

1852.

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Victoria.

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ROADS AND BRIDGES

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REPORT

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FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE

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ON

ROADS AND BRIDGES,

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TOGETHER WITH THE

Proceedings of the Committee,

AND

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

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ORDERED BY THE COUNCIL TO BE PRINTED,

3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER, 1852.

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Strebinger:

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EXTRACTED FROM THE MINUTES.

TUESDAY, 25TH. NOVEMBER, 1851.

ROADS AND BRIDGES.—Mr. Miller moved, pursuant to notice, for a Select Committee on Roads and Bridges, to enquire and report on their present state and how the funds placed at the disposal of Government may be expended to the best advantage in making and repairing Roads and Bridges throughout the Colony, and that such "Committee" consist of the following gentlemen :—Mr. Dight, Mr. Haines, Mr. Smith, Mr. Westgarth, Mr. Snodgrass, and the proposer.

Debate ensued—Mr. Rutledge moved, as an amendment, that all the words following the word "Committee" be omitted, with a view to insert in their place the words "to consist of ten Members, to be chosen by ballot."

Question—that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Question—that the words proposed to be inserted in the place of the words omitted be so inserted—put and passed

Question as amended was then put and carried.

Whereupon the Council proceeded to the Ballot, and the following members were declared to have the greatest number of votes and to be, with the mover, the Committee duly appointed viz. :—Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Haines, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Dight, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Dunlop, Mr. Splatt, Mr. Turnbull, and Mr. Fawcner.

WEDNESDAY, 14TH JULY, 1852.

ROADS AND BRIDGES.—Mr. Miller moved, pursuant to amended notice, That the Committee of Roads and Bridges of the last session be re-appointed, to consist, with the mover, of Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Haines, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Dight, Mr. Splatt, Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Fawcner, and substituting the names of Mr. Riddell and Mr. Wilkinson in lieu of Mr. Griffith resigned, and Mr. Dunlop, deceased.

Question—put and passed.

The Select Committee of the Legislative Council, appointed on the 25th day of November, 1851, on Roads and Bridges, to enquire and report on their present state, and how the Funds placed at the disposal of Government may be expended to the best advantage in making and repairing Roads and Bridges throughout the Colony have agreed to the following

## R E P O R T .

Your Committee have held twelve meetings, and have taken evidence from the Surveyor General, the Superintendent of Bridges and two Officers employed in his department, namely Messrs. Rossan and Rowand; and also from Messrs. D. C. McArthur, Stephenson, Cooper, Durham, and Major Campbell; minutes of the evidence so taken will be found annexed to this Report.

The Survey and Alignment of Roads, are duties entrusted to the Department of the Surveyor General; this officer was furnished, before his appointment, with instructions to divide the Country into sections, and leave places for Roads where he thought them necessary. Rules and Regulations of a more specific nature do not appear to have been framed and issued for his guidance, nor any general plan to which he was to adhere in making Road reserves; his staff of Assistants have not at all times been sufficient, and it was formerly the practice to restrict the width of the main lines of Road to one chain, and of Cross Roads to twenty feet only.

The Road line was made by marking Trees on or near the proposed Road, or by heaps of stones placed in its centre, instead of by a line cut in the turf. Many sections of land have been surveyed and sold without Roads having been reserved to them; and care has not been taken in all Surveys to give access to Rivers and water courses. And, in most cases, the track made by the original Settler has been adopted and proclaimed as the Public Highway. From this mode of Survey have arisen many of the evils now so generally and loudly complained of.

The highways, laid out originally too narrow, have been encroached on by the erection of buildings and fences on the road; and it does not appear that any steps have been taken to remove the obstructions caused by these encroachments. Your Committee indeed, are led to question whether the Road Acts now in force, make provision for this purpose. Your Committee believe that most, if not all, of the encroachments on the Roads have been made, solely from the difficulty of ascertaining the exact surveyed line where the marked trees and heaps of stones have been either cut down or removed.

Sufficient pains have not been taken, in all cases, to find the best lines of communication; for while the surface of this country presents, generally, peculiar natural facilities for the construction of Roads, many of the surveyed lines are made to pass over precipices and through morasses, difficult, if not impossible, to drain; and in one extreme instance, evidence has been given to your Committee, that instead of taking the best and shortest line, the worst for crossing the swamps, and the longest as to distance has been selected; and the omission of reserving Roads to all sections sold by Public Auction, and to Rivers, Ponds, and Water Courses, entail much serious loss and inconvenience on the Inhabitants of the Colony.

From a review of the whole of the circumstances within their knowledge, your Committee are led to the conclusion that Road Reserves have been made, in many instances, more with a view to facilitate the sale of the waste lands of the Crown, than to the formation of Roads available for the use of the Colonists; and that it will be found a work of difficulty and great expense to construct Roads on many of the reserved lines.

The Superintendent of Bridges has also charge of the formation of the Roads, but appears to have been able to effect little in that branch of his duty, as with few exceptions the Roads of the Colony are still in a state of nature.

The Prince's Bridge has been erected under the superintendence of this Officer, at a cost of £19,846, and this substantial structure may be taken as a proof of what he is capable of effecting when labor and sufficient funds are placed at his disposal.

About seventy Timber Bridges have also been erected in the Interior, at a cost varying in each instance, at from £15 to £1500. Many of these Timber Bridges have been swept away, and those that remain are almost all of so faulty a construction, as in the opinion of your Committee, to render it more than probable that they will share the same fate, when washed by floods at all beyond the ordinary height. And at least as many as Seventy additional Bridges are now urgently required for dangerous crossing places in the Interior.

It appears to your Committee that the chief cause of the insufficient number and imperfect construction of these Timber Bridges may be found in the smallness of the sums voted for the construction of these indispensable Public Works.

Returns on the table of the House will shew, that from the formation of the Colony to the



end of the year 1848, the date of financial separation from New South Wales, the sums voted from the general revenue for the department of the Superintendent of Bridges, was only £1005 6s. 10d.; (in the year 1849, £355 12s. 1d.; in 1850, £119 19s. 9d.; and to 30th June, 1851, £414 16s. 7d.) and for the Roads, Streets and Buildings generally during the whole of the above-named periods the sum of £36,655 5s. 9d., nearly £20,000 of which sum was expended on the Prince's Bridge, as before stated.

The territorial revenue for the like period, that is, from the settlement of the Colony to the 30th June 1851, produced a gross amount of £1,007,000 13s. 8d.; of which only £281 11s. 10d. was appropriated for the department of the Roads, and was expended in the opening of a way from Western Port to Gipps' Land.

The Revenues of the Colony have been ample, but the amounts voted for local improvements, so far at least as the road department is concerned, have been parsimonious in the extreme; nor can your Committee learn that the Government made any efforts to supply the deficiency by obtaining loans secured by debentures or otherwise. And while the state of the labour market in this country was such as in some years to have been unfavourable to the progress of public works, your Committee believe that no steps were taken to hire labourers from the adjoining Colonies, nor to obtain contracts in England for the erection of bridges here, as has been done in other British Colonies. In the neighbouring Colony of South Australia, the road department has been managed in a better manner, although the revenues of that Colony have been far inferior to our own.

N. Campbell, Esq.  
No. 12.

There a well regulated system has been organized for the management of their roads, and upwards of sixty miles of macadamized roads made in the vicinity of their capital.

And your Committee would also point out what has been done by the corporation of the City of Melbourne. By means of loans secured on their revenues, and by the assessment of the citizens, with little aid from other sources, the corporation have formed and metalled most of the streets of the metropolis: while the roads of the Colony under the charge of the Government have generally been allowed to remain unimproved and neglected to such an extent as to present in winter the wretched aspect of a succession of quagmires, impassable for wheel carriages, and traversed by packhorses conveying goods and merchandise at an enormous cost of transit, rendering all travelling difficult and dangerous, the conveyance of the Post irregular and a heavy charge on the revenue, and the pursuit and apprehension of criminals in the interior a matter of so much difficulty for the police to accomplish, as to act as a premium for the commission of crime, and a protection to the criminals.

But the worst feature in the present state of our thoroughfares is the want of a sufficient number of bridges, where roads are required, as in the interior chiefly, for the annual transport of wool to the market, or the driving of cattle. All that appears to your Committee necessary to be then done, is to mark off the most direct available lines, and to erect and maintain bridges over the creeks and rivers that may intersect such lines. For the want of such bridges in the interior, lines of communication cannot be maintained during the rainy season; and in addition to the inconvenience suffered by the public from this cause, many human lives are annually lost in endeavouring to ford the rivers.

Much labour and some outlay have been expended in erecting timber Bridges, but many of these have been so imperfect in their construction, and have been placed in such improper situations, as to have been swept away by the floods in May last.

The piles on which these Bridges have been erected do not seem to have been driven to a sufficient depth, nor have the openings or waterways been of the necessary width between the rows of piles; thus the waterway at the Barwon Bridge was only 30 feet wide. Trees and other large bodies floated down by the flood were unable to pass through these narrow openings, and, collecting against the Bridge, formed a dam across the river, until the pent-up stream gained sufficient force to carry away the Bridge, and the piles on which it rested. The site selected for the Weirabee Bridge, was, your Committee believe, an improper one for a pile Bridge. There the river ran on a rocky bed; the piles were made to rest on wooden sleepers, attached to the rock by iron pins, in a manner evidently so slight as to afford very little resistance to lateral pressure; the Bridge accordingly yielded to the first flood, having been also swept away in May last. Your Committee will not take upon themselves to say that wooden Bridges on piles may not, in certain localities, and when properly constructed, answer the intended end, and they are erected at little cost. Your Committee may here instance the wooden Pile Bridge erected over the Yarra River at Melbourne. This bridge was built by a private company, at a trifling cost, and stood for many years, and during high floods. This Bridge, before the erection of the stone Bridge, was of the greatest convenience to the public, and a source of much profit to the Bridge Company. But generally speaking, your Committee do not think that ordinary Pile Bridges can be made available in this Colony; and under that impression, your Committee directed their enquiries to ascertain whether a more suitable class of Bridges could not be constructed, and with that view your Committee have had under consideration various descriptions of Bridges, namely, the Wooden Lattice Bridge, the Iron Suspension Bridge, particularly that on Dredge's patent taper principle, and others; and after due consideration, your Committee have agreed to recommend for trial a Wooden Bridge, to be made of a single laminated wooden arch, according to a plan submitted by an officer of the Road department, a tracing of which plan will be found annexed to this Report; and your Committee think that a Bridge built according to this plan will be found to combine all the necessary requirements for a temporary Bridge at the present time, namely, that it can be erected by mechanics of ordinary skill, at a moderate cost, and will be found of great strength and durability, with an ample waterway for the highest floods. It may be observed that the principle on which the plan of this Bridge has been made, can be extended to any number of arches.



Having now placed before the House the chief causes of the deplorable state of our lines of internal communication at the present time, your Committee would proceed to observe that when the existing state of the labour market is taken into account, under the influence of the Gold Fields, the question now under consideration assumes an aspect of great difficulty, only to be met by the most energetic measures, and the united efforts of the Government and the Colonists. The attention of your Committee has been directed to the works that have been in operation near the Richmond Bridge. An advance warrant was granted to this Committee for the sum voted for these works, which have been carried on under the direction of an officer of the Government, aided by a Committee elected at a public meeting of the inhabitants. And, under this arrangement, and in a short time, a practicable road has been made through the Richmond Flat, hitherto impassable in the wet season, for the numerous carts engaged in the supply of firewood and agricultural produce from Boorandora to the Metropolis.

The success that has attended the labours of the Richmond Committee, and also that of the Heidelberg Trust, in making roads in their respective localities, induces your Committee to recommend as a temporary measure, and for the purpose of expending to the best advantage the unappropriated portion of the vote of the last session, that should similar Committees or Trusts be appointed in the vicinity of Melbourne, or of the towns in the Colony, a like advance warrant should be granted to be expended and accounted for by the Local Committees under the certificate of the Superintendent of Bridges.

Your Committee are of opinion that the main lines of Roads throughout the Colony should be made by means of grants from the public Revenues, and that Toll-gates should be erected on the roads when completed, and the tolls expended in keeping the roads in repair.

Your Committee deem the following to be the lines to be first formed as main Roads, namely—

1. The Road from Melbourne to Sydney, via Kilmore.
2. The Road from Melbourne to the Murray River, via Mount Alexander.
3. The Road from Melbourne to Geelong.
4. The Road from Melbourne to Portland, via Bacchus Marsh.
5. The Road from Melbourne to Gipps Land, via Brighton and Dandenong.
6. The Road from Geelong to the Westward, via Fyans Ford.
7. The Road from Geelong to Colac, via the Wauru Ponds.

Your Committee think that aid should be given from the Revenue, to make Parish and Cross Roads in the neighbourhood of the City of Melbourne, and the Towns of Geelong, Portland, and others; and that when an amount was contributed in any of the localities named by the inhabitants, and expended on the Roads in an approved manner, a like amount should be granted by the Government, so far as the funds for local improvement at their command would admit.

Your Committee cannot recommend that Railroads should be commenced at present by the Government, but they esteem it desirable that lines adapted for the laying down of Rails should now be surveyed, and reserved between Melbourne and Geelong, and between Melbourne and the River Murray, via Mount Alexander, and also between Portland and the Grange; and your Committee are also of opinion that every aid and encouragement should be afforded by the Government, to respectable Companies who may be willing to construct Railways in Victoria, by grants of land sufficient for the Rail roads, Station houses, and Termini, by loans of money when demanded, and a Guarantee of Interest to the Shareholders, and by every other authorized means within the power of Government.

Your Committee would also recommend that all main lines of Road be made three chains wide, and the old lines extended where practicable to that width, and that Roads be in all cases reserved to every section before it is sold and also to all Rivers and Water courses.

Your Committee have further to report that it appears to them that the present Department of Roads and Bridges is wholly insufficient for the existing requirements, and that the time has now arrived when this question of vital importance to the well being of the Colony, should receive that attention to which it is entitled, and that some system should be adopted by which lines of internal communication may be aligned according to a general plan, commencing the formation of Macadamized Roads at the Towns and extending them into the interior; these Roads to be constructed as the resources of the Government will admit, so as by degrees, to open up the Country, and develop a perfect net work of Roads throughout the Colony.

With this view your Committee would recommend—

- 1st. That the Road Acts now in force be repealed, and that a Road Act be made and passed similar in its provisions, so far as they apply to the circumstances of Victoria, to the Road Act of Van Diemen's Land, 15 Victoria No. 8, and to the Road Ordinance of the Colony of South Australia of the year 1849, No. 14, and that the Road Act for Victoria should specially provide.
- 2nd. That a Road Board should be appointed, to be called "*The Central Road Board*," to consist of Five Members, two to be nominated by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, and three by the Legislative Council, to be elected by Ballot from Members of your Honorable House who are willing to serve. The Members of the Road Board to continue in office for twelve months, and to be eligible for re-election. The Central Road Board to have exclusive power, subject to the approval of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, of aligning, making, maintaining, or improving any new or existing main line of Road, and any Bridge on such main line; and also of all Parish Roads and Cross Roads, until District Road Boards are appointed.
- 3rd. That the Central Road Board shall distribute all votes made for the service of the

Department of Roads and Bridges, and that all grants from the Territorial Revenue should also be placed at their disposal, and that the Board should have power to apportion to each line and district, the amount to which it may appear to be entitled. The Board should also be authorized to cause Toll Gates to be erected, and to collect and appropriate tolls, publishing accounts of receipt and expenditure annually in the Government Gazette.

- 4th. That the Central Road Board should appoint their own Secretary and Treasurer, and determine the amount of their salaries.
- 5th. That His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor should appoint an Inspector General of Roads and a sufficient staff of Engineers, Clerks and other Officers, to act under the direction of the Central Road Board. The Inspector General of Roads to have a seat at the Road Board, but without the power of voting.
- 6th. That the Central Road Board should meet at least once a week in the City of Melbourne, that Three Members should form a Quorum, and that each member should be allowed One Guinea for every attendance at the Board.
- 7th. That His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor should be empowered by proclamation, to declare any portion of the Colony to be a Road District, to define the boundaries of every Road District, and to give a specific name to every such District.
- 8th. That at any time after such Proclamation, it shall be lawful for any number, not less than Five Landholders and Five Householders in any proclaimed District, to require any Police Magistrate or Justice of the Peace residing within such Road District, to convene a Public Meeting of the Land and Householders in each District, to elect not less than five nor more than nine members to form a District Road Board, each Member to hold office for one year, and to be eligible for re-election.
- 9th. That each District Road Board shall have power to make, maintain, or improve any new or existing Parish or Cross Road, and to erect or maintain any new or existing Bridge within the limits of the District, subject only to the general Plan of the Central Road Board.
- 10th. That each District Road Board may appoint its own Secretary, Treasurer, and Collector, and determine the amount of payment to these officers, and to all labourers employed under their orders, and that an account of the Receipts and Expenditure of the District Road Board should be published yearly in the Government Gazette.
- 11th. That at the first Public Meeting for the Election of the members of the Local Board, and at every subsequent Annual Meeting, the Landholders and Householders then present, should be empowered to make an assessment of the amount to be charged on all Lands in their Districts, whether such Lands shall belong to Her Majesty, Her Heirs, or Successors, or not; the amount of such assessment not to exceed in any one year one penny per acre on all grass lands; two pence per acre for cultivated lands; and six pence in the pound on the actual Rental of any Messuage, Tenement, or Dwelling House.
- 12th. That the Chairman of each Local Road Board shall have a seat at the Central Board and be entitled to speak, but not to vote. In conclusion, your Committee beg leave to impress upon the House the necessity of granting a sufficient vote in aid of the system now recommended, and bearing in mind that it is in evidence that the construction of a single mile of Road will now cost three thousand pounds. Your Committee feel warranted in recommending a vote from the General Revenue, for the service of the Road Department, for the year 1853, of £150,000, and from that portion of the Territorial Revenue that may be applied to local improvements, a like sum of £150,000, making together the sum of £300,000 for the service of the Road and Bridge Department, for the year 1853.

(Signed)

Council Chamber,  
2nd November, 1852.

HENRY MILLER, Chairman.



2006

Dr Don Chambers  
4 Banner St  
O'Connor, A.C.T. 2602

T.H.Russell, A.M.  
2 Chaplin Court,  
Templestowe, 3106.  
Tel [ 03]98464935.

Dear Don,

One of my friends Doug Fullerton kindly lent me your book "Wooden Wonders", because he knew of my interest in bridges.

I enjoyed the book very much, and thought the photographs were excellent. I would have seen most of the bridges over the past 60+ years. It was nice to read the text and see the photographs together in such a beautiful presentation.

So that you are aware of my background I have attached an old brief CV. I spent over 10 years in the bridge division of the CRB, culminating in the position of Chief Bridge Engineer, and throughout my whole career had a lot to do with timber bridges.

I presented many papers, and also gave talks to community groups on bridge problems, and sometimes made reference to the 1852 report from a select committee on Roads and Bridges, and I have attached a copy which you may find of interest.

When I first joined the CRB we were building many timber, or timber and RSJ girder bridges, but the supply of good Class A timbers was a large problem. In 1950 I supervised the construction of a timber and RSJ bridge across the Murray River at Biggara and can remember waiting for months to obtain the timber piles and other timber of the correct quality. I visited the bridge about 2 years ago and found it in poor rotted condition with a load limit, and it needs complete replacement.

In the 1950's it was estimated that there were approx 15000 old timber bridges on all road classifications in Victoria, and many required urgent replacement. After the war, the Board of the time sent the Bridge Engineer Mr I J O'Donnell [later to become Chairman of the Board] on an overseas mission, to study the latest in bridge construction techniques. Out of this came the use in Victoria of reinforced concrete, and prestressed concrete bridges built on the meccano principle. Precasting yards were built in most regional divisions and this established the bridge construction methods in Victoria which continue to this day in a much more sophisticated manner. I personally supervised the construction of a precasting yard at Yackandandah Crk when the Kiewa Valley Hwy was being built. The huge development of mobile cranes over the past 60 years has played a large part in this development.

Almost every road bridge built in Victoria after the war was largely financed either with federal or state funds, and most municipalities lacked the ability to design modern bridges. Design was usually done by the CRB in house or by consultants, and the municipal engineer normally supervised the construction. I remember that our peak year for replacing timber bridges was about 200 bridges and major culverts per year, and we used to say we had a job for life with x thousand still to go. Replacement of timber bridges continues to this day. In 1979 I published a paper entitled "The Timber Bridge Problem", but I cannot locate a copy in my current files.

The conservation of stone arch and steel bridges was always important to the CRB, and I had a hand in the preservation of many such bridges. Old timber bridges were not considered in the same way because of the limited life of timber, difficulty of obtaining high quality replacement members, and the high cost of repairing. I once had the job of replacing the top chords on the timber truss bridge over the Thomson River near Walhalla. The problem in obtaining the large cross section members, and the high cost of repairs made the CRB very wary about the conservation of such bridges. That bridge has since been demolished. In addition the old bridges were often narrow, on poor alignment, inadequate for modern heavy loading and impact standards, and of course road safety problems were always a factor. Unless the organization responsible for the bridge is prepared to provide the finance necessary to maintain adequately or replace the old timber members, then I am afraid that in the course of


time many will become archaeological ruins. This of course makes your book of great interest as a historical document.

The superstructure of McKillops Bridge over the Snowy River was destroyed in the 1934 floods because the designers in the CRB had underestimated the max flood level. The height of the piers was then raised, and a new superstructure constructed. You can see the joint in the piers in your photograph.

In the 1960's the CRB experimented with the surfacing of timber bridge decks with polyester resin laminates to give the timber extra life and a smoother running surface. Several trial bridges were so treated , but because of cost and problems after time with separation between the timber and resin laminate the practice did not develop into general practice.

I could continue with these ramblings for some time, so you can see that your book has aroused many memories about the wonderful bridges around Victoria. Thank you for your efforts in this regard.

Yours Sincerely



Tom Russell.



THOMAS HENDRY RUSSELL. A.M.

I WAS BORN IN GEELONG ON THE 23-10 1925. IN 1943 I OBTAINED A DIPLOMA OF CIVIL ENGINEERING FROM THE GORDON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY. MY EARLY PROFESSIONAL CAREER WAS ON DEFENCE PROJECTS WITH THE COUNTRY ROADS BOARD OF VICTORIA, INCLUDING WORK ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NORTH- SOUTH ROAD (NOW THE STUART HIGHWAY) , AND GORRIE AERODROME IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

AFTER THE WAR I CONTINUED WITH CIVIL ENGINEERING STUDIES AT MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY, AND GRADUATED B.C.E.(HONS) IN 1948, AND FOLLOWING POST GRADUATE STUDIES IN THE STRUCTURAL FIELD I WAS AWARDED A M.ENG. SC. (HONS) DEGREE IN 1949.

AFTER UNIVERSITY I RETURNED TO THE COUNTRY ROADS BOARD AND WORKED IN VARIOUS AREAS OF VICTORIA ON A LARGE NUMBER OF ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS. FROM 1959 ONWARDS I OCCUPIED VARIOUS SENIOR ENGINEERING POSITIONS IN HEAD OFFICE, INCLUDING CHIEF BRIDGE ENGINEER, DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER, AND CHIEF ENGINEER. I WAS APPOINTED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT A MEMBER OF THE BOARD IN 1971, AND BECAME CHAIRMAN IN 1978. FOLLOWING RESTRUCTURING OF THE TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO IN 1983, I WAS APPOINTED CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY AND HELD THAT POSITION UNTIL I RETIRED IN 1986 AFTER MORE THAN 40 YEARS AS A CIVIL ENGINEER AND MANAGER IN THE HIGHWAY ENGINEERING FIELD. DURING THE PERIOD 1978-1986 I WAS A DIRECTOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN ROAD RESEARCH BOARD, AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN STATE ROAD AUTHORITIES. AND SERVED TERMS AS CHAIRMAN OF BOTH THESE ORGANISATIONS. I WAS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE WESTGATE BRIDGE AUTHORITY AND THE VICTORIAN TRANSPORT BORROWING AGENCY FOR PERIODS OF TIME. BETWEEN 1950-1987 I PUBLISHED AND PRESENTED 28 PAPERS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHWAY ENGINEERING.

IN 1987 I WAS APPOINTED A MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICES TO ROAD ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION I HAVE HAD A LONG INTEREST IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS. I AM A PAST PRESIDENT, DISTRICT GOVERNOR AND HON LIFE MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF APEX CLUBS, AND A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF HAWTHORN. I WAS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE VICTORIAN STATE COMMITTEE OF THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD BETWEEN 1982 AND 1989.

IN THE SPORTING FIELD I REPRESENTED VICTORIA IN THE 1949 AMATEUR FOOTBALL TEAM, AND ALSO PLAYED COMPETITION BASKETBALL AND SQUASH. MY INTERESTS THESE DAYS ARE FAMILY, GOLF, PROBUS, TRAVEL AND BUSHWALKING.

I MARRIED PAT IN 1953 AND WE HAVE TWO CHILDREN AND FIVE GRANDCHILDREN AND HAVE BEEN BLESSED IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE

4 Banner Street  
O'Connor,  
A.C.T. 2602  
(02)61618537  
5 December 06

Dear Tom,

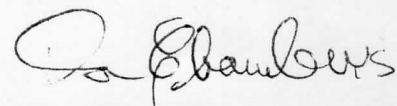
Thank you for the kind comments on the bridges book, and your detailed C.V. I am also grateful for the commentary on your detailed knowledge of timber bridges. We had access to a number of old C.R.B. bridge plans, from circa 1919 on. Actually, I know very well who you are, and what you have been (as I indicated to Doug when he mentioned your name). Back in the 1980s I interviewed you at home, when I was working up a manuscript on Victorian road and bridge construction history for the Road Construction Authority (Stoney period). But no sane person would expect you to remember that.

I very much enjoyed the bush-bashing involved in researching the bridges story, and got to know corners of Victoria of which I previously knew nothing. (And yes, I knew about the big flood and McKillop's Bridge. I think the same big flood on the Snowy took the historic road suspension bridge near Orbost. Hard to imagine now!) The biggest compliment that an engineer could pay the bridges book was that of Max Day in launching it for the Trust: 'If an engineer had written this, it would have been four times as long and nobody would have read it'. Actually, I get on well with engineers, and some of them have had obvious input into the book.

The other book of mine launched almost simultaneously was a centenary history of Fawkner Memorial Park, commissioned and published by the cemetery trust.

Thanks again for the comments. If I live long enough, I still have hopes of producing a decent history of the Country Roads Board, based on that research done in the Stoney era. I still possess a lot of historic old CRB photos relating to that research. The old manuscript is still in circulation, but needs polishing up. Max Day said he had a copy. A copy exists in the VicRoads Library, and another in the State Library (manuscripts section). But I still hold the copyright!

Regards,



Don Chambers