

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

JANUARY, 1945.

Issue No. 172.

BROAD OUTLINE OF UNIFICATION PLANS Conversion To Standard Gauge Will Cover 7 Years

PLANS are now being made for the conversion of the Victorian Railways to the standard gauge of 4' 8½". It is expected that the conversion in this State will cover 7 years . . . a preparatory period of 4 years, followed by an actual conversion period of 3 years. The work as visualised by the engineers engaged in planning it will be unique in railway history. It will involve the continuous employment of some thousands of men in addition to the normal staff; and will demand well considered measures to reduce the inevitable dislocations and interruptions to a minimum. Its difficulties in this State will be increased by the necessity for country services running over some of the busiest electrified suburban routes. It is not expected that any line will be closed for more than a week, that period being the maximum allowed for the conversion of branch lines. The planning provides for conversion of main lines during week-ends.

The first task in the programme will be the construction of new standard gauge locomotives and rolling stock. Storage yard with standard gauge connection to the Shops will have to be provided, and temporary workshops on the Jolimont-East Melbourne side for the conversion of electric rolling stock are also included in the scheme.

To enable the new and converted rolling stock to be routed out of support, a standard gauge line duplicating the existing line will be constructed from Newport to Sunshine, and from Albion to Broadmeadows. The line from Albion to Broadmeadows will be converted and third rails will be provided between Sunshine and Somerton, and between Broadmeadows and Somerton. The purpose of these provisions is to ensure a through standard gauge route for the rolling stock required for the North-Eastern line and branches, including the Somerton-Coburg-Spencer Street line, which will be converted as a preliminary to the conversion of the Melbourne-Coburg line.

With the conversion of the North-Eastern route, obviously an early conversion because of its connection with the standard gauge service from Sydney to Sydney, passenger trains from Sydney will run right through Somerton, and thence via Coburg and Spencer Street, whilst goods trains on the North-Eastern line will reach the City via Broadmeadows, Albion and Sunshine, thence onward by standard gauge to West Footscray, and by a third railed goods line to North Kensington. This will enable the existing electrified service between London and Sandringham to remain unconverted until the end of the whole programme, a necessary consideration

owing to the need of retaining a broad gauge connection over the Flinders Street Viaduct for the Gippsland Goods trains.

After the North-Eastern lines and branches, the following groups of lines and branches will be converted in this order:—

1. Hurstbridge and Whittlesea lines with the connection from Clifton Hill to Royal Park.
2. Goulburn Valley and Balranald line and branches.

HIGH TRIBUTE

A SUBURBAN railway traveller telephoned recently to say that he wished "to take his hat off" to an employe at a station on the Ringwood line.

"The badge on his cap describes him as an Operating Porter," he said, "but whatever his position, he is a great ambassador for the railways." He explained that his impressions were formed by the friendly, obliging fashion in which this employe invariably does his job. "Nothing is a trouble to him. He appears to take real pleasure in his work, and it is certainly a pleasure to do business with him."

This is a high tribute. The employe is winning more than public respect and friendship towards himself; he is enhancing railway reputation, and in doing so is helping to safeguard future railway business and, consequently, the interests also of his fellow-employes.

These are very sound reasons for a New Year Resolution by all of us to emulate his example.

3. Sunshine to Bendigo, Echuca, Kerang and beyond, and branch lines to Lancefield, Daylesford and Redesdale.
4. Eaglehawk to Kulwin and Robinvale lines.
5. Castlemaine to Mildura line and branches.
6. Connecting lines between Maryborough and Ballarat, and Ararat and Ballarat to Daylesford line.
7. Sunshine-Serviceton (Adelaide) line, Sunshine-Ararat section dealt with in the week preceding main conversion; Ballarat traffic diverted through Geelong and traffic beyond Ararat routed via Maroona.
8. North Geelong to Ballarat and Maroona lines, and Linton Junction to Cressy line. Third rail on Ararat-Marroona section to avoid transfers at latter station.
9. Ararat to Portland and Horsham to Hamilton lines and branches.
10. Newport to Port Fairy, Hamilton line and branches.
11. Melbourne to St. Albans, Williamstown and Altona and Newport-Sunshine lines. Section of Viaduct lines between Spencer Street and Flinders Street.
12. Healesville, Warburton and Fern-tree Gully lines with extension of the last-named to Emerald.
13. Eastern, South-Eastern and Stony Point lines and branches.
14. Broadmeadows - Sandringham, Flemington Racecourse and St. Kilda and Port Melbourne lines.

The conversion of the Eastern-South Eastern and Stony Point lines will probably be the most difficult task because the greatest total mileage, including a heavy mileage of electrified main line, is involved. It is proposed to close successively the several sections in the week preceding the conversion of the electrified portions—Melbourne-Dandenong and Melbourne-Frankston—which will be dealt with at a week-end.

[Continued in Col. 3, Page 2.]

NOTABLE STORY of V.R. SERVICE DURING 1944

COAL shortages, apart from other war disabilities, made 1944 another difficult year for the Department. Necessarily there was much restriction of transport—a position made increasingly embarrassing by drought conditions over a large portion of the State—but the staff again rose to the occasion and gave the Commissioners another opportunity to record their warm appreciation of the skill, diligence and energy displayed in trying situations.

The coal problem was a dominating feature of the whole railway year, and to assist the position, the burning of firewood on locomotives was again resorted to. Not only was the coal received from New South Wales insufficient for normal railway needs, but a marked deterioration in quality of the coal supplied was responsible for further hampering train operations. Poorer coal means less horse power from locomotives and delays through necessity for cleaning fires more often. These delays in turn upset the running of other trains.

Despite such disabilities, a reasonably satisfactory service has been maintained. The passenger traffic has again been of large dimensions including troop movements, whilst the goods business, though subject to certain restrictions, has been considerable and the live stock traffic has taxed the Department's resources. Owing to the shortage of coal, fewer passenger trains ran on country lines, and it often happened that these had to be built up to goods train loads. Under such conditions, a great deal of late running was inevitable. In Melbourne the electrified train services were fully tested in the "peak" hours, and again excellent railway work was shown in carrying record Melbourne Cup crowds of 60,501 on the forward journey and 65,539 from the course.

The Rolling Stock Branch was again extremely active and undertook the construction of two new suburban trains, together with locomotives and rolling stock and a variety of munitions for the Commonwealth.

The Rolling Stock Branch also extended its war experience by ship-building for the Commonwealth Government. Two hulls for ocean-going tugs, each of which is 75 feet long, 18 feet broad, with an overall depth of 17 feet, have already been delivered at the launching place.

The big job of the Way and Works Branch was the commencement of the Cremorne Bridge at South Yarra. Three new bridges consisting of three separate superstructures on a common sub-structure are to be constructed. They will be 448 feet long, practically double the length of the present bridge, and will carry six tracks instead of four. The completed structure is estimated to cost £335,000.

Following the disastrous bush fires in February, this Branch was conspicuous for the fine achievement of restoring within six weeks two bridges—re-

spectively 810 and 270 feet long—at the Latrobe River. Way and Works staffs rebuilt two bridges near Berrybank destroyed by bushfires, and much fine work was done both in saving railway property and in restoring many miles of track. Some idea of the latter task may be obtained from the fact that 33,000 sleepers had to be renewed.

Combined team work of Way and Works and Rolling Stock men was responsible for the difficult recovery of a 60-ton crane, which had overturned on a sodden bank following the derailment of several loaded trucks two miles from the Berrybank station.

During the year the Electrical Engineering Branch commenced the production of electrical instruments for the Commonwealth Government. On an average, these contain 60 different parts, and special precautions have to be taken in their manufacture to prevent dust or other foreign matter getting into the mechanism.

Another unusual industry by the same Branch is the manufacture of "looms," the official title for an assembly of electrical equipment and wiring for modern aeroplanes—an intricate job calling for concentration and patience on the part of the women engaged in the work.

The Refreshment Branch again proved its efficiency by meeting many emergency demands for meals. During the year, the Refreshment Rooms at Princes Bridge and St. Kilda Stations were converted into cafeterias, and a new cafeteria was erected at Newport Workshops to provide quick wholesome meals for the staffs of the Erecting and Boiler Shops, Foundry, etc. This handsome cafeteria seats 480 at one sitting, and provides hot and cold meals for a relatively small charge.

We deeply regret to record that during the year several more railwaymen were killed or died on active service, several were wounded, and some became prisoners of war.

Another railwayman, Corporal R. A. Drew, won the D.C.M., and Corporal R. N. Beatty was "Mentioned in Despatches."

The V.R. Patriotic Fund passed the £50,000 mark in October last, and early in the present year £60,000 should be in sight. The increasing support of railwaymen generally who are only asked to authorise the deduction of 6d. a pay for contribution to the Fund should mean an even more formidable figure. We cannot have too much aid for this worthwhile of all purposes, and railwaymen who are not contributing cannot begin the New Year better than by making the modest little contribution desired. This can readily be done through the Pay Officer.

Unification Plans

(continued)

The most complicated jobs will be the conversion of the Spencer and Flinders Street Yards, and the merging of the standard gauge lines into the suburban electrified system.

A third rail will have to be introduced in places and much extra work will be required. Conversion generally be effected by moving one of the track towards the centre line, thus displacing the "centre line" of the track $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. In places the "centre line" of the track in relation to fixed structures will not be disturbed, consequently it will be easier and more economical to move one rail $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches to standard gauge the relative position of the "centre line" will be retained by pulling the rails and sleepers half the distance one rail was displaced, i.e., $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches. This course will be adopted where clearances or conditions render it necessary through crossing work both rails have to be moved inwards $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Apart from the engineering sequences, the material required for strengthening of and alterations to bridges and other fixtures, the problem of feeding, housing and transporting the armies of men engaged in out track alterations.

Presentation to Mr. H. S. Sergeant

MR. H. S. Sergeant, who resigned the presidency of the V.R. Institute on account of ill health received a notable testimonial to his personality, character and service from the Council of the Institute at the annual dinner on December 18.

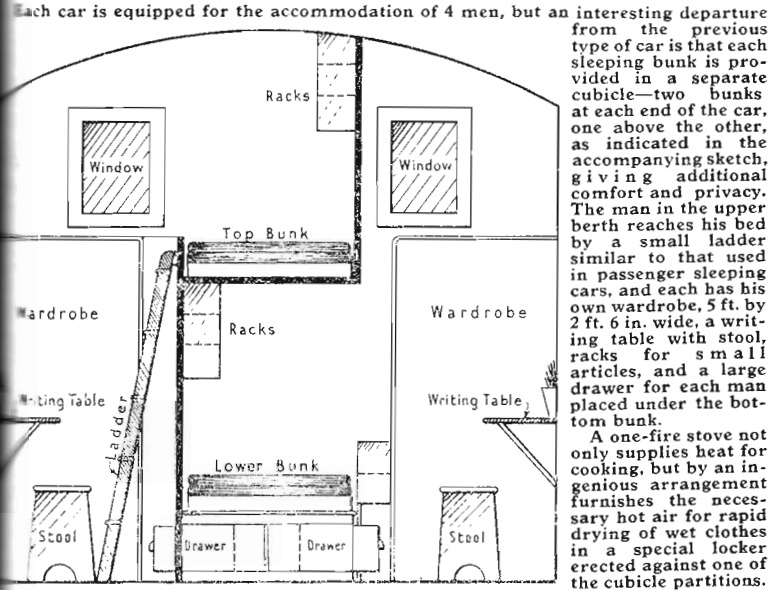
Mr Sergeant was presented with a handsome grandfather clock, and was asked also to accept a special chair for Mrs. Sergeant. In addition Mr. Sergeant was presented with a gold Life Membership Medal.

Mr. Sergeant, who became President of the Institute on January 1939, heard many complimentary references to his good work during the five years of his chairmanship. He never spared himself on behalf of the Institute and his interest and enterprise were immensely helpful in promoting the progress of the Institute.

The presentation was made by L. J. Williamson—the new President, and he was supported by many past and present members of the central council. Mr. Sergeant thanked everybody for such expressive expressions of esteem.

Shower Baths and Other Comforts Provided in Workers' New Sleeping Cars

FEATURES of the improved workers' sleeping cars now under construction are the increased comfort of the sleeping accommodation and the inclusion for the first time of provision for hot or cold showers.



Each car is equipped for the accommodation of 4 men, but an interesting departure from the previous type of car is that each sleeping bunk is provided in a separate cubicle—two bunks at each end of the car, one above the other, as indicated in the accompanying sketch, giving additional comfort and privacy. The man in the upper berth reaches his bed by a small ladder similar to that used in passenger sleeping cars, and each has his own wardrobe, 5 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. wide, a writing table with stool, racks for small articles, and a large drawer for each man placed under the bottom bunk.

A one-fire stove not only supplies heat for cooking, but by an ingenious arrangement furnishes the necessary hot air for rapid drying of wet clothes in a special locker erected against one of the cubicle partitions.

Against the other partition a table with forms is placed and against the outer wall is a large provision locker. In handy reach above the table are crockery racks and a store cupboard.

The shower cubicle has been devised to provide the maximum of service in a minimum space. Water for the shower is pumped to a roof tank by a semi-rotary pump from a 2-gallon tank mounted on the underframe of the car. The actual floor of the shower recess is 2 inches lower than the floor of the car. When the shower is in use the section of the car floor, covering the shower recess, lifts up and provides a shallow wall around the recess to prevent any excess water flowing on to the floor of the car.

All these improvements make for the greater comfort of men who may be engaged on jobs away from their homes.

Fine V.R. Performance in Clearing Sand Drift

NEARLY every year, but especially in drought years, drift sand creates serious problems for railwaymen, but it is doubtful if any body of men were confronted with the conditions that prevailed on the Kerang-Swan Hill line on October last.

Owing to the sand piling up on the tracks the 9 a.m. "mixed" train from Swan Hill to Kerang on October 16 was unable to run beyond Lake Charm, and the engine of the 9.30 a.m. goods train from Swan Hill on the same date was derailed between Tresco and Park.

The delays to local services involved emergency arrangements for the carriage of passengers and mails by road, and the job of rerailing the engine and bringing the tracks called for sustained effort on the part of the men concerned.

Those men rose to the situation, and after they had cleared the tracks sufficiently to enable another engine to approach the derailed locomotive they found that they could not move it.

The aid of the steam crane was enlisted from Bendigo, but in the

meantime the whirling sand had again covered the tracks and even after concentrated toil by the gang concerned it was found difficult to get the crane within reach of the locomotive. Ultimately this was achieved, and the engine set moving again, but with the sand blowing so thickly and continuously that the driver of the crane could not see the signals being exhibited to him by the man on the ground, the situation was often intolerable.

Frequently it was necessary to suspend rerailing operations and there were stages in the work in which the sand came in faster than it could be shovelled out. Nevertheless, the tenacity and energy of the gang prevailed. The track was cleared for service and the story of the railwaymen's devotion to duty went into the records to win the admiration of their fellow railwaymen and receive the congratulations of the Commissioners.

ENLISTMENTS.

JNR. Clk. W. G. Day; Lad Lbr. W. E. Dillon; Jnr. Clk. K. G. Douglas; Jnr. Clk. R. W. J. Rowland; Lad Lbr. C. G. Stanley.

Retirement of Mr. A. R. Stamp Supt. of Loco. Running

MANY railwaymen collected to say goodbye to Mr. Albert Richard Stamp, Superintendent of Loco. Running, who retired last month. At a farewell gathering presided over by Mr. A. C. Ahlston, Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Stamp heard numerous complimentary references to his ability, personality and good fellowship, and received a handsome wireless set as a token of his fellow railwaymen's esteem. He has been succeeded as Superintendent of Loco. Running by Mr. G. E. Burnell, former District Rolling Stock Superintendent in Bendigo.

Mr. Stamp joined the Department as a lad in 1897, and after being appointed an engineering student went to Newport Workshops for three years' general experience. He returned to Spencer Street Head Office as a draftsman in 1901 and in 1908 became assistant to Mr. W. M. Shannon, whilst the latter was Metropolitan Rolling Stock Superintendent and afterwards Assistant Chief Mechanical Engineer. Mr. Stamp became District Rolling Stock Superintendent in Ballarat in 1917, and was appointed S.L.R. in 1922.

In 1923 he went to America with Messrs. Ashworth and Dillon for further railway experience. He has been the Rolling Stock representative on Special Boards of Inquiry dealing with derailments, and has directed restoration work following any major mishaps for many years.

In one case in 1910, he had first hand experience of a serious railway accident at Richmond. The car in which he was travelling was damaged, but Mr. Stamp escaped without injury.

As a sportsman he has a fine record. In 1897 he was a member of the Essendon football team which won the first League Premiership. In addition to being a member of the East Melbourne Cricket team he also played baseball with South Melbourne and East Melbourne, and was a member of the Victorian Interstate Baseball Team. In later years he has been more concerned with the class of problems that arise on a golf course.

V.R.I. DEBATING SOCIETY

A WARM invitation is extended to all men and women in the Department to join the V.R.I. Debating Club, which meets every Friday night at the V.R. Institute, Room 109, Third Floor, Flinders Street Station Building.

The Club is now engaged in competitive debating, and is represented by six teams associated with the Debaters' Association of Victoria. Special features which tend to develop latent talents in people who wish to enter public life are also dealt with.

CHAMPION PERIODICAL TICKET HOLDERS.

THE following very interesting letter of appreciation comes from Mr. Alan M. Meudell, 114 Kooyong Road, Armadale.

"I am not taking another periodical ticket as I am over 81 years, and the ramp at Armadale station is a bit too much for me.

"I took out my first periodical ticket in 1880 at 17 years of age, and have continued ever since, save and except about 5 years when I have been away from railway facilities. During all this time I have been on the best of terms with the staff, and on my trips as a licensed surveyor when on country work have come in touch with old friends with whom I have been in contact on various suburban stations, and who were always delighted to meet me, as I was them.

"I suppose this must be a record in the periodical ticket department, and I lay down my last ticket with many thanks and best wishes to all."

Actually Mr. Meudell's feat as a periodical ticket holder, remarkable as it is, is not quite a record. Allowing for the 5 years in which he was not a patron of the service, he would have held a periodical (not continuously) for about 59 years. This performance is surpassed by that of the late Mr. Oliver Ambler, a member of the firm of Austral Grain and Ambler Pty. Ltd., who died in June last at the age of 81. Up to six weeks before his death Mr. Ambler had bought a yearly ticket without interruption since 1884—a period of 60 years.

He was one of the many enthusiastic supporters of railway service. "Travel by car into the City every day?" he said in a previous interview with him, "Not for me! I take the train!" And he took the train, latterly from Darling, but he was also a passenger from other stations.

Bendigo Workshops Employees Contribute To The War Loan

WARM congratulations to the Bendigo Workshops staff who again responded magnificently to the last War Loan Appeal.

A review of the contributors' names shows that 60 out of the 100 who contributed £1,340 to the 2nd Victory Loan also contributed to each of the previous Loan drives conducted throughout the Workshops.

That is a remarkable record and the Workshops War Loan Committee has taken the opportunity of thanking these regular contributors. The Committee feels hopeful that the next Loan will see many new names among those who are helping to "back the attack" of our sons and brothers.

A check up of the contributors also shows that approximately 210 of the 350 men employed in the Workshops have now contributed £7,370 to the past four Loan Appeals.

A Remarkable Book On The Platypus

ALL railwaymen interested in the natural history of Australia should secure a copy of a remarkable little book, "We Breed the Platypus," by David Fleay, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., Director of the Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary at Healesville. Carrying an excellent introduction by Mr. A. H. Chisholm, F.R.Z.S., the book tells simply and informatively the life stories of Jack and Jill and their daughter, Corrie, the three platypuses now enjoying careers of happy, well-fed indolence in a special platypusary at the Sanctuary.

Corrie happens to have achieved the now world-wide celebrity of being the first platypus to be born in captivity, whilst her father and mother have tasted the comforts of the Sanctuary with all the freedom from anxiety over where the next meal is to come from for nearly 6 and 7 years, respectively. If any testimony were required regarding the care, diligence and skill of the author in providing these animals with the equivalent to their natural conditions, it is contained in this narrative relating the full knowledge and experience of one who can surely claim to be the world's first authority on Australia's greatest natural curiosity.

Mr. Fleay has discovered many things about the platypus, particularly in the breeding periods, and his record is packed with strange and fascinating facts, not the least of which is his patience in watching the ways and habits of the unique trio.

Cafeteria Service At Princes Bridge

STAFF shortage is responsible for the conversion of the Princes Bridge dining room into a cafeteria—the fourth V.R. dining room in the metropolitan area to provide cafeteria facilities for its customers.

The new cafeteria has seating accommodation for 72 persons at 18 tables.

Entering a race erected along the Flinders Street side of the cafeteria the customer turns to the right to a long counter where he picks up his tray and then proceeds to select from the racks any of the cold foods he may require—scones, sandwiches, salads, cold sweets, etc., all tastefully spread out before him.

Further on he obtains—if he wishes—wholesome hot entree dishes with vegetables and then tea, coffee or milk and cutlery, after which he pays for the meal and passes on to a table.

Experience at other points indicates that more efficient service can be given to more patrons in this way than is otherwise possible under present conditions.

GOOD WORK FOR V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND

BENDIGO V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary reports that since the formation of the Auxiliary in 1940, approximately £5,000 has been raised for the V.R. Patriotic Fund. One of the features of this long sustained effort "News Letter" readers will recall was the Ugly Man Competition which raised £1,100 in three weeks. The Committee now reports that in support of a special appeal to assist "neighbourly ex-servicemen" in the present war, more than £700 was raised and contributed to the Bendigo Branch of the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia War Service Fund.

* * *

Commencing in December, 1945, the Committee of the V.R. Patriotic Fund has annually provided a special evening for those voluntary workers who have generously given up their time in assisting the Committee with many activities, not the least of which are the Sunday entertainments provided for servicemen at the Victorian Railways Institute throughout the year.

The evening of entertainment and refreshments, the cost of which was provided by the members of the Committee, has become a striking annual event. This year the evening was held on Thursday, December 20, and was well attended. Warm appreciation was shown by the guests. The programme had been excellently arranged and the hospitality was handsome in all respects.

Newport Workshops Men Help Williamstown - Footscray Hospital

THE Williamstown, Footscray District General Hospital has had reason to regret its appeal for assistance made to the railwaymen of the district. Recently the Committee gratefully recorded the receipt of a cheque for £31/4/9 provided by contributors in the Newport Workshops, Stores and clerical division, Newport Power Station, Sports Shops and Stores and railway stations in the district.

As a mark of appreciation for the support the Committee asked for a railwayman to be nominated as Life Governor of the Hospital. Mr. A. Ray, Clerk at the Newport Workshops, was selected. The Department is already represented by the Governor, Mr. J. P. Ginnane, also of Newport Workshops, who was appointed following a previous cheque provided by railwaymen in the district.

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

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

FEBRUARY, 1945.

Issue No. 173.

67 Apprentices Join The Railways

SIXTY-SEVEN bright young apprentices started their railway careers on January 8 last, and received a warm welcome into the Department. Chosen after an exhaustive examination, these lads represent the best all-rounders among 585 applicants from all over Victoria. The majority of them come from the country. Twenty of the successful applicants are apprentice fitters and turners, 11 will become electrical fitters, 9 will learn boilermaking, 7 car and wagon building, and 4 will be apprentice blacksmiths. Of the remainder, 2 each will be allotted to the trades of carpenter and joiner, moulder, tinsmith and sheet metal worker, upholsterer, car painter, and painter. Also, there will be one weighbridge fitter, one interlocking fitter, one spring-maker, and one sailmaker. Two potential fitters and turners and two boilermakers will commence at Bendigo, and two fitters and turners and one boilermaker at Ballarat.

The Board of Selectors (Mr. Fowler, Staff Board, as Chairman, E. G. Thompson, Engineer, Electrical Engineering Branch, and Mr. O. [unclear], Staff Officer, Rolling Stock Branch), started out on October 30 to interview the applicants and [unclear] a tour embracing Ararat, Bendigo, Maryborough, Sale and Wangaratta, on November 27.

Again the selectors encountered several cases of lads who had shown tenacity and industry in securing their education. The applicants included 7 boys who had won Government scholarships and 3 who had articulated for the University. One applicant travelled daily three miles by bicycle to pick up a bus that carried him 30 miles to school. He left home at 6.45 a.m. and arrived back at 6 p.m. as a member of a busy farm family had also to do various jobs prior to going out each day and after return at night.

Another applicant had boarded for 4 years, whilst getting his education, and to help his expenses he worked each evening until 6 p.m. and on Sunday mornings in a boot repairing shop.

The most interesting case, however, was that of a boy who had actually articulated at the age of 13½ years, and had served 3 years, including a period in New Guinea, before he eventually withdrew and offered his services to the railways. He was able to pass the tests and commenced a new life in the railway army last month.

MANNERISMS THAT OFFEND.

"I WAS made to feel that I was a nuisance." This was the complaint of a lady passenger who recently had need to ask at a suburban station about the despatch of her luggage—a simple enquiry that any member of the staff should have been glad to answer.

"It was not so much what the man said," the passenger explained, "as the manner in which he said it. He seemed to resent my asking for information."

The employe may not have been intentionally rude. Possibly an unfortunate mannerism was to blame. The point, however, is that an offended customer is a customer lost when the choice of other means of transport is again available.

Thoughtlessness, want of tact, or rudeness (even if unintentional), can be as destructive of goodwill and business as deliberate acts of sabotage.

We cannot afford to forget that we will need all the business we can get after the war.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.
Lad Lbr. J. D. Corn.
R.A.A.F.
Lad Porter J. W. Greenwood; Lad Lbr. G. C. S. Orr; Jnr. Clerk R. W. J. Rowland; Jnr. Clerk N. F. Young.
R.A.N.
Fitter S. Malcolm.
A.A.M.W.S.
Miss J. St.C. Rogers (Improver, Book-stalls).

Promotion for a Promising V.R. Soldier.

CONGRATULATIONS to Roy R. Gordon, now Lieutenant-Colonel, in recognition of his good work with the A.I.F. A keen, able soldier, he served some years with the Militia and at the outbreak of war was a Major in the 6th Battalion of the Royal Melbourne Regiment.

He dropped to the rank of Captain to join the A.I.F. in August, 1940, and was Company Commander in the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion in the Middle East. He served throughout the Syrian Campaign and was promoted to Major in September 1941.



Lieut.-Colonel
R. R. Gordon

Major Gordon was doing a course at the British Staff Office, Haifa, when his unit was moved early in 1942 to Java where 80 per cent. of his Battalion were taken prisoner.

Returning from the Middle East in July, 1942, Major Gordon served as Commanding Officer of the 1st Australian Junior Staff School until December, 1943.

With his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel 12 months ago, came the command of 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion, his original A.I.F. unit. He is now taking part in the drive against the Japanese.

In the railways he joined the Electrical Engineering Branch as a junior clerk in 1922. Transferred to the Secretary's Branch four years later, he was mostly associated with the Staff Board before the outbreak of hostilities decided him to get into khaki.

A highly popular officer with great qualities of leadership and determination he has displayed ability wherever he has been employed. He is, by the way, a Bachelor of Commerce, a degree he secured in 1932.

XMAS AND NEW YEAR TRAFFIC SUCCESSFULLY HANDLED

ALTHOUGH only a limited extra service was provided over the Christmas and New Year holidays, the railways carried a somewhat greater number of holidaymakers than in the Christmas and New Year period of 1943-4.

Since the railways were still obliged to adhere to restrictions imposed by the coal shortage, the job of getting thousands away at Christmas and returning them ultimately to the metropolis called for careful planning, and the fine teamwork of the staff enabled the whole task to be completed successfully.

Due to inferior coal and the necessity for long and heavy country trains having to stop twice at short platforms to enable passengers to alight, some delays were inevitable but they were accepted as bearable disabilities under war conditions.

LET US KNOW OF ANY PROMOTIONS AMONG V.R. MEN ON SERVICE

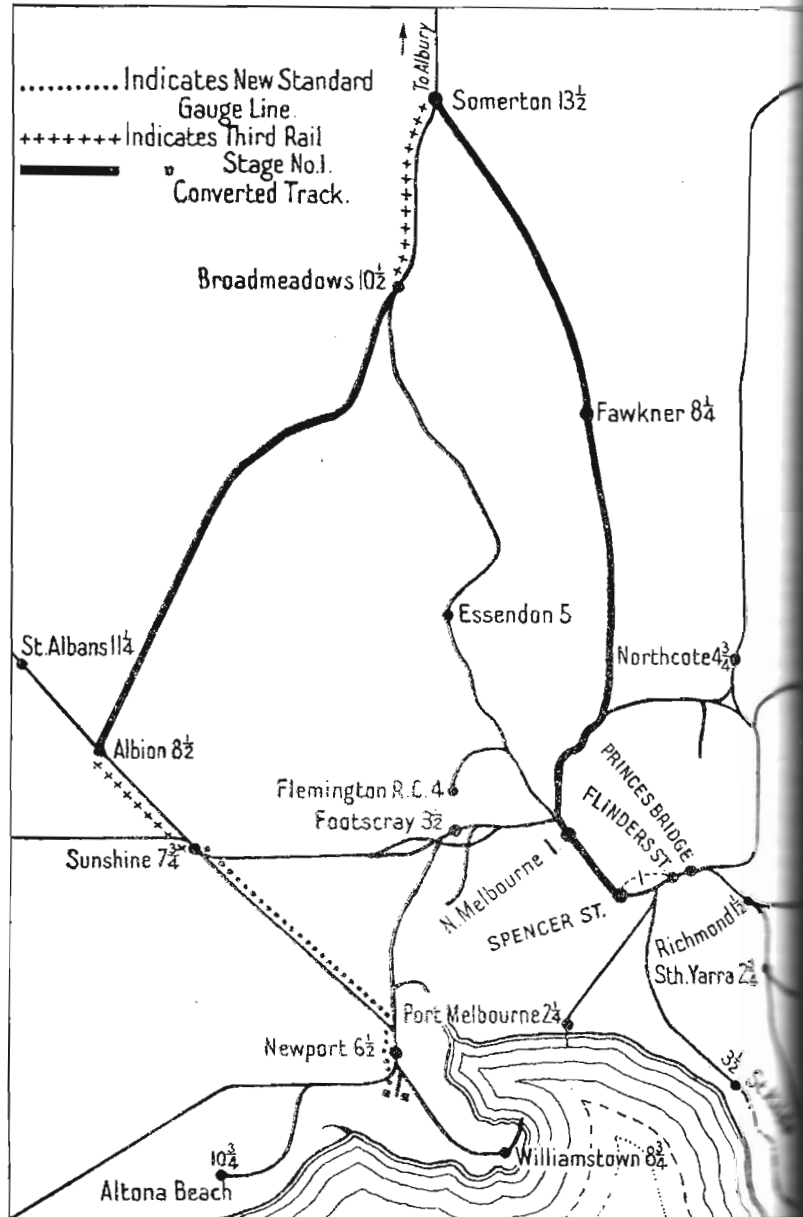
MANY railwaymen on active service have been promoted on the field. We are always anxious for news in such cases because of their interest to our readers. Reliable information will be welcome.

Next of kin and others having the knowledge are requested to advise the Manager, Publicity and Tourist Services, Railway Offices, Spencer Street, Melbourne.

A feature of the traffic which helped the Department considerably this year was that the fall of the holidays enabled most of the heavy outward traffic at Christmas to be spread over Friday and Saturday, December 22 and 23. The further circumstance that various industries did not resume until January 8 was responsible for an even wider spread of return travel from New Year's Day through the following two weeks, but considerable congestion existed on certain trains.

The system of requiring all tickets from Melbourne to be endorsed with the time of the train on which the passenger proposed to travel again proved of immense assistance in regulating the outward traffic and holidaymakers are to be commended for their co-operation, and particularly for the orderly manner in which they queued-up at the Spencer Street station and at the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau. This coupled with assistance by police on the big booking days enabled the staffs concerned to dispose of patrons in a speedy and orderly manner.

MAP REVEALING ROUTE FOR CONVERTED AND NEW ROLLING STOCK FROM NEWPORT TO FIRST SECTION OF CONVERTED LINE UNDER UNIFICATION.



LAST month the "News Letter" published an outline of the arrangements that would be necessary for the conversion of the Victorian system to standard 4' 8 1/2" gauge, and particular reference was made to temporary expedients that would be necessary to enable new and converted rolling stock to be routed out from Newport Shops to the first section of converted line in the North-East section without interfering with services still using the 5' 3" gauge. The above map indicates more clearly the alterations involved. It will be seen that from Newport to Sunshine a new standard gauge track will be constructed running alongside the 5' 3" line. From Sunshine to Albion, and from Broadmeadows to Somerton a third rail will be provided, whilst the section between Albion and Broadmeadows will be converted to 4' 8 1/2" simultaneously with the conversion from Spencer Street of the line running via Fawkner to Somerton—the first stage of the conversion of the line carrying traffic to Albury.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF BRITISH LOCOMOTIVES IN PRESENT WAR

IN these extracts from that notable production, "British Railways in Peace and War," the authors pay tribute to the English locomotive which has performed immeasurable feats of transport in the present war. Complimentary reference is also made to the undramatic, but equally valuable achievements of Engineers and their staffs, often called upon during the "blitz" for seeming miracles of repair for the restoration of services.

The work that the British railways doing in aiding the war effort been made possible because railway equipment has stood up valiantly to the test of war. That the test has been a gruelling one, and is by no means apparent to all. A railway is an intricate organisation depending largely on mechanisation and relying on its efficiency on the co-related working of widely scattered and diversely employed units.

"Designers of British locomotives will take pride in their achievements. War conditions have imposed heavier locomotive loading and longer runs in steam, while the necessity of using substitute materials in both repair and building, and the dilution of labour, have added to the difficulties. Their design and capacity have enabled British locomotives to surmount these difficulties and to meet every demand put upon them. On the L.N.E.R. main line, for instance, 20-coach trains are regularly operated, while locomotives built solely for passenger traffic have undertaken heavy freight services.

"In order to form a pool of locomotives which could be drawn upon for use overseas, it was decided that all heavy freight locomotives should be built to one design. The L.M.S. 2-8-0 type was selected as the standard, the reason being that its dimensions admitted its more general use.

"In addition to the adoption of the L.M.S. 2-8-0 heavy freight engine as a standard type, the Ministry of Supply have built their own "auster" version of the L.M.S. locomotive. Some 251 of these engines, built by contractors, are working on the railways at home, pending their use elsewhere. American engines—some 400 of them—modified for working on British railways, are also temporarily in service in this country.

"It is not surprising that the strain having its effects on the repair position. Locomotives present themselves more frequently for repair and to deal with repairs as they fall due, now demands an output in the number of heavy repairs some 20 per cent. greater than in pre-war years. In addition, the man hours required per repair are greater. In order to meet the position working hours have been increased, additional staff recruited, more machine tools acquired and temporary reductions made in new locomotive construction.

These and other measures adopted, are having their effect, and there is a reasonable prospect of the target of not more than 5 per cent. locomotives under or awaiting repair in the shops being achieved. Today, the figure stands at 6.3 per cent. Repairs, it must be remembered, amount to about 90 per cent. of the total man hours engaged on locomotive construction and repair work.

"British locomotives have played their part in direct support of the fighting fronts. A considerable number of locomotives were withdrawn from service for use in France at the beginning of the war, and many of these were lost after Dunkirk. 143 additional engines of the heavy freight type were later withdrawn from the railways and sent overseas to the Near East, where they are operating in Syria and Persia. The first engine to enter El Alamein after its re-capture was of L.M.S. design; L.N.E.R. engines are working on the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli line, while a G.W.R. engine has recently been photographed drawing supplies along the North African railways to Tunis. Some locomotives were working in England three weeks before they were in action with the U.S. Army in Africa.

"Peace-time standards in appearance have had to go, but the stock is being maintained in serviceable order. One may regret the passing of the shining paintwork of the pre-war locomotives and trains, but the efficiency of service is not impaired by the wearing of honourable "battle dress."

"Much more track equipment is being reconditioned and used again. To conserve timber, reinforced concrete sleepers and sleeper blocks are being used. Some concrete sleepers are even carrying the heaviest and fastest main line traffic. Altogether, on running lines and in sidings, 33,810 concrete sleepers, and 772,200 sleeper blocks are in service.

"Some of the many new works the railways had in hand at the outbreak of war were suspended because they were not for the time essential, but others were completed. Many other works originated during the war have also been completed. In addition, special works required as war necessities have been promoted by the Ministry of War Transport. Such works include the doubling and quadrupling of tracks, loop lines and sidings, halts and stations serving war factories, and bridges.

RAILWAYMAN'S SON DECORATED

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. T. P. Brophy, Stationmaster at Moreland, whose son, Squadron Leader James T. Brophy, has been awarded the D.F.C. In the citation referring to his achievements, it is stated that Squadron Leader Brophy "has completed numerous operations against the enemy in the course of which he has invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty."

Squadron Leader Brophy, now in England, was born in Tinamba, Gippsland, 30 years ago, and enlisted in May, 1942. He was trained in South Australia and left Australia in March, 1943. Before enlistment he was an architect in Melbourne.

Another of Mr. Brophy's sons, Private B. Brophy of the A.I.F., was killed in New Guinea after long service in the Middle East.

V.R. CASUALTIES

THE "News Letter" deeply regrets to report that Flt. Sgts. J. J. Broderick and G. E. McGrath have been killed in aircraft accidents. Also reported "Missing" are Warrant Officer G. A. McMullin and Flt. Sgts. E. J. Kenealy, W. Q. McGeachin and A. J. Neeson. Another casualty is that of Aircraftsman C. B. Begg, a prisoner of war who is believed to have been drowned on a Japanese transport which was torpedoed.

Flt. Sgt. Broderick, who was a conductor in the Transportation Branch, enlisted in 1941. He was born in 1915 and entered the Department in 1936. Flt. Sgt. McGrath, a junior clerk in the Refreshment Services Branch, enlisted in 1942. He was 20 years of age and commenced his railway career in 1941. Warrant Officer McMullin, who entered the Department as a Junior Clerk in 1938, enlisted in 1941. He would have been 24 on January 30 last.

Flt. Sgt. Kenealy, who is 19, had been a junior clerk in the Way and Works Branch when he enlisted in 1943. Flt. Sgt. McGeachin, a former clerk at Newport Workshops, enlisted in 1941. He was born in 1917. Flt. Sgt. Neeson (aged 32) was previously a sailmaker in the Department and enlisted in 1942.

Aircraftsman Begg, who had joined up in 1940, was a skilled labourer in the Way and Works Branch. He entered the railways in 1936 and was 28 years of age.

"Special measures were taken to carry out these schemes in the shortest possible time, and with the minimum of equipment and labour."

"One Saturday, at 12.30 p.m., a railway received a request for the installation of a quarter-mile long siding, for traffic due to start arriving the following Thursday. Plans were made, a special train brought the materials to the site, and the line, complete with ballast, connection to the running line, apparatus for controlling the junction from a nearby signal box, and catch-points, was completed by 5.0 p.m. on Wednesday, and the traffic started flowing, as scheduled, on the following day."

RAILWAYMEN SHOULD MEET CORRIE



RAILWAYMEN with an eye for the unusual and picturesque in our native fauna should take a trip to the Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary at Healesville to see the Sanctuary's latest arrival, Corrie, the first platypus born in captivity. It owes its present sturdy condition to the care of the Sanctuary's Director, Mr. David Fleay, B.Sc., Dip. Ed.

Corrie is now over 12 months old and has long exhibited an adult appetite, which means that it will consume daily almost its own weight in worms, grubs, yabbies, etc. No other animal known to naturalists has anything like the same capacity, and it takes some imagination to realise that a typical night meal for Corrie's mother, Jill, consisted of 400 earth worms, over 300 grubs, and about 3 dozen yabbies!

The problem of feeding the parents, Jack and Jill, and the daughter, Corrie, is no light one, and the job of providing the worms alone is a special activity in itself. The animals are generally on view for public inspection every afternoon at 3.30 p.m., and it is due to the patience of Mr. Fleay that one of the shyest animals known to science has become sufficiently friendly to eat out of his hand.

Mr. Fleay has done much for science in carefully recording the behaviour of the mother prior to and following the arrival of her offspring. In his fascinating little book, "We Breed the Platypus," just issued, he provides a most interesting account of the mother platypus carefully selecting wet grass and leaves for her nest, and of her comical resentment when he carefully dug down to the hole in which the baby Corrie (then 9 inches long) was found lying.

The baby platypus is blind for some time after birth, and there is strong evidence suggesting that there is a gap of some days before they learn to extract nourishment from the mother.

As to the mother, Mr. Fleay recalls that its appearance in the Sanctuary was the merest accident. It was found wandering in Healesville bush country apparently lost, and nearly a mile away from the nearest stream, over seven years ago. Transferred to the scientific care of the Sanctuary, and badly in need of a meal at the time, it has flourished ever since and become responsible for a story of platypus family life which has travelled around the world.

Prizewinners— V.R.I. Nov. Exams.

Congratulations to the following students who secured the highest percentage of marks in the annual educational examinations conducted by the Victorian Railways Institute:

Bookkeeping—Grade 1.

M. W. Nolan, Jnr. Clerk, Room 30, Spencer Street.

Bookkeeping—Grade 2.

F. Shelton, Accounts Branch, Room 209, Spencer Street.

Shorthand—Elementary Theory.

W. J. Barbour, Clerk, Melbourne Goods.

Shorthand—Advanced Theory.

Miss M. Munn, Office Asst., Newport Workshops.

Shorthand—Speed.

Miss M. Hopper, Clerk, Room 100, Spencer Street.

W. J. S. Kirkpatrick, Clerk, Melbourne Goods.

Miss M. Grant, Dept. Commerce, 419 Collins Street, Melbourne.

(In the speed section of the Shorthand Examination special prizes were handed to Miss M. Hopper and Mr. W. J. S. Kirkpatrick, who had, respectively, won the First Prize in 1943 and 1942, and were equal for First Place in the Examination of 1944.)

Typewriting.

Miss S. Watson, Dependent V.R.I. Member.

Engine Working—Junior Grade.

G. A. Jackson, Cleaner, Benalla.

Senior Grade.

B. Shanahan, Fireman, Geelong.

Westinghouse Brake—Junior Grade.

G. W. Patterson, Cleaner, Ararat.

Senior Grade.

J. G. Wood, Fireman, Geelong.

Internal Combustion—Engine

Mechanics.

K. J. Murphy, App. F. & T., Newport Power Station.

Permanent Way Construction & Maintenance.

H. S. Bullen, Works Sub-Foreman, Shepparton.

Safeworking—"A" Division,

Signalling.

F. J. Blencowe, Clerk, Melbourne Yard.

"B" Division,

Train Running.

T. W. Quick, Signalman, Wodonga.

Station Accounts & Management—Grade 2.

W. J. Richards, Porter South Yarra.

Storeman's Duties—Junior Grade.

C. Cartner, Ac. 3rd. Cl. Storeman, Works Store, Geelong.

Senior Grade.

C. H. Robertson, Storeman, Workshops Storehouse, Bendigo North.

Ticket Checking.

J. F. Iles, Jnr. Clerk, Footscray Goods.

V.R.I. CHORAL SOCIETY'S SUCCESS

A FULL enthusiastic house listening to the "Schubert Evening" at the Assembly Hall on December 6, when the V.R.I. Choral Society under the skilled direction of Dr. Ehrenfeld achieved another conspicuous success. The result of this concert was that a nice cheque for £49 9s was handed to the Alphington Branch of the Australian Comforts Fund.

A feature of the evening was the rendering of the oratorio, "Song of Miriam". A portion of the program was broadcast from the Cairns Memorial Church over 3LO on December 10 and the A.B.C. is apparently so impressed with the fine work of the Choral Society under Dr. Ehrenfeld that it has been requested by the A.B.C. to broadcast a series of items including Malotte's "Lord's Prayer," Dvorak's "Goin' Home," and Beethoven's "Hymn to Creation" on February 15.

With the warm assistance of the V.R.I., Dr. Ehrenfeld is now endeavouring to start the V.R.I. Orchestra in active work again. He trusts that with the support of an orchestra of at least 30, the V.R.I. Choral Society would be capable of even more impressive achievements.

Retirement Of Mr. R. G. McFarlane

THE recent retirement of Foreman R. B. McFarlane at the Spencewood Workshops will be remembered for the unusual form of the "send-off" arranged by his fellow workmen. In addition to hearty complimentary references to his qualities, followed by the receipt of a volume of notes, Mr. McFarlane had the expected experience of being escorted by a Highland Piper playing "Home to the Isles"—a compliment which he, as a Scot, fully appreciated.

Mr. McFarlane joined the Spencewood as a Fitter at the old Spencewood Ironworks Shops in 1911, became Sub-Foreman in 1922, and was transferred to Spencewood in 1927, where he was appointed Foreman. A number of his recalled that during his career at Spencewood he was engaged on the Plenty Road Crossing. There was a good deal of overtime in connection with this job, and on one occasion his earnings were so big that they were jokingly handed to him in a kerosene tin!

Mr. McFarlane will spend a large part of his retirement on the bowling green, which he is reported to have developed such an "eye" that he may yet be heard of in Championship Tests.

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

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

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Issue No. 174.

THE HEROISM OF ENGLISH RAILWAYMEN IN "THE BLITZ" OF 1940.

IN this further extract from "British Railways in Peace and War" you are taken back to the tragedy of Coventry "blitzed" in November, 1940, and the heroic work of the railwaymen concerned in restoring the damaged tracks and structures—an achievement outstanding in its individual courage and devotion to duty. Many awards for bravery were earned, but it is certain that many other rare exploits, indicative of the valour of the railwaymen in a crisis, have gone unreported. Those unrewarded heroes have at least the consciousness of a "job well done."

"Though the period of the blitz for the present over, bombs still fall on railway property, in the South-East and Eastern districts of England particularly. Even through the worst period, the lines were never seriously interrupted. Railwaymen and women stuck to their posts and got the trains through.

"A train cannot dodge a plane or a bomb—it just has to stop or keep on. On the pitch black night the 8.45 crowded with servicemen and civilians was travelling at reduced speed through the blitz. Suddenly the track immediately in front of the train received a direct hit, and where a second before had been two sets of lines, was now a yawning crater into which the engine plunged, sending the driver and fireman to their deaths. The tender mounted the engine and the carriages were fantastically fanned out behind, yet, with the exception of the unfortunate driver and fireman, the only casualties were two slight injuries. By 5 p.m. next day the coaches, one of which had been blown down a steep embankment, had been re-railed.

And The Women Too!

"The women were not to be outdone by their male colleagues in bravery and fortitude; one telephone operator at a main railway exchange refused to leave her post though the building was in ruins around her.

"One bleak December afternoon a bomb hit a passenger train in a rural district. The driver and guard were killed, but the fireman, blasted from the footplate, crawled back and at great risk of severe scalding, shut off the train. Then, with the woman porter, he took charge until help arrived.

"Then there was a horsekeeper who brought out of stables, set ablaze by incendiary bombs, 24 horses, knowing at the time that his own home was burning.

"Many such stories of bravery could be told. One George Cross, 28 George Medals, 76 British Empire Medals, 9 Members of the Order of the British Empire and 127 Commendations for Bravery have been awarded by the King in the Honours lists to the staff. For each railwayman so honoured a hundred courageous acts have been performed, each one part of the daily job. The men and women of the railways may well be proud that their fortitude, bravery and competence have brought them through a terrible test triumphantly, but with many casualties.

"The courage of railwaymen and women in the midst of bombing is matched by the speed with which the engineers repaired broken and debris-littered tracks and quickly enabled services to be resumed.

MORE ABOUT MANNERISMS

MANY of us at some time or other when seeking information or service have had an abrupt "What do you want?" snapped at us. Or, just as bad, we have been met morosely with a grunted "Huh?"

No one relishes that sort of thing. The effect upon the normal individual is to irritate him.. to make him feel he is unwelcome. He will avoid, if he can, having anything to do in future with the person who offended him.

Abruptness, or apparent rudeness, may be only an unfortunate mannerism. The fact remains that no business can afford mannerisms that turn customers away. This applies equally to the railways as to any other business.

A pleasant, friendly "Can I help you?" or "What can I do for you?" is appreciated by everybody. The good impression created today in this easy way will help to retain business that will be badly needed in the times that are ahead.

"Since the start of the war 10,000 attacks have been made on the railways. With the exception of Coventry, probably the most bombed section of line was one of 2½ miles near London, with 92 attacks in a period of nine months—but it carried on throughout though not without difficulty and many improvisations.

"Undoubtedly the skill of the engineers and the hard work of the gangs was helped by the organisation for dealing with damage set up before the war. Emergency breakdown trains and stocks of rails and other permanent way stores, bridging and filling material were located at strategic points. Much of the material was loaded on wagons in position for despatch. Gangs could be mobilised immediately and arrangements existed for reinforcements to be drafted in from districts adjacent to the damage.

Coventry's Experience

"The experience of Coventry in the attack on the 14th November, 1940, has been officially described as "an experience without precedent in the history of a British city." It is equally true that this attack is without precedent on the railways, and one that called for all the resource of the engineers to restore communications.

"It was made by 400 bombers; and 600 incidents in the city were reported. Of these, no fewer than 122 were on railway property. Stations, sidings, junctions, main and branch lines, bridges, and viaducts were hit; one 3½ mile stretch of line receiving 40 H.E. bombs. So well did the engineers and the gangs do their work—and again quoting the official record—"By the evening of the 16th the report came through: Coventry-Birmingham and Coventry-Leamington clear." Damage to other lines was more severe, but before the end of the month working everywhere was normal.

(continued col. 3, page 2)

PLANS FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE NORTH-EASTERN LINE TO STANDARD GAUGE

IN the plans now being prepared for the conversion of the Victorian Railways to standard gauge, provision is made for the actual change over to be done in sections, so arranged as to cause a minimum of public inconvenience through temporary breaks of gauge, as the work progresses. The busiest portion of each section will be converted at a selected week-end, the line being closed on Saturday and re-opened as a standard gauge line on the following Monday, subject to speed restrictions. The less important branch lines will be closed for up to a week before or after the week-end.

One of the most important sections is the North Eastern line and branches, which will be the first major operation. This is one of the busiest country lines, and its conversion will permit through running between Melbourne and Sydney. Before the main line conversion is started, however, the Department will convert the 70 miles of track between Wodonga and Cudgewa. This will serve as a dress rehearsal enabling the staff to check the answers to many conversion problems before the vital sections are undertaken. After conversion the Cudgewa line will be temporarily operated with rolling stock borrowed from, or manufactured in New South Wales for this Department.

It is estimated that 5,500 men will be required to convert the North Eastern line at a week-end and they will be accommodated in camps at intervals along the whole route. As much of the work as practicable will be carried out prior to the conversion week-end. At the actual conversion, the men will all be working to a progressive time schedule and mobile squads will be transferred from point to point as required if the work of any gang should fall behind schedule.

As already explained in the "News Letter" the work between stations will be simple though extensive. One rail will be unfastened from the sleepers and respiked in its new position $6\frac{1}{2}$ " nearer the other rail. At bridges and in station yards it will be necessary for rolling stock to be kept at the same distance as at present from platforms and other structures.

At such places the converted track will be pulled over to maintain the existing clearance. Through all but the simplest crossing work it is intended to shift both rails inwards $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

As it will not be practicable to convert more than the main North Eastern line at one week-end, the branch lines to Wahgunyah, Peechelba, Oaklands, Bright and Tatong will be closed and converted during the week before the main line conversion. The men employed will then go to their allotted places on the main line. After the main line is converted some of the men will be transferred to the Heathcote Junction-Bendigo and the Mansfield lines, which will then be converted in the following week.

Under this arrangement no branch line will be out of commission for more than a week.

Prior to conversion, each line must be cleared of all 5' 3" gauge rolling stock. By the time the track is converted on Monday, standard gauge equipment will be ready to leave Melbourne.

Through trains from Sydney may be run with New South Wales rolling stock.

The preparation of camps and the transportation and feeding of the men will require careful planning, but much will remain to be done after the standard gauge trains are running. Re-sleeping and making up ballast will be important tasks.

ENGINE CLEANERS CAN GO FAR

THE appointment of Mr G. E. Burnell, as Superintendent of Loco. Running, in succession to Mr. A. R. Stamp, who retired last December, is the result of steadfast attention to duty and enthusiasm for the job which should inspire every ambitious lad entering the Service. Mr Burnell joined the railways as an engine cleaner in 1908, and he has passed through the grades of fireman, driver, enginemen's instructor, night depot foreman, shed foreman, Westinghouse Brake Inspector, Locomotive Examining Officer, District Rolling Stock Superintendent (Bendigo) to his present important post.

Lad engine cleaners have the same possibilities of promotion. Engine cleaning is the preparatory job to the footplate of an engine as a fireman, then graduating to full control of a locomotive as a driver in goods and passenger services. In his first year the driver draws 21/2d. a day, which increases until his sixth year as a driver, when his daily earnings reach 25/2d. with an extra 1/- a day for special class drivers.

To rise from engine cleaner to driver, a lad must do shift work, but shift work is only a minor consideration to industrious and ambitious lads.

Incidentally, applications are now being called for from lads over 17 years of age who desire to take up the footplate as a career.

English Railwaymen in 'B'

(continued)

"Where structures such as bridges, arches and viaducts were damaged, temporary repairs were usually carried out so that traffic might be speedily resumed. Recently a 70-ft. high viaduct had one of its piers and two arches carried by it demolished by a bomb. Rails and sleepers and one passenger hung precariously over a 70-ft. gap. The first job was to make the remainder of the viaduct safe. The piers adjacent to the gap were tied by rods to the next one to prevent them being pushed over by the thrust of the arches beyond them and the overhanging portions were made safe with steel wire ropes.

"The site was cleared, foundations prepared, and heavy steel trusses erected in such a way that a new pier and arches could be built later. Horizontal steel framing was constructed to relieve the temporary tie rods of the thrust of the undamaged arches. The trestles were carried up to support steel joist waybeams spanning the gap.

"At one London station, between an important road junction, and a concourse immediately below it, a bomb penetrated the road and burst in the concourse. The roof was demolished the covering over the station, which is about 150 ft. across, and wrecked three escalators. It injured a number of people on the platform, and the windows of a train standing in the station were blown in. Repair gangs immediately got to work, a bridge was erected to carry traffic over the road junction, and temporary stairs were erected on one side of the escalator tunnel to enable the station approaches to be restored to service. Sufficient space was left to erect a new escalator and the station was in use again in two months.

"A bomb falling at the side of a long viaduct carrying a main line railway shattered one of the piers. This began to subside slowly, and the movement not being stopped, the arches at each side would have collapsed and probably brought down with them several more arches.

"Within 48 hours the weight of the arches and track was taken off the pier by massive baulks of timber, which to carry several hundred tons, and a new pier was built and the viaduct rebuilt."

ENLISTMENTS.

R.A.A.F.

LAD Lbr. E. B. Blurton; Lad Messrs A. Cole; Jnr. Ck. R. M. Curlem; Ck. A. C. Fielder; Lad Lbr. F. Garrow; Lad Lbr. R. S. Gertz; Lad A. J. H. Glanvill; Lad Lbr. D. J. Glass; Lad Lbr. K. L. Johnstone; Lad Lbr. Kline; Jnr. Ck. P. J. Nelson; Lad Lbr. J. F. O' Donnell; Lad Messrs Pritchard; Lad Lbr. H. F. Roberts; Jnr. Ck. E. J. Watson; Lad Lbr. Weybury;

R.A.N.

Jnr. Ck. A. E. Dunne.

Subscribe Now To The Third Victory Loan

HEAVY RECORD OF BY-LAW OFFENCES DURING 1944

VIGILANCE on the part of the checking staff has resulted in the formidable number of 2,536 passengers being prosecuted during 1944 for travelling without a ticket. The Consolidated Revenue benefited extensively from the amount of fines paid, which was in many cases sufficiently severe to convince the army of offenders that it is more economical to pay the fare.

A total of 856 passengers were found travelling 1st class on 2nd class tickets, and here again they left the Court lighter in pocket, presumably making a firm resolution not to try to defeat the revenue in future.

Special attention to the growing offences of entering or leaving stations by unauthorised ways, crossing or walking along railway lines, and stepping from trains in platforms into adjoining trains, was responsible for another small army of 1,228 being impressed by the fines they paid that careless and often dangerous practice should be stopped.

Smoking In Non-

Smoking Compartments

The Department is strongly insisting that smokers should smoke only in compartments set apart for that purpose. Over 300 passengers who chose to think otherwise were reminded by fines that the railway by-laws will have to be respected.

Here is a list of other by-law offences recorded during the year:—

Travelling on expired tickets	218
Cycling on footpaths	167
Giving wrong name and address	99
Obscene and insulting words	84
Opening doors of moving trains	54
Damage to railway property	20
Removing electric light globes	16

Fines were exacted for the thoughtless and dangerous practice of opening doors of moving trains when entering the stations.

The high figure of those who were prosecuted for giving wrong names and addresses is not an indication of an increase of this offence, but of the Department's improved methods of discovering the whereabouts of passengers who endeavour to escape prosecution in this way.

Some examples of the fines inflicted (with costs) are as follows:—

Assault on a railway-man	£5.	Costs 10/-
Travelling on expired ticket—and insulting language	£4.	Costs 15/-
Crossing line at an unauthorised place	£3.	Costs 10/-
Travelling without a ticket	£2.	Costs 7.6d.

Watch the Weekly Notices for particulars of the Departmental Group System under which you can subscribe by a series of easy deductions over a number of pay days.

The Giant Locomotive "H-220" Doing Fine Work

AUSTRALIA'S most powerful locomotive, "H 220," is steadily adding to its record of achievement. Completed at Newport in February, 1941, it has since proved to be the Department's biggest asset in goods transport. Some idea of its value is shown by the fact that over the 12 months ending June 30, 1944, it covered 72,000 miles.

Each week it does 10 trips "up" and "down" between Melbourne and Wodonga, covering approximately 1870 miles and hauling a total load of about 8,000 tons, making an average of 800 tons a trip.

According to its present schedule which commenced in July, 1942, it starts out from Melbourne at 9.25 p.m. on the Monday, arriving at Wodonga early on the following morning. It leaves Wodonga on the return journey at 8.45 a.m. the same day and is due back in Melbourne at 3.50 p.m.

Except for withdrawals for necessary examination and overhaul "H 220" has carried on this very valuable service without a serious hitch.

It is not always able to adhere to its schedule. The substitution of Lithgow for Maitland coal in the tender of the giant engine—an alteration brought about by the shortage of Maitland coal—has sometimes been responsible for it stopping at two or three points en route for the purpose of cleaning fires—an operation which means the loss of anything from 20 minutes to three-quarters of an hour at each stop.

With Maitland coal for fuel, "H 220" is a vastly different performer, earning the admiration of the most critical of train crews.

Giving wrong name and address	£2.	Costs 5/-
Opening door of train in motion	£2.	Costs 5/-
Smoking in Non-Smoking Compartment	£1.	Costs 5/-
Travelling 1st-Class on 2nd-Class ticket	10/-	Costs 7/6d.
Entering station platform otherwise than by means of entrance provided	10/-	Costs 7/6d.
Riding bicycle along a pathway reserved for pedestrians	10/-	Costs 5/-

ALWAYS PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

ALL communications from suggestors to the Betterment and Suggestions Board are seen only by the special "Suggestions" staff, and under no circumstance is the name, grade or location of any suggestor disclosed.

As a further precaution, all correspondence from the Board to the Suggestor is enclosed in a plain envelope and mailed to the private address (if available), of the suggestor, or to his Departmental location in such a way that no indication of the origin of the letter is disclosed.

This system has proved most successful in ensuring the utmost privacy, and no suggestor need have any hesitation in forwarding to the Betterment and Suggestions Board any idea which may occur to him for improvement in the Service. Every idea submitted is most carefully examined.

A number of awards is paid each month for adopted suggestions and during the past 12 months 17 per cent. of suggestions submitted were adopted and a considerable amount in awards was paid.

So, if you have an idea that you think will stop waste, give improved service to the public, or result in some other betterment, do not delay in sending it to

The Betterment and Suggestions Board,
Railways Administrative Offices,
Spencer Street,
MELBOURNE.

V.R. PRINTER'S LAD WINS PROMOTION IN R.A.N.

THE last three years have been of immense interest to Ian D. Wilson, who enlisted in the R.A.N. and has now been promoted to Sub-Lieutenant.

When he entered the R.A.N. in October, 1941, he became a "coder" dealing with codes and during this period was two years away on active sea service.

Having qualified for his promotion by passing through a special 9 weeks' school, he is now known as a "cypher officer."

Sub-Lieutenant Wilson, who will be 24 this month, entered the V.R. Printing Works as a junior in 1937.

A keen studious lad, he won his Intermediate Technical Certificate after 3 years at the Swinburne College, where he took the general course including drawing, turning and fitting and mechanical engineering.

During his period at the V.R. Printing Works he attended the night classes at the Melb. Technical College.

V. R. WARRIOR'S DESCRIPTION OF ESCAPE FROM GERMAN PRISON CAMP

SOME months ago the "News Letter" published a brief account of the escape from a German prison camp of Lance-Bombardier R. G. Stuart, who before enlistment, was a clerk in the Staff Office of the Secretary's Branch of the Department. Now a Captain in the Movement Section, L.H.Q., Melbourne, he has kindly supplied a more detailed description of his adventure, which railwaymen generally will read with great interest.

Captain Stuart was in a prisoner of war camp at Salonica, when he and a number of others were warned to prepare for "a rail journey of four to five days."

"For some days two friends and I had been planning to escape before this movement took place," he says, "and in the face of this contingency it was unanimously decided to bale out of the train at the earliest possible moment after sunset.

"On arrival at the railway yard, we were not surprised to be assigned to cattle trucks—upwards of fifty men per truck—but were somewhat disconcerted after entrainment when bolts were shot and the truck doors were locked on the outside.

"There was, however, on each side of our truck an opening with a shutter about 2½ feet by 1½ feet, at a height of 5 feet from the floor. These were not locked and the barbed wire screen fastened across with staples was later removed without much trouble.

"The wait for the night to fall seemed interminable. The moon was unkind too in its full radiant glory, but at last I found myself lying on the ground at the side of the track with the train clattering past. From that moment the train seemed to crawl, as I anxiously lay rigid, hoping I would not be seen.

"Every second truck had a guard box and there were more guards in the brakevan; some of them were singing lustily, probably because they were bound for home on leave. My luck was in, and my friends' also, for sometime after the train had passed they walked back and found me.

"Our rations lasted a couple of days and by that time, moving by night, we were back in Greece. Some friendly Greeks one night changed our uniforms for peasants' clothing. Soon after that I decided to move alone. I did not get very far at first; but spent six fairly safe weeks in a little village in the mountains. I was weak and sick with dysentery (followed by malaria) during this time; and it was not a very healthy region."

When his health improved, he covered great distances on foot through mountainous country where the inhabitants were mostly friendly, but "the worst features of my journey were the

cold nights and lack of foot comfort. With the distance covered and varied nature of surface the soles of my acquired rubber shoes soon wore out. The best retreat I could devise was from the felt covering of my water bottle. Unfortunately, this was not very satisfactory and so I ended my travels practically barefooted."

Later on he spent some weeks "living in and around some monasteries of the Order of St. Basil (Greek Orthodox)" but he was weakened by frequent attacks of malaria, and his stock of quinine ran low. One night after covering a few miles he stumbled into the courtyard of a monastery and then apparently passed out for a couple of days.

After this period "there followed several journeys over land and sea by various means, including a small fishing yacht (nearly wrecked in a storm) and a pull of over 20 miles in a rowing boat."

Ultimately he arrived in British territory "four months after the initial break with German hospitality!"

Concluding a narrative which is necessarily somewhat vague in details, Captain Stuart expresses his high hopes of once again meeting "those pals from my old unit who were not so fortunate as I in quitting the Nazis."

Two Good Railwaymen Pass On

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report the death of Mr. G. R. Critten, Depot Foreman at Ararat, at the age of 63.

He entered the Service as an apprentice fitter at Newport in 1897 and became a fitter in 1902.

Thirteen years later he was a leading hand fitter and became a senior leading hand fitter at North Melbourne Loco in 1924. After some months as a sub-foreman fitter at Bendigo Loco he was appointed to the responsible post of Depot Foreman at Benalla, and to the Ararat Loco Depot in 1937.

Mr. Critten was a widely known and popular railwayman with a passion for thoroughness in everything he undertook.

* * *

ANOTHER greatly regretted death last month was that of Mr. E. E. Hooke, a member of the clerical division of the Stores Branch at Newport at the age of 54.

Mr. Hooke, who entered the Department in 1915, became permanently appointed in 1920, and for the greater part of his railway career gave valuable service at Newport.

Highly esteemed by all his colleagues, he won a further reputation outside as a tenor singer, appearing on several occasions with the Melbourne Philharmonic Society and Liedertafel Society. For 25 years he was tenor soloist with St. Paul's Choir and many will remember him as a member of the original "We Four" quartet.

Also he was a Life Governor of the Freemasons' Homes of Victoria and a Life Governor of the Williamstown Hospital.

V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND NOW TOTALS £54,000

THE fact that the total raised for the Railways Patriotic Fund has reached the fine figure of £54,000 was referred to in complimentary terms in "The Railway Union Gazette" of February 19.

"The £54,000 which has been raised is a great effort," said the Gazette "but it can be improved." There are still some thousands of Victorian Railwaymen and women who have not signed up for the regular contribution of 3d. per week. Now is the time for a special effort to join up further contributors.

The main source of the Patriotic Fund's income is the fortnightly contribution of the regular railway contributors. A determined effort is about to be made to bring this appeal under the notice of non-contributors. Each one who takes the due course will receive a separate personal letter. The task of addressing the necessary envelopes is being undertaken by volunteers working for a couple of hours after office hours each evening until the formidable job is completed.

It is hoped that the response to this additional appeal will be worthy of the labor involved in making it.

V.R. CASUALTIES.

THE "News Letter" deeply regrets to report two more casualties among railwaymen on Service—Pilot Officer A. L. Coates, previously reported "Missing" now presumed dead, and Sergeant E. G. Hocking, killed in an air collision during training exercises.

Pilot Officer Coates, who was only 27 years of age, was educated at the Dandenong State and Technical Schools. He joined the railways as an apprentice carpenter and joiner in 1940, and his enlistment in 1942 he worked at the Spotswood Workshops.

Sergeant E. G. Hocking started in the Accounting Office at Ballarat in 1930 and enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in December, 1943. He was born in 1925.

V.R. MAN'S SON WINS IMPORTANT SCHOLARSHIP

MAX CALSAFERRI, the son of Mr. A. Calsaferrri, a well-known driver at Warragul, has recently won a scholarship offered by the Australian Paper Manufacturers Association which provides 3 years residence at the Forestry Commission's School at Creswick.

When Max has completed his course, he will be appointed to the Wood Procurement Branch of the Paper Company.

Max's father is a vigorous and popular engineman who entered the Department in 1920 and was wounded in the first Great War in the course of 3 years service. He has been stationed at Warragul since 1941.

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

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

APRIL, 1945

Issue No. 175.

The Work Of England's Railway Staff In The War

ONE of the most interesting chapters in that arresting booklet "British Railways in Peace and War," pays tribute to the calibre and courage of the British railways staff and incidentally reveals the extent of feminine participation in this great industry. Here are some extracts:—

"The total staff employed by British Railways and London Transport is 668,145; of these 114,000 are men and the wages bill for 1943 was £2,562,000.

"The successful fulfilment of all demands which the war has made on the railways has occasioned unremitting toil on the part of their staff. These men and women have a record of dogged endurance and self-sacrifice which they can be justly proud of. A body they have never failed to respond to any calls made upon them in the circumstances of war.

Despite the arduous nature of their work, despite the difficulties of black-out and the press of winter's storm, despite attacks from the air, railwaymen and women are "on top of the job" mentally and physically, and they are in no way dismayed by the prospect of still heavier demands likely to be made upon them.

Work Of Women

Just over one-sixth of the staff are women. Before the war 26,000 women were employed mostly in clerical capacities as shorthand-typists, machine operators, telegraph and telephone operators. Small numbers were also employed as baggage cleaners, waiting-room attendants, cooks and messroom attendants, crossing keepers and office cleaners.

Now their activities have spread to many other spheres of manual and non-manual work, heavy and light, and not so dirty. They issue and collect your ticket; announce your arrival over the loud-speakers; carry your luggage; collect, sort, load and deliver your parcels. That well-known horse which draws the railway carriage bringing goods to your door is probably driven by a woman and groomed by one.

Women help in the maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock. They work on the permanent way. At railway depots making concrete sleepers is staffed entirely by women.

There are women architects and draughtswomen; crane operators and gas fitters; painters and signalwomen; passenger train guards and motor-van drivers; wood-workers and metal-workers.

Like their sisters in other industries, many railwaywomen have husbands in the Forces, and homes and children to care for. Work does not finish at shift's end, but despite their domestic responsibilities they carry on the war-time jobs with a fine determination, knowing that on them depends the turning of many wheels, wheels of wagons and locomotives rolling over the iron road bearing a thousand and one necessities for the home front and the fighting fronts.

BAD IMPRESSIONS DIE HARD.

THERE is reason for pride in the great job done by the rank and file of railway men and women during the difficult years of the war . . . but the fact remains that the convenience and comfort of our patrons have been seriously affected by the drastic, although unavoidable, restrictions arising from shortage of coal and manpower.

Bad impressions die hard. When competitors are again seeking business—as they surely will be when the existing war-time restrictions are removed—the public may forget the good work done and hold the present disabilities against us.

It is more than ever important therefore that all of us should make very sure NOW in all our dealings with railway-users, that there is no fault in the personal service that we are able to render them.

A cheerful, courteous, and generally helpful attitude towards our patrons can be relied upon, more than all the explanations and assurances, to hold their goodwill and conserve business that will be badly needed after the war.

STILL ANOTHER V.R. MAN WINS THE D.F.C.

CONGRATULATIONS to Pilot Officer H. W. Tinning, who has just been awarded the D.F.C. for fine service in Europe.



Pilot Officer
H. W. Tinning

Pilot Officer Tinning joined the Department as an Apprentice Fitter and Turner at Newport in January, 1939. He enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in November, 1940, and for the past two years has rendered gallant service as a navigator with Bomber Command in England.

He was educated at Toorak Central School and Melbourne Boys' High School, and will be 24 next month.

MR. W. BROMBY RETIRES

MR. W. Bromby, who recently reached the retiring age, has been succeeded as Engineer of Structural Design in the Way and Works Branch by Mr. T. H. Jenkins who has been his assistant in this important section for several years.

Like Mr. Bromby, Mr. Jenkins holds the degrees of B.Sc. and B.C.E. He entered the Department as a draughtsman in the Way and Works Branch in 1920 and is 48 years of age.

Mr. Bromby is being retained in the department for a short period for the purpose of preparing a code for the design of bridge structures and completing an investigation into the impact allowance on railway bridges and stresses in rails. An additional subject which will engage his attention is the life of Australian timbers in bridges.

After he has completed these inquiries, for which his long experience and knowledge make him particularly fitted, he will retire to the placid, but not unprofitable pastime of poultry farming in an agreeably situated property on the Mornington Peninsula.

MR. A. W. KEOWN RESUMES AS SUPERINTENDENT OF REFRESHMENT SERVICES

AFTER an absence of 3 years as Controller of Food Services in the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, Mr. A. W. Keown has resumed his job as Superintendent of Victorian Railways Refreshment Services.

Speaking to the "News Letter" of his Commonwealth work, he explained that his principal task was to design, equip and operate kitchens and cafeterias at a period when Australia's rapidly expanding war effort involved the erection of factories all over the Commonwealth.

At all major Commonwealth factories employing large numbers of workers (very often in three shifts "round the clock"), Mr. Keown had to see to the problem of feeding them comfortably, wholesomely and with the utmost speed, because the average "break" for a meal was only 20 minutes.

In all, he was responsible for the installation of 152 feeding points at munition, explosive, ordnance and aircraft factories throughout the Commonwealth, providing also for naval dockyard, shipbuilding and waterside workers. In all, over 2,500 employees comprised his staff, including architects, engineers, dietitians and other technically trained men and women.

Special Courses of Training

To meet the demands of such a large service and to overcome the dearth of trained catering staff, special courses were instituted whereby cafeteria managers, cooks, catering supervisors, and bookkeepers were trained in various phases of large scale industrial feeding. Text books were specially written, and complete new manuals dealing with accounting, stock recording, provedoring, recipes, and care of plant and equipment, were evolved.

His activities ranged from Fremantle to Townsville, and the variety of his work is shown by the fact that he had to provide all sizes of dining rooms having accommodation for from 50 to 1,000 workers at a sitting.

At a Commonwealth Aircraft factory, 830 men required meals over 3 shifts, and had to be taken in 3 sittings. His biggest undertaking was in keeping the staff at a huge explosives factory in South Australia well nourished and contented. Here there were 3 kitchens and 26 dining rooms—the whole factory embraced 1,400 buildings covering several square miles—and the refreshment service truck had to cover 45 miles on each trip daily.

The necessities of rapid feeding were responsible for the design of an ingenious cafeteria race which was extremely valuable, and because of war shortages it was also necessary in some cases to design special cooking equipment.

Mr. Keown speaks highly of the readiness of the thousands of men attending the cafeterias to co-operate in the plan made for their refreshment, even to the extent of returning their dirty dishes to the washing point, and he has a warm word of commendation for the waterside workers throughout Australia, who were particularly well-behaved and grateful for everything that was done for them.

V.R. CASUALTIES.

ALL railwaymen will extend their deepest sympathy to the relatives of Private E. Allen and Private J. McCarthy, A.I.F., two good railwaymen who died whilst prisoners of war. It is also noted with sincere regret that Flt. Sgt. E. S. Symes is reported "Missing."

Before enlistment in July, 1940, Private Allen had been a lad labourer in the Rolling Stock Branch, and after he had gone into khaki was appointed an apprentice coppersmith. He was born in 1922. Private McCarthy, a labourer in the same Branch, enlisted in June, 1940. He entered the Department in 1933 and was 28 years of age.

Flt. Sgt. Symes entered the Transportation Branch in 1939. He was a junior clerk in the Melbourne Goods and enlisted in 1941 in his 19th year.

Mr. R. E. B. Lee on Loan to Federal Dept. of Works

MR. R. E. B. Lee, Auditor of Revenue is now on loan to the Federal Department of Works for an indefinite period for the purpose of carrying out special investigation work.

Mr. Lee, who joined the Department in 1916, was originally a junior clerk in the Rolling Stock Branch. In 1918 he enlisted in the A.I.F. and resumed duty in 1920, subsequently transferring to the Bendigo Loco. In 1923 he was granted extended leave to visit America where he had some railway experience. On his return three years later he was employed in the Accountancy Branch. In 1928 he was transferred to the Secretary's Branch for a period, and in 1933 he was appointed Assistant to the then Auditor of Revenue, Mr. J. A. McTaggart, whom he succeeded in 1935.

Mr. Lee is a Bachelor of Commerce and a qualified Accountant.

During Mr. Lee's absence Mr. C. J. Savage will act as Auditor of Revenue. He entered the Railways in 1897 serving in the Auditor of Receipts Branch which was amalgamated with the Accountancy Branch in 1932. He has been in charge of the Powers Machines and Goods Credit Division in this Branch since 1936.

Great Success of Tourist Bureau's Enquiry Section

THE remarkably efficient telephone system in the Enquiry section at the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau has fully justified its installation. Since December 23, 1943, when the system was first put into service, well over 1,000 telephone enquiries have been registered—a daily average of approximately 20 inquiries covering all the subjects of potential railway users want to know—fares, train times, changes, connecting road services, times country trains arrive, etc., etc.

This service has proved of immense benefit and its great attraction is that it is available every day of the week—from 8 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays and from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays.

Whilst the telephone enquiries during the week keep busy a staff of a dozen, including 10 women, the heaviest demand for information is on Saturday mornings and over holiday periods. Calls over Saturday and Sunday average between 4,000 and 5,000 and at the "peak" a total of 615 per hour has been registered over 10 per minute!

During holiday periods the service is strengthened to meet the increased business. Over the last Christmas week-end, Saturday and Sunday, December 23 and 24, 5,800 people made their enquiries by telephone. The number of enquiries over the following New Year week-end was only 700 but at the Australia Day week-end the total almost reached 6,000—the biggest figure yet recorded.

The efficiency of the system, of course, promoted by the use of electrically operated arrangements which ensures that every enquiry is taken strictly in turn, immediate assistance given and the next enquiry brought automatically to the attention without manual switching.

An illuminated indicator in the telephone room (a replica of which is now installed in the office of the Manager of the Bureau) enables the Officer in Charge to observe the number of enquiries waiting and receiving attention, so that temporary staff adjustments can be made to meet fluctuating demands.

ENLISTMENTS.

A.I.F.
LAD Lbr. A. W. Anstif; Jnr. Clk. R. E. Beam; Lad Lbr. B. A. McKenna; Lad Lbr. C. L. G. Wood.

R.A.A.F.
B'lr. Maker's Asst. C. Chung; Clk. E. H. Davidson; Jnr. Clk. G. Hayes; Jnr. Clk. N. F. Hall; Jnr. Clk. R. Hulland; Porter McCrory; Jnr. Clk. K. J. McGowan; Jnr. Clk. E. S. Murphy; Jnr. W. Scanlon; Jnr. Clk. H. J. Schur; Jnr. Clk. A. E. Stephens; App. M. L. N. Tynan.

R.A.N.
Jnr. Clk. N. E. Wood; Lad Lbr. W. Purchase.

W.R.A.N.S.
Miss S. M. Grey (Jnr. Clk.); Miss J. Quickensted (Jnr. Typist); Audrey Lane (Jnr. Typist).
W.A.A.A.F.
Miss M. E. Simpson (Jnr. Typist).

V.R. RAILWAYMEN WIN SEVERAL DECORATIONS IN THE WAR

THE record for gallantry by Victorian railwaymen serving in the present war is mounting up. To date thirteen have been reported to the "News Letter" as recipients of decorations, and four more are known to have been "mentioned in despatches."

The most decorated of the V.R. men is Flt. Lieutenant Dudley Marrows, who wears the coveted ribbons of the D.S.O. and D.F.C., for a remarkable feat of bravery and cool resourcefulness in saving the crew of a Sunderland after a long battle over the Bay of Biscay against six tanker fighters. He is a member of the Stores Branch staff at Spencer Street Head Office.

Five other railwaymen who won the D.F.C. are Flying Officers James Kearney, John Purves, Kenneth Richards, the late Flt. Lieutenant Richard Henry Roe, and Pilot Officer Robert William Tinning, reference to whom will be found on page 1 of this issue.

Flying Officer Kearney, a promising young accountant, came into notice for shooting down one fighter and destroying two others in a half-hour's action.

Flying Officer Purves, who enlisted in the Electrical Engineering Branch, earned his D.F.C. for skill, courage and devotion to duty in many night flights, often in extremely bad weather.

Manly And Daring

Daring operations in Italy were responsible for Flying Officer Richard's award. Like Flt. Lt. C. W. Miller, D.F.M., who had displayed his merit as an airman in command of a Catalina on our Northern fighting front, Flying Officer Richards is a member of the Secretary's staff at Spencer Street Head Office.

The D.F.C. was awarded posthumously to the late Flt. Lieutenant Roe, originally a clerk in the Rolling Stock Branch, for his valiant attacks on Japanese ships in the North of Australia.

Another possessor of the D.F.M. is Sergeant Observer R. D. Dangerfield, killed in a crash in England, for a striking record in Lancaster raids over Germany.

Among V.R. members of the Australian Army who have been decorated is Captain G. H. Halliday, M.C., the first Victorian railwayman to win a decoration in the present war. This was received for excellent service in the North African campaign. He was another Head Office man (Way and Works Branch, Accounts Division). As a prisoner of war, he recently came into notice again for passing an intermediate examination of the Commonwealth Institute of Accountants. Also awarded the M.M. for

gallant services is Lieutenant G. B. Phurman, a fireman in the Rolling Stock Branch.

The Transportation Branch is represented in this record of honour by Private H.P. Clark, M.M., one of the heroes of Tobruk, by Corporal Jenkins, who was selected for a Military Medal after conspicuous bravery in rescuing an enemy prisoner in Tobruk Harbour, and by Corporal Drew, who wears the ribbon of the D.C.M. for his feat in alone killing four Japanese in New Guinea.

And well earning their place in this splendid record are Flt. Lieutenant K. O. Woodward, the late Pilot Officer K. Millgate, Signalman G. J. Quirk, and Acting Corporal R. N. Beatty, who have all been "mentioned in despatches" for "distinguished service." Flt. Lieutenant Woodward and Pilot Officer Millgate enlisted from the Rolling Stock Branch, and Signalman Quirk was in the Transportation Branch Despatch Office at Spencer Street. Acting Corporal Beatty mentioned for "services in connection with the packing of parachute supplies in New Guinea," was a V.R. motor Driver with a particularly fine record for safe driving.

A Young Railway Girl's Achievement In First Aid

LET us introduce you to Miss Lorna June Lamprell, whose record in First Aid is sufficiently unusual to earn this special complimentary reference.

Although only 17, she is now doing her 4th Year First Aid with the V.R. Ambulance, which will qualify her to sit for the 5th Year Silver Medal, the examination for which is conducted by the Department.

Prior to this achievement she gained at the age of 15, the Home Nursing Certificate, obtaining 90 per cent. of the possible marks. At the same age she also secured the Royal Life Saving Certificate and her 2nd Year First Aid Certificate, the examination for which was conducted by the Department. A year later she also secured the St. John Ambulance Bronze Medal.

Miss Lamprell is one of the bright diligent girls in the Accountancy Branch who operate the microphones connected with the costing system at the Newport Workshops. She joined the Department in February, 1943 and is the only daughter of Mr. R. D. Lamprell, Stationmaster at Spotswood.

Are You Contributing Towards These Boxes Sent To V.R. Men on Service ?



THE above illustration shows the contents of the gift boxes mailed twice a year by the V.R. Patriotic Fund committee to approximately 2500 railwaymen on service. These boxes contain a cake of chocolate, a packet of biscuits, tin of preserved fruit, cigarettes, box of dried fruit and nuts, steam rollers, chewing gum, writing pad, envelopes and pencil. They are expertly packed by volunteers and the appreciation they excite in the V.R. men on service can well be imagined. Are you contributing towards the cost of these boxes? Only 3d. a week deducted from your pay envelope.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR LOADING AND UNLOADING TRUCKS HERE

ONE of the little known V.R. war activities is the work of the volunteers who have given up much of their leisure in assisting with the loading and unloading of trucks at the Railway Goods Sheds in Melbourne. There is nothing spectacular about this labour, but it is of great value in enabling the trucks to be released for further urgent jobs elsewhere and has won the commendation of the Commissioners.

Indirectly, too, it has assisted in prompt release of vital shipping, through better availability of trucks to receive loading.

All sorts of good men are volunteering. Most, but not all, are railwaymen from the clerical and shed staff of the Melbourne Goods, and other sections of the service, but some are volunteering from outside.

These willing workers are busy practically every night and frequently on Saturdays and Sundays as well. Principally they have been used in the Grain Shed to release experienced shed staff for the work at the Perishable Shed and at Newmarket.

The work is constant and the demand for volunteers is constant, too. More railwaymen are asked to volunteer. The rate of pay is approximately 3/6d. per hour.

The accession of fresh strength will be warmly welcomed by the Commissioners, who are anxious in the interests of the public to see trucks released promptly for the work of moving supplies for the Fighting Forces, food, fuel, manures and other vital requirements without which the wartime hardships suffered by the nation would rapidly increase.

New Cremorne Bridge Will Involve Big Signalling Alterations

EXTENSIVE signalling alterations will be involved in connection with the erection of the new Cremorne railway bridge crossing the river at South Yarra.

As the bridge is designed to carry six tracks, one of which will pass through the site of the present signal box on the "up" side of the Brighton-Sandringham line platform at South Yarra station, this signal box will be pulled down and the signalling apparatus required for the power operated signals and points for the new junction will be maintained in the signal box, which was recently erected close to the "up" end of the local Caulfield platform at South Yarra.

The change-over to the new signal box will be made this month.

Signalling arrangements include the erection of a new signal bridge on the Richmond side of the river about 70 yards from the Cremorne Bridge.

This signal bridge, on which will be erected the home signals for governing the rail traffic through the proposed new junction of the local and through Caulfield lines, is 84 feet in length and is supported on legs 34 feet long. The whole structure was built at Spotswood Workshops.

Owing to its length, the main truss of the bridge, which, of course, is designed to span six lines of track, had to be carried from Spotswood to the site at night, after traffic had ceased. Transported on 2 "Q" trucks, the bulky structure was swung into place with the help of two 3-ton cranes with 45 ft. jibs, the whole job being completed in approximately 5 hours.

U.S. Test of Passengers' Travel Tastes

IN an endeavour to discover passengers' likes and dislikes in various aspects of railway travel, the New York Central Railroad recently distributed among more than 5,000 patrons a pocket-size booklet of 60 questions requesting their frank opinions on a number of subjects of manifest interest, such as seating comfort, air-conditioning, lighting, smoking, etc.

The idea behind the questionnaire was to learn the regular passengers' views on what they would expect on the "Post-War Railroad Coach" and a tabulation of the replies revealed that the New York Central's customers are generally well content with the present cars.

It is interesting to note, however, that there was a distinct difference between men and women on their major desires in railway comfort, the men declaring that air-conditioning is the most important feature of travel ease, whereas the ladies found that their conception of travel happiness is a comfortable seat, mostly all plumping for a separate lean-back seat, as is now common on the more important American trains. As regards air-conditioning, the opinion was almost unanimous for the present temperature of 75 degrees to be lowered only in extremely hot weather.

On the subject of smoking in railway cars, the 5,000 replies from both smoking and non-smoking members of both sexes affirmed the desire of a large majority that smoking in the coaches be strictly confined to the smoking accommodation provided.

Another illuminating revelation was that four out of five passengers found that present timetables admirably suited their convenience, whilst 66 per cent. of those questioned declared against any increase in present-day speeds.

AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER MAN IS GRATEFUL

ONE of the warm admirers of the Victorian Railways is Mr. Lawrence B. Sebring Junr. of the New York "Herald Tribune." When Mr. Sebring was in Australia two years ago a friend made him a present of a kangaroo skin. It was forwarded to him in Melbourne, but as he had already departed north the skin came under the care of the Claims Division. He was then found that if it were sent on to Mr. Sebring it would be tanned.

Mr. Sebring forwarded 10/- to the tanning costs, but the firm to which the work was offered declared that it would cost much more than 10/-. As a gesture of gratitude and friendliness, however, to the representatives of the United States it agreed to the 10/- for the job. Mr. Sebring was impressed by the generosity of everybody concerned that he forwarded another £1 which was contributed to the V.R. Patriotic Fund.

In a recent letter to Mr. P. Fankhauser, Claims Agent, Mr. Sebring again records his thanks for the courtesy he received:

"I found the skin all wrapped up just as it came," he says. "I put it among my souvenir and display to be shown at places where I am to speak, and at appropriate times I shall tell the story of how a railway company could take time to do a little favour of this kind for someone it didn't even know".

V.R. CONTRIBUTIONS TO WAR VETERANS' HOME APPEAL

THE Committee of the Victorian Patriotic Fund was recently asked by the Lord Mayor (Sir Thomas Nettlefold) to contribute to the War Veterans' Home Appeal—a handsome scheme for the provision of cottages for veterans of both the present and previous World Wars. Immediately recognising the value of an appeal of this kind in Victoria, the Committee handed Sir Thomas Nettlefold a cheque for £500. Later on, when the Honorary Secretary of the Victorian Patriotic Fund was visiting Australia to attend the annual meeting of the local Auxiliary, the question of an additional contribution to this war charity was discussed and it was decided by that Auxiliary to contribute £300.

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The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

MAY, 1945

Issue No. 176.

UNIFICATION OF GAUGES

THE LESSONS OF THE WAR

WHATEVER doubts may previously have been entertained as to the need for unifying the Australian railway gauges—and there were many sceptics, even among railwaymen—have been largely removed by the lessons of the present war. With modern equipment a determined enemy could land on Australia or its territories almost without warning. No matter how brave or well trained our defending forces may be, they are of little value until transported within striking distance of the enemy and even then they must be assured of supplies by communications of ample capacity.

No enemy in his senses would attack Australia without having superiority of sea and air power; our armies must, therefore, depend largely on land transport—mainly by railways. The present war in Europe has time and again proven the decisive importance of railways. Moreover, in Australia the railways are the only transport medium not dependent on imported fuel.

REPORT BY SIR HAROLD CLAPP, K.B.E.

Realising the vital importance of the subject, the Commonwealth Government deputed Sir Harold Clapp, K.B.E., to investigate and report on the unification of gauges.

His report which was recently submitted to the Commonwealth Authorities emphasises that the justification for standardisation must rest primarily on Defence rather than on economic grounds, and the proposals are framed after due consultation with the Army Authorities. Economic and developmental aspects were also fully surveyed.

Briefly, the recommendations comprise the conversion of practically all broad gauge lines in Victoria and South Australia, together with new construction or conversions to provide standard gauge connections between—

- (a) Fremantle and Kalgoorlie;
- (b) Port Pirie and Broken Hill;
- (c) Bourke (N.S.W.) to a point on the Townsville-Mt. Isa line which is to be converted and connected via the Barkly Tableland to Darwin.

The proposed standard gauge connections are indicated by heavy lines on the accompanying map.

Process of Conversion.

As explained in the "News Letter," the work of standardisation falls within three periods. Firstly, the initial, or preparatory period (estimated in the

case of Victoria at 4 years) during which suitable preliminary works are undertaken, including assembling material and equipment, the construction of new lines, alterations to workshops, locomotive and other depots, goods and livestock transfer yards, new rolling stock and locomotives, conversion of portion of the existing rolling stock, and preparing tracks and structures for actual conversion. Secondly, the conversion period (estimated at 3 years in the case of Victoria) which commences with the actual conversion of tracks, structures, and existing locomotives and rolling stock.

Sir Harold approves of the intended programme of sectional conversions in Victoria (as described in the January "News Letter").

The conversion of locomotives and rolling stock will in general be achieved by the substitution of standard gauge axles and bogies for their existing counterparts. A suitable number of axles and bogies will need to be manufactured beforehand. These works as well as the construction of many new locomotives, cars, vans and goods vehicles, will involve the construction of special workshops for the purpose, and the programme will be of such magnitude as to require the assistance of outside engineering establishments, generally in the manufacture of component parts.

Balance of Scheme.

The conversion of the remaining lines in Queensland and in Western Australia is not recommended pending the completion of the main conversion scheme, while it is not suggested that any change be made in Tasmania, where the 3' 6" gauge is in operation.

Standardisation and Modernisation of Rolling Stock and Equipment.

Sir Harold states that—

"To be fully effective in the national sense, unification of gauges must be accompanied by unification of railway thinking and planning, standardisation of equipment and introduction of modern methods of operation to the greatest extent practicable, with the object of securing maximum efficiency and service. In my opinion, standardisation without modernisation could not be justified."

The point is made that in view of the huge amount of betterment and maintenance work that has had to be deferred during the war years, the greatest opportunity in history will be afforded the railway authorities for modernising their systems.

It is stated that the Australian railways are operating many different types of passenger cars and brake vans, a great number of types of freight

(Continued on page 2)

SIR HAROLD CLAPP'S REPORT ON UNIFICATION OF GAUGES (continued)

waggon, and over 100 different types of locomotives, which vary widely in design and operating efficiency even when intended for similar service. It is contended that standardisation would vastly simplify and cheapen design, tooling and production, reduce the holdings of spare parts, and lead to considerable economies in maintenance costs. Central engineering designing and laboratory staffs are suggested.

Many aspects of railway policy are involved in the references to modernisation, and a summary of Sir Harold's comments, under various headings, is given hereunder.

Scientific Advances.

The enormous advances in engineering science and production under the stimulus of the present war have opened up a most promising field for the use of new materials to give better or more efficient service. These should be exploited to the full if the railways are to reap the maximum advantages. Constant research and experiment costing millions of pounds on improvements to bridges, signals, locomotives, rolling stock, etc., are continuously taking place in the railway systems of Great Britain and the United States of America. The best results, however, demand that equipment and operating procedures be standardised, and more important still that their effective use be not curtailed by the arbitrary limits imposed by existing State boundaries.

Train Speeds.

Developments in air, sea and road transport indicate clearly that if the railways are to hold their place in the post-war world, it is imperative that both passenger and freight train speeds be increased, particularly on Interstate and long Intra-State routes. Standardisation will undoubtedly facilitate the establishment of faster "through" schedules for both passenger and freight services between the respective capital cities and between such cities and their important country centres.

Travel Comfort.

All inter-capital and long distance Intra-State trains should be air-conditioned to prevent the entry of smoke, dust and grit, and to ensure quietness, adequate ventilation and cleanliness; and that up-to-date buffet car service should be provided. Car interiors should also be made attractive by the use of special lightweight materials, comfortable seating, streamlined interior design, and modern shadowless lighting.

Modern Operating Methods.

Greater use should be made of electric traction on dense traffic routes, and modern power signalling and in-

stallations and power operated points should be provided.

The Diesel-electric locomotive, which has many advantages, has proved itself a successful rival of the steam locomotive in several phases of railway operation, and has also become a strong competitor with electrification development of main lines. Such locomotives could be operated with great advantage on some Australian lines, such as the Trans-Continental railway and the proposed Darwin-Queensland line, as the haulage of coal and water would be unnecessary. In the case of the Trans-Continental line, water treatment plants could be eliminated. Diesel-electric shunting engines have abundantly demonstrated their suitability for busy shunting yards and passenger terminals, where they can be worked for approximately 72 hours without refueling.

In the United States of America, Canada and Mexico, the control of safety standards is regarded as of such vital importance to safe operation that all railways and private rail car operators have established one controlling authority, known as the Association of American Railroads, to handle these matters.

Developmental Value of Scheme.

The view is expressed that the proposed standard gauge lines to connect the Northern Territory with the Eastern portion of Australia "should have been carried out years ago in the national interests." The defence aspect is, of course, paramount, but Sir Harold unequivocally expresses the opinion that this portion of the scheme can be justified on other grounds.

The Northern Territory will never enjoy any real development unless connected by rail with the Eastern States, and such a line would greatly benefit the pastoral industry. The logical route is across the Barkly Tableland, which has an assured and plentiful rainfall as well as bore water, and large areas of which, along with other portions of the Northern Territory, can be converted to sheep raising. The railway would enable cattle for meat production to be disposed of at least a year earlier than is generally now possible, saving time, labour and the cost of droving and agistment. The beasts must now be held till a more mature age to fit them for a long journey on the hoof of upwards of 1,000 miles, during which they lose so much condition that they have to be retained for lengthy periods in the fattening areas before they are suitable for marketing. Queensland would gain increased business from the link between the Northern Territory and Townsville, which would bring fat stock direct to the meat works on the Queensland coast.

The route suggested for the Queensland section of the line traverses better country, and would lead to much greater development than the more westerly route proposed in earlier years.

The construction of the Charleville-Blackall line would give Queensland and the Commonwealth a strategic defence line, a pastoral railway, insurance against drought, substantial closer settlement, not only in the area served, but also in adjoining areas, additional permanent and temporary employment, and greater security with improved social conditions in the Central West.

Another economic factor in the standardisation of gauges is the conversion of the Port Pirie-Broken Hill line, which would shorten the distance between Perth and Sydney by 200 miles. This would not only confer advantages in defence transport, but in case of emergency, would enable much of the iron ore now sent by sea from Whyalla to be over-landed from Port Pirie direct to Newcastle. Coal and coke could be sent in the reverse direction from New South Wales to Adelaide and to Port Pirie with a shorter sea route to Whyalla by boat.

In the present war the existence of this link with reinforcements of rolling stock from New South Wales would have been invaluable for movements of troops and military supplies and would have made the position of troops in Western Australia less precarious.

National Outlook.

The report states that it was the experience of Great Britain and the United States of America that diversity of railway gauges retarded national development, and that the advent of a unified gauge initiated an era of increasing co-operation and a broader national outlook which rapidly broke down the artificial barriers between communities.

Through Rating.

Associated with the scheme is the question of modifying the freight rates at State boundaries which may exist as artificial barriers impeding the flow of goods to their natural markets or ports. Freight rates on the individual State railway systems in Australia are normally based on what is known as the tapering system, which provides for a lower rate per ton per mile the farther the goods are hauled. In the case of inter-system traffic the tapering rate stops on the border of the originating State, and for possibly a short haul in the adjoining State a much higher rate applies. The report advocates a system of through rating whereby the tapering rate will operate across the borders of the State to the ultimate destination of a consignment.

(Continued on page 3)

V.R. Achievement in Machine Gun Carrier Production

Sir Harold Clapp's Report on Standardisation—Continued.

With standardisation of gauges there will be less reluctance to move goods Interstate by rail, as the handling at border stations will be eliminated.

In the concluding portion of the report, Sir Harold states that—

"From any serious study of this subject two paramount facts emerge: firstly, that for the safety and well-being of this great country, standardisation of railway gauges will ultimately have to be undertaken (that has been demonstrated only too clearly by the world war); and secondly, that the longer it is deferred the more costly it becomes."

Finance.

Sir Harold was not asked to report on financial aspects as affecting the division of expenditure between the Commonwealth and States. Agreement upon this point, being vital to the scheme now calls for attention.

The estimated cost attributable to the main proposal, i.e., excluding any general conversion in Queensland and Western Australia, is £76,752,000, including £21,484,450 on the Victorian System distributed as under:—

Year	Locomotives and Rolling Stock	
	Tracks and Structures	Rolling Stock
1	£ 978,000	£ 309,709
2	816,500	877,816
3	1,294,600	827,815
4	2,102,377	961,531
5	3,345,675	1,133,833
6	3,283,900	1,133,833
7	3,306,000	1,020,023
8	92,838	
	£15,219,890	£6,264,560

These estimates, however, do not represent the full expenditure necessary for the conversion to be effective. For example, in all systems there is a cessation or lag in the replacement of rolling stock, due largely to the War, which will need to be overtaken in conjunction with the conversion scheme. These associated works will involve a further expenditure estimated at £14,903,845, of which the Victorian portion is £10,152,605, including £1,103,025 for a new locomotive depot at South Kensington.

The total cost of the main scheme is accordingly estimated at over 91 million pounds.

Unification is primarily a national undertaking, and it is hoped that the Federal and State Governments will succeed in reaching agreement as to finance so that this golden opportunity may not be lost.

THE Chairman of Commissioners (Mr. N. C. Harris) recently received the following letter from the Honorable Norman Makin, Minister for Munitions:—

"I would like to add my thanks to those of the Director-General of Munitions, recently conveyed to you, congratulating the Victorian Railways organisation on the splendid achievement in production of over 4,000 Machine Gun Carriers by the Victorian Railways.

"I have been extremely interested in the progress of this project and feel that I would like to express to you and to your Colleagues my personal appreciation of the excellent results which have been achieved in this very important project.

"I would like you to convey to all those concerned my good wishes and the thanks of the Commonwealth for their very great assistance to the Munitions Programme in this connection."

Most of our readers are already familiar with the munition project to which the Hon. Norman Makin refers.

Very few, however, are aware of the fact that in December, 1941, at the urgent request of the Prime Minister, the V.R. Commissioners undertook the management of the complete undertaking—at that time the largest of all munition projects—for the whole of Australia.

Carriers were then being produced at the Victorian and South Australian Railways Workshops, and at the Fitzroy Works of the Metropolitan Gas Company. The Ford Motor Company, Sydney, also held an assembly contract, and later, by direction of the Federal Government, a contract for a limited number of Carriers was placed in Western Australia.

In addition to the manufacture of Carriers in four States, the project included tremendous provision of spare parts. This work alone was shared by a great variety of engineering shops ranging down to small country garages.

This vast undertaking was terminated in February last (owing to the altered character of the war) and it has been elsewhere recorded that the Commonwealth had every reason to be grateful not only to the Officers controlling the activity—the Controller of the Machine Gun Carrier Section (formerly Mr. C. Weate and latterly Mr. J.W. McNamara) and his staff, including the Production Manager (Mr. K. F. Cox)—but particularly to thousands of loyal and capable workers concerned and their supervisors, for the very efficient manner in which Carrier and Carrier Spares production had been handled during the period of the V.R. control of the project.

Boilermakers, Blacksmiths, Car Builders, Coppersmiths, Fitters and Turners, Toolmakers, Upholsterers and Welders, all contributed to the great effort at Newport and the other centres, and we must not forget the work of the employes in the countless small firms referred to above.

Some idea of the magnitude of the task undertaken is shown by the following statistics:—

Number of contracting firms	
Victoria	261
New South Wales	299
South Australia	11
Western Australia	63
Queensland	10
	644

The co-operation of all these firms under the central control of the Victorian Railways was responsible for the completion of over 4,000 Machine Gun Carriers, and Spares for over 5,500 Carriers of the various types, including a number of special units for carrying such weapons as mortars and 2-pdr. guns, to the total value of over £6,000,000.

A useful by-product of this performance is that a number of capable railway officers have had valuable experience in the handling of a thoroughly decentralised project. This experience will be of great value if the standardisation of railways proceeds.

Another helpful factor was that the State Government agreed to suspend the normal procedure necessitating Government approval as to purchase of materials.

Retirement of Mr. W. Burch

WARM, heartfelt compliments were conspicuous in the farewell speeches to Mr. W. Burch, when he recently retired after a record service of over 52 years at the Newport 'shops. The big meeting of workmates, of which Mr. Jack Precious was Chairman, made Mr. Burch a present of a well-filled wallet of notes, handed to him by Sub-Foreman Mr. Ivan Dee.

It was Mr. Burch's sentiment regarding his service which took him on his last day to the steam hammer on which he had worked when he first entered the 'shops as a lad of 12½ years.

After his early career in the Smithy, he moved to the Machine Shop, and following employment for some time as a driller he was classified as an iron machinist—a job he held until his retirement.

Mr. Burch had an unblemished record, and his popularity was tremendous. In his leisure he was an enthusiastic amateur gardener, and some of his dahlias, carnations and asters exhibited at the 'shops aroused great admiration. Also he revealed some skill as a writer of light verse. His efforts recording in rhyme sundry episodes at the 'shops, showed a nice turn of phrase on several occasions.

WHAT THE BRITISH RAILWAYS HAVE DONE IN THE WAR

Activities of Ararat Social Club.

THE Ararat Loco. Social Club is entitled to a hearty round of cheers for its excellent work on behalf of various charities.

Started modestly in August, 1942, with contributions from the fortnightly pay envelopes, the Club has since devised various other means, such as gymkhanas, sports meetings and carnival balls, for helping the good cause.

To date it has raised about £1200, the principal distributions being:—

Ararat Base Hospital	560
Railways Patriotic Fund	169
Girls' Friendship Club (2nd A.I.F.)	165
Prisoner of War Fund	156
Aust. Comforts Fund (Ararat Branch)	72
Parcels for Soldiers (ex Loco. Depot)	50

Of the amount donated to the Hospital, £300 is a cot endowment in the Children's section. The cot has been named the "Harry Blake Cot" in memory of Pilot Officer H. Blake who has been killed in action. Prior to enlistment in 1940, Pilot Officer Blake, who was 25 years of age, was a clerk at the Ararat Loco. Depot. He joined the Department as a junior clerk at Ararat in 1936.

At a happy, enjoyable social at the Ararat Railways Institute some weeks ago, Mr. F. J. Martin, District Rolling Stock Superintendent, Geelong, presented the Vice-President of the Ararat Hospital (Mr. G. Bell) with two cheques, one for £158, being the final endowment payment on the "Harry Blake Cot," and the other, for £90, the first payment towards assisting the post-war job of rebuilding the nurses' quarters at the Hospital.

* * * *

Following on the lines of the entertainment at the Annual V.R. Institute Dinner, Seymour and Benalla Patriotic Fund Committees have adopted a similar form of entertainment for their respective centres. They recently enlisted the aid of the General Secretary (Mr. W. E. Elliott) in the organisation of two concerts, one at Benalla on April 26, and the other at Seymour on the following night.

These concerts, which were held in the local Shire Halls, enabled local railwaymen and their friends to renew the acquaintance of several metropolitan artists, including Mr. Tom Lockhead, Scottish entertainer, and prominent figure at Sunday afternoon entertainments for the Fighting Forces at the Melbourne V.R. Institute. Mr. Lockhead assisted Mr Elliott in the organisation of these events from which it is expected that the local Patriotic Fund will benefit by more than £100.

"STATISTICS Relating to the War Effort of the United Kingdom" is the title of a booklet which includes some interesting comments regarding the achievement of the British Railways during the years of the war.

"In studying these statistics," it is explained, "it should be remembered that the vast organisation of the British economy which the figures show has been carried through in particularly difficult living and working conditions. For five years men and women have lived and worked under complete black-out. Family life has been broken up, not only by the withdrawal of men and women to the Services, but by evacuation and billeting. Production has been made more difficult by the dispersal of factories to frustrate the air attacks of the enemy, and by the need for training new labour to unaccustomed tasks. There have been two long periods when work was carried on under constant and severe air attacks. Since 1940, 1½ million men have given their limited spare time, after long hours of work, for duty in the Home Guard. Most other adult male civilians and many women have performed part-time Civil Defence and Fire Guard duties out of working hours."

Regarding the railway position in Britain during the war, it is stated that there has been an increase of about 10 per cent. in the total number of passenger journeys. To a considerable extent this rise has been caused by the increased travelling of members of the British Forces and the large number of American and other Allied Forces stationed in the United Kingdom.

The average length of journeys has increased so that the number of passenger-miles is estimated to have risen by about 60 per cent. The facilities for carrying this increased traffic could not be provided during the war, and, in fact, there has been a reduction in the number of passenger trains running as well as the withdrawal of many long-distance trains. As a result the number of passenger train miles is now 30 per cent. below the pre-war level, and the average load carried by passenger trains is 125 per cent. greater than before the war.

In a striking table it is shown that where the number of loaded train miles in passenger services had dropped from an average of 268 millions in pre-war years to 194 millions in 1943, the total number of journeys over the same period had increased from 1,177 millions to 1,268 millions.

Increased transport for essential war purposes had been responsible for the reduction in passenger rail facilities. Furthermore, the strain on the railway system had been greatly increased by the diversion of shipping from

London and the South and East Coasts ports.

Also, since the beginning of the war the tonnage of freight carried by the railways, and the average length of haul, have both increased. Measured by ton miles the work of the railways has increased by about 40 per cent.

The following table reveals the growth of freight train traffic on British main line railways up to 1943:

	Loaded Train Miles Millions	Original Tonnage of Merchandise Mined, Quarried, etc.—Total in millions tons
1935-38 Average	120	268.2
1939	124	284.3
1940	133	289.2
1941	131	283.3
1942	135	291.4
1943	135	297.2

In the "Road" section it is stated that "the total number of private motor cars licensed has fallen from 2 million in August, 1939, to 700,000 at the beginning of 1944, and their use has been restricted to essential purposes. The amount of motor spirit used for private cars is now only about one-eighth of what it was before the war."

"At the outbreak of war a special allowance of motor spirit was made available to all private car owners to which was added a supplementary ration for essential purposes. In 1942 the unconditional ration of motor spirit was abolished and control was obtained over the use of all motor spirit issued. Apart from saving fuel a similar step was taken to conserve rubber which became in short supply after the loss of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies."

DEATH OF CAPTAIN W. S. REDPATH.

THE "News Letter" regrets to report the death of Captain W. S. Redpath, a railwayman with a long and valuable military record who did fine work as an amenities officer smoothing out the utmost sympathy and tact, many domestic difficulties for men of the A.I.F.

Captain Redpath, who was 35 years of age, served for 3½ years in the First A.I.F. and joined the 5th Battalion of the A.M.F. in 1924. He became an area officer in 1942 and in April, 1944, he was appointed to the post of amenities officer.

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

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THE BRITISH RAILWAYS CONSIDER POST-WAR SERVICE

IN this final extract from that illuminating and vastly human document, "The British Railways in Peace and War," we get some interesting references to British railway thought on post-war service, which are all the more interesting because of the termination of the war in Europe.

"It is inevitable that when the war is over," says the publication, "it will take some time for the British railway machine to recover from its tremendous task and dilapidation during the war. Its effort must be concentrated on war requirements until—as Mr Bevin picturesquely puts it—"the whistle blows."

"Reconstruction in the senses of orientation and rehabilitation will be essential. The war has changed the normal flows of traffic, and many new industrial areas have been created which at present are employed on war production, but are capable of adaptation to the needs of peace. Railway transport plays so large a part in the life of the community that any reconstruction or post-war planning of cities, towns and villages must inevitably include the consideration of the transport problems which will present themselves in the post-war period.

"It is the policy of the railways to look ahead, and for some time past, despite war demands, post-war planning and reconstruction have engaged their attention. The subject is not being dealt with as a domestic or provincial matter, but in its widest sense, in that the closest touch is being maintained with local authorities throughout the country in order that new works and reorganisation schemes of the railways shall be in accord with the needs of the community. The aim is that their plans and those of the great cities and industrial areas shall march together.

"Throughout the country the railways are already working with the regional planning officers of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and many meetings have taken place with civic authorities. For some time past an intra-railway committee has been sitting, and has assembled evidence and data upon various phases of the internal operation of railways, so that when the time arrives for new stations, goods depots, marshalling yards, or other great works to be put in hand, there will be for each an

ideal arrangement, limited only in its attainment by such restricting factors as geographical considerations and other local circumstances.

"The railways are vital in war, and they are just as vital in peace. The work which is now taking place will ensure that they knit in with the needs of the post-war community.

"When peace comes the railways are planning to increase the already high level of efficient transportation to take their place in the post-war world. The confidence of the British public in their railways to meet their needs will be held and enhanced.

GOOD SERVICE . . .

IT would be entirely wrong to think of good service merely in terms of train frequency, or speed or comfort. The quality of the personal service which each of us gives to our patrons is at least equally important.

More and faster trains will not efface a passenger's memory of a rudeness; nor more comfortable riding cause him to forget the irritation caused by a disobliging employe.

Whatever mechanical improvements in railway service are possible, the post-war future still holds its threat of active competition, in new as well as the old familiar forms. It can be faced with confidence only if all of us, in our daily contacts with railway users, show unmistakably that we are endeavouring to uphold the reputation long held by the Victorian Railways for friendly and obliging service.

"The fulfilment of future plans depends largely upon circumstances beyond the control of the transport undertakings. On the day that the Germans said they had had enough, another memorable instruction went out from the railways and London Transport's headquarters to the staff at

Modernisation of Newport "A" Power Station

FOLLOWING the recent completion of the first stage of modernising the steam raising and generating plant in the Newport "A" Power Station the Department will shortly be calling for new plant for the second stage of the work. This will involve replacing six of the existing boilers and one turbo-alternator by two new boilers of greater aggregate capacity and a turbo-alternator approximately three times the capacity of the old turbine.

The alterations, which are roughly estimated to cost £840,000, will involve modifications to the existing boilerhouse structure and new coal and ash handling equipment.

The two new boilers will each be capable of steam production of 287,500 lb. per hour, actually a greater power output than eighteen old boilers of the chain grate type, each of which has a capacity of only 30,000 lb. per hour.

The new turbo-alternator of 37,500 kW. rating will be far more efficient than any of the old turbo-alternators of a 12,500 kW. to 14,000 kW. rating.

The new plant with its pulverising mills will be able to burn any coal, whereas in the old type boilers difficulty has been experienced in burning relatively inferior coal such as Lithgow because of its lower volatile content, and its higher percentage of ash.

By the time the new plant is in operation it may be possible to obtain sufficient supplies of briquettes for Newport Power House, and tenderers are being asked to submit equipment suitable for burning this fuel, as an alternative to New South Wales small coal.

works, garages, depots and stations—to remove, as quickly as possible, all the protective fabric and black-out margins from the windows of trains, buses, trams and trolley-buses—and to 'put up the lights again all over the system.' "



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

GALLANT SERVICE BY V.R. MEN WINS FURTHER DECORATIONS

IT gives the "News Letter" great pleasure to record that two gallant young airmen, Flying Officers K. A. Richards and A. H. Drew, have again been officially noticed for exceptional service and have received bars to their D.F.C.'s. In addition, two other young and valiant V.R. men, Flying Officers W. R. Courtis and J. T. Byrne, have been decorated with the D.F.C., whilst we have also just learned that, during the siege of Tobruk, Major Thurman was awarded the Military Medal.

Flying Officer Richards is a son of Mr. J. A. Richards, S.M. at Warragul, and a former junior clerk in the Secretary's Branch, Spencer Street Head Office. He has been previously mentioned in the "News Letter," particularly for his accurate bombing of ships off the Jugo-Slav. Coast and for his cool audacious attack with others on the big Pescara Dam in Italy, the consequence of which was the destruction of the sluice gates and a vast flooding of the surrounding country.

More recently he has been conspicuous in other difficult operations, and official appreciation is shown not only by the receipt of a bar to his D.F.C. but also by his appointment to the responsible post of Acting C.O. of an all-Australian Mustang Squadron.

Flying Officer Drew, who is the eldest son of Mr. C. T. Drew, a member of the Way and Works Staff Office, and the second in the family to be decorated (another brother, Corporal R. A. Drew of the 37/52nd Infantry Battalion, has won the D.C.M.), has enhanced his fine record on the Western front. The citation referring to the award of a bar to his D.F.C. states baldly but informatively that "Since the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Flying Officer Drew has participated in many operational sorties, including attacks against such heavily defended and important targets as Stuttgart, Cologne and Duisberg. Throughout he has continued to display outstanding skill and initiative which combined with his high courage and unflinching devotion to duty have been most praiseworthy."



Flying Officer
W. R. Courtis, D.F.C.

As regards Flying Officer Byrne the citation states:—

"During his operational career, Flying Officer Byrne has completed a large number of sorties. At all times

he has evinced the greatest keenness and efficiency. A cool and determined gunner he has played no small part in the successes achieved by his crew."

Flying Officer Courtis, who is 29 years of age, is the second member of the staff of a small section in the Accountancy Branch at the Head Office to win the D.F.C. The other was Flying Officer Kearney, D.F.C., mentioned in the "News Letter" in November, 1943. Flying Officer Courtis enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in 1941, and after serving at Milne Bay for about 14 months, he was sent overseas for further important service. He entered the Department as a Junior Clerk in 1933.



Flying Officer
J. T. Byrne, D.F.C.

Flying Officer J. T. Byrne, who was 26 last month, was a Clerk in the West Footscray Goods Shed when he enlisted in 1941. He has had wide experience in bomber operations. After training in Australia he was sent to Egypt in 1941, and started tactical bombing with the 8th Army in the following year. He went through North Africa, Malta, Sicily and Italy, and early in 1944 went to England on instructional duty.

Major E. B. Thurman, M.M., enlisted in June, 1940, as a private, sailed for the Middle East as Sergeant in November of the same year, and was one of the gallant Australians who for so long held the fort at Tobruk. It was there that he won the Military Medal, and we can do no better than quote the official citation referring to that award:

"At Tobruk after his platoon commander, Lieutenant Grey, was lost, Sergeant Thurman took over command. Following heavy divebombing attack on April 30th, the enemy put down an artillery barrage lasting 4 hours.

"Throughout this period Sergeant Thurman showed conspicuous bravery and leadership, and so inspired men under him that the post was able to hold out against what often appeared to be overwhelming opposition."

To that tribute may be added a brief, but highly complimentary reference to his bravery in that striking book



Flying Officer
A. H. Drew,
D.F.C. and Bar.

"Tobruk" written by the A.B.C. War Correspondent, Chester Wilman.

Following Tobruk, Sergeant Thurman was promoted to Lieutenant. He became a Captain in 1943 and Major last year. He is now serving in New Guinea.

He joined the V.R. Service in 1935, and on enlistment was a Fireman in the Rolling Stock Branch. He is 32 years of age.



Major
E. B. Thurman, M.M.

V.R. SOLDIER'S REMARKABLE ESCAPE

LET us here commend the courage and toughness of Private H. L. Matthews of the 2/2 Pioneers, 2nd A.I.F., who was captured by the Japanese in 1941, and had the unusual experience of surviving when the transport carrying him and other unfortunate prisoners of Japan was torpedoed and sunk by an American submarine.

The Jap. transport was torpedoed in September last year, and for a long time Private Matthews was posted "missing" and ultimately given up for dead. News of his remarkable escape—which he has yet to detail—came from the Minister for the Army and was confirmed by the International Red Cross. He is still a prisoner in Tokio.

Private Matthews, who is 33 years of age, enlisted in the 2/2 Pioneers in 1940 and left for stirring events in Europe. He was transferred to Java in 1942 and after being taken prisoner was engaged with other prisoners working on the Burma Railway for the Japanese.

In the Department he was a Porter at Flinders Street and played the football and cricket with V.R.I. teams.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND TOTAL £60,000

UP to the end of April, £59,000 had been raised for the V.R. Patriotic Fund and the total expected to reach £60,000 by the end of May. This represents the voluntary contributions of less than 50 per cent. of the V.R. working staff during the war years, and out of it some handsome donations have been made to those deserving war activities. Though the war in Europe is over, the war in the Pacific still continues and it is therefore necessary to maintain the V.R. Patriotic Fund, not only for the benefit of the V.R. men who are still fighting, but also for those who are prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

In order to increase the Fund the committee recently decided to make a further appeal to the large number of employees still not contributing. This was a special personal letter was sent to every railwayman concerned and the response to date has been encouraging. Over 1,000 have already given permission to deduct 6d. from their fortnightly envelopes and it is hoped that many more will join up. This will mean a substantial annual addition to the fund, and those members of the staff who have not yet agreed to contribute are earnestly requested to do so.

Last month over 2,000 gift boxes were sent to V.R. men and women working in England, America and various parts of the Pacific, and those who were engaged in preparing these boxes were most gratified by the receipt of over 300 acknowledgments from recipients. An example of the appreciation among the boys is this note of appreciation in a letter from F/Sgt. K. Davey, R.A.A.F.: "We are glad to think that for all the extra work forced upon you people these many days you all can still find the time to organise parcels for us." This compliment also from Tel. W. J. English, R.A.N., should not be overlooked: "I have seen the contents of parcels forwarded to members of the Service by different Societies, but I have yet to see one that equals the one forwarded to me by the Fund."

There was a happy little gathering at the Spotswood Workshops last month when Mr. K. F. Wood (Assistant Manager of the Workshops) handed over to Mr. W. A. Perrin, President of the Railway Club (Melbourne) and to Mr. E. J. Putland, Chairman of the Social Committee Division of "Toc", each a cheque of £50 donated to the Spotswood Workshops V.R. Patriotic Auxiliary. Mr. Wood made his presentation in the absence of Mr. R. Leslie, Manager of the Workshops who was unable to attend, and Mr. W. E. Elliott, Hon. Secretary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, was also present.

Spotswood Workshops is full of patriotic activities, not the least of which is the effort of the voluntary workers who have been devoting three or four hours on Saturday mornings to the manufacture of chairs, tables, packing cases and many other useful articles required by the Red Cross. This splendid work started back in 1940 and with one brief interval has been carried on ever since. The team of volunteers numbers about 100 and although each man is only asked to work one Saturday in every four, many of them have worked much more and several have been at the bench practically every Saturday. It is estimated that the value of the articles provided amounts to approximately £2,500—an excellent effort.

Last month this team of workers was invited to a smoke night at the V.R. Institute and a highly enjoyable evening was spent. The refreshments and the speeches were alike hearty and invigorating, and the guests had a special array of superlatives for the singers and other artists, who right royally gave of their best in a programme that was full of good things.

Just a final little note of applause for the good work of the Clunes Railwaymen and Carriers. For the past three years they have been contributing 2/- per pay to the funds of the Clunes Hospital, and up to the end of April they had helped the hospital by approximately £60. Excellent!

A SIMPLE IDEA IS WORTH SELLING

RECENTLY a railwayman noticed that a simple time table alteration on a suburban line would eliminate overcrowding on one train and provide greater service on another. This idea was adopted and the suggestor was suitably rewarded.

That is an example of an idea of value to the Department and its patrons, and illustrates once more the virtue of keeping one's eyes open for improvements that can be made.

Probably there is room for improvement in the routine around you which stares at you every day and can be altered to everybody's advantage.

Look around you and some idea—possibly a valuable one—will occur to you. Write it down and forward it to the Betterment and Suggestions Board, Railways Administrative Offices, Spencer Street, Melbourne.

All accepted suggestions will be paid for and—Remember!—all communications will be kept *Private and Confidential*!

Two V.R. Men Escape From Prison Camp

TWO V.R. men, Private R. Harbrow, 32nd Battalion and Private E. Scealy, 23rd Battalion, A.I.F., who both saw service in Tobruk and were later captured, escaped from their prison camps and managed to return to Australia two or three months before hostilities ceased in Europe.

Both are former repairers in the Way and Works Branch, and both enlisted in 1940, completing their training in Palestine before taking part in the defence of Tobruk where individual heroism was so universal.

Private Harbrow was captured whilst endeavouring with another soldier to rescue a wounded Lieutenant, and it was his fate as a prisoner to experience the meagre menu and lack of comforts in various prison camps in Italy and Germany.

The Italians fed him barely on macaroni and rice. The main and often only feature of the German ration was potatoes, and it was only the excellent Red Cross parcels containing cocoa, sugar, oatmeal, chocolate, preserved meats and other nourishing foods that kept them in reasonable health. At one period he had to toil from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily in a working camp, and he recalls that in certain prison camps vermin at night made sleep almost impossible.

He escaped with the help of Poles and reached Odessa, which city was also the embarking port for Private Scealy, who managed to evade his guards after working in a coal mine for 6 months—a job of 10 hours a day for every day of the week, broken only at periods when repairs had to be made.

Private Scealy, who declares that he was much thinner in Italian than in German camps, learned to play chess and contract bridge in prison. He declares philosophically that his experience, bad as it often was, had some compensations, notably the endurance and quality of friendships when established in hardship and suffering.

ENLISTMENTS.

- A.I.F.
JNR. Clerk J. M. Oliver; Lad Lbr. H.G. Rhode.
 R.A.A.F.
App. Painter G. F. Cole; Jnr. Clerk K. C. McDonald; Jnr. Clerk H. H. McKenzie; Jnr. Clerk M. L. Meyer; Lad Lbr. E. J. Nance; Jnr. Clerk W. E. O'Donoghue; Lad Lbr. F. W. Symons; Lad Lbr. A. White; Jnr. Clerk S. R. White.
 R.A.N.
Jnr. Clerk R. A. Bland; Lad Lbr. E. C. Brett; Lad Lbr. J. Briscoe; Lad Lbr. N. S. Caldwell; Lad Lbr. M. Devereux; Lad Lbr. D. J. Guy; Lad Mssgr. G. M. Jarrett; Jnr. Clerk R. P. Perry; Jnr. Clerk A. F. Ramsay; Boiler-maker R. A. Stone.
 W.R.A.N.
Misses J. E. Edwards and M. Lucas (Car Cleaners).

POPULAR SIGNAL SUPERVISOR RETIRES

THERE was a great gathering of over 100 friends from all Branches when Mr. A. E. Porter, Signal and Telegraph Supervisor, retired last month. Mr. W. Forrest, Signal and Telegraph Engineer, was Chairman of the proceedings, and in a happy speech made reference to the outstanding qualities of Mr. Porter. He was warmly supported by his second in command, Mr. C. B. Young, and by other speakers, and the guest was overwhelmed when on top of the speeches he was presented with a well-filled wallet of notes.

Mr. Porter, who had completed 50 years and 5 months' service, entered the Department as a supernumerary in December, 1894. Later he became an Apprentice Instrument Maker in the Telegraph Workshops, Spencer Street, and in 1899 the Commissioners agreed that his apprenticeship should commence from the date of his joining the railways in 1894.

After being stationed at Flinders Street station where the traffic at the time was accommodated on four or five lines, he was transferred to the country, where he assisted in installing electric staff instruments. He was electrical Fitter-in-Charge at Seymour and other districts and became Foreman at Flinders Street in 1918. He subsequently rose through several supervising jobs to his final post of Signal and Telegraph Supervisor, which he attained in 1936.

Mr. Porter, who enjoys life to the full, is extremely fond of swimming and fishing. Another of his early hobbies was amateur acting. He was a member of the old Dagonet Society and appeared in several shows presented at Williamstown and Footscray. But his greatest thrill as an actor was to appear in small parts with Bland Holt and Dan Barry, when those two well-remembered actor-managers were the Kings of Melodrama in the Melbourne theatrical world.

"N. C. HARRIS" PRIZE—EXAMINATION RESULTS.

THE results of the "N. C. Harris" Special Prize Examination held on March 7 last in Station Accounts and Management, Safeworking, Engine Working and Westinghouse Brake, and in Permanent Way Construction and Maintenance, are as follows—

"A" Division—Station Accounts and Management.

W. J. Richards, Porter, South Yarra.

"B" Division—Safeworking.

F. J. Blencoe, Clerk, Melbourne Yard.

"C" Division—Engine Working and Westinghouse Brake.

H. J. Dixon, Fitter and Turner, Ararat.

"D" Division—Permanent Way Construction and Maintenance.

H. S. Bullen, Works Sub-Foreman, Mangalore.

The V.R.'s Champion Grower of Chrysanthemums Wins Again

LAST October the "News Letter" made a brief, complimentary reference to an Electric Train Driver Mr. B. Hubbard, whose patience and skill in the production of magnificent chrysanthemum blooms has earned over 200 prizes.

In the season mentioned in that reference, Mr. Hubbard had won 24 first prizes. In the season just closed he is again conspicuous with a record of 2 Championships, 10 First and 7 Seconds, secured at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show in the Melbourne Town Hall on April 26 and 27, and subsequently at the Brunswick and Box Hill Shows. At the Show in the Melbourne Town Hall he secured for the third time (the previous occasions were in the years 1942 and 1944) the Blue Ribbon for the best bloom in the Show—a magnificent William Turner white chrysanthemum which was the admiration of all who saw it.

Mr. Hubbard regularly delivers lectures on his favourite subject and can be heard for a couple of hours once a month at the Victorian Railways Institute, Flinders Street. Any gardeners who desire to hear these lectures can secure full particulars from the Secretary of the Institute, Flinders Street Station, or the Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society, 27 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne.

The value of these lectures has been widely demonstrated. Amateurs who have regularly and attentively listened to Mr. Hubbard have won prizes in open competition at various shows and it was in recognition of the value of his "talks" that he received recently from his grateful students a handsome silver tray. The presentation was made to the accompaniment of warm appreciative words by Cr. W. J. Brens, Chairman of the Parks and Gardens Committee of the Melbourne City Council, who is also Vice-President of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Good War Record of Lieut. A.D.K. Sullivan

ENLISTING for active service soon after the declaration of war in 1939, Lieutenant A. D. K. Sullivan is another railway man whose patriotism and courage have won him promotion in the field.

A repairer in the Way and Works Branch on enlistment, he embarked as a private in April, 1940. Twelve months later he had three stripes and he became a Warrant Officer 2nd Class early in 1942. He received his commission in February last year.

He has seen service in the Middle East and Syria and since his return in 1942 he has been actively engaged in New Guinea.

Our congratulations and thanks!

Ararat Accident Reveals Value Of First Aid

IN the Ararat Loco. Yard recent Driver P. Farrelly was accidentally struck by a rail motor and sustained severe injuries to his left leg.

On being informed, Mr. R. West (a member of the Ararat No. 1 Ambulance Corps) who was the Driver of the rail motor, made an examination of the injured man and found blood spurting from an artery. He immediately applied digital pressure to the femoral artery at the groin, and at the same time sent Fireman H. Fitch to secure a doctor, ambulance and further assistance.

Mr. A. Jamieson, Superintendent of the No. 2 Ambulance Corps, Fireman Corbett, who was the Driver of a St. John Ambulance Certificate were quickly on the scene. Mr. Jamieson immediately applied a tourniquet on the femoral artery (while digital pressure was still being held by Mr. West) and then with the assistance of the others, cleaned, dressed and securely bandaged the wound to prevent further haemorrhage.

Dr. F. C. de Crespigny, who attended the injured man at the Ararat Hospital, stated that if the patient had not received expert First Aid treatment, he would have died from loss of blood. This accident once again demonstrates the value of First Aid which every railwayman should have good knowledge.

A Former V.R. Man Wins Literary Success

ALITERARY sense developed in the terrors of Tobruk has brought honor and reward to Corporal Rutherford, formerly employed at Melbourne Goods Shed.

Enlisting in a Field Ambulance in June, 1940, he sailed abroad in October of the same year and served in Tobruk twice, including 6 months of active service. After returning to Australia he braved further heavy weather at Milne Bay, Buna, Sanananda, the Markham and Ramu Valleys in New Guinea.

He started writing in Tobruk but it was during the New Guinea campaign that his graphically written stories and articles caught the attention of the Melbourne "Herald," which published his "Lik Lik Dog," "Ramu Valley Ferry Bus" and "Question of Time."

He has since contributed successfully to the Sydney "Sun," "African Women's Weekly," "Life," and the "Western Mail" (Perth), but his greatest performance was to win Second Prize with the story "Airborne to Nadzab" in the Christmas book, "Jungle Warfare."

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

The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

JULY, 1945

Issue No. 178.

STANDARDIZATION OF RAILWAY GAUGES Involves Standardization of Rolling Stock

IN his comprehensive report to the Commonwealth Government, a summary of which was published in a recent issue of "News Letter," Sir Harold Clapp has detailed his recommendations for the standardization of railway gauges throughout the continent of Australia. Sir Harold agrees with the Army view that a substantial measure of standardization is a military necessity to the security of Australia. He also stresses the experience of the present war that for mass movements by land of troops and their material requirements, there is no substitute for railways. The immediate recommendations to meet strategic requirements (including full conversion of Victorian broad gauge railways) will involve an expenditure of about £91,000,000.

The whole work of conversion in Victoria as proposed by the Commissioners, should be completed in 7 years. In addition to the construction of a number of new locomotives and rolling stock units, the scheme entails conversion of 300 of the existing Victorian steam locomotives, 12 electric locomotives, 1,534 cars and vans (bogie type), 526 "Z" vans, 17,000 wagons, 176 private tank cars, and 38 rail motors and tractors. New steam locomotives to be provided will include 90 "R" passenger, 95 goods and 70 electric engines, and it should be noted here that the Commissioners' preference (representing all systems) is to limit the number of different types of new locomotives to eleven for types of service throughout Australia.

Standardization of Rolling Stock.

In order to obtain the maximum benefits of gauge standardization, it is, of course, necessary to standardize rolling stock, both with respect to major dimensions and the design of detail parts, especially those subject to wear or damage.

Structure gauges representing the dimensions of tunnels, bridges, viaducts, etc., and maximum dimensions of rolling stock have been determined so that practically all vehicles should be able to move to almost any part of Australia where a 4-ft. 8½-in. gauge has been applied.

Touching the need to standardize detail parts, we may take as examples brake blocks, axle boxes and brasses, wheels and axles, springs, etc. If each system had its own design of detail parts, a vehicle requiring a simple replacement when in a distant State would have to wait weeks for a new one, and would be necessary for each system

to carry stocks of all the types used in all the other States.

In these circumstances, the prompt servicing of vehicles when in another State would be difficult and the only solution is the adoption of standard parts for all systems.

Much discussion has already taken place on the standardization of rolling stock, and considerable progress has been particularly achieved by agreement on the maximum dimensions of rolling stock as to height, length and width, and spacing of bogies. One

NEVER AGAIN! . . . ?

"I WILL never go to that place again. I could not even get civility!" is the most destructive criticism that can be offered against any business. One churlish employe amongst a large staff may have been the culprit, but the whole establishment is judged by his conduct.

Discourtesy is, happily, a rare fault in Victorian railwaymen. But, here and there, it does exist. Worry, ignorance, or merely "swelled head" may be responsible, but whatever the cause, disagreeable behaviour of the kind can be corrected with a little determination.

We simply cannot afford to have people say of the railways: "I will never go there again!" In the times ahead we are going to need all the business we can get. Conduct that will turn it away is as short-sighted as it is inexcusable. Apart from the reputation of the service, it destroys the self-respect which every employe must have if he is to be happy in his relations with his fellow-men.

important matter of detail is the handbrake. In different States there are various forms of handbrake in operation, each familiar to its own shunters.

With standardization and the interchange of rolling stock, not more than two types of handbrake would have to be adopted. It has been agreed that the standard brake will be a wheel type which can be operated from either side of the vehicle, in spite of the proven advantages of the one-sided drop lever type.

One Type of Sheep Truck.

Sheep trucks may also be cited. South Australia, for example, has in use a sheep truck with doors fitted to each end of the truck. A line of trucks thus equipped, and with all the doors open, becomes a long race into which a large number of sheep may be driven. But Victoria and New South Wales load and unload sheep from the side of the truck. To meet the needs of all systems in this case it will be necessary for a number of trucks to be equipped for both end and side loading.

These are only some of the many problems presented by standardization, but whilst the initial labour will be great and the cost heavy, standardization from a strategic point of view and the greater simplicity in working that must result, will confer outstanding benefits of incalculable value in the future land transport of Australia.

ENLISTMENTS

A.I.F.

PAINTER G. R. McKenzie; Jr.
Clk. E. P. Nicholas; Jr. Clk. I. J.
Stewart; Lad Lbr. N. H. Wickham.

R.A.N.

Lad Lbr. W. R. Cousins.

COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE WATER USED IN LOCOMOTIVES

ALTHOUGH some of the water used for locomotives in country districts is excellent, particularly in the North East, there are other places in the State where it contains a large amount of solids in suspension or minerals in solution. The water used for locomotives is obtained from many different sources, such as large reservoirs feeding city supplies, direct from rivers, from storages filled by running water through channels, from bores, and from excavated dams with relatively small catchment areas.

Large reservoirs feeding through pipe lines supply water of good quality free from solids, but in certain cases, notably in the Mallee districts, water which is of good quality at the source of supply is contaminated whilst passing along earthen channels and also whilst standing in its final storage. Evaporation and salt seepage play a large part in raising the salt concentration in storages, a typical example being Hopetoun, where the solid is 30 grains per gallon when the storage is filled and rises to 140 grains per gallon towards the end of summer.

River water is usually good, but water pumped from bores is invariably bad, being heavily charged with scale-forming salts.

Certain stations such as Diapur and Derrinallum have railway dams, but, because of the nature of the catchment area, the water at these two places is heavily charged with very small particles of clay, which remain in suspension whilst in the dam but when the water is used in a locomotive boiler the clay separates out, forming an insulating layer on the firebox plates. This prevents proper heat transfer from the fire to the water, thus causing overheating of the plates and reducing the steam producing capacity of the boiler.

The corrosive and scale-forming action of waters containing high concentrations of mineral salts, though always present, becomes aggravated during dry spells such as that just passed through, when alternative supplies are drawn upon and the salt content increases in the normal water storages.

The detrimental effect of bad water on locomotive performance is so extensive that it has been decided that an expert committee, consisting of Mr. E. Connor (Engineer of Tests) as chairman, Mr. G. Brown (Superintendent of Locomotive Maintenance) and Mr. W. Stephen (Engineer of Machinery and Water Supply), should immediately investigate the most effective means of improving quality.

It will be the Committee's duty to examine troublesome water supplies, and to advise after each investigation is completed as to prospects of improvement, where warranted, by chemical or other treatment.

In the next issue of the News Letter the effects of bad water on locomotive performance will be dealt with.

Mr. C. H. Mahy, Water Supply Engineer, Retires

MR. C. H. MAHY, a widely known and highly popular engineer of the Water Supply Division of the Way and Works Branch, reached the retiring age last month.

He entered the Department as a junior clerk in the Way and Works Branch in June, 1898, and was steadily enlarging his experience as an engineering student when the Boer War broke out.

The call of military service was too great to resist. He enlisted and departed for South Africa as a private in the 1st Victorian Infantry. He saw active fighting at Belmont, Diamond Hill, Johannesburg and other places in Orange Free State and Cape Colony under Lord Methuen, and later under Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, returning to Australia in January, 1901, and gaining the Queen's medal with five clasps.

In May, 1902, he left Australia as a member of a contingent that travelled to London to represent this continent at the Coronation of Edward VII.

Resuming his studies at the University he became an engineering assistant in the Department. With the ominous days of 1914, and Germany seeking to dominate Europe, he was restless once more and although in the middle "thirties" he left Australia as a Lieutenant with the 10th Field Company of Engineers in 1916. He came back unscathed, but wearing this time the ribbon of the Military Cross, which he won at Messines, and bringing with him a fine record of gallantry in action.

All his life he has been a vigorous outdoor man. In his youth he was a member of the Civil Services Rowing Club, and played ruck in the Way and Works Football team, another member of which was the Hon. R. V. Keane, the Minister for Trade and Customs in the present Federal Cabinet. Also, he was very handy with the gloves. At the University in 1903 he entered, after some persuasion, for the Heavy-weight Boxing Championship, and knocked out his opponent in the second round.

INCREASED DEMAND FOR MEALS ON "SPIRIT OF PROGRESS"

IN the provision of meals, the dining car of "Spirit of Progress" was again broken all previous records. For the 4 weeks ended June 2, fewer than 6958 breakfasts were provided on the "up" journey, and the outward run from Melbourne to Albury, 5924 dinners were served.

The previous record was a total of 6881 breakfasts for the 4 weeks ended May 5, 1945, whilst over the same period 5756 passengers required dinners.

The demand for dinner on "Spirit of Progress" requires no less than five sessions, viz., 6.40 p.m., 7.25 p.m., 8.10 p.m., 8.55 p.m. and 9.40 p.m. In addition, a substantial number of light refreshments are supplied during the day.

The increase in the number of dinners served is shown in the following striking figures revealing the daily average number of dinners provided for the years 1939-1944:—

Year	Daily Average No. of Dinners
1939	94
1940	100
1941	128
1942	153
1943	191
1944	198

To these figures might be added a postscript that for the 4 weeks ended June 2, 1945, the daily average was 211 dinners.

The increased number of meals has necessarily meant more work for the staff of the dining car, and it is a pleasure to record that the additional demand on their labour has been cheerfully and capably met.

V.R. Control Men Help P.O.W. Fund

FOUR years ago Train Control men at Spencer Street Station Office decided to contribute a week towards the Prisoner of War Fund established by the Red Cross for the purpose of providing comforts for prisoners of war in Europe.

These generous contributions were continued through the years, in addition to the regular fortnightly donations from pay envelopes to help the V.R. Patriotic Fund.

On the collapse of Germany and the resultant release of prisoners, it was decided to close the Fund and is now the "News Letter's" pleasure to record that this small group of railwaymen raised the substantial sum of £190 4s. Congratulations on this excellent achievement!

ACHIEVEMENTS IN SAFETY DRIVING BY V.R. ROAD TRANSPORT MEN

V.R. Road Motor drivers continue to maintain their high percentage of achievements in the National Safety Council's Freedom from Accidents Competition.

In the year 1943-44, 77 per cent. of the drivers had qualified for awards—a highly gratifying result to which Mr. Remfry, General Superintendent of Transportation, alluded in a complimentary speech on presenting the medals and certificates to the recipients last month. Mr. R. S. Forbes, Secretary of the National Safety Council, also congratulated the men on their splendid performance. "I can assure you all," he added, "that your record is one to be proud of, and if everyone had similar records there would not be the sorrow there is today as a result of accidents."

Last month no fewer than 12 drivers received bars to their gold medals for over 10 years' faultless driving. Six of them—Messrs. E. R. Fleiner, L. J. Preston, R. Horne, W. P. L. Keating, L. V. Reed, and L. J. Watson, have records for 14 years; Messrs. A. M. Murray, N. H. Gladwin, and H. F. L. Wehsack (12 years); and Messrs. T. Harris and A. J. Middleton (11 years).

Mr. B. D. Powell of the Electrical Engineering Branch also has a bar to his gold medal for 13 years blameless driving, and Mr. F. V. Chalwell of the Mt. Buffalo Chalet staff has earned a gold medal for 10 years' good work.

The following railwaymen have been awarded bars to their silver medals for driving without mishap over these periods of years:—

- 9 years—Messrs. D. D. Garlick and J. D. McInerney.
- 8 years—Messrs. H. A. Doyle, C. T. Faulkner, T. P. Pritchard, W. G. L. Sidebottom, L. S. Sheppard and W. J. O. Wallis.
- 6 years—Messrs. R. A. C. Nugent, A. A. R. F. Price and K. A. Redfern.

Mr. E. McIntosh (Way and Works Branch) has also earned a bar to his silver medal for 6 years' careful driving. Mr. L. P. Bradshaw (Refreshment Service Branch) joins the Transport group of three—Messrs. A. E. Andrews, J. Baird and R. C. Robinson—who this year received silver medals for 5 years' driving without accident.

It is the practice to award certificates for safe driving for periods of from 1 year to 4 years, and 28 railwaymen received these from Mr. Remfry the other day.

That is a splendid performance, and when we consider the difficulties of driving under present conditions, the record seems all the more meritorious.

A "Hobson's Bay" Veteran Passes On

AN unfortunate street accident was recently responsible for the death, soon after his 91st birthday, of Mr. V. Uniacke, one of the last employees of the old Hobson's Bay Railway Company.

Mr. Uniacke was born at Johnston Street, Collingwood, on 11th May, 1854, and attended the Spring School, North Melbourne, where a notable fellow pupil was the late Dr. Maloney.

Mr. Uniacke joined the Hobson's Bay Company as an engine cleaner at Berwick in 1878 and fired his first engine in 1880. He transferred to

V.R. CASUALTIES

ALL railwaymen will extend their deepest sympathy to the relatives of Sergeant George Killingbeck and Private E. W. Pitson, A.I.F., killed in action and of Private E. J. Borham, A.I.F. who was accidentally killed on service. It will also be noted with deep regret that Flt. Sergeants K. G. Holloway and L. L. Hall, R.A.A.F., have been reported "Missing."

Sergeant Killingbeck, formerly a fireman in the Rolling Stock Branch who was promoted to driver while on service, enlisted in the A.I.F. in July, 1940. He entered the Department in 1928 and was 32 years of age.

Private Pitson, who was only 19 years of age, enlisted in August, 1943. At the time of his enlistment he was employed in the Testing Section of the Electrical Workshops, Spencer St. Private Borham, who was 28 years of age, enlisted in January, 1942. He was a Labourer in the Rolling Stock Branch since November, 1939.

Flt. Sergeants Holloway and Hall were formerly Apprentice Fitters and Turners in the same Branch. Flt. Sergeant Holloway, who was born in 1923, joined the Department in January, 1939, and enlisted in May, 1942. Flt. Sergeant Hall started his railway career in August, 1940, and enlisted in April, 1942. He was born in 1924.

Sandridge (now Port Melbourne) in 1880, passed his examination for junior driver in 1883, and finished his railway career as a steam suburban driver on the same route in 1914.

During his long life, he was a charter member and Past President of the Port Melbourne A.N.A. Lodge, with which he had been connected for 70 years. He was also a prominent member of the Port Melbourne Bowling Club.

Mr. Uniacke's wife also lived a long life, for she predeceased him by only 4 years. They had a family of 11. Of the 8 still living two are Messrs. Norman and R. J. "Jack" Uniacke, popular Electric Train Drivers in the Department.

Air Record of Flying Officer K. C. Williams

AMONG the young Australian airmen supporting Montgomery's armies in the invasion of Germany, was Flying Officer Kelvin C. Williams, a member of the staff of the Accountancy Branch in Spencer Street Head Office.

Flying Officer Williams entered the Accountancy Branch in May, 1941, and enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in November, 1942. After doing his initial training as an A.C. 2 he became a L.A.C. In due course, he joined a Senior Flying School at Deniliquin. Here, in September, 1943, he received his wings as a fighter pilot and became a Sergeant. He then sailed for England, via America. In March, 1944, he was promoted to the rank of Flight Sergeant, and while training for operations did a conversion course on to Bombers.

Gaining his Commission in September, 1944, he returned to France, flying Mitchell Medium Bombers with R.A.F. Squadron No. 226 of the 2nd Tactical Air Force.

His promotion to Flying Officer dates from March this year. Before hostilities ceased he had been engaged in 42 operational trips, on the last achieving the honor of leading his Squadron.

Flying Officer Williams, who is still only 20 years of age, is now stationed in Holland, but expects to return to Australia before Christmas.

Flt. Lieut. J. F. A. Ellis Has Seen Much Aerial Warfare

ANOTHER young railwayman who, at 23, has seen a great deal of yeoman service in the R.A.A.F. is Flt. Lieutenant J. F. A. Ellis.

He joined the Department as a lad laborer in the Rolling Stock Branch in 1938, and when he enlisted in 1941 as an A.C. 2 he was acting as a junior clerk at Newport. He was promoted to Sergeant in December, 1941, and became a Pilot Officer in October the following year. After hard, keen service with all the thrills and experiences of aerial warfare in the desert he reached the rank of Acting Flight Lieutenant with a Fighter Bomber Squadron in the latter part of 1943.

He was one of the valiant air crews that followed the 8th Army through Africa to Malta, and covered the invasion of Sicily and Italy. He was transferred to Palestine in June, 1944, for instructional duties.

He confesses to cherishing a high regard for Glasgow. His wife, whom he first met in Cairo, is a native of that celebrated Scottish city.

Bendigo Nth. Workshops Have Subscribed £10,000 to War Loans

THE employes of the Bendigo North Workshops have again demonstrated their sense of patriotic duty by contributing £2,610 to the last War Loan.

The number of subscribers was 146.

Cash applications numbered 52 for bonds to the value of £1,550, whilst 94 employes took the opportunity of securing bonds totalling £1,060 by means of fortnightly deductions from the pay envelopes.

The men in the Bendigo Workshops have now subscribed £10,000 to the past five War Loans—a fine sustained effort by all concerned.

It is of interest to mention, by the way, that the local Ordnance Factory has also established a great record in this respect. In connection with the last War Loan the Factory issued a challenge to raise more per head than the Workshops men, and beat the Workshops' good performance by raising £6,600—actually £8 4s. per head. They also deserve warm congratulations.

Notable First Aid Exponent Retires

MR. W. CRIPPS, leading hand car cleaner, who retired on June 8 last, was delighted by the warm display of esteem on his departure. Certainly he was overwhelmed by gifts, for he received a wallet of notes, a nutcracker, and a toy model of a sleeping car made by one of the car cleaners, the handing over of the presents being preceded by a neat little speech by Mr. H. Homersham, Foreman Car Builder in the Shelter Shed, North Melbourne. The sleeping car conductors also presented him with a radiator and an electric torch.

Mr. Cripps, who entered the Department as a car cleaner in 1907, and became a leading car cleaner in 1924, was one of the outstanding exponents of First Aid, in which he had achieved an unusual record.

He passed 22 First Aid examinations from May, 1922, and obtained his last certificate in May 1945. In 1924 he won the St. John's Bronze Medallion. In 1926 he received the Silver Efficiency Medal, and in the eighth year he won the coveted Gold Life Medallion.

He was a member of the Shelter Shed First Aid Corps, which won the Final in the Novice Corps events in 1924, and was subsequently superintendent of this Corps for 15 years. Individually, he exhibited particular skill which secured him a place in the District Novice Individual Events on several occasions.

RETIREMENT OF MESSRS. E. WARREN AND R. ROUTLEY

MR ERNEST ("ROCKY") WARREN, Signal Ganger in the Department, received a warm send-off by many good fellow railwaymen when he retired last month. It was an evening affair in the Board Room of Unity Hall, and in addition to a programme of musical and instrumental items, there was a series of complimentary speeches by Mr. W. Martin, State President of the A.R.U., and other speakers, all testifying to the personal character of the retiring railwayman. At the end, he was presented with a plump wallet of notes.

Mr. Warren, who joined the Department as a Repairer in 1908, and subsequently passed through the jobs of Skilled Laborer, and Assistant Signal Adjuster, to the post of Signal Ganger, which he reached in 1926, was known throughout the service for his big-heartedness and charity. No reasonable request for help was ever turned aside by "Rocky" Warren.

In his leisure he will continue his hobby of gardening, and will probably add further to his record as a breeder of Muscovy Ducks, to the succulence of which fellow railwaymen refer in the most enthusiastic terms!

* * * *

MR. RICHARD ROUTLEY, a popular member of the Rolling Stock Staff Office, Spencer Street Head Office, had the honor of a "Newport Send Off" when he retired recently. It is the practice at Newport to applaud a retiring railwayman by the music of steel on steel, and Mr. Routley's colleagues gave a somewhat melodious imitation on cups and glasses after Mr. H. L. Dickinson, Chief Clerk of the Branch, supported by Mr. O. Keating, head of the Staff room, had presented the departing, bashful veteran with a handsome cheque.

Mr. Routley joined the Department as a Supernumerary Lad Laborer in 1896, and was appointed to the permanent staff early in 1912. Having passed an examination for employment on the clerical staff, he worked for some time in the North Melbourne Car and Wagon Shops. After a period as timekeeper at the Dudley Street Car Depot, he returned to the Car and Wagon Shops and took up duties in connection with the Westinghouse brake records.

He entered the Rolling Stock Staff Office in June, 1927.

As a young man he was conspicuous in cricket and baseball. He was a medium to fast bowler with the North Melbourne club, and on one occasion dismissed seven Fitzroy batsmen for 16 runs. He also played baseball for over 10 years with North Melbourne and Essendon clubs, and was considered one of the best bats in the competition.

ANOTHER V. R. PATRIOTIC RAFFLE IN AUGUST

COMFORTS are few on Tarakan, wrote Corporal G. Davenport, A.I.F., in a grateful note thanks for the receipt from the V.R. Patriotic Fund of one of its parcels. The young soldier, who enclosed souvenirs a packet of Japanese cigarette papers, and examples of the Dutch paper money which the enemy is issuing in the part of the world in which he is fighting, knows only too well the thrill and pleasure of receiving the carefully packed eatables, cigarettes and other comforts when removed from civilization.

The above comment summarizes the messages we receive from many of our brave young railwaymen who are serving in various ways in the Pacific war, and it is imperative that we lessen the gifts that the V.R. Patriotic Fund has been able to give to them. The Fund needs more and more money, and it will welcome the addition of further contributors to its revenue (it only means 6d. deduction from every fortnightly pay). To provide further assistance it has been decided that another raffle will be launched. Tickets costing 2/- each (2/- for a book of 5) should be available for sale this month, and the usual handsome prizes will be provided. 1st Prize is an open order to the value of £100; 2nd an order for £20; 3rd an order for £10; and consolation open orders to the value of £1 each will also be provided. Tickets will be distributed as usual, and the raffle should be drawn towards the end of August or early in September.

Pilot Officer W. G. Leed Wins Attention

COLLEAGUES of W. G. Leed, formerly a clerk at Bendigo Loco., will be happy to learn that through conspicuous ability in the R.A.A.F., he has gained a commission as Pilot Officer.

Pilot Officer Leed joined the R.A.A.F. in 1942, as an A.C. 2, and when he subsequently left Australia he had reached the rank of Sergeant. In England he was attached to the famous No. 10 Sunderland Squadron as a Wireless Air Gunner, and his record of 1,000 hours air service, which he recently completed, are long periods spent in flying over the Atlantic and the Bay of Biscay in the hunt for submarines.

This brilliant airman, who joined the Department at Bendigo in 1920, is now doing a six months' course as an instructor in Scotland.

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The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

AUGUST, 1945

Issue No. 179.

AMAZING TRANSPORT ACHIEVEMENT IN SHIPPING STATOR TO AUSTRALIA

SOME time ago the "News Letter" made some vague reference—which was all that was then permitted—to a unique feat of transportation on a Sunday when a "large and heavy piece of machinery" weighing 120 tons, was carried in a special truck from the city to "an address somewhere in Australia." It can now be revealed that the piece of machinery was a stator for erection in Newport "A" Power Station and the difficulty of rail transport of this huge mass of metal was shown by the facts that a special rail truck had to be constructed to carry it, and that during its progress no vehicle was permitted on any adjoining railway line.

This excellent performance, however, was nothing compared with the task under war conditions of shipping the stator from England.

The stator was completed at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and after much negotiation a boat was made available to carry it from Liverpool to Australia, provided that the manufacturers—C. A. Parsons & Co. Ltd.—could make arrangements to move it to the ship-side.

This boat was the only one which could handle such a huge load with its own cranes and the Ministry of Shipping was reluctant to have the vessel incurring unnecessary risks from submarines.

Nevertheless, the ship was made available solely because of our need of the new plant, and the manufacturer's problem was to have the stator moved from Newcastle to Liverpool in time for the ship to join a convoy going to South Africa.

Transport of the stator by rail from Newcastle-on-Tyne was out of the question. It would have been necessary to sling it by means of girders threaded through the bore and its dimensions would have complicated its transport by special train in three separate Sundays.

The manufacturers then explored the possibility of carrying the stator by road. One firm promised to provide a special 32-wheeled road trailer, but in a fierce English winter, the vehicle was hopelessly bogged in a remote part of the country, and the same fate befell the only other vehicle available.

The sole remaining method was to send the stator by coaster around the north of Scotland, but the chance of making Liverpool by this method seemed dim, because coasters were scarce and overwhelmed with work.

After many appeals and much negotiation, however, the Ministry of Shipping provided a coaster, but here again there was another hitch—no

vehicle of sufficient size was available to move the stator from the works to the Newcastle quay—a distance of three-quarters of a mile.

Undaunted, the manufacturers discovered a firm in London willing to provide two 8-wheeled bogies, which were sent on motor wagons by road, as a basis for a portable structure.

"We need not go over the mechanical difficulties in coupling the ends of the girders together, in obtaining suitable girders strong enough without too great a deflection to sustain the load, or the trouble in getting tractors to control the load both in front and in the rear over the short haul," the manufacturers said. Nor did they dwell on the prospect of trouble because the route traverses two heavy declines and some awkward turns, "necessitated by our having to traverse a route which would avoid bridges and the like."

All one night was occupied in loading the stator on to the bogies and making it secure. Arrived at the quay, three or four hours more were lost in withdrawing the girders and in lowering the small mountain of metal by means of a floating crane into the hold of the waiting vessel.

The coaster which was timed to leave at 2 p.m. to join a convoy, ultimately got away at 6 p.m. and it took six days to reach Liverpool.

"The next trouble was getting the stator out of the coaster," wrote the manufacturers. "It was not at all certain that the derrick could plumb the lift in the hold of the coaster, but having tilted the freighter a little we found in actual experience that it cleared and was finally safely housed in the hold of the freighter."

It duly arrived in Melbourne, as previously reported, and was carried to its ultimate destination, but the success of the whole undertaking was due to the quiet tenacity of the manufacturers, who were never daunted by transport difficulties, and were able

to "by-pass" seeming impasses in a world devoting most of its transport to the war, and of the shipping interests concerned.

The amount of telephoning, telegraphing, letter writing and personal approach, the arrangements necessary with the police and other local authorities for the carriage of the stator to the quayside are all testimonials to British genius for organization and preparation which was responsible for this valuable piece of machinery reaching Australia when it was most wanted.

Increased length of No. 1 Platform, Flinders St.

FOR the purpose of increasing the space for parcels and goods service at the western end of No. 1 Platform, Flinders Street, an additional 70 feet has been added to the platform. Also, the dock on the north side of the platform has been extended to 210 feet, to provide additional facilities for parking parcels coaches.

The roof, which has been erected over the extended platform, also covers the additional docking area, assuring protection against weather for a busy section of railway work.

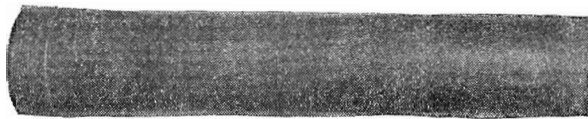
The addition of 70 feet now gives Platform No. 1 an overall length, under Princes Bridge and beyond, of 2,097 feet. This makes it one of the longest in the world.

According to the "Universal Directory of Railway Officials and Railway Year Book, 1944-45" (London), the following platforms are longer than No. 1 Flinders Street:—

	feet
Sonepur, B. & N.W.R., India	2,415
Khargpur, B.N.R., India	2,350
Bulawayo, Rhodesia Railways	2,302
New Lucknow Station, E.I.R., India	2,250
Manchester (Victoria and Exchange), L.M.S.R.	2,194
Bezwada, M. & S.M.R., India	2,100

REMARKABLE EFFECTS OF BAD WATER ON LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE

WHEN water is evaporated into steam in a locomotive boiler, all solids, whether originally in solution or suspension, remain behind in the boiler. Most of the dissolved solids remain in solution building up the concentration until the water becomes saturated after which further evaporation causes solids to begin settling out on the boiler water surfaces. The higher the concentration of salts, the greater are the chemical reactions on the boiler plates, tubes and stays and the greater the tendency of the boiler to prime.



Photographs of a tube corroded by bad water and of a new tube for comparison

Solids originally in suspension settle in the lower spaces of the boiler and also coat the water surfaces.

If the solids were not removed at proper intervals, the boiler would cease to produce steam, or the severe local heating of the plates would result in a boiler explosion.

In the July issue of the "News Letter" it was mentioned that at some locations the water contains 140 grains of solid matter per gallon, which means that when 4,000 gallons of water—about the tender capacity of a "D" class engine—have been used, 80 lb. of solid have been introduced into the boiler.

Some of the solids—for example clay—separate out and form an insulating blanket on such surfaces as the firebox plates, preventing the heat from being conducted through the fire to the water. If this deposit were not removed by washing out the boiler, the firebox plates would become overheated, lose some of their strength and bulge. The engineman notices that the "blanket" prevents the engine from steaming freely, because much of the heat that should be producing steam is being lost up the chimney.

Other solids such as magnesium chloride and magnesium sulphate form weak acids which corrode the boiler plating and stays, tubes, etc. They also form scale in the boiler, again reducing its steaming capabilities. The corrosion shortens the life of the boiler and necessitates unduly frequent replacement of boiler stays and tubes.

The ability of a locomotive to maintain schedule running times depends on the power developed by its

boiler, and anything lessening its steaming efficiency will also result in bad time-keeping and excessive coal consumption.

The effect of bad water most noticeable to engine crews, however, is that of "priming" which means that the steam has mixed with it particles of water which not only destroy the superheat but also remove the lubrication from the valves and pistons. This is one of the most frequent causes of stalling, particularly on momentum grades where, just as the driver feels he has sufficient speed to negotiate the grade, the engine primes, loses power and stalls. In extreme cases so much water is carried over from the boiler to the cylinders that it cannot get away as the piston comes to the end of its stroke, and damage is caused to the cylinders, pistons and motion gear.

Appreciation of Service

THE following little note of appreciation comes from Mrs. D. E. Wheeler, 47 Woonack Road, Murrumbidgee, formerly a member of the V.R. Refreshment Service Branch:

"I wish to tell you that I have recently been discharged from the W.A.A.F.'s.

"While in the Service I received your 'News Letters' and parcels regularly, which I appreciated very much indeed. I wish to thank you and your staff and the Patriotic Fund contributors for this very kind procedure during my 3 years in the Service."

V.R.I. CHORAL SOCIETY'S SUCCESSFUL YEAR

THE V.R.I. Choral Society again records a very successful year. The membership is now over twelve more than in 1944, but there is a very warm welcome and plenty of room for other railwaymen and ladies with voices. Recruits are also needed for the Institute's new venture—the V.R.I. Orchestra, which is now strong. With a greater membership under the care of the Choral Society's eminent conductor, Dr. Ehrenfeld, the orchestra should establish a reputation as striking as that of the choir which, during the past year, achieved outstanding musical successes.

The most conspicuous of these was on December 6, when the Society gave its first big concert in the Assembly Hall, Collins Street, and had the honor of half of its program being broadcast by 3LO. It was a big event in the Society's history, and the patience and care exhibited by the conductor, Dr. Ehrenfeld, were not more commendable than the enthusiasm of the members, who at one stage of the preparation, attended 7 rehearsals in 11 nights.

The assistance of the eminent soloists, Miss Thea Philips (Soprano), Miss Millicent Osmond (Soprano), Mr. Frank Mithen (Tenor), Mr. J. Mitchell (Baritone) and of the pianists, Misses Valerie and Margaret Buchan, was another feature of that memorable evening. Through this particular effort a cheque for £49/9/10 was handed to the Alphington Branch of the Australian Comforts Fund.

During the year 1944-5 the Society was heard three times over 3LO and appeared by invitation at two Wesley Church "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" once on Empire Sunday, with a broadcast over 3DB. The Society was also heard in the celebration of Brotherhood Week at St. Paul's and contributed to the Church services at Surrey Hills Methodist Church.

Last April there was also another fine performance in conjunction with the Mitcham Choral Society at the Melbourne Town Hall in support of The Council of Encouragement of Music and Art Festival.

On Saturday, November 17, the Choral Society is to give a combined concert in conjunction with the Mitcham Society at the Melbourne Town Hall. Great preparations are being made for this event, and a big audience is expected.

The success of the Society is largely due to the able and enthusiastic conductor (Dr. Ehrenfeld) assisted by very keen and energetic helpers—Mr. J. S. Morcombe (President), indefatigable Secretary, "Wally" Southey, Miss A. D. Atkinson (Treasurer) Miss Edith Kennedy (Pianist) and Miss Laurel Chester (Librarian).

War Record Of The Clement Family

THE "News Letter" deeply regrets to report that Flt. Sergeant Charles Clement, previously reported "Missing" lost his life in an air crash in June last year—some days after the invasion of France by the British and American Armies, in which he took a valiant part.

Before enlisting for active service in December, 1941, Flt. Sergeant Clement had served for a period in the Refreshment Services Branch, subsequently transferring to the Transportation Branch, in which he had been a porter at Auburn, Ringwood East, and Surrey Hills.

All railwaymen will sympathise with his parents in a bereavement so particularly poignant to them by the fact that they had already lost their son, William Clement, a member of the crew of H.M.A.S. "Sheeny".

The misfortunes of the family do not end there, for a sister of the unfortunate lads, Mrs M. Gordon, suffered a painful hand injury when operating a machine in a munitions plant. Mrs. Gordon is now a portress at her brother's old station, Auburn, and has joined the Department in January this year.

A Former V.R. Man Now Chief Electrical Engineer of Southern Railway Co., England.

OUR warmest congratulations to Mr. Charles M. Cock, a former employe of the Department, who was recently appointed Chief Electrical Engineer of the Southern Railway Company of England.



Mr. Charles M. Cock

Mr. Cock, who is a native of Melbourne, is only 50 years of age. He started in the Department as a clerk in the Stores Branch in 1910, but became an apprentice fitter and turner at Newport in the following year. He had not completed his apprenticeship when the First Great War broke out. Eager to serve, he was selected as a midshipman with the combined naval and military expedition which landed in New Guinea in September, 1914.

Later in the war he saw service in the Pacific and the North Sea concluding his service in January, 1919, as an Engineer Lieutenant.

In 1920 he resigned from the Victorian Railways to accept a position with Messrs Merz and McLellan, and worked as personal assistant to the late Mr. E. P. Grove, Chief Resident Engineer for that firm in the electrification of the Melbourne suburban system, and also in the construction of the Newport "B" Power Station for the State Electricity Commission.

In 1924 he was one of Merz and McLellan's Supervising Engineers in India, in the electrification of the G.I.P. Railway suburban, the B.B. and C.I. Railway suburban lines and the main lines of the G.I.P. railway to Poona and Igatpuri. Five years later he joined the G.I.P. railway and was successively Distribution Engineer, Rolling Stock Engineer, Traction Superintendent and Divisional Superintendent for the area including Bombay.

During the present war, he organised the Bombay Motor Boat Patrol and later went to sea again as Engineer Lieutenant Commander of the R.I.N.V.R. He was appointed to the engineering staff of the Southern Railway Company (England) in January of this year.

COMPETITION FOR TREE PLANTING AND DECORATION OF STATIONS AND DEPOTS.

IN the annual competition for tree planting and station yards in 1944, the first prizes in districts where entries were received were gained as under:—

Section	District	Name	Grade	Location				
New work without piped water supply: maintenance of existing trees, gardens, etc., with piped water supply:	Metropolitan	Mr. H. J. Freestone Mr. W. T. Bettess ...	S.M. ... Op. Porter	Wandin				
	Seymour ...	{ Mr. J. Morrison ... Mr. J. Stanning ...	Asst. S.M. Ptr.-in-Ch.	Longwood				
					Geelong ...	{ Mr. A. A. Newman Mr. J.W.H. Branagh	S.M. ... Op. Porter	S. Geelong
	Bendigo ...	{ Mr. B. W. Lyndon ... Mrs. M. I. Lyndon ...	Ganger Caretaker	Kotta				
					Seymour ...	{ Mr. A. Davenport ... Mr. E. F. Castles ... Mr. L. C. Mumford Mr. W.L. O'Connor Mr. W. H. Cauty ...	Ganger Repairer Repairer Repairer	Broadford
	Geelong ...	Mrs. A. S. Bruce ...	Caretaker ...	Grassdale				
	Metropolitan	Mrs. E. A. Young ...	Caretaker ...	Somerton				
	Eastern ...	Mr. E.F.E. McLean	Ganger ...	Kardella				
	Ballarat ...	Mr. M. Petch ...	Ptr.-in-Ch.	Bannockburn				
	Locomotive and Works Depots (State-wide).							
Maintenance of existing trees, gardens, etc.		{ Mr. A. Dossier ... Mr. H. Martin ...	Laborer Laborer	Seymour Loco. Dpt.				

V.R. CASUALTIES.

THE "News Letter" records with deep regret that Flying Officer R. B. Groves is reported "Missing" and is presumed dead, and that Signaller D. F. Nippard, Sapper R. L. Walsh, and Private M. A. Connally, all of the A.I.F., have been killed in action. Other casualties which we most regretfully report are those of Private W. Slavin (died of wounds) and Private A. A. Kinghorn (died whilst prisoner of war). Also Flt. Sergt. W. V. Eates is among the "Missing."

Flying Officer Groves, who joined the Transportation Branch as a number taker in 1925, enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in 1941. He was 24 years of age. Signaller D. F. Nippard, who was also 24, enlisted in the A.I.F. in 1941. He joined the Department as a junior clerk in 1935. He was a son of Mr. D. J. Nippard, a locomotive driver in the North Melbourne Loco Depot. Sapper R. L. Walsh enlisted in 1940, and entered the Department as a lad laborer in 1936. He was subsequently employed in the engine house at Mt. Buffalo National Park. He was born in 1921.

Private M. L. Connally, who was 20 years of age, enlisted in 1944. He joined the railway service as a lad laborer in 1941. Private W. Slavin was a casual laborer in the Melbourne Goods when he enlisted in 1940. He was 33 years of age. Private A. A. Kinghorn, who was an operating porter when he enlisted in 1941, joined the Department in 1925. Flt. Sergt. W. V. Eates was a laborer in the Stores Branch when he enlisted in 1941. He was 34 years of age.

The absence of rain greatly handicapped the maintenance of existing garden work or planting of new shrubs and trees, but despite this the results were very commendable.

For the first time in 25 years Trentham station was not entered for this competition. It is regretted that Mr. H. C. A. Waterman, who has so often shared the prize, was ill.

Lieutenant Whitaker's War Experience

DESCRIBED in a press report as "a fearless dashing fighter," and "probably the best dressed jungle fighter in the forward areas of New Guinea."



Lieutenant Douglas Whitaker

Lieutenant Douglas Whitaker has seen active service in various parts of the globe.

Prior to enlisting in September, 1939, Lieutenant Whitaker was employed as a casual labourer in the Melbourne Goods Sheds. He left Australia as a private in the 2/5 Aust. Inf. Battalion and saw active service in Libya, Greece (1941), and Syria (1941-2) where he was mentioned in despatches. After a period in Colombo he took part in New Guinea jungle fighting during 1943-4. He is now an instructor in New South Wales.

In Libya he was in command of an outfit called "Whitaker's Circus," representing a number of Bren gunners who were conspicuous on several occasions and were subsequently used as infantry in Greece. Some of these men were captured in Crete, but Lieutenant Whitaker and others were again noticed in Syria.

Specialising in night attack and reconnaissance, his battalion gave the Japs a sound beating at Wau, Observation Hill, Mat Mat and Goodview Junction.

It is worth mentioning here that at Wau some of the boys were cut off for 10 days and had to fight their way through enemy country to their base.

SERVICE

THE following letter of warm appreciation addressed to Mr. H. L. Kennedy, Asst. Supt. of Refreshment Services, comes from Mr. A. H. Barraclough, Chairman of the Australian Red Cross Society (Victorian Division).

"I have received a report from the Red Cross Hospital Visitors who recently accompanied Australian brides of American servicemen to rail to their port of embarkation.

"This report stresses the extraordinary help and co-operation which they received from your particular Department, and my Executive has asked me to convey to you its sincere thanks for this further evidence of your goodwill.

"I can assure you that the Society and the personnel concerned are deeply appreciative."

The service to which Mr. Barraclough referred was the provision of dinner on "Spirit of Progress" for 27 of the young mothers with children, whilst warm milk (supplied by the Red Cross) was given to a number of young children by the Stewardess on the train. Also, 62 wives, who travelled on the Albury Express, were supplied with an attractive 3-course dinner in the buffet car on the train.

BIG RAFFLE ON BEHALF OF V.R. PATRIOTIC FUND DRAWN ON SEPTEMBER 12

IN a recent letter to Mr. W. E. Elliott, Secretary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund, Mr. H. H. Krohn, Hon. Administrator of the Australian Comforts Fund, records the warm gratitude of his Executive for a further donation of £350.

Mr. Krohn appropriately added that "these calls on the A.C.F. are now greater than ever and although we have more men in the fighting areas than ever before there seems to be a tendency on the part of the public to regard the fact that the European War has ended as an opportunity to relax their efforts."

We agree with Mr. Krohn that there must be no relaxation of our efforts. The war in the Pacific is a full-time job for our Navy, Army and Air Force, and anyway the 2,000 and more railwaymen still serving require our utmost consideration and care. It is on their behalf that the V.R.

Patriotic Fund Committee has authorised the big raffle which will be drawn on September 12. As already mentioned, the 1st Prize will be an Open Order for goods to the value of £100; 2nd Prize, Open Order for £20; 3rd Prize, Open Order for £10 and 10 Consolation Prizes at £1 each.

In the last raffle, over £1,000 worth of tickets were sold and out of the profit of approximately £850 a substantial cheque was made available for the Australian Comforts Fund. Every railwayman and woman in the Service should take a ticket in the new raffle. The cost of each ticket is only 6d., or a book of 5 tickets for 2/-, and every railwayman who should help in making this raffle a bigger success than the previous one. The greater the success the greater the benefit to our men, fighting often in indescribable conditions against a ruthless and courageous enemy.

Grateful Danish Boy Would Like To Hear From a V.R. Man

NO. 83876, L.A.C. Jensen, M.B., No. 2 P.D., Bradfield Park, N.S.W." would love to hear from a railwayman employed at Flinders Street Station, who greatly helped him five years ago.

The record of this kindness to a Danish boy who was friendless and ignorant of the English language is worth telling.

In January, 1940, the boy—aged 14—deserted from his ship at Fremantle, Western Australia, and became involved in legal proceedings in that State. The V.R. man who was visiting Western Australia heard of his difficulties and generously volunteered to see him through. The railwayman was able to solve all his problems and managed to secure the lad a job in the Western State.

Subsequently, young Jensen enlisted in the R.A.A.F. and recently passed through Melbourne from Perth to Sydney. In the two hours' stay in Melbourne, L.A.C. Jensen made desperate efforts to locate his benefactor, whose name he hadn't caught correctly owing to his ignorance, then, of English, but who, he believed, was employed at the Flinders Street Station.

L.A.C. Jensen had to leave Melbourne bitterly disappointed. This little story is published as a tribute to a fine kindly service and in the hope that it will catch the eye of the man concerned, who is urged to get in communication with Jensen at the address mentioned.

V.R. Prisoner of War Returns

A magnificent welcome awaited Sergeant Lionel J. Murphy, affectionately known as "Spook," when he returned to Melbourne five years as a prisoner of war in Germany.

Sergeant Murphy's story, delivered with the philosophy which was his comfort through many months of hardship, reveals that he was captured in Crete, after fighting at Bardia, Tobruk, and in Greece.

In Salonika on his way to Germany he managed to escape into Serbia, but then slipped back into Greece, leading a very secluded life in the forests for 12 months, before he was recaptured a victim to malaria, and was taken to Stalag 303, in Germany.

That prison he will recall to the end of his life. During the last 12 months good food was rare—even the precious Red Cross parcels failed to arrive—and he learned the rigours of German imprisonment relieved by displays of Australian resource which gave color to his story.

He recalls that because N.C.F. were not compelled to work, some privates managed to produce surplus.

There were 17 of these "Bogies" as they were called in his camp. Sergeant Murphy, who was born in 1916, and was a clerk in the Railways Stock Branch at Bendigo, was one of the first to enlist. He was in the 2/1st Battalion, A.I.F., in October, 1939, and a member of the original 2/1st Battalion, A.I.F.

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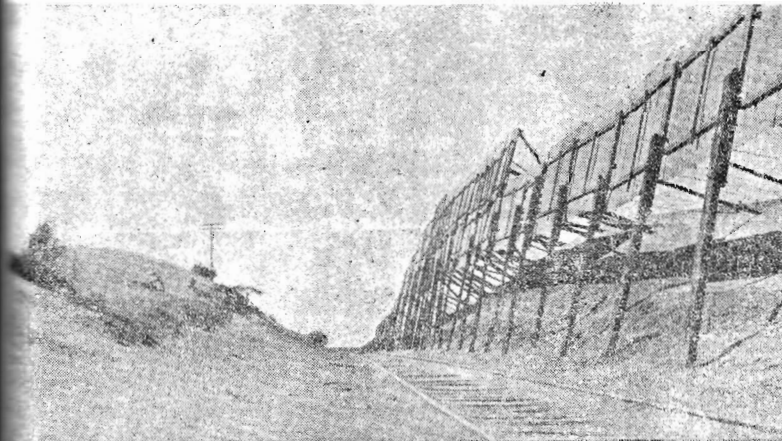
The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

SEPTEMBER, 1945

Issue No. 180.

SOIL DRIFT DUE TO WIND EROSION TRAFFIC DIFFICULTIES REVEALED

THE breaking of the drought throughout the Northern half of the State by the rainfall of June and July has relieved railwaymen of much anxiety. A series of years during which the rainfall has been below normal culminated in a particularly long period of meagre rainfall in 1944 and the first half of 1945. Soil drift due to wind erosion extended and trouble was experienced in parts of the country that had not previously been affected. Due to the abnormal conditions and insufficient labour to keep the line clear of sand, the normal services between Sea Lake and Kulwin, which involved some night running, had to be altered to provide for daylight running.



Wind Chutes for clearing sand from tracks in cutting on Hobanvale line

To indicate the extent to which troubles increased, it is pointed out that in the Bendigo district during the whole of 1938, the delays to trains due to the effects of sand drift totalled 30 hours for 5 trains, whereas in the six months ended 1/5/45 in the same district eighty-six trains were delayed a total of 135 hours, whilst 15 trains were cancelled and five were terminated short of their proper destinations. In addition to causing troubles on running lines, sand drift is responsible for sidings, road approaches, buildings, fences, stock yards and culverts becoming partially buried and the clearing of these difficulties is an almost never-ending job. At one location the sand was blown most up to the top of the sheep yards and the fencing had to be partly removed in order to clear the area.

The clearing of railway property has been carried out by hand shovelling, power-plants, horse scoops, and other

available means, but the men and equipment available for the purpose were by no means sufficient for requirements. Outside labour is employed wherever available, but the main burden of clearing lines has fallen on the track force who have done a wonderful job, working hard and long at all hours of the day and night, frequently under most unpleasant conditions.

They have never failed to go out to inspect and clear tracks at any time drift has been suspected, and have co-operated splendidly with the operating staff in endeavouring to avoid delays to trains. The gangs in the sand drift areas are equipped with flood lights and portable telephone sets.

On the worst sections of tracks, wind chutes made of timber frames sheathed with iron are used extensively to keep the drifting sand from covering the rails. An illustration of one of these chutes is given above. These chutes operate as a funnel which

carries the sand over the tracks and forms a bank on the other side.

Some 13 miles of these wind chutes are in position, and more are in course of erection. Without them certain lines could not be kept open for traffic in bad years. By constant experiment and alteration to suit particular localities, the usefulness of sand chutes has been greatly increased. The longest continuous stretch of sand chutes is 15 chains and the highest is 30 feet above rail level.

Endeavours have been made in the past to control the drifting sand to some extent by planting selected cover crops in conjunction with the landholders and other Government Departments.

Very little success has been achieved in this way, but the appointment of the Soil Conservation Board to which this Department has offered full co-operation, should produce better results. With proper methods in the planting of drought-resisting crops, controlled fallowing, fencing, etc., much can be achieved in improving conditions in the areas subject to wind erosion and restoring land to fertility after it has been denuded of its natural cover.

Feeding The Fighting Services—V. R. Record

IN addition to providing hundreds of thousands of meals for passengers in ordinary trains in 1944-5, the Refreshment Services Branch served 476,000 meals to members of the Fighting Forces travelling on special trains. That figure is over 50,000 more than the total supplied during the previous year.

In 1944-5, 421,460 meals were consumed in country refreshment rooms, the busiest station being Wangaratta, where the figure was 164,650. This station satisfied the hunger of hundreds of servicemen on a special train every night in the year, apart from smaller groups at irregular periods. Ararat, Ballarat and Seymour bear the brunt of the remainder, with occasional trains at rooms such as Horsham and Benalla.

The meal comprises hot meat, vegetables, bread and butter and tea, and in the summer, cold meat and salad.

That the service was much appreciated is shown by the tributes received from grateful members of the Forces.

METHODS OF MINIMISING EFFECTS OF BAD WATER

PREVIOUS articles in the "News Letter" have emphasised the harmful effects of bad water on locomotive performance, but fortunately it is possible by chemical or other treatments to minimise, though not entirely eliminate, the troubles. Suspended solids such as clay can be entirely cleared, and in this regard the Diapur water supply may be cited as an example. This water contained so much clay in suspension that it was unsuitable for locomotive use. By spraying the dam with a slaked lime solution, the clay dropped to the bottom and left a very satisfactory water.

Broadly speaking, chemical treatment of the water aims to change the solids in solution so that their harmful effects on the boiler are controlled or prevented.

For the treatment of water containing harmful dissolved solids, chemicals are added, and the combination produces in most cases an insoluble salt which is deposited readily, and a soluble salt of a type which has little or no chemical effect on boiler plates.

For example, if sodium carbonate (washing soda) be added to water containing magnesium chloride—which corrodes (or eats into) boiler plate—magnesium hydroxide and sodium chloride (common salt) are formed at the temperature existing in the boiler.

Magnesium hydroxide is insoluble and settles out as a soft precipitate which does not effect boiler plates. Sodium chloride is very soluble in water but does no harm so long as there is sufficient sodium carbonate in the solution.

Solids in Boiler

As mentioned in a previous article, solids whether in suspension or solution remain in the boiler when the water is evaporated. The solids in suspension separate out more readily than those in solution, the latter remaining in solution until the water becomes saturated with them, when they begin to separate out.

When the concentration of dissolved salts in the boiler becomes excessive, foaming (or priming) takes place.

It is obvious that even after water treatment, if the water in the boiler is to be kept within limits of concentration and the water spaces free from solids, action must be taken to clean it out periodically.

If, while the engine is under steam, some water is blown out from the lower points where the solids congregate, not only will a good deal of the solids be removed, but so also will some of the dissolved salts in the water be taken from the boiler. Filling up the boiler again with fresh water will then reduce the concentration of dissolved salts, and the tendency to foam will decrease.

This is actually what happens when a driver "blows down" his boiler. This blowing down reduces the concentration of salts in solution and re-

moves the solids lying near the blow-off cocks, but cannot entirely remove all foreign matter from the boiler. Therefore, it becomes necessary to wash out the boiler completely at regular intervals, when water under high pressure is directed through nozzles against all portions of the boiler surfaces and drained away through the lower plug holes. Subsequently, examinations are made, using mirrors to make certain that all solids have been removed.

It will be realised then that water treatment is only one factor in the elimination of troubles brought about by bad water, for without the intelligent co-operation of drivers and running shed staffs the boiler, and consequently the performance of the locomotive, would still be adversely affected.

Keep Contributing to V.R. Patriotic Fund

THOUGH peace has been declared, it will obviously be some time before all V.R. men on war service will be demobilised. In these circumstances, the Committee controlling the V.R. Patriotic Fund has decided to continue its activities until further notice. Men on service will still need comforts and it will be the job of the Fund to provide them. Therefore, keep on contributing to the Fund. A special effort is required to make a success of the raffle which will be drawn on September 12, and which will benefit many of the 2,300 V.R. men still on active service.

As already stated, the First Prize in the Raffle is an Open Order for goods to the value of £100; Second Prize an Open Order for £20; and Third Prize an Open Order for £10, with 10 Consolation Prizes at £1 each. Tickets are 6d. each (or 5 for 2/-) and it would be a handsome gesture if we all help to make this raffle—the last one, by the way—the most successful of the war.

The Committee of the Fund desires to acknowledge with thanks a cheque for £2/10/- from the Gatekeepers' Section of the Australian Railways Union. The amount represents the balance of a special social fund account which the Gatekeepers established during the war.

NEW FLEMINGTON BRIDGE STATION

ONE of the advantages of the recently constructed Flemington Bridge Railway Station is the replacement of the flights of stairs leading to the platforms by easy ramps from Flemington Road. The gradient (1 in 9) is the same as that of the ramps connecting the platforms with Swan Street Concourse at Flinders Street Station. The former wooden stairs providing access to the Flemington Bridge Station, were a frequent source of annoyance and strain to elderly passengers and mothers with perambulators. Their elimination will be popular.

By locating the new station buildings at the centre of the platform they are almost the same distance from Racecourse Road as from Flemington Road, both arterial thoroughfares carrying tram services.

If future patronage warrants ramps leading direct from Racecourse Road may be installed.

To reduce the work on the old wooden frame supports for the platform, buildings and ramp were prefabricated at North Melbourne Works Depot. This and the organised work of the construction staff contributed to the speed of erection of the new "up" platforms where two 10-foot bays were completed each during the "off-peak" period with a minimum of inconvenience.

The frame supports for the buildings, transported by train to the site, were placed on prepared reinforced concrete foundations by crane in one night shift.

SPEAKING TO YOU

OVER 7,500 suggestions have been accepted by the Department for the improvement of innumerable features of the railway service and their authors have been rewarded. Some of the authors, who are ever watchful for practices that can be corrected for the benefit of the Department, have been rewarded more than once.

They are good examples of the use of alert mind that is of value to the industry, but there is no reason why you shouldn't emulate their success. Use your eyes and your interest—not necessarily in your own Branch—but all around this great system which employs you, and you will surely find something that calls for improvement.

When you have an idea that seems to you of sufficient merit, send it to the Betterment and Suggestions Branch, Railway Administrative Offices, Spencer Street, Melbourne.

If your idea is accepted, it will be paid for and all communications will be kept quite confidential.

Two Popular Personalities Retire: Mr. J. McLeish, Manager of Wonthaggi State Coal Mine and Mr. E. Richard, V.R. Engineer of Maintenance

RAILWAY officials led by the Chairman of Commissioners (Mr. N. C. Harris) assembled on August 3 to say goodbye to Mr. John McLeish on his retirement from the post of General Manager of the Wonthaggi State Coal Mine.

Complimentary references to the ability and courage of the departing General Manager were made by Mr.

Harris, and his tributes to a man who had never considered any personal hazard in rescue and salvage work in dangerous situations were supported in happy speeches by Mr. E. C. Eyers, the Secretary for Railways, and Mr. D. Cameron, former Chairman of the Staff Board (now Deputy Director-

General of Manpower in Victoria). Other railway officials having association with the Wonthaggi State Mine, which Mr. McLeish had served so long and notably, also wished him all happiness and comfort in his retirement.

Coalminer since age of 14

Mr. McLeish has been a coalminer since the age of 14, when he started in a pit boy at Newcastle, New South Wales. Determined to improve his technical knowledge, he attended the Newcastle School of Mines and graduated in engineering, chemistry and surveying.

After working up to the position of Manager of the Invincible Colliery (N.S.W.), which he occupied for 5 years, he took up the position of Mine Manager of the State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi, in 1912, succeeding to the post of General Manager in 1932.

His career is marked by many accidents in which he demonstrated his character, coolness and courage. In 1924 he received the Royal Humane Society's medal for his conduct during a fire in a main pit at Wonthaggi when he led the rescue gang. In 1937 an explosion wrecked Shaft No. 20 at the same mine, and Mr. McLeish was again in personal control of rescue operations, for which he was awarded a bar to his Humane Society's medal.

He is an authority on safety and rescue work, and it is due to his energy and skill that Wonthaggi now possesses 60 men who have reached the standard of rescue work set by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

He is justifiably proud, too, of the number of men trained at Wonthaggi,

who now hold responsible positions associated with the industry in other States as well as Victoria.

The character and valour of John McLeish will always be remembered by those who knew him. His guiding hand played no small part in the splendid record of industrial peace at Wonthaggi during the war years.

* * *

MR. Evan Richard, Engineer of Maintenance, reached the retiring age last month, and after he has completed some important Departmental work, for which he is specially equipped, he will commence the leisure which he has so well earned, after nearly 50 years' service.

Born in Wales, Mr. Richard arrived in Australia on Boxing Day, 1884, and entered the Department by way of the Architect's Office in 1897. Following a University course in Civil Engineering he was transferred to the field as assistant to the late Mr. J. J. Gilchrist, General Service Engineer.



Mr. Evan Richard

In 1910 he was appointed Roadmaster at Castlemaine and in 1914 a Superintending Roadmaster. Later he became a District Engineer and in 1920 Engineer of Track Duplication and Regrading. At the end of that year he was selected as Chairman of the newly-created Inventions, Suggestions and Efficiency Committee. This Committee, of which the other members were Mr. A. E. Hyland (now in London) and the late Mr. George Curtis, was the parent of the present Betterment and Suggestions Board.

In 1925 Mr. Richard returned to the Way and Works Branch, and on the revival of the position of Engineer of Maintenance in 1936, he was appointed to the post and held it until his retirement.

Mr. Richard's private life has been full of interest. He has given much attention to State and High School work. He has been a Sunday School Superintendent for 30 years, and has played a prominent part in the affairs of the V.R. Institute in the capacity of Councillor for many years. On his retirement he held the position of Senior Vice-President.

As President of St. David's Committee, he was associated with a unique piece of publicity in the celebration of its centenary in Australia. Welsh people assembled at a dinner in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide, and by an arrangement of the national radio network, each capital and several other stations in Western Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand, were able to listen-in to all sections of the programme, including messages from the late Hon. David Lloyd George (who, at the time, was Prime Minister of Britain) and from Australia's most noted Welshman, the Hon. W. M. Hughes.

In the history of the Way and Works Branch few executive officers have been so well known to the staff throughout the State, or as popular, as Mr. Richard. He has a great respect for their loyalty, integrity and enterprise, and a keen interest in their welfare. They in turn, have a high regard for him.

Mr. W. O. Brown, formerly Engineer of Special Works, has succeeded Mr. Richard, and Mr. H. C. Thomas has moved up from the position of Metropolitan District Engineer vice Mr. Brown.

A Member Of A Fighting Family Comes Home.

WELCOME home to Flt.-Lieutenant Ronald T. Cargill, another young railwayman who has served long and valiantly as a pilot in the R.A.A.F.

He enlisted in January, 1942, and in the following May left for Canada to take part in the Empire Training Scheme. In his final examination in Canada he was first out of 485 trainees—a remarkable achievement.

In 1944 he was in Europe where he spent three months with special coastal patrols hunting down submarines. He was subsequently transferred to Bomber Command in England and made 35 trips over Germany, France and Belgium without suffering any mishap.

Flt.-Lieutenant Cargill, who on his enlistment was located at the North Melbourne Loco. Sheds, is a son of Sergeant F. Cargill, a veteran of the last war, who was previously employed at the Newport Loco. Storehouse. Two other sons are Sergeant K. Cargill, of the A.M.C., with 4 years' service in the Middle East and New Guinea, and Private F. Cargill, a member of a trench mortar unit in Borneo.

Death of Mr. W. A. Chipper, V.R. Train Lighting Inspector

THE "News Letter" announces with deep regret the sudden death last month of Mr. W. A. Chipper, V.R. Train Lighting Inspector, at the age of 60 years.

Mr. Chipper, who was born in West Australia, was educated in Adelaide, subsequently returning to his native State where he was apprenticed as an electrical fitter on the Western Australian Railways.

After completing 5 years in Western Australia he went to sea for 12 months as 3rd Engineer on a coastal ship travelling between Perth and Brisbane, and it was during this period that he gained his first knowledge of refrigeration.

He next joined the South Australian Railways as an electrical fitter, and after periods of work at Terowie and Peterborough he became responsible for all carriage lighting activities in the State.

He brought his valuable knowledge to the Victorian Railways in October, 1922, when he was appointed Train Lighting Inspector. During his service with the Department he supervised the introduction of electric lighting in country passenger stock, installed the first electric headlights on locomotives and was closely associated with the introduction of air conditioning, particularly in connection with "Spirit of Progress."

A cheery, happy man, with a multitude of friends in the Department, he was greatly appreciated for a generosity of mind and bearing which coloured all his activities. For years he had been a regular subscriber to charities and also had a high record as a Mason, reaching the position of Grand Lodge Officer in South Australia.

He was also a member of the Peterborough Council and was appointed a J.P. In his later years he was an ardent bowler, becoming a prominent member of the Canterbury Bowling Club.

Mr. T. H. Maddern Retires

AFTER nearly 48 years in the Service, Mr. T. H. Maddern retired last month.

Entering the Department as a Junior Clerk in 1897, he worked at several stations and the Spencer Street Head Office before being promoted to Train Running Officer at Ballarat in 1920.

Four years later he became District Superintendent at Ballarat, and in 1933 was transferred to a similar position at Seymour, relinquishing that post in 1942 to undertake special work in Melbourne.

Mr. Maddern, who specialised in train operation and statistics, carries with him into retirement the good wishes of a large circle of railway associates.

ANOTHER PROMOTION FOR COLONEL T. R. COLLIER

PREVIOUSLY Deputy Director of Railway and Road Transportation in the Department of the Army, Colonel T.R. Collier, M.C., has been appointed Director of that important section of Army Head Quarters in Victoria. His marked ability and his intimate knowledge of both military and railway work have enabled him to give valuable service during the two years since he was transferred at the request of the Commonwealth Government.

At the time he made the change Colonel Collier was Acting Superintendent of Train Services at the Head Office. Previously he was Metropolitan Superintendent, a position which he had attained in 1940 after starting off in 1910 and moving up via the jobs of Operating Porter, Assistant Stationmaster, Stationmaster, Train Despatcher, Assistant District Superintendent and District Superintendent.

He served from 1915 to 1919 in the First Great War and here again his ability and courage, frequently displayed in difficult and dangerous situations, won him the coveted Military Cross and Bar.

V.R. CASUALTIES.

THE "News Letter" records with deep regret that among the casualties reported just before peace was declared were those of Sergeant-Observer C. L. Hughes of the R.A.A.F., killed in action, and Flt.-Sergeant D. E. Mutimer, "Missing."

Both of these young airmen were formerly employed in the Transportation Branch. Sergeant-Observer Hughes entered the Department in 1932 as a lad porter at Carnegie, and was a shunter at Newport Goods when he enlisted in March, 1942.

Flt.-Sergeant Mutimer enlisted in January 1942, when he was operating porter at Murchison East. He began his railway career in 1933 as a lad labourer in the Rolling Stock Branch, and in 1935 transferred to the Transportation Branch as a lad porter at Clifton Hill. He was 26 years of age.

Sons of Prominent Railwaymen Decorated

IT is gratifying to learn that sons of prominent railwaymen (both past and present) have been awarded decorations for good service in the Papua-New Guinea area during the period from April 1 to September 30.

Lieut-Colonel E. G. Eyers, son of Mr. E. C. Eyers, Secretary for Railways, and Lieut-Colonel G. F. Brennan, son of Mr. T. F. Brennan, former Comptroller of Accounts, have been awarded the O.B.E.

Also Captain T. A. Molomby, son of the late Mr. T. B. Molomby, a former Commissioner of Railways, has received the M.B.E.

PRIVATE MILLER'S WAR EXPERIENCES

WHEN the Russians invaded Germany thousands of prisoners, including 6,000 Russians and 4,000 British, Australia and New Zealand Servicemen, were moved by forced march of 600 miles to West in Bavaria.

Among that number was Private A. J. Miller, a V.R. man who had worked in the Melbourne Goods and had served subsequently as a Porter. He tells a very interesting story of his war experiences and gives graphic details of the forced march of six months in which the only rations were bread and synthetic coffee.

The plan for the march allowed for one and sometimes two days for rest, but even the hardiest of the prisoners felt the strain and fatigue on such a diet. Occasionally the men obtained a few vegetables en route, but for the most part the menu for breakfast, dinner and tea was black bread.

But everyone considered the march worth while when on arrival at West the delighted prisoners ran into General Patton's 3rd American Army.

Private Miller enlisted in the and was attached to the 2/24th Battalion, A.I.F., serving in Palestine, Egypt, North Africa (8 months), Tobruk and Syria. He was wounded at El Alamein in 1942, taken prisoner at Derna, and endured Italian prisoner camps before being transferred to Germany later.

Only A Bird Again!

OWING to the curve on the "Up" platform at Heyington station, the Eastmalvern Line a mirror is placed on the Melbourne end to enable the driver to see the reflection of departure signals given by the guard.

On a couple of occasions late in this mirror, which is of considerable size, has been curiously distorted even on fogless mornings, and the station staff have been called upon frequently to wipe the moisture from the surface of the glass.

At first it was felt that the weather was responsible for the trouble, but investigation has shown that it is due to a blackbird flying at the moment in an endeavour to get into holes in its own excited image.

In rainy weather it drops frequently into any pool of water near by, dabbling about in it and then rises again to make a violent charge at the glass, smothering it dirtily with its beak and wings. The bird is not strong enough to break the glass, but it is persistent enough to be a nuisance.

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

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Conditioning Water In Boilers By Blowing Down

WHEN water with its impurities is taken into a boiler and evaporated, pure water passes out in the form of steam whilst the impurities remain inside the boiler. As water continues to be evaporated, the impurities accumulate in the water left in the boiler, and when a sufficient degree of concentration has been produced, foaming takes place. The difference between foaming, which is generally caused by dissolved salts, and the overheating troubles associated with suspended solids may be likened to the difference between boiling milk, which foams, and cooking porridge, which after water is evaporated turns into a solid mass and results in a burnt pot.

Foaming is the term applied to the condition in the boiler when steam bubbles build up over the surface of the water to form a layer of foam, which fills the steam space and carries over to the cylinders with the steam. Disregarding the operating features that affect the occurrence of this condition, it is sufficient to say that foaming is caused by the concentration of alkaline salts in the water.

There is no economic chemical treatment that will remove foaming salts, and since these salts remain in the water in the boiler, the prevention of foaming depends on removing all or a portion of the concentrated water from the boiler—that is, by emptying the boiler as for a washout, or by blowing out a part of the concentrated water at proper intervals, and refilling with fresh water.

The degree of concentration required to produce foaming varies somewhat, but for any one operating district the variation is not great, and foaming can be prevented and satisfactory operation secured by keeping the concentration below the critical stage.

If part of the accumulated impurities in the boiler are blown out through the blow-off cock at sufficiently frequent intervals, the critical concentration of the water is not reached, and no foaming occurs.

The benefit from blowing down is most noticeable to the driver is the decrease in engine failures and train delays due to foaming, which trouble can be practically eliminated when systematic terminal and road blowing down are properly done.

Priming is said to occur when large quantities of water are carried over to the cylinders, and can be caused by excessive foaming. Before reaching this condition, however, and when nearing the critical stage of concentration, the

water, to use the engineman's expression, is light, and cannot be carried so high in the gauge glass without giving trouble.

Sudden operation of the regulator, or the use of an excessive cut-off when the boiler is too full, tends to cause priming even with low concentration in the boiler.

RESULTS OF V.R. PATRIOTIC RAFFLE

THE result of the special raffle drawn last month in aid of the V.R. Patriotic Fund is as follows:—

1st Prize (Open Order for £100):
No. 79286—Mr. H. Cracknell, 19 Frederick St., W. Brunswick.

2nd Prize (Open Order for £20):
No. 108955—Name not known at time of writing.

3rd Prize (Open Order for £10):
No. 59094—Mr. Fred. Beare, 323 Nicholson St., North Carlton.

Ten consolation Prizes to the value of £1 each were also distributed, and the Fund benefited by nearly £600. Mr. Cracknell, the winner of the 1st Prize, is employed in the North Melbourne Loco. Depot. Mr. Beare, the winner of the 3rd Prize, is the brother of Miss L. Beare, Correspondence Clerk in the Chief Clerk's Office, Accountancy Branch, Head Office, Spencer Street.

Mr. Beare did not know of his success until advised by his sister, who had purchased the ticket. A similar situation arose in the drawing for the previous V.R. Patriotic Raffle, twelve months ago. This was won by Mr. F. A. Marzorini, whose daughter employed in the Audit Office, Accountancy Branch, Spencer Street, had also secured the lucky ticket for her father.

V.R. MILITARY BAND'S EXCELLENT RECORD

IN its 51st Annual Report just released, the V.R. Military Band records an excellent year of service. During the year 1944/45 the Band was heard in well selected programmes on 16 occasions, including the Massed Bands performance organised by the Melbourne City Council on Hospital Sunday to assist the Lord Mayor's Annual Hospital Sunday Appeal and the 23rd Battalion A.I.F. Pilgrimage to The Shrine.

Under the care of Mr. G. Candela as Conductor, the Band has made much progress, and it is worth noting that the average attendance at the 16 recitals mentioned was 30 players, a good achievement when the demands on members' time under wartime conditions are remembered.

Nevertheless, the Band would welcome new recruits. Mr. O. Keating, the new President of the Band Committee, who has succeeded Mr. H. L. Dickinson, Messrs. H. Middleton and G. E. Burnell, the Vice-Presidents, and their energetic Committee are all nursing the ambition of strengthening the Band during the coming year.

Any railway man who is keen to obtain band experience in good company should communicate with the Band Secretary, Mr. M. Curlett, care of the Workshops Manager, Newport.

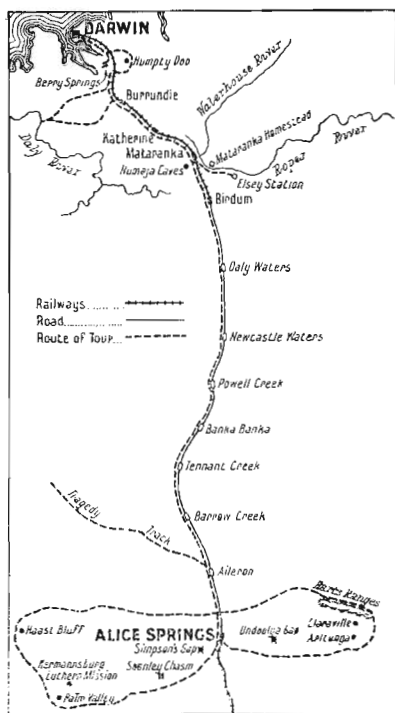
The Band Committee paid a warm tribute to the retiring President, Mr. H. L. Dickinson, Chief Clerk of the Rolling Stock Branch, who gave 14 years of valuable service to the affairs of the Band. The Committee said that "during his long term as President, Mr. Dickinson did not spare himself in upholding the traditions of the band and his efforts were largely responsible for keeping our organisation together during the depression years, and also for surmounting the many difficulties that confronted us during the six years of war."

In appreciation of Mr. Dickinson's excellent advice and leadership, the Committee presented him with a handsome smoker's outfit.

New Tourist World Is Discovered

TRAVELLING 3,000 miles by motor, Mr. L. C. Bromilow, Acting Manager, Publicity and Tourist Services, Mr. A. J. McAndrew, Tourist and Inspecting Officer of the New South Wales System, Mr. A. G. Bond, of Bond's Tours, Adelaide, and Mr. F. Sherridan, representing the Northern Territory Development League, recently covered a large area of Central Australia and the Northern Territory to see at first-hand the possibilities of developing a tourist industry in the North.

To test its value on tourist routes, the party carried a two-way wireless set, enabling them to keep in touch with Alice Springs. They visited Mataranka and Eleyse Stations on the Roper River, Darwin, Humpty-Doo Station out from Darwin, Berry Springs, Daly River, the Numaja Caves



The above map shows the route of tour

between Maranboy and Katherine, Tragedy Track from Aileron towards the Granites, Haast Bluff, Hermansburg Mission, Palm Valley, Standley Chasm, Simpson's Gap, Undoolya, Arltunga, Claraville and the Harts Ranges.

The Mataranka Homestead, 5½ miles from the North-South Road, is delightfully situated on the Waterhouse River and is to be converted to a tourist house prior to the next dry season. Close to the homestead is a thermal pool which is ideal for swimming. It has a temperature of 70 to 75 deg. all the year. The scenery along the Waterhouse is tropical and beautiful, and "fish-alligators" are seen on the banks. Fish is plentiful and game abundant.

The extraordinary Numaja Caves were explored for about half a mile. Even in their present undeveloped state, they should be an outstanding tourist attraction.

Near Katherine, the vast vegetable gardens developed by the Army and the rapid growth and heavy cropping of pawpaw and banana plantations are an indication of the productivity of the area.

Darwin, with its fine harbor and magnificent beaches, surprised those who were visiting it for the first time. Within an hour's run on reasonably good roads are the Humpty-Doo Station, the Black Jungle, Magnetic ant hills, and many other points of interest. Also, 40 miles to the south are the Berry Springs, a thermal pool 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, another attractive picture in a tropical setting.

Daly River too opened the visitors' eyes. It is a sportsman's paradise: ducks and geese are there in thousands; whilst excellent fishing is obtainable. Barramundi are caught in great numbers. Crocodiles and buffaloes will provide thrills for the big game hunter.

The richest colors on Nature's palette have been lavishly splashed in the North. The orange, vermilion and gleaming brick-reds of the rock faces in the valley of the Finke and at Standley Chasm are reminiscent of the Colorado Canyon.

A new hotel costing £40,000 is being erected at Alice Springs and next winter should see the North opened up as a winter tourist resort. Apart from the beauties and novelties of this new tourist world, the warm sunshine and brilliant blue skies from May to October should prove an immense attraction to the thousands of holidaymakers seeking relief from the cold winds and grey weather in the southern parts of Australia.

V.R. CASUALTY.

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets reporting the death, while on active service, of Leading Stoker M.J. O'Brien, R.A.N., of H.M.A.S. "Manoora."

Leading Stoker O'Brien was formerly a fireman at the Power Station, Newport, where he commenced duty in 1939. He enlisted in the R.A.N. in February, 1940, and it was his hard fate after surviving the worst years of the war to lose his life when almost in sight of peace. He was 31 years of age.

"NINETY and OVER"

STILL living quietly in retirement are several old Victorian railwaymen who are "90 years and over." In most cases their records go back to the Hobson's Bay Railway Company.

The oldest of these veterans is Mr. Alfred Young, who will reach the age of 98 on November 23. A native of Crewe (England) he served his apprenticeship in the London and North Western Railway Company. Coming to Australia, he joined the Hobson's Bay Railway Company in 1873 and worked in the Rolling Stock Branch. He retired as Boiler Inspector in 1908. In the earlier years of his retirement he devoted much time to gardening, bowls and craft-work, but latterly has found most pleasure in reading.

Among the most interesting nonagenarians is Mr. I. Maskell, a fine old veteran now totally blind, who will reach the age of 92 in January next. He entered the Hobson's Bay Railway Company in 1868, starting on a salary of £1 0/0 a week. He was subsequently a Booking Clerk and Railway Collector in that Company. He retired in 1914.

The Maskell family has an unusual railway history. Mr. Maskell's father, the late Mr. Wm. Maskell, was a railway guard in Victoria, until his death in a railway accident caused by a jury in a railway accident caused by his retirement. A brother, Mr. F. Maskell, was an engine driver who was killed in the Windsor railway accident of 1887. Mr. Maskell's eldest son, Mr. C. E. Maskell, is now the official in charge of the Passenger Audit at Spencer Street Head Office. His second son, Mr. Rupert Maskell, was also a railwayman, but resigned to take up farming. A third son, Mr. E. R. Maskell, is education officer for the Vacuum Oil Company.

Mr. Isaac Maskell was a professional sportsman in his younger days, the early "eighties" he was a successful hurdler, and also won success as an amateur boxer. As a bowler over half a century he played with the Camberwell and M.C.C. teams and represented Victoria in matches with New South Wales. Incidentally he was active in amateur theatre and also established a record for Australia, if not for the world, as Secretary for 64 years for the United Ancient Order of Druids—a job he held until he was 90.

Another veteran figure who passed away in July last when within 12 days of his 91st birthday, was Mr. W. Bell, who entered the Hobson's Bay Railway Company in 1877 and retired in 1908. Before joining the railways he served over 10 years at sea in the great sailing ships of the time. He was one of the crew of Victoria's first flag-ship, H.M.S. "Victoria."

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14 DIFFERENT RAIL GAUGES ONCE IN U.S.A.

THE break of gauge problem in Australia, which the comprehensive report of Sir Harold Guppy discusses, seems almost trivial in comparison to the original railway gauge nightmare in the United States. As late as 1867 there were no fewer than 14 gauges in use, ranging from 2 ft. to 6 ft. Here they are in all their bewildering variety: 3' 0", 3' 6", 4' 3", 4' 5½", 4' 7", 4' 8" 4' 8½", 4' 9½", 4' 10", 5' 0", 5' 4", 5' 6", and 6' 0".

Each railroad had adopted its gauge for reasons considered of sufficient moment at the time and there were also various schools of thought as to the merits of "narrow" as against "broad" gauge. The virtues of the narrow gauge (3 ft. or 3 ft. 6 in.) were strongly stressed by R. F. Fairlie, an English engineer, in his volume, "The Battle of the Gauges," also entitled "Railways or No Railways." This railway authority emphasised his opinion with the following subtitles on the title page:—

Narrow Gauge	Broad Gauge
Economy with V.	Costliness with
Efficiency	Extravagance.

Mr. Fairlie maintained that the narrow gauge was cheaper and just as efficient in service as the broad gauge which American railroads were adopting and he gave, as an example, the cost of constructing the 3' 6" railroad of the Toronto Grey and Bruce Co. in Canada—15,000 dollars a mile against 23,000 dollars a mile for a 6' line.

The Ohio and Mississippi and the New York and Erie, however, adhered to the 6' gauge. The latter Company declared that the heavy grades on its line demanded extra powerful engines which could only run on the broadest possible gauge, and in declining to adopt the 4' 8½" gauge at that period he held that the cheaper first cost of construction and equipment for 4' 8½" did not enter into the argument.

The idea of a uniform gauge grew gradually, but even when its utility developed with the conception of a transcontinental transport, the New Jersey and Ohio Company secured special legislation in favor of a 4' 10" gauge to prevent an interchange of rolling stock between it and other roads.

In the eyes of General D. C. McCallum, then General Superintendent of the New York and Erie, uniformity of gauge had the particular drawback that "the cost of transfer-

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ring freight from the cars on one road to another with which it connects is less than that of hauling the empty returned cars back—rendered necessary where the freight is sent east—the preponderance of trade being largely in that direction."

The conflict of the gauges ultimately reached Congress, which passed an Act authorising a trans-continental railway and included a provision that President Lincoln should select the gauge. He selected 5 feet, but this decision was not adopted. The matter was referred back to Congress, which declared for 4' 8½". That was the beginning of a general conversion to 4' 8½", but even in 1885 there were still nearly 13,000 miles of railway continuing business on other gauges.

Out of approximately 240,000 miles of railway in the United States today over 99 per cent. are of standard gauge, the remainder being mostly small branch lines on which the gauge ranges from 3 ft. to 2 ft. The State of Maine, for instance, has two separate 2 ft. systems aggregating only 24 miles on which a regular service is provided.

SPORTING ACTIVITIES OF V.R. INSTITUTE

WITH the termination of the war the Victorian Railways Institute will resume its pre-war sporting activities—a singularly large and comprehensive program, involving almost every form of outdoor and indoor sport in which men in search of healthy recreation can indulge.

Several clubs affiliated with the Institute have already met to discuss their plans and several more are to meet in the future. All games will be represented in the programs now taking shape, and a particular stimulus to the grand old game of bowls will be given by the news that by amalgamation with the Albert Park Bowling Club the V.R. Institute has acquired the use of a bowling green.

The club will now be called the Albert Park-V.R.I. Bowling Club. The green is in a delightful setting and when the present building regulations are lifted the club plans erecting new buildings and making extensive repairs.

This is a wonderful opportunity for V.R. men to join up with a young club, which is not yet big in membership but is assured of playing pennant bowls. The new green, it may be added, is only 7 minutes by train or tram from the city, and the South Melbourne tram passing the V.R. Administrative Offices, Spencer Street, stops close to the club house.

PRIZES AWARDED FOR THE BEST KEPT TRACK LENGTHS.

THE following prizes have been awarded for the best kept lengths of track in the various districts. The First Prize is £15; Second Prize, £10, Third Prize £5; the Best Improved Length Prize £10, and the names mentioned are those of the Gangers-in-Charge of Gangs of from 3 to 6 men.

District	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize	Most Improved Length Prize
TRACKS WITH RAILS OVER 75 LB.				
Metro. & Eastern Seymour	G. J. Brown (Trafalgar) H. R. Billman (Glenrowan)	S. Hall (Darnum) H. C. Brignell (Kilmore East)	R. V. Curran (Koo-wee-rup) L. H. Willis (Springhurst) G. Hyde (Mitiamo)	W. Hartrick (Aspendale) M. Nagle (Longwood) W. Willington (Kangaroo Flat)
Bendigo	C. J. Hall (Malmesbury)	N. J. Turner (Clarkefield)		
Ballarat	A. Flavell (Burrumbeet)	J. F. Bromilow (Melton)	R. D. McDougall (Bacchus Marsh)	T. Bricknell (Maryborough)
Geelong	A. F. Campbell (Buckley)	G. H. Pevitt (Heywood)	W. H. Lingham (Nhill)	W. J. Tayles (Camperdown)
TRACKS WITH RAILS OF 75 LB. AND UNDER.				
Metro. & Eastern Seymour	C. F. Smith (Stratford) W. D. McNicol (Dookie)	P. J. Crough (Tostaree) W. Edwards (Numurkah)	W. E. Evers (Kernot) S. L. Downing (Rushworth) F. S. Kick (Berrillock)	W. J. Daly (Sale) W. T. Ockendon (Rutherglen) W. G. Rowe (Bullart)
Bendigo	F. Giri (Knowsley)	B. W. Lyndon (Kotta)	G. O. Read (Carisbrook)	No Award
Ballarat	A. V. Praed (Talbot)	W. J. Spencer (Newstead)	H. T. Bowyer (Yanac)	
Geelong	J. M. Shanahan (Antwerp)	A. N. Tong (Cressy)		T. E. Rankine (Heywood)

RE-OPENING OF VICTORIAN GOVT. TOURIST BUREAUX

WITH the termination of the war the Department, in accordance with promises given when the Intra-State Branch Offices of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau were closed due to war conditions, it is hoped shortly to re-open Branch Bureaux at Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and Mildura.

Although the present restricted train services due to the shortage of coal will limit the activities of the Bureaux, their re-opening will be of material assistance to district residents in making holiday and travel arrangements.

They will also be invaluable to visitors in arranging accommodation and advising them of points of interest which will make their stay in the district more enjoyable.

As is the case in the Head Office of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau in Melbourne, it will be the aim in each Branch Office to give service irrespective of whether travel is by Rail, Road, Sea or Air.

V.R. Patriotic Fund To Close

AT a meeting on August 15 last the V.R. Central Patriotic Fund Committee discussed the termination or continuance of its functions, but a decision was deferred until September 19. It was agreed, however, that the Fund itself shall close on December 31, and payroll contributors are earnestly requested to continue their fortnightly contributions until the end to assist the Red Cross and Comforts Fund activities, many men in war zones having not yet been repatriated.

The Patriotic Fund's Auxiliaries throughout the State will also cease to function at the end of this year.

SERVICE

THE following appreciation of good service on the part of railwaymen comes from Mr. F. O. Harper, General Manager of Robert Harper & Co. Ltd., 390 Little Flinders Street, Melbourne:—
"Now that the raiiling of the rice harvested from the Wakool Rice Project has been completed, I am desired by the millers to whom the rice was consigned in Melbourne to express their appreciation of the manner in which the Railway Department's Superintendents at Bendigo and the Station Master at Wakool helped to make the despatch of the rice from Burraboi a success by the alterations made there this year and also by always having plenty of trucks and covers on hand.

"It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the three firms interested, Messrs. J. F. McKenzie & Co. Pty. Ltd., Parsons Bros. & Co., Pty. Ltd., and Robert Harper & Company, Ltd., to advise you accordingly."

"H. 220" Has Covered 270,000 Miles.

FROM the date of its debut in rail service in February, 1941, up to its return to Newport Workshops for major overhaul in May, 1945, Australia's most powerful locomotive, "H. 220" had covered approximately 270,000 miles—which speaks volumes for its sound design and faithful construction.

Since it was first engaged on fast goods work between Melbourne and Wodonga in July, 1942, it has been hauling an average load of 800 tons on each journey, and covering approximately 1,870 miles weekly.

With its train loads of priority loading it leaves Melbourne at 9.25 p.m. and Wodonga at 8.45 a.m. daily on five days each week.

During recent months its performance has been adversely affected by the necessity to clean fires en route as Maitland Coal is no longer available for this important service.

When it becomes possible to relay and strengthen the Adelaide line to Ararat it is intended to build additional "H" Class engines for working the Adelaide expresses and the Interstate Fast Goods Services.

Railway Girls Help Carnival And Gala Ball

THE enthusiasm of numerous Railway people contributed greatly to the success of the Queen Carnival and Gala Ball at the Melbourne Town Hall last month. The big evening was in the joint care of the Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association and the Australian Railways Union Youth Committee, and among the Queens whose outstanding comeliness invited votes (each of which cost 1d.) were four railway girls: Miss Joan Hulme of the Rolling Stock Branch, Head Office; Mrs. Carol Ritter and Miss Joyce Cole of the Refreshment Services Branch, and Miss Jean Greenhill, of the Accounts Office at Newport Workshops.

Miss Joan Hulme received the largest number of votes among the railway girls, though the other ladies were also well supported.

Miss Hulme was crowned "Queen of the Carnival," and the votes cast for her and the other three railway girls were responsible for contributions amounting to £1,335, the largest amount obtained by any Group in the Carnival. The total amount secured was £3,662—a distinctly handsome effort by all concerned.

Miss Hulme, by the way, has an unusual job in the Department. She is the only girl in the Service who takes care of train running records. It is interesting to note that one of her private interests is officiating most efficiently as a Lady Cub Master.

PROGRESS IN LOCOMOTIVE DESIGN

OF special interest to all railway men is the announcement of a new design of Turbo-Electric Locomotive now building in America at the works of the General Electric Company and Babcock & Wilcox.

Its sponsors are nine of the most important United States railways whose Mechanical Engineers are supervising its construction.

The boiler pressure is to be 600 pounds, and the steam turbine engine expected to deliver 6,900 H.P. on the shaft of an electric generator.

Pulverised fuel will be employed which, with the high steam pressure, should ensure high economy of fuel. Electric transmission will allow flexibility of operation, making the engine suitable for fast goods or passenger work on flat or hilly country.

A Valiant V.R. One-Legged Airman Returns

FLYING OFFICER J. H. GIBSON who recently returned to Australia is an example of fortitude and courage which adds to the colour of our country's war story.

Originally a clerk in the Staff Branch of the Department, he was listed in the R.A.A.F. in 1941, when in Alexandria to continue his training, he lost one leg in an ordinary way. Walking along a street at night he was caught in the tail cable of a barrage balloon which had broken away, and which had become entangled in a fast moving bus, 300 or 400 yards ahead of him.

He could not extricate himself and was hauled along the rough ground covering fully half-a-mile before he was released. By some miracle he escaped death, but the injuries to his left leg comprising a fractured femur and knee-cap and smashed foot compelled an amputation. He was in a year in hospital and was operated four times.

Undaunted by his experience he went to Canada for further training and took a course in air bombing, completing this period of training in June last year. He then went to England for further training. Subsequently he was constantly in the bombing over Germany and in dropping supplies in Holland.

His artificial leg, which he secured in Canada, is behaving almost like a human limb, and he has become confident in the use of it that dancing, cycling and even cricket cause him no the slightest embarrassment or concern.

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Reconstruction of Cremorne Bridge STEADY PROGRESS BEING MAINTAINED

THE first year of work on the reconstruction of the Cremorne Bridge across the river at South Yarra finds a massive abutment and pier already in place on each bank, whilst preparation is being made for the most difficult part of an exceptionally difficult job—the construction of the supporting concrete pillars to the pier in the river itself.

Coffer dams have already been sunk in the river and the necessity of having a rock base for the pillars means that the steel sheeting of each coffer dam has to be driven into the river bed to below rock level, each being not less than 50 feet deep, the deepest that have been constructed in Victoria.

The process of preparing a coffer dam in these exceptional circumstances involves driving the steel sheets of the dam down in short lengths and welding on further lengths until the dam has reached the required depth below the surface of the stream. The stream itself are 4 coffer dams, each to be filled with concrete when the water and silt have been removed by powerful pumps.

Some idea of the size of the concrete foundations may be gained from the fact that the abutment on the south bank is 102 feet long, 10 feet wide and 28 feet deep. Each pillar carrying this abutment is 13 feet square and 50 feet deep. The new bridge, which is designed to carry six lines of railway track, will be of five spans—two of 80 feet and three of 96 feet.

On the east side of the bridge a new footbridge will be constructed

with a striking approach consisting of steps in concrete on each bank of the river.

Another particular aspect of this outstanding railway job is the straightening of the "dog leg" turn of the Alexandra Avenue under the present bridge.

As soon as the necessary girders to carry the railway track over Alexandra Avenue have been delivered, they will be placed on the concrete abutments and piers. The new section of roadway providing a straight run under the bridge for all traffic along Alexandra Avenue will then be completed.

When the new section of Alexandra Avenue is in service, it is proposed to remove the bend of the river bank which carried the former "dog leg" turn. This job will widen the river considerably, and relieve any flood conditions that may occur in the future.

The work on the bridge has to some extent been affected by the shortage of manpower, but with the expected increase in skilled labor as men now on service are returned to the Department, activities will be expedited and it is confidently expected that the bridge will be finished inside the original estimate of three years.

New Minister of Transport

ON 2nd October the Commissioners and Heads of Branches said farewell to the Hon. J. A. Kennedy, M.L.C., the retiring Minister of Transport, in the late Dunstan Government, and welcomed the Hon. J. S. Disney, M.L.C., the new Minister of Transport.

In a short speech by the Chairman of Commissioners (Mr. N. C. Harris) warm references were made to the cordial relations that had existed between Mr. Kennedy and the Railway Administration during his two years as Minister, and Mr. Kennedy expressed his thanks for the help he had received from the Commissioners and staff during his official connection with the Railways.

Mr. Disney, in responding, said it was a coincidence that Mr. Kennedy and he both represent the Higinbotham Province in the Legislative Council.

Mr. Disney who is a native of Ballarat, was first elected to the Victorian Legislative Council in June, 1940. He was appointed to the Public Works Committee in October, 1943, and was elected to the Vice-Chairmanship in July, 1945. He has been a member of the Melbourne City Council since 1935, devoting much time to work on various committees.

He enlisted at the commencement of the First Great War in 1914, serving with the 8th Battalion at the Landing on Gallipoli. Subsequently he gained a commission with the Australian Flying Corps and was a member of the No. 2 Scout Squadron, A.F.C., until the end of the war.

NO GREATER ASSET

THE problems of the railways were not solved when the war ended.

Our patrons are still having to put up with inferior services, judged by their normal standards. While the dearth of coal continues, it is not possible to give the frequency of trains, or provide the comfortable conditions of travel, that create favorable public impressions.

Meanwhile, other forms of transport, highly developed and

in the hands of energetic and ambitious operators, are losing no opportunity to win public popularity.

Railway revenue is steadily going down. In the last two years it has dropped by nearly £2 million. Next year there will be a further drop, and it can be expected that the decline will be accelerated as petrol and rubber restrictions are eased and new motor vehicles become available.

The ability of the railways to hold their business—and this con-

cerns the future prospects of every man and woman in the Service—depends, more than ever before, upon the enthusiasm and loyalty of the staff.

In the contest for patronage, there is no greater asset than public respect and goodwill. Let us strive to win this by the quality of our personal service, that will make it plain for all to see that our hearts are in the job and that we are doing everything possible to counteract the present disabilities.

PROBLEMS OF USING WOOD ON LOCOMOTIVES

THE critical position which has been reached with railway coal stocks and the unpromising outlook obliged the Commissioners to arrange for the burning of firewood not only in pilot engines, but in locomotives hauling goods trains on most lines throughout the State. Nearly three tons of wood are required to give the same heat value as one ton of coal, and as approximately 6,500 tons of wood were being used weekly, a real problem had to be faced in obtaining, distributing, unloading and stacking the firewood, and in fuelling the engines.

There are four receiving points for New South Wales coal—Melbourne, Geelong, Wodonga, and Tocumwal, and mainly one (Wonthaggi) for Victorian coal. Supplies are conveyed from those places to depots throughout the State. Loading stations for firewood, however, are selected because of their nearness to wood supplies and fuelling points.

With coal, trucks can be loaded to capacity, but only 10 tons of wood can be carried in a 16-ton truck. The haulage between loading and fuelling points is, in many cases, less for wood than for coal, but the number of trucks required is considerably greater and more handling is involved.

The loading of wood on tenders that were originally designed for the carriage of coal is another problem. The wood is cut into 2-foot lengths with a maximum diameter of 7 inches, and enough wood must be placed on the tender to enable the locomotive to reach its next fuelling point. Fortunately, the wood can be stacked in places on the tender where coal cannot be carried, and this enables most tenders to carry almost the same weight in wood as in coal.

But the use of wood involves far more stoppages for refuelling and an additional fireman must sometimes be carried to assist in handling the wood *en route*. Some idea of the difficulties and delays that are involved is shown in the relatively short run of 100 miles between Melbourne and Bendigo. A goods train leaving Melbourne for Bendigo and burning coal would not refuel until after arrival at its destination, whereas a wood-burning train over the same route has to stop for refuelling at Sunbury, Macedon and Castlemaine. Over the 170 miles between Maryborough and Ouyen a wood-burning train has to stop for refuelling at Bealiba, St. Arnaud, Donald, Birchip, Woomelang and Speed, or on an average of about every 28 miles.

As far as possible, the fuelling points for wood have been arranged at stations where staff is available, but the answer to the question as to how far a locomotive can travel on wood without refuelling is governed by the load, and by the nature of the country over which the train is travelling. On relatively flat lines a wood-burning train can cover up to 40 miles

without refuelling, but in country with grades demanding heavy steaming the distance might be as low as 30 miles.

V.R. CASUALTIES

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report the death whilst prisoners of war of three former V.R. men—Signaller G. G. Quigley and Privates J. J. Burge and L. G. Morgan of the A.I.F.

Signaller Quigley, who died in the p.o.w. camp at Amboina, entered the Dept. as a lad porter in 1936 and was subsequently employed as a block recorder at Caulfield and Spencer St. Yard. He enlisted in 1941 in the 2/21st Battalion. He was 24 years of age.

Private Burge, who was born in 1908, began as a lad porter in 1925. He was subsequently a porter at Moorabbin, McKinnon and Flinders St. and on his enlistment in 1941 he was a sorter and goods checker in the Melbourne Yards. He was captured in 1942.

Private Morgan joined the Dept. as an apprentice Fitter and Turner in 1938 and enlisted in 1941. He arrived in Singapore just a fortnight before its fall and during his long period of captivity at Ranau his parents only received three cards from him. He was born in 1922.

Ararat Patriotic Auxiliary Concludes Fine Record

THE Ararat Auxiliary of the V.R. Patriotic Fund terminated its activities at a well-attended meeting on October 14 last.

During the war the Auxiliary raised approximately £2,600 which indicated the sustained enthusiasm of the Committee and many individual members.

In a final exchange of complimentary speeches, warm reference was made to the efforts of the President (Mr. J. Edgumbe) and of the Honorary Secretary (Mr. F. Bird), and some well deserved verbal bouquets were handed to the ladies of the Auxiliary.

It was generally agreed that their assistance was magnificent. A special tribute was paid to the energy of Mrs. H. R. Richards, who by her hard work and splendid example, proved an inspiration to her fellow-workers during the whole of the war period.

Mr. Commissioner M. J. Canny Reappointed For Further 3 Years

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. Commissioner M. J. Canny who has been reappointed for a further three years commencing from 1st January, next.

Mr. Canny, who was first appointed a Commissioner in January, 1938, succeeding the late Mr. T. B. McKinnon, has now the handsome record of 10 years continuous service in the department.

He joined the railways as a supernumerary messenger and speedily exhibited those qualities of concentration, tact and ability which assure advancement and responsibility.

For many years he learned the finer art of administration as secretary to various Commissioners including the late Sir Thomas Tait, and when he was promoted to the post of Outside Superintendent in the Transport Branch he was obviously bound for the more important position of General Superintendent of Transportation which he was appointed in 1924.

During his career as Outside Superintendent he visited America where he studied aspects of railroads which greatly enlarged his experience and understanding of the problems that are constantly facing railway executives.

LOST—AND FOUND

THE extraordinary story of seven Australians being discovered on the top of a 4,500-foot mountain in Bali, has particular interest for railwaymen, for the reason that one of the seven was Captain J. R. Cashman, a clerk in the Accountancy Branch at Spencer Street, who has seen considerable service.

Captain Cashman, who is only 37 years of age, entered the Department in 1936 and enlisted in the A.I.F. in 1941.

He went to Timor in July, 1942, returned to Australia in February, 1943, and was again back in Timor early in 1944. Subsequently captured by the Japanese, he was a prisoner of war for 15 months and was then transferred to Bali in a boat of 70 men which carried 250 people. The journey from Timor occupied 15 days.

Captain Cashman and his fellow-prisoners were simply dumped by the Japanese on the mountain and it was that our people would rescue them that they were discovered and returned to Australia so early.

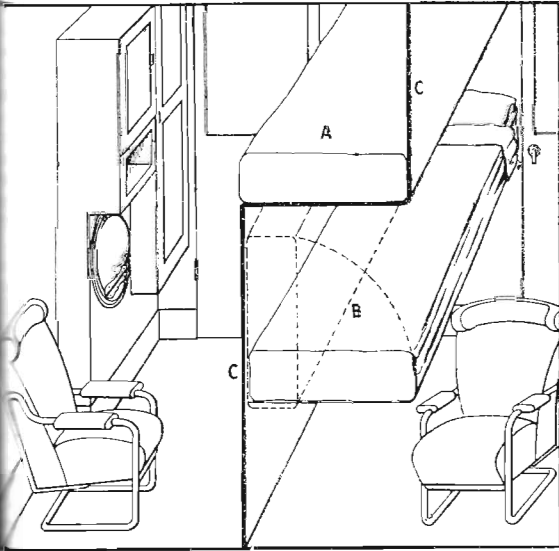
NEW TYPE OF SLEEPING CAR BEING CONSIDERED

POST-WAR improvements in the comfort and convenience of rail travel are now being planned by the Victorian Railways. One important innovation that is receiving

attention is the construction of a type of sleeping car that will be new to Australia.

This sleeper will embody the principle of the single berth cabin of which there will be at least ten in each car, although some two-berth cabins will also be included. In order to ensure that the limited space available is used to the best advantage, adjoining single-berth cabins will have alternate high and low berths, one over the other, as shown in the accompanying sketch.

This type of sleeping car will enable the Commissioners to test the extent of the demand for the exclusive use of sleeping cabins.



In the above drawing, "A" indicates the upper berth, "B" the lower berth, and "C", the partition designed to assure the privacy of single berth compartments.

M.R. ENGINEER'S LECTURE AT MELBOURNE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

A feature of the Civil Engineering course at the Melbourne Technical College was the series of lectures recently delivered by railway officers on "Civil Engineering Aspects of Railway Engineering."

To suit the convenience of all concerned, the lectures were delivered between 5.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. Some of the lectures were limited to one hour, others occupied the two full hours, but even the latter period was insufficient for the lecturer to cover fully the subject of his discourse. In an endeavour to overcome this difficulty, students were given summaries of lectures in advance.

The scope of the lectures is revealed by the subject headings. For example, Mr. H. C. Thomas, Engineer of Special Works, devoted a couple of hours to the economics of railway location, location factors, length grades, rise and fall of curvature location and surveys. On another evening he spoke of steam and electric traction, tractive power of locomotives, tractive resistances, ruling and momentum grades, vertical and horizontal curves, transition curves and grade compensation curves.

The broad subject of maintenance occupied Mr. E. Richard, late Engineer of Maintenance, for a couple of

hours, and Mr. S. P. Jones, former Signal and Telegraph Engineer, spoke very informatively on signalling and interlocking problems.

Mr. E. B. Slater, an Engineer in the Way and Works Branch, took as his subject: "Station Yard Layout, Marshalling Yards, etc.;" Mr. A. T. Coates, another Way and Works Engineer, revealed to the students some interesting facts about points and crossings, and Mr. G. G. Bennett, an Assistant Engineer in the same Branch, lectured for two hours on typical track sections, plans and sections required for earthworks, ballast, sleepers, rails, jointing and creep, track drainage and methods of tracklaying.

The lectures, which were all carefully prepared by the engineers concerned, were largely attended and were highly appreciated by the students.

Seymour with its six bridges. Subsequently he was busily engaged in the extension of sidings at Spion Kop and is now in control of the big job of reconstructing the Cremorne Bridge at South Yarra and various lesser bridges on country lines.

Another, industrious, undemonstrative man, Mr. Thomas used to be an ardent fisherman, but he now concentrates on the Boy Scout movement as Group Scout Master of the 8th Brighton Group. During the First World War he served for three years in the A.I.F. in France, receiving his commission on active service.

Promotions of Two Popular Engineers

THE recent retirement of Mr. Evan Richard from the post of Engineer of Maintenance has brought well-earned promotion for Mr. W. O. Brown, who succeeds him, and Mr. H. C. Thomas, who steps up from the job of Metropolitan District Engineer to take over Mr. Brown's responsibilities as Engineer of Special Works.

Mr. Brown, who was for some years with the Transportation Staff Office, joined the professional staff of the Way and Works Branch in 1911 and started on survey work, followed by bridge inspection. In 1923 he was transferred to Bendigo in connection with regrading and bridge construction on the Bendigo-Korong Vale line, to enable "C" class engines to run. This was followed by a wide experience in charge of various regrading and bridge construction works throughout the State. From 1926 to 1933 he was a Relieving District Engineer, and after 5 years as District Engineer, Geelong, he was appointed Metropolitan District Engineer.

Succeeding Mr. J. J. Montgomery as Engineer of Special Works, Mr. Brown supervised the construction of bridges over the Goulburn at Murchison and Molesworth, Latrobe at Rosedale, Avoca at Charlton, as well as the earlier stages of the reconstruction of the Cremorne Bridge at South Yarra.

An energetic, self-effacing engineer, Mr. Brown confesses to one absorbing passion—fishing . . . anywhere . . . in river, or sea and for any sort of fish from the aristocratic trout down to the ruffian shark.

Mr. H. C. Thomas, who was first articled to a Civil Engineer in England, entered the Way and Works Branch in 1933, after twenty years' service in the Railways Construction Branch, during which he was Engineer in Charge of Location and Construction of new lines, bridges, etc., between Rushworth and Stanhope, Koo-wee-rup and Strzelecki, Kerang and Stony Crossing. He also directed the construction of the South Kensington to West Footscray Goods line—an important major work which cost over £500,000.

In the Way and Works Branch he has been, respectively, District Engineer, Bendigo (1933), North-Eastern District (1938), and Metropolitan District Engineer (1942).

While at Bendigo he investigated the problem of overcoming the loss of time to trains due to sand drift, improved methods of preventing the ravages of termites; and reconditioned the track in the Elphinstone tunnel.

Four years ago he was the Supervising Engineer in the duplication of the line from Goulburn Junction to

(Continued in Column 2)

FINALS OF AMBULANCE COMPETITIONS

NORTH Melbourne Loco. No. 3 scored the highest number of points and won the Senior Corps Event in the finals of the 1945 State Ambulance Competitions held at Lilydale on October 25. Benalla No. 1, which was only beaten by 5 points for the coveted first prize, was second, and also secured the honors for the best improvised stretcher. Third place went to Melbourne Goods No. 1.

In the Senior Individual, Mr. K. J. Hart (Melbourne Goods), who was second last year, put up the best individual performance of the day in winning the Dux for this event. Second and third places went to Mr. H. Jones (Nth Melb. Loco.) and Mr. A. Atkinson (Newport). The last named, who just beat Mr. J. Gleeson (Benalla) for first in the Novice Individual, won the honor of competing in the Senior Individual Test, and his securing a place in a test which again revealed the originality of the Ambulance Officer, Mr. W. Blackburn, in devising it, was most praiseworthy.

The third in the Novice Individuals, was Mr. J. Richards, Leading Porter at Spencer Street. As regards the Novice Corps Event, 1st, 2nd and 3rd places went to North Melbourne Loco. No. 1, Bendigo North No. 1, and Seymour No. 2, in that order.

Mr. Blackburn and his industrious staff were again responsible for a fine program of tests and in the Annual Dinner held at the Doric Hall, South Melbourne, under the capable chairmanship of Mr. M.A. Remfry (General Superintendent of Transportation) handsome reference was made to the success of the day. In the absence of the Commissioners who were unable to be present, Mr. A. C. Ahlston (Chief Mechanical Engineer) presented the prizes and toasts were enthusiastically drunk to the winning Teams and Individuals, Visitors and Adjudicators (Drs. McAree, Sloss, Shiel, Harbison and Mr. W. Godden, (Ex-Asst. Ambulance Officer). Replying on behalf of the visitors, Mr. A. G. Hall, of the Indian Railways spoke in congratulatory terms of the Victorian railwaymen's wonderful gift for improvisation in First Aid.

Doctors McAree, Sloss and Shiel spoke informatively on the day's events, and a fine musical program contributed by Mr. V. Maskell, (vocalist) Mr. Darrell Mansfield (a most entertaining juggler) Mr. Keith Peterson (humourist and dancer) and Mr. Roy Ogilvie (accompanist) received rounds of applause.

A V.R. Footballer and Cricketer Retires

NOW pursuing the pleasures of gardening in retirement, is Mr. Albert McDougall, a former coppersmith at Newport Workshops, with an excellent war and sporting record.

Mr. McDougall, who was born in 1876, joined the Department in 1919 and was due to retire in October, 1942. He continued, however, at Newport, as a Supernumerary until September last.

In his youth he played both cricket and football in first-class company. For 10 years he was a valued all-rounder with the Port Melbourne Cricket Club. In football he collected high honors as a follower and half-forward, first with the North Melbourne team and later with Fitzroy serving valiantly with the latter Club for 7 years. He played with Fitzroy in the premier teams of 1898 and 1899, and received the team's valued certificate for 5 years' good work. His photograph now hangs among others in the Committee Room of the Fitzroy Club.

Though too old for football, he continued in cricket with an amateur club until well into the "fifties," on one occasion scoring 105 with a Woodfull bat—a feat which earned him another bat. On this one he secured the autographs of the famous English team, captained by Jardine, and including Hammond, Larwood and Ames.

In the First World War he enlisted in 1916, and was accepted for the job of a mechanic in an aerodrome near Bristol. He served three years.

SPORTING ACTIVITIES OF V.R. INSTITUTE.

DURING the war numerous sporting bodies connected with the V.R. Institute found it necessary to curtail their usual programs, but as already reported in the last issue of the "News Letter," the Council of the Institute is now developing plans for the resumption of sporting activities throughout the State.

Most of the clubs connected with the Institute in Melbourne are now reforming. Indeed, meetings of the V.R.I. Cricket and Tennis Associations have agreed to resume immediately the competitions discontinued some four or five years ago, and enthusiasm among players and officials is so great that already more teams have been enrolled than was the case in pre-war days.

Death of Lieut. Andrew Veteran of 1st World War

THE "News Letter" greatly regrets to report the death of Lieut. D. Andrews, a V.R. veteran of the First World War.

Lieut. Andrews served for 4½ years with the first A.I.F. He was originally with the 13th Light Horse ("Devil's Own") and saw continuous service in Egypt, Western Desert, Palestine and France.

When the Second World War broke out he was again eager to get into khaki. He joined the A.M.C. and was attached to the Movement Control Staff. For some time he was in the Northern Territory, but being found medically unfit for tropical service, he was transferred to Albany subsequently returning to Headquarters.

The late Lieut. Andrews, who will be greatly missed by his former colleagues in the department, started as a lad porter in 1911. After his return from the First World War he was promoted to Station Master on his enlistment in August, 1940, he was S.M. at Westgarth. He was 50 years of age.

SERVICE.

THE following complimentary reference to the V.R. Buffet Service was recently received from Mr. J. Reeves of Rutherglen:—

"It is with extreme pleasure I express, through you, to the crews of the Buffet Cars in use on the 4.15 p.m. daily Melbourne-Albury Express, my appreciation of the excellent service rendered to the travelling public in them under trying circumstances.

"As a frequent traveller using the cars to and from Melbourne during the past two years, I can say that these ladies have always been courteous, polite and helpful to all. They had to contend with all types of passengers and submit to insolence and remarks bordering on the insulting at times whilst always maintaining control of their own feelings.

"Women travelling with young children, including my own wife, have a right to thank these girls for in the assistance and kindness they have received from them.

"No doubt you and your officers will say that you always expect good service to the public from your staff. This is true and the public are entitled to—but you often do we find the public want far more than their "pound of flesh." Frequently, I am afraid. In the future I will not be travelling to Melbourne very often but I know that whilst you are able to retain the standard efficiency of your present staff, I and my family, will always receive the same attention in the Buffet Cars.

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The Victorian Railways NEWS LETTER

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Issue No. 183.

Re-Establishment Of Staff On Discharge From Armed Forces

FOLLOWING the conclusion of the war, the Department is busily preparing for the return and re-establishment of the small army of railwaymen who have been engaged in so many ways on the various fighting fronts. Naturally, their re-absorption after an absence which in some cases has extended over five or six years presents a number of problems.

As a starting point for a common policy certain arrangements have been tentatively decided upon. For example, Engine Drivers, Locomotive Firemen and other operating staff whose classification requires the possession of safeworking and other certificates, or that they be qualified under rules and regulations, will be given ample time in which to re-qualify and where necessary will be suitably employed in the meantime at their classified rate of wage.

Men who have qualified for promotion subject to their passing a written examination in safeworking or other subjects will be given up to twelve months to sit for the examination, and on qualifying will be placed in their former relative order of seniority.

Men who were apprentices in the Department, when they joined up, will need special consideration. Some of them have had war service entirely different from their railway trade and it will probably be necessary to plan certain portions of their training. Others whilst on active service have been doing work closely associated with their trade. In such cases the aim will be to devise a means

to assure them of a balanced overall training. Where work performed with the Armed Forces is regarded as equivalent to apprenticeship training, it will be credited as such. On their resumption of duty, apprentices are paid the rate of wage they would have received but for war service.

Staff and supervising officers will endeavour to ensure that every man returning to the Railways is happily placed in the job to which he is entitled. A Rehabilitation Officer, Mr. L.G. David, has been appointed to control the reception of these men and help them as far as possible. It is intended to appoint as Welfare Officers some selected returned men who will have the responsibility of visiting discharged servicemen at their work and discussing any difficulties that have been encountered. They will also encourage them to increase their railway knowledge and advise them on methods of qualifying for promotion.

Returned servicemen who are now joining the Department for the first time, also have a strong claim for friendly aid in re-establishing themselves among us, and the Welfare Officers, when appointed, will be equally available to them.

In directing that every effort must be made to assist discharged servicemen in their re-establishment in the Department, the Commissioners made it clear that under existing legislation such men "are entitled to be placed in the occupation in which they were employed immediately prior to their war service and under conditions not less favourable than those which would have applied to them in that occupation but for their war service."

Special efforts will be made, too, to discover the best method of utilising the services of men who, through the misfortunes of war, are not able to perform their normal duties.

At some of the principal centres of railway activities, it is proposed to appoint committees representing the Administration, returned servicemen of both world wars, and the local staff to assist in making the returned men welcome, and to bring to light for study by specialists any personal problem which cannot readily be solved locally.

If this experiment is found to be of value to ex-servicemen, the extension of the idea to other centres will be favourably considered.

FROM THE COMMISSIONERS TO THE STAFF . . .

WITH the approach of Christmas, we send our cordial greetings and best wishes for the New Year to all members of the staff.

* * *

The passing year has seen the return to our ranks of many who were away on active service. We welcome them back to the railway team, and look forward to the time when all those railwaymen who are still in the Forces can be released to resume in their peace-time positions.

To those who have returned with coveted distinctions, we offer sincere congratulations, and we

pay grateful tribute to each and every one of you who risked everything in the cause of liberty.

* * *

Inevitably, the upheaval of war has left its aftermath of problems. The times immediately ahead are fraught with uncertainties and difficulties, intensified in the railways by rapidly developing competition at a time when lack of coal is gravely handicapping the System.

In these circumstances, more than in any previous period of railway history, there is great need for wise counsel, for mutual

understanding and for friendly co-operation in all sections of the service. If these prevail, with public respect and confidence assured, the challenge of the future can be answered by fresh proofs that the railways have no equal for faithful and dependable service.

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

Rail Welding In Long Lengths Interesting Performance In U.S.A.

In a recent issue of "The Railway Gazette" (England) complimentary reference was made to the achievement of the Elgin Joliet and Eastern Railroad (U.S.A.) in rail welding $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles of track, the longest individual rail of which was 3,503 ft. Special interest lay in the fact that the rails were welded at a depot and were then "moved in continuous strings up to 1,750 feet long to the sites at which they were to be laid in."

The rails were 131-lb. and the method of moving the welded rails from the depot to the site was that of bedding. "A set of sleepers sufficient for spacing about 50 feet apart," is explained, "was prepared by attaching two single-shoulder sole-plates each, with the shoulders set roughly to the gauge distance apart; the purpose was to invert these sleepers, carrying the long rails above them and bedding the sole-plates along the running rails. The sole plate shoulders would then keep the long rails central with the track over which they were running. The two welded rails were set about 1 ft. apart and secured to each side by a pair of rail anchors, one on each side of the sleeper."

The welded rails were hauled along the track by means of a steel cable attached to a train travelling at 4 miles per hour, and in the course of the journey the welded rails successfully negotiated two curves. This was an excellent performance and recalled the efforts of the Department in producing welded rails, 1,710 feet long, for the Elphinstone Tunnel.

Rails Dragged on Their Sides

These rails were Thermit welded outside the tunnel, but no special supports were provided when the rails were dragged on their sides by a locomotive along the sleepers into position. In the Geelong tunnel, two lengths of 1,530 feet were hauled similarly into position and welded together by the Thermit process in the middle of the tunnel, making an unbroken length of 1,530 feet. The reason why the welding was not completed outside the tunnel was due to the fact that the full length of 1,530 feet could not be completed without interfering with a crossover.

The usual length of a welded rail for general service in the department is 270 feet. The welds are completed at Spotswood by the flash-butt process, and up to date 128,000 welds have been made equal to 430 miles of track. For transport purposes, the welded rails are loaded into six "Q" trucks and are unloaded by means of ropes over the sides.

Lieut. A. D. K. Sullivan Wins the Military Cross

CONGRATULATIONS to Lieut. A. D. K. Sullivan, who has been awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in action at Balikpapan, Borneo.

The official citation states—



Lieut. A. D. K. Sullivan

"In the face of heavy fire, Sullivan successfully led his platoon against a series of bunkers and strong-posts. On one occasion, when his headquarters were checked by eight of the enemy, he leaped among them killing several and putting the remainder to flight. As his company neared the summit of their objective, it came under heavy fire. Sullivan immediately attacked the enemy position, destroyed it and thus enabled the high ground to be captured.

"Sullivan's bold, aggressive leadership sustained his men throughout a critical period, and contributed greatly towards the success of his battalion."

Lieutenant Sullivan, who enlisted in October, 1939, has fought valiantly on many battle fronts. He served with the 6th Infantry Battalion, A.I.F., in the Middle East, Western Desert, Bardia, Tobruk and Benghazi, and learned the peculiar hazards of jungle fighting in New Guinea, Salamaua and Borneo; his bravery and resource bringing him promotion from Private to Corporal, thence on to Warrant-Officer and a Commission.

Lieutenant Sullivan, who was born in 1916, entered the Way and Works Branch in 1938 and became a repairer in the following year. Since his return he has transferred to the Rolling Stock Branch and is now training for the job of a Rail Motor Driver.

The longest welded rails in the Department, and probably ranking among the longest in the world, are the two lengths of 4,748 feet and 4,321 feet between South Newport and Paisley on the Geelong line. These rails were first Thermit welded into lengths of 225 feet outside the track and were again Thermit welded together on the site.

BIG CROWD CARRIED TO MELBOURNE CUP

RELIEVED of the war time task of returning many thousands of Saturday workers to their homes at the same time as Melbourne Cup patrons had to be carried to Flemington, the Department had a relatively easy task this year when the great event was restored from Saturday to Tuesday (November 6).

When the Cup was run on the Saturday in the war years, 1942, 1943 and 1944, big crowds were railed to Flemington, the record for all time being 65,558 in 1943. This year the number carried totalled 59,804, which is well above the previous Tuesday record of 57,000 in 1920.

Rail transport to Flemington on Cup Day last called for 67 trips from Flinders Street by sixteen 8-car trains, and on the return twenty 8-car trains ran 40 trips.

After the running of the Cup at 3.30 p.m., and before the last race at 5.5 p.m., 13 special trains returned from the course.

One noticeable feature of this year's event was the marked increase in the number of rail and combined rail-and-admission tickets sold at stations outside Flinders Street and Spencer Street. The total reached the record figure of 16,335—over 3,000 more than last year.

Re-Union of Resonians

THE end of the war has enabled the Brotherhood of Resonians to resume its activities, and as soon as the coal position improves sufficiently, the Commissioners hope that the popular Reso Tours will be continued as before.

Last month the Brotherhood staged a re-union dinner at Admiralty House, and 70 of the members, including many popular and prominent figures in the city and country, had a very pleasant evening. If they could have obtained accommodation—the dinner was held on the night after the Cup—45 other members of the Brotherhood residing in country districts, would have been present. Their absence was greatly regretted, but it was realized that in the circumstances they could not visit the city.

The new President of the Brotherhood is Mr. D. Claude Robertson, prominent barrister and chairman of the Discharged Servicemen's Employment Board, and the vice-President is Mr. Ivor Evans. The Committee comprises Messrs. W. E. B. Macleod, R. Hemingway, H. C. Collingwood, J. R. McKenzie and the three Victorian Railways Commissioners.

The Honorary Secretary and Treasurer is Mr. L. C. Bromilow, the Asst Honorary Secretary is Mr. W. F. Thomas and the Honorary Auditor, Mr. J. E. McEncroe.

A V.R. WAR VETERAN WRITES FROM SINGAPORE

RAILWAYMEN who recall the description in "The News Letter" of the remarkable escape from the Germans of Lance-Bombardier Stuart, A.I.F., in Greece, will be glad to read the following breezy extracts from a letter which he recently sent from Singapore to Captain L. J. Lord in Melbourne. After his escape from Greece, Captain Stuart, as he is now, returned to Australia and was assigned to Movement Control, subsequently being sent to Singapore. He writes from H.Q. 2 Aust. P.O.W. Reception Gp. (SEAC), and after referring to the fact that "the Tommies are quite good to work with," he says:

"We are at Changi Gaol—an enormous place—about 15 miles out of the town. I have a jeep and am out most of the day. At night I catch up on my signals and clerical work. Most of my work is oral, however. It is really amazing the way the 8th Division carried on at Changi. The Japs allowed them to keep their organization, and they ran the whole of the prison camp themselves—the Commandant exercised strict discipline and conducted enquiries, Courts Martial, etc., in the normal way. They kept very good records and built a beautiful war cemetery just a couple of miles along the road. They had their own workshops and performed marvellous feats of ingenuity and improvisation in the way of making needles out of nails, razors out of hoop iron, etc.

"There are millions of people here. The roads are alive with them and traffic is a terrible shambles—there are lots of accidents, but it's a wonder that there are not more.

"Young Wally (Col. W. Coombes, late of Room 2) arrived yesterday, and I have had a couple of chats with him. He is very happy at being over here and looks very well. He has been at Kandy and is going back there. We expect to have all the P'sW. on the water within about four weeks and to leave here ourselves about the end of October, so I might not get the 90 days in.

"This must be a great place in normal times; I don't think it would be any hardship at all to live here for several years. The scenery is very picturesque and peace time life is leisurely in this part of the world. There is rubber to burn and the country is very wealthy.

"I had a quick trip to Johore the other day and spent a quarter of an hour looking over the Sultan's Palace. It would take me pages to describe its magnificence and the antiques, etc., must be worth hundreds of thousands of pounds.

"Cheerio . . ."

WHAT AN IDEA . . . !

"**A**IR driven boring gear for drag-boxes!"

To most of us that is something vaguely associated with engineering, but the expert saw that it meant an appreciable improvement in the engineering job. Actually that improvement was suggested by a railway employe and after the idea was investigated and was found to be useful, it was adopted and a substantial reward was made.

Perhaps you in your daily work as a railway employe have noticed some method or practice that can be improved or even abolished for the benefit of the service. Your suggestion need not necessarily deal with the engineering side of the Department, it might reveal an alteration in packing or water supply, or even in time-tables that would be of benefit to our patrons. Indeed, it might touch on any one of a thousand other things that become visible to the sharp eye of a railwayman looking for ideas.

If you see some obvious waste that should be removed, or behold a practice that is behind the times, send your suggestion to the Betterment and Suggestions Board, Railway Administrative Offices, Spencer Street, Melbourne. It will be treated as confidential, and will be quickly and closely investigated. If it is accepted, you will be paid for it, and you will join the growing army, now numbering over 7,000 whose suggestions have been adopted by the Department.

Valiant Survivor of Two World Wars

MAJOR John Bailey, a veteran of the First and Second World Wars, who was "Mentioned in Despatches" in the recent conflict, has had a remarkable record as a soldier. Throughout two wars that were full of danger, difficulty and hardship, he was never wounded or suffered a day's illness.

Soon after the outbreak of the first war in 1914, he enlisted in the Army Medical Corps and participated in the landing at Gallipoli where the courage and resolution of every man was tested to the utmost. During the Gallipoli campaign he became a Staff Sergeant, and in France was promoted to the rank of Captain.

After the end of the First War, he resumed his duties in the Militia, which he had first joined in 1908, and was subsequently promoted to the rank of Major.

At the commencement of the recent war, Major Bailey, who was then an upholsterer at Jolimont Workshops, again enlisted in the Army Medical Corps. One of his first duties was assisting to equip hospitals around Victoria. Later he went to the Middle East, Palestine, Syria and Egypt and eventually to New Guinea.

RESIGNATION OF MR. TOM NELSON, TRANSPORTATION BRANCH

THE Department has lost an expert time-table man in Tom Nelson, who resigned last month to commence a new career in egg and poultry production at Glenroy.

On the last day of his service in the Transportation Branch numerous colleagues assembled in the room of Mr. F. D. Greene, Acting Superintendent of Train Services, and speeches affirming the high personal qualities and wide railway knowledge of Mr. Nelson, all dwelling on his ability in the intricate science of time-tabling which he has won a special reputation were delivered by Mr. Greene, Mr. Bert Williams, Mr. Mark Baynes, Safe-Working Officer, and Mr. A. Cudmore, Acting Chief Train Controller, who spoke in the absence of the Chief Train Controller, Mr. H. Zeis.

Mr. Nelson, who responded in suitable terms, was presented with a decorative hall lamp and a handkerchief for Mrs. Nelson.

His departure concluded nearly 20 years valuable service in the Department. He joined as a lad porter in December, 1908, and was subsequently a block recorder, relieving at various Signal Boxes in the Metropolitan area. He came into Spencer Street Head Office as a clerk in 1911 and was clerk in charge of train running in the District Superintendent's Office, Southern Western System, before starting his long career in time-tabling which covered 20 years.

CURE FOR HAY FEVER.

IN my case, I have found great relief when travelling in a train, as long as there is a coal-burning locomotive. So I was one of the few who did not view the electrification of the Southern Railways lines (England) with the coast with rapture.

"What I need is a good sooty carriage with a soft-coal-burning engine. The carbon happens to kill pollen and every other irritant with it.

"I told this once to an elderly gentleman who replied: 'Lord bless my soul! There's nothing remarkable in that. When I was a boy and had what we then called 'croup,' my mother used to pack my brother and me off on a morning's round of the Inner Circle. There were railway engines on the underground then and the fog was awful.'

(Gordon Beckles on "Hay Fever" in "The Strand Magazine.")

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