine caught him up the miner was found lying dying from poison and self-inflicted wounds.

Dick Dugan Goes

PUNCTUALLY on his 65th birthday, genial old Driver Dick Dugan of Donald stepped down from the footplate for the last time in 27 months. He was a driver for 27 years and 42 years service, starting at Seymour and remaining at Donald for 22 years. A good railroader, a good unionist and a good fellow, he is known wherever rolling stock men gather. He now lives in Melbourne. —D

Four

A MONGST the old veterans who retired recently were Messrs. Doble, W. Sutherland and A. Branmann, enginemen of Bendigo, and Stationmaster Tom Rennie of North Melbourne. —B.C.

The Last Mile Post

ERNEST C. ANDERSON, RELIEVING Stationmaster at North Melbourne, died last month after a protracted illness.

He had long service in the Department, starting as a block recorder at Ferntree Gully when Harry Clark was stationmaster. He was night office at Castlemaine and had been on relieving staff for the last 12 years.

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THE MONTH'S THOUGHT

All things come to the other fellow if you wait.

Issue No. 13

News Letter

October, 1931

Australia's First Railway

THE recent press statement that Australia's first locomotive, which arrived in New South Wales from England in 1855, would steam over the Sydney harbor bridge at the opening ceremony" shows that misapprehension still exists concerning the operation of Australia's first railway.

In the interests of historical accuracy, it is desirable that there should be no confusion on this subject. Australia's first locomotive was actually

1930-31 in a Nutshell

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Gross rail revenue ... | £10,089,884 |
| Working expenses ... | 7,770,341 |
| Interest charges ... | 3,614,244 |
| Exchange on interest... | 183,863 |
| Leaving a deficit of ... | £1,478,564 |

Revenue Still Declines

UP to the middle of last month, the decrease in railway revenue since the beginning of the financial year had aggregated £240,500, compared with the corresponding period last year.

The period decrease for the seven days ended, September 19, was nearly £12,000. Goods and live stock revenue was the only item to show an increase—a matter of £2,000-odd.

WORLD'S OLDEST STATION

WHAT is said to be the oldest railway station in the world, in point of material used in its construction, has been erected at Tell Billah, in Mesopotamia, to aid archaeological excavations. Bricks dating back to more than 3,500 years ago were used to build this one-storey station on the Khorsabad railway.

5d. Revenue for Year

TANK'S-SIDING, the tiny stopping-place on the Gembrook line, has lost its distinction of being the station which earns least revenue in Victoria.

WHILE four passengers booked from Tank's-siding and contributed 8s. 8d. in fares last year, three stopping-places on the Orbost line didn't provide a single rail passenger or earn one penny in revenue.

One passenger travelled from Herne's Oak, in Gippsland, in the 12 months, contributing 5d. to the year's revenue, and another solitary customer at Laceby, on the Whitfield line, paid 10d. for a fare.

As a contrast, Spencer-street station earned £1,390,258 19s. 11d. in passenger goods, parcels and live stock revenue for 1930-31.

Wireless in Victorian Trains

TRAIN radio in Victoria may become an accomplished fact if tests which were begun on the Sydney Limited last month are successful.

Headphones would be made available to passengers for the whole journey on payment of a small fee. A traveller wishing to listen in would simply plug in the attachment to a point above his seat.

THE engineers have recommended that a system of broadcasting from the train itself be adopted instead of receiving from outside stations. In that case, a phonograph with a special pick-up attachment would be used to broadcast selected records from the train itself, while a railwayman would receive news and weather reports from outside stations and rebroadcast through the set on the train. Loud speakers would probably be installed in the saloon car.

Besides the Sydney and Adelaide expresses, important country trains may be equipped.

In America, 17 railway companies provide wireless for passengers. These companies have broadcasting stations along the tracks at comparatively short distances, so that there is little possibility of fading or static interruption. The wireless is used for entertainment and railway propaganda.

Bank Finances Better Farming Train Tour

A MOST interesting development last month was the decision of the Commonwealth Bank to finance a trip by the Better Farming train. The expenses of both the Railways and Agricultural Departments will be paid out of the bank's "rural credits development fund."

The tour, which will commence on Monday, October 19, will embrace the following centres:—

- Dingee (20th), Kerang (21st), Murrabit (22nd), Swan Hill (23rd), Pyramid (24th), Rochester (26th), Gunbower (27th), Cohuna (28th), Lockington (29th).

TRAIN TRAVEL AT 223 M.P.H.
PROPELLER-DRIVEN trains at a speed of 223 miles an hour have been made possible by Professor K. Wiesinger of Zurich Polytechnicum (Switzerland) after 30 years of experimentation. The weight of the coach must be reduced from 20 tons to three tons, and the wheels set at an angle of 30 degrees to ensure against derailment.

built and operated in Victoria some months before regular rail operation was commenced in N.S.W. It was built by a firm of Melbourne engineers—Messrs. Robertson, Martin, Smith and Co.—was of 30 h.p., had a power of traction equal to 150 tons at a speed of 25 miles per hour, and cost £2,500. It ran its trial trips successfully, and on September 12, 1854, hauled four tiny carriage-loads of dignitaries from Flinders-street to the harbor bridge (now Port Melbourne), thus officially opening the first railway in the Southern Hemisphere.

The first N.S.W. locomotive was built by the Stephenson at Newcastle (England) and imported into the colony in 1855. For some months it hauled the first trains on the Sydney-Paramatta line, the first railway in N.S.W., which was not opened for traffic until September 26, 1855.

Interesting facts concerning Victoria's first rail service: "Down" passengers paid on entering Flinders-street, "Up" passengers from Sandridge before leaving. There were no fares. A uniform charge of 1s. per passenger per trip was made. Trains were run on Sundays except during the season of church service.

We are Talking THINGS About

A DROP of £2,000,000 in revenue on last year's operations, compared with 1929-30, and of more than £3,000,000, compared with 1928-29, has left the Department with the biggest deficit on record—£1,478,564.

OUR BIGGEST DEFICIT

Everything practicable was done to adjust expenditure to the conditions, and working expenses were reduced by more than 19 per cent. Additional economies are being constantly effected, but it has been utterly impossible to reduce the total expenses in direct proportion to the unprecedented fall in earnings as it occurred. It is true that, on a population basis, our deficit per head was considerably less than that of the railways of any other Australian State, and that the return on our interest-bearing capital was 3·08 per cent. compared with, say, the 2·98 per cent. return on the London and North Eastern railway co.'s capital investment for 1930. But these comparisons in no way minimise the gravity of the situation, especially as it appears quite certain that, until the State has rehabilitated its economic condition, nothing but a substantial loss can be expected from the railway system, with a capitalisation built up in years when traffic was increasing and rendering it capable of handling a greatly increased volume of business. For example, country passenger traffic for 1930-31 was actually less by 201,000 passenger journeys, or 3·3 per cent. than in 1908-09—22 years ago—when the mileage of line open for traffic was 28 per cent. less and the population 29 per cent. less.

ALTHOUGH the greatest part of this startling decrease in revenue was due to the general collapse of business, it is beyond question that a substantial part was due to the diversion to the roads of much passenger and goods traffic. Restrictive legislation in this direction, the Commissioners affirm, is "imperatively necessary" to control the situation before it gets entirely out of hand. "We are convinced," they declare, "that no measures taken for the State's financial rehabilitation can be regarded as complete, nor can they be expected to be successful, which do not include the safeguarding against road competition of the huge railway investment. This investment, amounting to more than £75,000,000, is in danger of being converted from the State's greatest asset into a tremendous liability by the system being deprived of its most profitable traffic, and we again urge the immediate necessity for remedial measures being taken while there is still time to control the situation and before the costs of transport become an intolerable burden upon the whole community."

"WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME"

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CURTAILMENTS of train services were effected to meet the heavy and progressive decline in passenger traffic, the services being adjusted as far as practicable to meet the most important local needs. On nine lines the passenger traffic had so diminished that the provision of a regular service for passengers was discontinued and only a goods service maintained, while the 5½-mile Triholm-Strzelecki section was closed to all traffic. On the electrified system, the decline in traffic demanded substantial curtailments and admitted of the withdrawal from regular running of seven complete seven-car trains. Altogether, reduced services saved more than 540,000 country passenger train miles, 580,000 mixed train miles and 370,000 suburban passenger train miles. This represented, in round figures, 5,500,000 car miles in country services and 2,500,000 car miles in electrified services. These changes, further, were not operating for the whole year and will therefore have a still more

SAVING TRAIN RUNNING

noticeable influence next year, increased also by curtailments effected since July 1.

noticeable influence next year, increased also by curtailments effected since July 1.

ACKNOWLEDGING the services of the staff in their report, the Commissioners say: "The standard of service given by the staff was well maintained during the year. We receive numerous eulogistic letters which furnish evidence of the improvement and constantly growing spirit of co-operation between the employees and patrons of the Department. It is a pleasure to us to place this fact on record and to express our own appreciation of the excellent service and valuable assistance rendered by officers and employees throughout the year."

THANKS TO THE STAFF

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IT was anticipated that the construction by the Railway Department of a bridge and subway at Mt. Alexander road, on behalf of the Essendon Council and the Tramway Board, would be completed by the end of this month.

UP TO SCHEDULE

Some space was devoted in the past month, by the way, to misinformation and criticism by an Essendon councillor of the progress on this job. He declared expansively that the Department had begun its operations "about two years ago" and gave it as his considered opinion that private enterprise would have completed the work in "two months"! Actually, the job was first tackled in December last and, despite delays in the delivery of steel—by an outside contractor—and the enforced suspension of operations for six weeks while the Postal Department removed underground cables, has been performed expeditiously and economically by a gang of Superintendent Engineer Fethney's skilled men. The work was extremely complicated and its difficulties were accentuated by the restrictions of a very limited working space. "Nine to 12 months" was the estimate originally given by the Council, completion within 10 months, despite unforeseen outside delays, was a highly creditable performance.

"**W**E agree that with world prices as they are, primary consideration must be given to primary production—which is of such vital importance to this country—whenever a reduction in freights can be contemplated as within the realm of practicability, but until there is some prospect of balancing the railway budget, and thus relieving the community of the burden of taxation imposed by railway deficits, we are convinced there is no economic justification for a reduction in charges." Thus the Railways Commissioners last month when asked to reduce rail freight rates on wool and wheat for the coming season. Any reduction would inevitably increase the already huge rail deficits, and as there are no means of meeting the deficits other than by additional taxation, the result would merely be to shift the burden from one section of the community to the other. In any case, Victorian rail rates for wheat are already lower than those of any other State, the comparative rates per ton being

NO ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION

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| Miles | Vic. | N.S.W. | S.A. | Q. | W. |
|-------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| 100 | 10/3 | 12/- | 13/8 | 12/2 | 10/6 |
| 200 | 13/7 | 15/2 | 17/2 | 20/4 | 14/6 |
| 300 | 15/7 | 16/11 | 20/4 | 24/10 | 18/6 |

Wool has of course been very adversely affected by the fall in prices, but even now the freight for the average haul in Victoria is only four per cent. of its value.

Waging War on Weeds



The Iced Trucks Are Here Again!

ON Friday, September 25, iced "T" trucks were made available for this summer's butter traffic. Country stationmasters can help greatly to reduce any unnecessary haulage of the refrigerator trucks by keeping in close touch with the butter traffic, and promptly advising Room 10 of any cancellations or of the probability of deliveries of butter exceeding the truck capacity ordered.

Points from Annual Report

At the end of the year, there were in service —
 645 steam and 12 electric locomotives.
 961 passenger cars and 776 other steam coaching vehicles, including sleeping and special cars and vans.
 34 rail motors, 34 trailers and 29 mail trailers.
 51 electric passenger cars and 5 parcels coaches.
 35 tramcars.
 20,227 goods vehicles of all kinds.
 753 service vehicles, including workmen's sleeping cars, water trucks, etc.
 12 road motor passenger coaches, 18 motor trucks and 12 trailers.

The wheat harvest was 53,814,369 bushels, and 14,601,317 bags had been carried by rail at the end of the year. 3,564,120 bags were still in stacks, including 2,893,621 bags at country stations.

Claims for goods, parcels and livestock damaged, delayed or short delivered absorbed £11,811, compared with £17,701 for the previous year.

The Audit and Accountancy branches were amalgamated under the Comptroller of Accounts from June 1, and the Signal and Telegraph and Way and Works branches were amalgamated from the beginning of the new financial year.

| | 1930-31 | 1929-30 |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Passenger journeys— | | |
| country | 5,906,293 | 7,547,240 |
| suburban | 128,748,927 | 149,571,831 |
| Goods tonnage | 5,557,176 | 6,823,607 |
| Livestock tonnage | 542,134 | 689,999 |

Rolling stock construction was restricted to one "S" and nine "N" class locomotives, one bogie van and 107 27-ton open goods trucks. One "N" class locomotive was still under construction

RAILWAYS open for traffic at end of the year totalled 4716.76 route miles or 5085.31 track miles, and 1036.25 miles of sidings. There

SPRING-TIME being weed-time, Victorian railway track gangs are now arming themselves with picks, shovels, forks, hoes, poison and fire in preparation for a vigorous offensive against the creeping growth of grass that regularly invades the running tracks.

Weeds grow most freely in the north-eastern district, where there is usually a heavy and consistent rainfall, followed by a longer period of warm weather than is experienced south of the Dividing-ranges.

QUITE apart from the appearance of the tracks, the removal of weed is essential for the maintenance of an efficient service. Weeds, if permitted to grow, interfere with the drainage of the track, encourage decay in sleepers, prevent the proper inspection of rail fastenings, clog engine ash arresters, cause engine wheels to slip, especially on gradients, and, by obscuring the rails, make it impossible for permanent way men to obtain the correct line and level of the tracks. In effect, they are not welcome.

Until 1908, the removal of weeds was performed solely by hand, a particularly costly arrangement because of the extra track force required. Following upon reports from other parts of the world, however, experiments were conducted with chemical compounds, not only to reduce the maintenance costs but also to secure better results than were possible with hand-weeding. Arsenical solutions were developed and have proved the most satisfactory chemical means for exterminating the weed growths. The use of this weed-killer has been extended wherever practicable and the resultant savings have been considerable.

Arsenite of soda is the chemical used by the Victorian Railways and by leading railways in other countries. It is spread by the track gangs from 400-gallon tanks mounted on ordinary gangers' trolleys which are propelled through the sections by the members of the gangs. A perforated pipe for distributing the solution across the full width of the track is fitted to each tank, and the equipment is passed on from section to section as the work is completed. As much as 1,600 gallons of the mixture, containing 32 gallons of concentrated solution, is used for each mile of track. This mixture not only kills the grown weeds, but also remains in the ballast and destroys any seeds that have not yet germinated.

* * * *

FOR convenience in handling, it is desirable that weed killers be obtained either as concentrated liquids or in powder form. This obviates the necessity for carrying large quantities of water for long distances. For instance, the 1,600 gallons of weed-killer used per mile of track contains 1,568 gallons or seven tons of water. As supplies of water are available at frequent intervals along the various tracks in Victoria at the time of the year when the weeds are attacked, it is not necessary to incur the expense of running special trains or of providing specialised equipment on a large scale.

Because of its constituents, the greatest care is exercised in the distribution of the poison. The solution is never spread on level crossings, in the neighborhood of occupation crossings, on bridges, nor in any position where there is a possibility of its being washed down by rain and affecting water supplies.

Endeavors are now being made in various countries to develop a non-poisonous weed killer, and a solution tried out on the Victorian railways last year proved fairly successful. It is intended to make further experiments in this direction this season with the view of using the new mixture in the metropolitan area and in station grounds generally.

In the United States of America, weeds have been destroyed by burning, using a suitably designed apparatus which directs flames of great intensity downward on to the weeds, burning or wilting the vegetation over the full width of the track as the train is moving slowly along. A few days later, the train is again moved over the tracks and burns up the hardy surviving remnant. Steam jets have also been used in a similar way to kill weeds.

Experience has shown, however, that treatment with arsenical solutions, as practised by this department, is the most effective method of destroying weeds that has yet been discovered.

were also 9.79 route miles or 17.18 track miles of tramways.

The electric system covered 439.01 track miles or 172.4 route miles at the end of the year.

90.74 per cent. of country passenger trains, 84.59 per cent. of country mixed trains, and 96.99 per cent. of suburban electric trains were on time during the year.

* * *

593,660 tons of coal were purchased, 457,133 tons being obtained from the State Coal Mine. 584,780 tons of coal, valued at £627,330 were consumed.

During the year, 180 miles of line were equipped with station to station telephones, and 99 miles of line were equipped with selector telephones, making a total of 1,655 miles equipped for train despatcher system.

RAILWAYMEN of the MONTH

Fired First "V"

FOR 32 years of his just-completed career, Driver Bill Ellis was located at North Melbourne loco. For the remaining 11 years of his life on the footplate, he was a Traralgon man. He was the fireman who stoked the first "V" class locomotive to run in Victoria. One of his most remarkable experiences was a collision with an old-man kangaroo, which either through short-sightedness or suicidal tendencies ran slap into the side of Bill's locomotive. —E.P.O.

Sandridge Man

CHEERFUL George Bleazby, who has called it a fair thing after 47½ years service, has been despatch clerk at the Metro.'s since 1903. He was a boy porter at the old Sandridge station, and later became a running guard and inspector of tarpaulins. His farewell gifts from the staff were umbrella, kit bag and travelling rug. —W.

Another Veteran

THE ranks of Ballarat's railway veterans were further depleted last month by the retirement of Ganger Albert J. Knight, who had 44 years of service to his credit. Road Foreman O'Loughlin presented the popular old ganger with a travelling rug, a suit case and a brief bag for himself, and a set of carvers for Mrs. Knight. —B.C.

October Birthdays

INCLUDED amongst the following fifty railwaymen, representative of all ranks and hailing from all parts of the State, who celebrate birthdays this month, there is only one solitary branch chief—Superintendent of Refreshment Services, W. D. Bracher—whose anniversary is October 13. Others who will be receiving congratulations include:—

Assistant Distribution Engineer W. Coe of the Electrical branch, on the first; Assistant Superintendent J. James of the Melbourne Yard, Shunter H. Phillips of Geelong and Rolling Stock Superintendent J. Noonan of Geelong, on the second; Driver H. Cottier of Warrnambool and Signal Special Officer E. R. Roberts, on the fourth; Superintending Engineer H. N. May 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 District Superintendent M. A. Remfry of Seymour, on the seventh; Rolling Stock Clerk A. P. Burdeu of Ballarat and Fireman L. Bennett of Warragul, on the eighth; Way and Works Engineer Gordon Massey and Driver Paddy Zinnow of North Melbourne loco., on the ninth; Reclamation Officer H. G. Molloy of the Stores, on the 10th; Electrical Engineer Ronald Harvey and Fireman A. Fraser of Benalla, on the 11th; Johnny Barklamb of the Seymour D.S.'s office, on the 12th; Reg. Hunt of the Metro. Superintendent's office, Stores Bookkeeper F. Towers of Spotswood store, and Driver F. W. Corrie of Ararat, on the 13th; Conductor Joe

Keppel of Ballarat and Goods Guard R. H. Spiers of Bendigo, on the 14th; Chief Clerk Tom Neal of the Seymour D.S.'s office, Tom Slattery, Secretary to the Chief Engineer of Way and Works and Train Despatcher T. R. Collier of Ballarat, on the 15th; District Superintendent H. E. Russell of Maryborough, on the 16th; Guard J. T. Sheehan of the Melbourne Yard, on the 17th; Leading Shunter T. Cowdell of Geelong and Assistant Superintendent F. Lacey of the Melbourne Yard on the 19th; Ewen McIntyre of Room 10, Landscape Gardener George Allen, Stationmaster Andy Larkins of Casterton, Fireman A. Tweedale of Ballarat and Dan Connell of the Way and Works, on the 20th; Signalman A. Moverley of Melbourne Yard,

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 9: Macedon

MACEDON is apparently a reference to Philip of Macedonia, the famous father of Alexander the Great.

Major Mitchell is believed to have named the mountain with that association in mind, as he surveyed the waters of Port Phillip from the slopes of the mount in 1836.

on the 21st; Signalman W. Canning of North Fitzroy, Leading Shunter G. F. Lowday of Maryborough and Train Despatcher L. K. Missen of the Metro. Superintendent's office, on the 22nd; Hall Officer Wally Wedgwood, on the 23rd; Guard F. Nash of Colac and Signal Supervisor C. Bass of Ararat, on the 24th; Guard Rowland of Maryborough and Ganger L. J. Eldridge of North Geelong, on the 26th; Porter J. Streeter of Stawell, on the 27th; Block and Signal Inspector J. Evans of Flinders-street, on the 28th; 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.

Chief Clerk Goes

AFTER serving as Chief Clerk of the Signal and Telegraph branch from its establishment on July 1,

The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited

has again achieved

a Record Year

in the ORDINARY Department

Firstly.—By issuing Policies for the largest amount of Assurance in any year since its establishment in 1873.

Secondly.—By making available for distribution the greatest surplus in the Society's history.

The Society's Group Policies (for Railway Employees)

are issued under

ORDINARY Department Conditions.

DO NOT DELAY

Write to the Society for particulars

NOW

1922, until its reabsorption by the Way and Works branch on July 1, 1931. Jack Ford has severed his connections with the railways and can now be found as "mine host" at the Hotel Traralgon. His railway service goes back to 1897, when he joined up as a junior clerk in the Way and Works branch. He was appointed special officer in 1917, switching over to the accounts section of the branch the following year, and remaining there until the new branch was formed. Jack was a leading figure in the cricket world and played for 10 years with Williamstown. He was secretary of the Victorian sub-district cricket association for sixteen years, and a member of the Victorian Cricket Association for a decade, serving for three years on the country committee. He also shot with the V.R. rifle club for three years. Traralgon footballers' cricket club has already elected him representative on the Traralgon Association. —S.C.W.

The Last Mile Post

JAMES CONSIDINE

AN old Hobson's Bay railwayman died the other week—James Considine—who retired from the service in 1914. He was for many years stationmaster at Healesville.

Chief Clerk Duncan Considine of the Metropolitan Superintendent's staff is a son.

JOHN CUMMINS

FORMER Signalman John Cummins, who retired from "Box" Flinders-street, some five years ago, is dead.

He had 45 years service and was stationed at Flinders-street throughout his career.

Shunting Problem Solved

HERE is one solution to the shunting problem which we propounded last month with the suggestion that a practical Victorian railwayman would find a solution in two minutes.

Suppose the two opposing trains to be headed east and west. The east-bound loco. leaves the rear half of its train some distance from the siding and proceeds on to the siding with the front half.

The entire west-bound train passes the siding along the main line and couples on to the rear half of the east train.

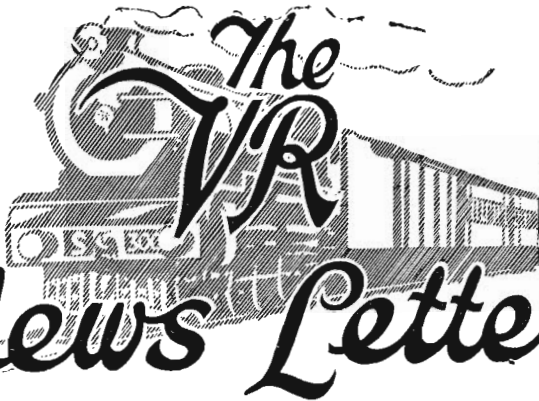
The east train pulls its front half of the siding, heading east, and proceeds far enough to leave a length of clear track behind.

The west train (as a whole) backs up, pulls the rear half of the east train on to the siding, backs on up on to the main line and then proceeds as a whole on its original route westward.

Now, all the east locomotive has to do is back up, couple on to the rear half of the train and proceed eastward.

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

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

The largest room in the world is the room for improvement.

Issue No. 14

News Letter

November, 1931

Improved Housekeeping Saves Money

THAT railwaymen generally are appreciating the need for exercising the strictest economy consistent with efficient operation is indicated by the increased number of requests which are being received by warehouse staffs for supplies of second-hand instead of new material of all classes. This desire to save has been much in evidence recently, and at workshops considerable use has been found for material that was previously used only sparingly.

DURING last financial year, the work of stores reorganisation was extended to include two main warehouses and 27 signal depots and sub-depots. All stores at signal depots are now held in the Stores Suspense Account until issued, and the standard stores system and methods are fully at these locations.

Railway housekeeping reorganisation so far as it affects standard facilities and the installation of standard systems and methods—has now been completed in Victoria, and it is expected that the work of amalgamating storage depots in country districts will be finished this year.

Reductions in the stocks held at main and country depots and sub-depots have been continued, and workshops and signal sub-depots, stocks have been reduced by more than 50 per cent.

Although the demand for scrap iron and steel fell off considerably, the sale and re-issue of salvaged and reclaimed goods at the Spotswood reclamation depot last year amounted to £60,300.

The value of railway stock on hand on June 30, 1931, was £1,103,452, compared with £1,352,750 at the close of the preceding year—a reduction of nearly £250,000.



IF each railwayman saved only one penny each day in the prevention of waste, the year's savings would be £28,000.

So—don't order excessive quantities of stores, don't waste stationery, don't burn electric light unnecessarily, don't use coal recklessly.

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 10: Dandenong

THE station took its name from the town, which had in turn been derived from the creek.

Writing of this creek in 1837, Captain Lonsdale spelt the word "Dan-y-nong," although the first surveyor in the early 'forties wrote it as "Tangenong." It was always difficult to distinguish between "d" and "t" sounds when spoken by natives.

The word is believed to be the native term for "high or lofty."

Revenue Decline Continues

ALTHOUGH last financial year was the worst in the history of the Victorian railways, the revenue returns for the first quarter of this year have been even more depressing. Up to October 14, this year, the receipts from all sources aggregated £2,500,000, compared with £2,800,000 in the corresponding period of last year. Passenger traffic declined by £201,000 to £994,250, and goods and live stock revenue (although improving recently), declined by £37,000 to £1,236,000.

Momentum Does the Impossible

MANY railway sections include gradients up which it is theoretically impossible for locomotives to haul certain loads. Yet every day those loads are being comfortably dragged up the incline by the triumphant iron horse. Momentum is the explanation.

THOSE grades are known as "momentum grades": the driver gets over them by "taking a run" at them.

He knows that, provided he can push his train along at a speed of, say 20 miles an hour (or whatever speed has been determined for that particular location) before reaching the foot of the grade, the momentum of the train will supplement the power of the locomotive sufficiently to take the train to the summit.

Conserving Loco. Power

Drivers know that a speed of 20 miles an hour will lift a train at least 10 feet by momentum, 25 miles an hour will lift it at least 19 feet, 30 miles an hour 28 feet, and so on.

In fact, when surmounting a momentum grade, the speed of approach is more reliable even with a reduced boiler pressure than a low speed with a full boiler pressure.

Obviously this factor is of great importance in conserving locomotive power.

The Interest Burden

IN the past 15 years, the amount set aside by the Railways Department for payment of interest charges and expenses has totalled nearly £43,000,000.

This is substantially more than half the whole debt on which the interest is being paid.

NO November—
a
NO-Derailments !
Month !

Carefulness
Cuts
Claims !

We are Talk **THINGS** ing About !

Increased Show Traffic—Another Buffalo Reduction—A Welded Truck—The Editor Who Wasn't

AN interesting development in the use of electric welding for construction purposes was the completion recently at the Newport workshops of an all-welded 27-ton open goods truck. The assembly of both underframe and body was carried

WELDING TRUCKS

out entirely by welding, the door fittings alone necessitating the use of rivets. The truck has proved satisfactory from an engineering standpoint, and, when other vehicles are being built, a small number will be constructed by this new method so that particulars of costs may be secured for comparison with the old method. Electric welding is being more generally availed of, too, for railway maintenance purposes. Damaged parts can often be reclaimed without being dismantled, while other parts can be reclaimed by building up. Tender tanks, some of which would otherwise have been scrapped, have been patched by arc welding, which substantially reduces the need for importing steel plates. Welding has also proved invaluable in producing composite parts and eliminating the need for purchasing steel castings at a much higher cost.

* * *

THE striking of a limit fare of 40s. first and 30s. second-class for long-distance travellers to the Melbourne Show this year proved a great success. While fewer than 750 cheap excursion tickets were issued

LONG-DISTANCE TRAVEL ENCOURAGED

from country stations to the Show last year, nearly 2,500 were issued this year, the comparative revenue figures being £1,473 in 1930 and £3,823 in 1931. The following examples show the nett gain in the total number of cheap excursion and holiday excursion tickets issued to the Show this year from selected typical stations :

From Mildura 472, Redcliffs 85, Ouyen 63, Swan Hill 57. This same concession was offered country visitors coming to Melbourne for the Cup. In addition, special day return trains were run from Ballarat and Bendigo, and low fares were charged.

* * *

AFURTHER reduction in the tariff at The Chalet, Mt. Buffalo National Park, during the Christmas-New Year vacation fortnight, was announced last

month by the Railways Commissioners. The new rate over that period will be 15s. a day for those making a stay of more than two days, or an inclusive charge of £6/15/- for one week's accommodation, first class return rail and road travel and meals *en route*. The former rate for Christmas was 17s. 6d. a day or £8/10/- for the inclusive ticket.

REDUCED RATE AT MT. BUFFALO

* * *

A GOOD story in a recent issue of the *Railway Gazette* concerns a concession once available for journalists on the American railways, who were permitted to travel free on presentation of their card. A needy young free-lance decided to bluff a fellow

A JOURNALIST'S STORY

ride and, boarding the train, explained to the checker, "I'm on the *New York Sun*. I haven't got my card on me but I suppose it's all right?" "O.K. with me," said the checker pleasantly, "provided your editor identifies you. As it happens, he is on this train now." The young man glanced despairingly behind him, but the train had started and he reluctantly followed the conductor to where the editor sat, reading his paper in the saloon car. On being approached, however, the editor merely looked up and observed, "Quite right, conductor, he's one of my men." The conductor then left them and the young free-lance began to stammer his thanks to the editor, who cut him short with, "No need to worry about that. I was afraid you might give me away. You see, I'm not the editor."

* * *

TO carry the abnormal Sunday suburban traffic in connection with the impressive funeral of the late Sir John Monash on October 11, special rail services were arranged on all suburban lines. In addition to the usual morning excursion and church

FUNERAL OF SIR JOHN MONASH

specials, two groups of extra trains were run, one lot arriving in the city at about noon, the other at 1 p.m. Large numbers availed themselves of these specials and also of the seven-minute service from the city to Gardenvale and Elsternwick, the two stations nearest the Brighton cemetery.

The Fortunate 13

THIRTEEN stations in Victoria (including six country stations) earned more than £50,000 in revenue last financial year. Nine earned more than £80,000, seven contributed more than £100,000, but only one, unfortunately, passed the £1,000,000 mark. Spencer-street recorded the seven-figure total with £1,390,259; Flinders-street, a million pounds farther back, filled second place with £332,467; while the Government Tourist Bureau (£174,708) managed to beat Spotswood (£167,364) for third place. Then, after a gap of nearly £40,000, came Footscray (£128,168), followed by the first country station, Ballarat (£104,746). Yallourn was a close seventh, only some £3,000 behind Ballarat. The other six stations which earned more than £50,000 were—Bendigo, £86,758; Geelong, £84,841; Wodonga, £71,246; Caulfield, £68,993; Newmarket, £64,733; and Fyansford, £51,580.

Pies, Cakes & Raisin Bread —by the Ton!

Entries for the Station Order Book

WHEN loading ice cream, remember that the surrounding salt brine may escape into the container if the tub is not kept upright.

* * *
At some destination stations recently, "fragile" labels have not been removed from trucks after discharging.

* * *
Requisitions for packing material and frames should reach the Goods Superintendent by 3 p.m. on week days and 12 noon on Saturdays and holidays.

* * *
To avoid deterioration, consignments of margarine should be promptly removed from trucks on arrival at destination and sheltered in a cool position until delivery is effected.

Lines from Abroad

40 Loaded Trucks Break Away

RAILROAD workers on the London and North Eastern Railway between Haltwhistle, Northumberland, and Hexam have had enough thrills to last them for a lifetime.

Forty freight trucks, loaded with coal and iron, broke loose from a train during shunting operations in the Haltwhistle yards and started out downgrade on the main line.

Frantic efforts were made to stop the runaway, but they continued on their mad race until they reached Hexam—16 miles away—when shunters managed to stop them by means of hand brakes.

During their journey, the trucks negotiated several sharp curves, two river bridges, three level crossings and a junction with another line.

Rail Tunnel with only One Portal

THERE is a railway tunnel in America that has only one portal. It is to be found at the summit of the Cascades in Oregon, at a point where it was necessary to build a wye to turn helper engines for their trip back down the mountain. There was not enough space to build the wye entirely in the open air, so the engineers solved the problem by building a tunnel to accommodate the stub end of the wye. The bore runs into the mountain and then stops.

Lonely Railwaymen

THE loneliest railwaymen in the world are in the Sudan. They work on the waterless stretch of desert between Wadi Halfa and Abu Hamud.

This is one of the few railways, if not the only one in the world, on which the stations are numbered, writes a correspondent in East Africa. "The line is about 230 miles long, its stations being numbered merely because there is no landmark by which they could be named. In fact, they exist only to give the engines a rest. The stations, which are about 30 miles apart, and are simply corrugated-roofed huts set in the barren desert, have a stationmaster and a clerk—both natives. Five trains stop at each station during the week."

THERE may not be as many railway travellers as in pre-depression days, and those that are travelling may be less inclined to indulge in light refreshments than formerly, but the Victorian railway bakery at Dudley-street is still kept busy manufacturing pies and raisin bread and cake by the ton.

RECENT production figures for a four-week period included:

11,500 loaves of raisin, wholemeal and prune bread,
32,500 meat, fruit, raisin and apricot pies,
12,500 scones, and
14 cwt. of cake,
to say nothing of swiss and sausage rolls, sultana luncheons, yeast buns, pasties and queen cakes.

THE bakery, which forms portion of the dining car depot at Dudley-street, comprises one large room with a loft for storing flour, a small room containing dried fruits, sugar and other necessary commodities, and a third room for packing the products ready for transport. The oven, situated at one end of the bakery, has a capacity of 600 pies or 1,800 scones at one time.

Along one side of the bakery are the mixing machines and a roller for rolling out the dough. These are driven by electric power. There are also two large bins for holding the flour required for current use, which can be filled as required from the storeroom overhead. The flour is fed through a mechanical sieve into the bins.

One machine is used for mixing the butter, sugar and eggs for the fruit cake. This is prepared in 200 lb. batches. Resembling huge a round-bottomed mortar with a pestle that beats instead of pounding, it holds some 80 lb. of the mixture, which is beaten up mechanically while the baker gets busy elsewhere. Flour and fruit—72 lb. of sultanas, lemon peel, and almonds—are then added and the whole batch is divided into 14 lb. blocks for baking.

The other two mixers are like troughs in which arms rotate in much the same action as a cook's arm kneading dough by hand. One machine makes dough for pies; the other, its arms rotating at a greater speed, makes a batter of sugar and butter for buns, raisin bread, queen cakes and similar dainties.

A Schoolboy's Paradise

FOR the manufacture of meat pies, the dough is taken from the mechanical mixer to the rolling machine—a substitute for the housewife's rolling pin—and is rolled to the required thickness. As it emerges, it is wound on a wooden roller like a white and soft roll of linoleum, and then run over the pie tins, while a slight pressure is applied to cut out the correct amount of dough for each tin. The meat is brought from the steam-heated copper, where it has been cooking, and is ladled out with a wooden spoon, the edges of the dough are moistened, another sheet is spread out to form the top layer and the surplus dough is removed by passing the wooden roller over the top of the dough in the same way as for the lower layer.

After the pies have been painted with a mixture of egg and water to give them a flaky brown appearance, they are placed in the oven to cook.

On removal from the oven, the pies are left in the tins and packed in trays in baskets which are sealed and despatched to the various refreshment rooms. The pies are consequently not touched by hand during the whole process of manufacture, packing or transit.

Strict cleanliness in methods and surroundings and close attention to the quality of the ingredients are features of the bakery, not only in the making of the pies but also in the preparation of the numerous other articles supplied.

The bakery was established in September, 1923, when it commenced to popularise raisin bread in Melbourne, and the huge business which has since been built up is perhaps the greatest tribute that can be paid to the high quality of its products.

RAILWAYMEN of the MONTH

Vale Jack Colligan!

THE Sydney Limited loses its most familiar identity this month. In his 35th year on the express, Conductor Jack Colligan calls it a fair thing and steps off the parlor car for the last time. He was known personally to every regular interstate traveller, and his grave dignified and supremely capable figure will leave a gap that will be hard to fill. He had, in all 46 years of sound, solid service, started in the Melbourne goods in 1885, became Spencer-street's first and nearest approach to a man in grey, was appointed sleeping-car conductor on the Adelaide trains, and finally assumed office in the Sydney Limited parlor. Of him, the managing editor of one of Australia's biggest dailies has said, "Harold Clapp runs the Victorian Railways, but Jack Colligan runs the Sydney Limited."—A.B.

Sixth Cup

FOR the sixth successive Cup meeting, Paddy Cahill, V.R. special traffic specialist, has induced rearing racehorses, feverish punters, packed turnstiles and miles of electric trains to sort themselves in orderly fashion, and bow to timetable decrees. He has had an unbroken run as officer-in-charge at Flemington and Newmarket for each Cup meeting and Royal Show since 1925. A stationmaster for 18 years, the genial and broad-shouldered Patrick has had long and varied experience in the Transportation branch. He was in charge at Portland during the first season in which wheat was shipped from the western port, and he also had the distinction of opening the Strzelecki line.—H.G.W.

Room 10 Veteran Retires

A LARGE and representative gathering of Transportation officers assembled recently to farewell Ewen McIntyre, who was retiring after 42 years of service. He started as a clerk in the Transportation branch in 1889 and was connected with that branch for the whole of his railway life, with the exception of the period from 1900 to 1905, when he was attached to the Secretary's branch. He had been on the staff of the Superintendent of Goods Train Service since the beginning of 1909. A wallet of notes, token of the esteem in which he was held by his colleagues, was presented by Assistant General Superintendent Thomas, who also spoke appreciatively of his long service.—B.N.

November Birthdays

STATIONMASTER H. H. Perry of Geelong, on the first; Engineer Chas. Melhuish and Fireman A. Carroll of Seymour, on the second; Yard Foreman F. Ring of Melbourne Yard, 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 and Stationmaster Mick Enright of Williamstown Pier, on the eighth; Stationmaster Bill Killen of Port Melbourne, on the ninth; 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's office and Fireman F. T. Rolfe of North loco., on the 15th; Storeman-in-charge Sam Turner of Oakleigh and Enginemen's Instructor D. Morganti, on the 16th; District Superintendent A. G. Fletcher of Geelong, Asst. Superintendent of Refreshment Services A. W. Keown, and Signal Supervisor Chas. Blee of Flinders-street, on the 18th; Sub-foreman Bill Roberts of Newport shurns, on the 20th; Porter J. Kenny of Benalla and the 23rd; Sydney Limited Conductor Jack Colligan, on the 26th; Block and Signal Inspector W. J. Pearson of Ballarat, on the 29th; and Clerk S. L. Greer of the Melbourne Goods, on the 30th.

"Sparks Chief"

RICHARD BALMER commenced his railway career on one side of the Flinders-street station yard and will spend his last day on the job on the opposite side of the yard. He started early in 1886 as a cleaner in the old Princes-bridge loco. shed, became a fireman three years later, and graduated as a driver in 1900. He has been closely connected with the suburban electrified service since its inception, four years as travelling foreman having preceded his appointment as asst. electric running inspector in 1922. He succeeded Mr. Rist as electric running inspector last year, and will retire early this month.—M.A.

Hundred Per-Centers

REMARKABLE account in a recent presentation to a retiring work-shops employe:

"Joe Kelker, shop supt., presented Charley Adamson with a large can of smoking and chewing tobacco, commended him for his long service, and called him a 'damned good old waggon.' As a speaker, Joe is a darned good shop supt. President Atkinson, of the shop employe's association, then handed Charley a pair of slippers, an arm chair, a floor lamp and a great cut of chewing tobacco. In reply Charlie said, 'I thank you. You are all square shooters.'"

Transportation Man

AFTER 46½ years of service, Stationmaster Andrew Johnston of Ballarat, is now on final leave, prior to retiring. All his railway life has been spent in the Transportation branch, in which he started as a porter in 1885. Subsequent experience as shunter, block recorder and signalman, preceded his appointment as stationmaster, in which last capacity, he served, among other places, at Kerang, Kyneton, Footscray, Murtoa, Warrnambool and Ararat, before taking charge of Ballarat at the

The

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has again achieved

a Record Year

in the ORDINARY Department

Firstly.—By issuing Policies for the largest amount of Assurance in any year since its establishment in 1873.

Secondly.—By making available for distribution the greatest surplus in the Society's history.

The Society's Group Policies (for Railway Employes) are issued under ORDINARY Department Conditions.

DO NOT DELAY

Write to the Society for particulars

NOW

beginning of 1926. In his earlier days, he took an active interest in station beautification, and was successful on a number of occasions, in securing prizes in the station garden competitions.—M.G.

Ambassadors of Travel

LES. WRIGHT, Victorian representative in the Government Tourist Bureau in Sydney, is at present on his way to Singapore to join the American cruise ship *Malolo* which will reach Sydney on November 23. He will represent the Australian railways and tourist bureaux on the ship, delivering lectures and showing moving pictures and lantern slides, descriptive of life and scenery in Australia. Prior to his appointment to the Sydney office, two years ago, he was assistant fares clerk in Room 4, where he had been located for 25 years. His successor in Sydney, *pro tem*, is Jack Dickson, who has been in charge of the branch of the Government Tourist Bureau at Spencer-street station since its establishment early in 1929, and who has been connected with the Bureau since his return from the war in 1919.—S.C.W.

Postscript—

A FINE EXAMPLE

THE clerical staff at the Spotswood general storehouse have a common fund for charity into which the members put small sums each pay day. The annual meeting was held last month and the committee reported that a distribution had been made the previous week to the following institutions:—

Melbourne General, Alfred, St. Vincent's, Homoeopathic, Williamstown, Austin, Children's, Women's, Queen Victoria, and Eye and Ear Hospitals, and the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind—two guineas each. Total, £23/2/-.

REDUCED TOURIST FARES

REDUCTIONS were announced last month in the prices of combination rail-and-road tickets from Melbourne to tourist resorts during this summer season. The new rate for travel to Lorne is £1/9/2, first class, and £1/4/3, second class, via Geelong; or £2/1/- and £1/11/6, via Birregurra. This represents a reduction of 10/- on the Geelong route ticket, and 7/- on the Birregurra route ticket.

Other reductions apply to the combined fares to Lakes Entrance, Anglesea, Barwon Heads, Buchan and Inverloch.

EARLIER SUNDAY MORNING TRAINS

FOR the convenience of suburban travellers, the first Sunday morning trains to the city are now being run from three to seven minutes earlier. This alteration will give travellers more time to transfer from the electric trains to the country excursion specials at Spencer-street.

COMMONWEALTH RAILWAYS DEFICIT

THE loss on the Commonwealth railways for the last financial year was £149,487, excluding interest. The loss the previous year was £150,445.

Last year, earnings decreased by £95,002, and working expenses by £95,960, compared with the previous year.

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

The 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

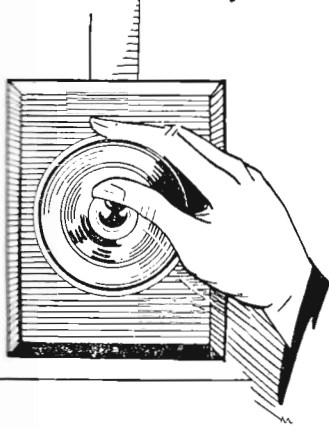
"To make mistakes as we are on the way to knowledge is far more honorable than to escape making them through never having set out to seek knowledge."



The V.R. News Letter

Issue No. 15

December, 1931



Greater Efficiency in Goods Train Operation

REMARKABLE improvements in the operating performances of goods trains in Victoria are disclosed by a comparison which has been made of goods train statistics in August, 1923 (the year prior to the introduction of the train control system) and in August, 1931.

While the aggregate goods train mileage has been reduced from 362,277 in 1932 to 360,099 in 1931, the average weight of goods trains has been increased from 342 to 424 gross tons per mile, the standing time of goods trains has been reduced from 22.8 to 17.2 hours per 1,000 train miles run, the percentage of roadside shunting mileage to traffic mileage has been reduced from 12.3 to 10.0, and the gross ton miles per train hour have been advanced from 3,356 to 4,323.

THAT last figure is really the barometer of goods train operation, recording as it does fluctuations in both the load and the speed of trains. The substantial improvement of 967 gross ton miles per train hour is therefore very gratifying. Considerable savings, also, are represented by the reduction in the standing time of goods trains, which in effect means that 1,000 train miles were run in August this year in the same time that it took to run 940 miles in August eight years ago.

These figures not only reflect savings in fuel consumption and operating expenses, but also denote more expeditious handling of perishable and livestock traffic and the provision of an improved service for the public generally. "Through" marshalling of loading, particularly of wheat, has enabled goods trains to be run direct to the seaboard from distant stations, avoiding delays at depot stations and minimising congestion in the Melbourne yard.

Another important improvement in goods train operation has relation to the handling of traffic from the State coal mine and the Yallourn briquetting works. Until recently, the State mine coal trains—operated with two "C" class locomotives, one pulling and one pushing—were limited to a load of 1,107 tons. The arrangements now in force, under which the two "C" locomotives are both placed in front of the train, permit of 1,332 tons being hauled from State mine to Nyora.

Similarly, trains carrying briquettes from Yallourn, which were formerly operated over the first portion of the run to Melbourne by two "N" class locomotives (one pulling and one pushing), are now worked by the two locomotives in the front of the train. Concurrently with this alteration, a lower-powered assistant locomotive was provided for the Yarragon-Drouin section.

THESE instances of increased efficiency in working coal trains have been made possible only by the policy of equipping the rolling stock with automatic couplings in place of the old standard three-link couplings. A progressive programme for the conversion of existing vehicles to the automatic system was entered upon in 1927, and since that time, all new rolling stock has been so equipped. One of the outstanding advantages of the automatic coupler over the older type is that it enables more substantial drawgear to be incorporated in the trucks, which in turn enables a heavier train to be hauled without fear of breaking the drawgear on vehicles nearest the locomotive.

Approximately 24 per cent. of the total goods stock is now fitted with automatic couplers, and, as the conversion programme is being proceeded with, even better results may be expected in the future. Other factors contributing to the increased efficiency are the modern train control system, the operation of larger locomotives and the co-operative efforts of the staff.

A further intensive study is now being made of goods train schedules, any improvement in which will naturally favor the railway measuring rod of efficiency—the gross ton miles hauled per engine hour in traffic service.

WITH the lengthening of daylight hours, stationmasters and office staff can help to reduce the electric light bill by seeing that no lights are left burning unnecessarily.

ONE country stationmaster, some little time ago, made a special check of his electric lighting costs and reduced his bill by 17 per cent. in one month. Similar results are no doubt possible at many other places.

Straight Answer to Straight Question

Q: How do the operating results of the Victorian Railways compare with those of other systems?

A: Our deficit of nearly 1½ million pounds last year—the greatest in the history of the Department—represented 18s per head of population. This was the lowest on that basis of all the States of the Commonwealth. Western Australia was next lowest with 18/1d. per head; then came New South Wales, 32/2; Queensland, 34/4, and South Australia, 58/1.

While it is difficult to make a close comparison with overseas railway systems, the following figures are available, showing the return on the interest-bearing capital on the Victorian railways and the London and North-Eastern Railway Co. last year, and on the class I railroads of the U.S.A., for the first six months of this year:

| | per cent. |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Victoria ... | 3.08 |
| L. and N.E.R. ... | 2.98 |
| U.S.A. ... | 2.15 |

We are Talking THINGS ing About!

OUR last month's list of the 13 busiest stations in Victoria has been challenged on the ground that it omitted Sunshine, which, it is claimed, should have beaten Fyansford for 13th place. The challenge is,

SUNSHINE OR FYANSFORD

however, apparently based on the assumption that the stations included in our list were credited not only with the revenue that came from their own outwards traffic, but also with the revenue earned at any stations and sidings which may have been supervised by the station mentioned. Sunshine itself earned £36,769 last financial year, or some £15,000 less than Fyansford. But if to Sunshine's local business is added the aggregate income of the 16 sidings on the Newport-Sunshine loop line, the figure becomes £55,299, or nearly £4,000 more than Fyansford. Our figures were taken from the annual report, which places the earnings of each station beside the name of that station, whether it be a caretaker or no-one-in-charge station or even a siding.

* * *

RAILWAYMEN have been recently enjoined to give special attention to the care and custody of mails conveyed by rail. A digest of the instructions is:

WATCH THE MAILS

Check number and description of bags and waybill or docket before giving a receipt, and examine bags to see that no interference has occurred; stow the mails, if possible, near the guard, and under his observation, and do not place them in the trailing canopy farthest from the guard, although the end vestibule door of this compartment should in any case be locked; keep mails under close watch during transfer at junction stations, take them to the office if there is a long interval between trains, and lock them up if they are held overnight; in a word, exercise all reasonable care to ensure safety of mail matter from the moment of receipt to the moment of delivery.

* * *

WITH the twofold purpose of encouraging holiday travel and of inducing Christmas holidaymakers to travel early, and thus help to spread the peak traffic, special cheap excursion tickets will be on issue

CHEAP TICKETS FOR CHRISTMAS

from Melbourne to all country stations on Saturday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 19, 21, 22 and 23, available for return from December 25 to February 2. As a special concession to city workers and others who cannot possibly get away until late on Christmas Eve, these tickets will also be available by seven limited express trains, which will be run from Melbourne to country centres, between 9.20 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Thursday, December 24.

* * *

A 15-MONTH job is being undertaken by the Construction branch, Chief Engineer C. H. Perrin having been commissioned to recondition the Victoria-street bridge at a cost of some £22,000. Preliminary work was begun last month

15-MONTH JOB

with about half-a-dozen men, and this number will be gradually increased until about 50 are working on the bridge and another 50 in factories and workshops on the preparation of materials. The bridge will at no time be closed to traffic, as 20 feet of roadway will always be available in addition to the tram tracks.

AFTER being in recess for 15 months, the Better Farming train has made a welcome 33rd appearance in the Kerang-Swan Hill-Lockington districts, visiting nine centres and attracting more than 7,000 visitors.

RETURN OF BETTER FARMING TRAIN

Exhibits included dairy cattle, prize pigs, sheep and poultry and grasses from experimental irrigation plots. "Aldenhams Bugler," an imported large white York boar, owned by Mr. T. M. Noble of Maffra was a notable exhibit, his progeny having been prominent prizewinners at the recent Royal Show. It is interesting to note that Mr. Noble commenced breeding this type of pig as the result of a visit to the Better Farming train on one of its earlier tours. Of great interest, too, as an indication of the value of the train's work is this extract from the report of the officer in charge of the train (Mr. C. Mullany): "Dairying is making considerable progress and the output from the butter factories shows a marked increase over that of previous years. This is partly due to favorable seasonable conditions, but is also in a large measure the result of increasing yields from the herds brought about by better methods in conformity with

WHAT WAS THE DRIVER'S NAME?

THERE is a real answer to the famous railway puzzle which has been going the rounds lately and which is said to have originated on a Canadian university exam paper, although nobody seems to have solved it yet. Perhaps some V.R. men would like to have a go at it. Here are the facts (and don't scorn any of the clues):

It appears that three men of the crew of the Continental Limited 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?

herd-testing procedure. . . . The average increase in the yield of cows in the herd testing associations of the State is 80 lb. of butter fat per cow. The monetary return of this increase, even at the very low price of 1/- per lb. for butter fat is £4 per cow. The average herd contains 28 cows, so that the dairy farmer is receiving £2 per week more than he did under pre-testing conditions."

* * *

VICTORIAN railwaymen have been asked to make themselves thoroughly conversant with the facts contained in two pamphlets which have recently been distributed in the service. These pamphlets

HAVE YOU SEEN THEM? Fares—Why a Reduction is In practicable" and "Scrap Your Railways or Protect Them—Which?"

are entitled "Railway Fares—Why a Reduction is In practicable" and "Scrap Your Railways or Protect Them—Which?" and every railwayman will find the information which they contain most helpful in clearing away some of the misunderstandings regarding railway policy which are often disclosed in friendly, personal conversation with members of the public. Any railwayman who has not received copies of the pamphlets or who desires additional copies should apply to the Betterment and Publicity Board, Head Office.

Cheap Berry Fruit

WITH the approval of the Commissioners, stationmasters are voluntarily offering their services this season as agents in order to help the berry-grower to clear his crop and to make fresh fruit readily available in country districts at very low prices. The following table shows the periods in which the different varieties will be available and the price of a bush-bucket of each variety (with rail freight from Melbourne included):

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Raspberries ... | 4s. 6d. | Nov. 14 to Dec. 20 |
| Blackberries ... | 7s. 6d. | See Note |
| Strawberries ... | 5s. 6d. | Dec. 1 to Jan. 7 |
| Black Currants ... | 7s. 6d. | Dec. 1 to Jan. 7 |
| Red Currants ... | 7s. 6d. | Dec. 14 to Jan. 28 |
| Blackberries ... | 5s. 6d. | Jan. 7 to Feb. 14 |
| Gooseberries ... | 5s. 6d. | March and April |

NOTE.—Because of thrips, strawberries will be procurable from the first crop at the end of November, but the local S.M. will be advised immediately the late crop is available.

Fewer Rail Joints Mean Smoother, Quieter Travel

THE weakest point of the railway track is the rail joint. It is there that the chatter with its corresponding wear takes place. In consequence, the ends of the rails, the fish plates, and the fish bolts become worn, and the road bed is damaged. There is also additional wear on the rolling stock. While improvements have resulted from the endeavors to eliminate these troubles, the objectionable features of the early rail joints are still present, although in a lesser degree.

OBVIOUSLY, by eliminating the rail joints, these consequences would automatically disappear. In the past, this ideal could not be realised, as it was considered essential to allow for the full theoretical expansion of the rails on hot days. Of recent years, however, certain European railways have been successfully welding their rails into long lengths. Encouraged by the experience of these foreign railways, whose activities have been closely watched, the Way and Works branch has now introduced this practice between St. Kilda and Middle Park, where the rails are being welded into 200 ft. lengths. The ordinary rail length is 45 feet.

APPROXIMATELY 1,000 feet of new 110 lb. rails in 180-ft. lengths have already been placed in position, and the remainder of the track that is being treated comprises 100 lb. rails which have already seen over 30 years service. These rails are all worn on the head and are badly worn at the joints. The worn ends are being sawn off and the rails welded together into lengths of about 200 feet. The resulting track is of the highest standard, including excellence of top and line.

As an eight-minute service operates on the St. Kilda line, the gangs must work speedily to remove the old rails and install the new section without delaying trains. Under the new system, there are certain features of the track which differ from the previous practice. The sleeper spacing is 2 ft. 3 in., and the dog spiking has not been changed. The rails are anchored in the middle with 16 anchors in the direction of traffic, and eight against the traffic, while 16 inches of ballast is placed outside the ends of the sleepers.

With rail joints at 200 ft. intervals, it is essential that they be of the highest quality, and, to this end, they comprise four "Bescom" fish bolts, with the usual standard spring washers, and two new Australian standard 4-bolt fish plates, with a bridge plate beneath the rail joints. Square joints make the smooth running of the trains especially noticeable.

Where Expansion Goes

CONCERNING expansion, research has shown that with 200 ft. rails much of the expansion is taken up by friction between the rail and the sleeper and the sleeper and the ballast. In consequence, the ends of the rails actually do not move proportionally to their length. As a matter of fact, while only the same expansion spaces have been allowed as for 45 feet rails, there has been ample space between the rails even on days when the temperature of the rail has exceeded 100 deg. F.

The rails are welded together by the Thermit process, the mixture used comprising fine aluminium, fine mill oxide, finely subdivided steel, and the necessary flux. These are ignited, and in 15 seconds, the mixture, now a liquid at a white heat of 3,000 deg. F., is discharged into the mould, which has previously been fitted around the ends of the rails, where it combines with the web and flange of the rail to form one solid mass. The slag runs around the head of the rail, which is raised to a welding temperature within 100 seconds, the clamp is tightened and the railheads thoroughly welded. After the mould is removed, the railheads are cleaned with a file and made perfectly true and straight at the weld.

This new method, which has been shown to be entirely practicable, opens a new era in railway track building, and is certain to play an important part in the future in adding to the comfort of train travel.

Watch the Splash—and You Watch the Track!

THE Great Western Railway, England, has introduced a novel method of testing the permanent way in order to discover any defect which may militate against smooth running. It takes the form of a train composed of various types of passenger rolling stock, each coach having different bogies. An observer is stationed in a compartment over each bogie, and, when a

jolt occurs, he releases, by means of a special apparatus, a splash of colored wash. This wash falls on the permanent way, and indicates the exact position at which the uneven travelling occurred, and, as each bogie has allocated to it a different color wash—blue, yellow, green, red, and so on—it is immediately apparent which one was affected at any particular point.

The train usually makes a fast run to some place on the line, such as Plymouth, Newport, Wolverhampton, or Taunton, during which time the bogies are tested and the wash dropped. On the return journey the train proceeds more slowly, stopping when necessary for an examination to be made of the permanent way at the places where the jolts occurred.

Naming V.R. Stations

No. 11: RUSHWORTH

THE township after which this station is called was first known as "Dry Diggings," while four miles further away was another goldfield known as "Wet Diggings."

In order to have a more marked distinction between the names, the warden suggested that "Dry Diggings" should be renamed, adding usually that it was "a rush worth coming to." The words "rush" and "worth" caught the fancy of the diggers and the compound word was at once adopted.

Latest Revenue Figures

FOR the seven days ended November 14, railway revenue declined by £26,800, compared with the corresponding period of last

year. This further decline brings the total increase since the beginning of this financial year to £380,712—the aggregates being £3,359,932 this year, and £2,979,220 last year.

Passenger revenue (£1,282,389) has declined by £245,016, and goods and livestock revenue (£1,675,323) by £221,784.

Sweet Subject Which Can Cause Sourness

HONEY tins are as fragile as eggs—or almost.

Even grit or rough particles of matter, if allowed to remain on the floors of trucks, may damage the tins sufficiently to cause leakage.

And if a hook is used on a loose tin of honey, it's just a matter of waiting for the claim to arrive.

RAILWAYMEN of the MONTH

John Michie

THE *News-Letter*, as direct lineal descendant of the *Magazine* ("which being dead, yet sleepeth"), takes a special interest in the retirement of Mr. J. D. Michie from the Victorian Railways Institute. For Mr. Michie was the very first editor of the *Magazine*, and its oldest friend and mentor. He had been librarian at the Institute and editor of the old *V.R.I. Review* for more than a decade, when he started the *Magazine* rolling as an Institute publication in 1924. He carried through all the heavy spade work, bore unaided the brunt of the initial issues, and edited the *Magazine* until it was absorbed by the Commissioners at the end of 1926. Scholar, artist, astronomer and gentleman, he was one of the best-read men in the Commonwealth, and never made an enemy in the whole of his long and varied career.—The Editor.

Victoria in Bananaland

ALFRED ERNEST WILLIAMS of the Government Tourist Bureau, has reversed the fashionable practice of following the sun to Queensland, for the winter months. He recently travelled north to spend the summer in the Sunshine State, and is now established in the Government Tourist Bureau in Brisbane, impressing on the Bananalanders the wisdom of visiting Victoria's holiday resorts. Window displays, the distribution of literature, and personal contacts both in the Bureau and on board ships carrying passengers southward should show results during the next few months. In normal times, Mr. Williams is one of the Victorian Bureau's most popular and successful escorting officers.—S.C.W.

December Birthdays

MANY happy returns to the following railwaymen:

Fireman S. Marks of Traralgon and M. J. Brennan of the Powers machine division, on the first; Livestock Agent W. Robert, Guard L. H. Young of Stawell, and Assistant Metropolitan Rolling Stock Superintendent W. Headland, on the second; Engineer R. R. Cannington and Metropolitan Rolling Stock Superintendent W. H. Deasey, on the fourth; Driver Gronn of Ballarat and Despatchman Gus. Harvey of the Transportation despatch office, on the fifth; Rolling Stock Clerk Sam Jones and Harry Hodgins of the Commissioners' office, on the seventh; Clerk Jim Withell of Wangaratta, on the eighth; Jim Meares of Room 2 and Night Depot Foreman W. House of Seymour, on the ninth; Rolling Stock Superintendent Eric Jackson of Geelong, Chemist Cyril McTaggart of Newport Workshops, and Leading Car Builder A. Deakes of Bendigo, on the tenth; 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 Government Tourist Bureau and Goods Foreman S. Taylor of Geelong,

on the 15th; Driver F. N. Palmer of Maryborough, on the 18th; Repairer J. Vaughan of Geelong and Rolling Stock Clerk W. S. Lawler of Traralgon, on the 19th; Acting Stationmaster E. J. Kavanagh of Spencer-street, on the 21st; Guard B. B. Pollard of Warragul, on the 22nd; District Superintendent W. Tredinnick of Bendigo and Porter R. Penrose of Benalla on the 23rd; Lighter-up T. Zock of Dimboola and Road Foreman J. Ryan of Ballarat, on the 25th; Superintendent of Loco. Running Albert Stamp and Fireman W. S. Ward of Ararat on the 26th; Advertising Artist Harold Jack and Road Foreman Lane of Wangaratta, on the 27th; Assistant Superintendent W. Arundel of Melbourne Goods and Guard H. Lawry of Geelong, on the 29th; Chief Accountant T. F. Brennan, Loco. Storeman C. L. Kuffer of Maryborough and Relieving Stationmaster T. E. Devine of Room 9, on the 30th; and Driver W. Rampling of Maryborough, Acting Roadmaster W. G. Collins of Ballarat, and Clerk J. McArthur of Room 9, on the 31st.—A.L.

Real "Ghost Train"

PROBABLY the only locomotive ever operated with two headlights was the *New York, New Haven and Hartford's* old No. 129, which pulled the famous *New England Limited "Ghost Train,"* on its non-stop run from Boston to Willimantic, Conn.

The chief reason for equipping this engine with two headlights was to distinguish it as a limited train, one of the first, by the way, in America. The lights were mounted side by side on top of the smoke-box, in front of the smokestack.

Four Retirements

PASSENGER GUARD FRANK MARTIN of Spencer-street has retired after 44 years service. He was porter at Richmond for many years, and also guard at Benalla and the Melbourne yard.

Signalman Bill Hall, with more than two score years of railroading to his credit, has called it a fair thing. He

Victorian Railways Employees

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was at Stawell, Ballarat East and Dudley-street.

Stationmaster L. Rice of Footscray has terminated a 44-year career. He was on the relieving staff for a long time, and before coming to Footscray was stationed at Lubeck, Kingston Ascot Vale and Colac.

Block and Signal Inspector J. Evans was presented with a wallet of notes by his brother officers upon the occasion of his retirement. In his earlier days he operated the levers at Newmarket and Princes-bridge, and was subsequently inspector in the Gippsland district.—H.E.C.

K.O.

BY knocking out the welter-weight champion of Tasmania in four rounds the other night, Reg O'Haire, of the Accountancy branch strengthened his claims to recognition as one of the finest amateur boxers in the Commonwealth. As welter champion of Victoria, he accompanied this State's team to Hobart to compete against the champions of Tasmania. For the past five years his boxing record has been one of victory after victory, with very few defeats to disappoint him. A born fighter, he picked up the finer points of the game in the Institute gymnasium under the tuition of Larry Copeland.—D.B.

Loco. Veteran

FORTY-FIVE years of practical railroading was the lot of William Headland, who retired from the position of Assistant Metropolitan Rolling Stock Superintendent, at the beginning of this month. His first railway job was as laborer in the traffic branch in 1886, whence he transferred to the loco. branch a cleaner after a month's service. After three years he graduated as fireman in which grade he served for 11 years followed by nine years as driver, 13 years as chageman, and two years as assistant shed foreman. His appointment as shed foreman in 1924 and acting depot foreman in 1927 paved the way to the job of assistant superintendent two years ago.—H.H.

The Last Mile Post

ROBERT ICK

CONDUCTOR BOB ICK, well known to travellers on the 4 p.m. Albury express, died suddenly last month. He was lately conductor in the Gippsland district.

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