

C.R.B. SUMMARY OF ROADWORKS FOR EASTER

At this time of the year many of the road and bridge improvement works under construction by the Country Roads Board during the summer are nearing completion. The benefits of some of these works will be enjoyed by motorists over the Easter holidays.

In the vicinity of the larger and more complex works which are still under construction motorists may encounter conditions which require travelling at lower speeds. At these locations signs will be displayed to guide drivers.

The Board urges all drivers to comply with directions given, especially at the sites of road and bridge works listed below:

STATE HIGHWAYS

BASS HIGHWAY

Bass Shire

North of Bass township 2 miles of widening is in progress. The existing 18 ft. sealed pavement will not be disturbed but care should be exercised.

BURWOOD HIGHWAY

Knox City

Through Lower Fern Tree Gully work is in progress to provide 1 mile of dual carriageways. Traffic will be required to use a short unsealed section of the new work. Care should be exercised.

CALDER HIGHWAY

Maldon Shire

At Porcupine Hill, north of Harcourt, a new road-over-rail bridge is being constructed. A sealed side track is in use for $\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

Marong Shire

In the township of Marong the bridge over Bullock Creek is being widened and strengthened. The available road width for traffic will be reduced to 20 feet.

CANN VALLEY HIGHWAY

Orbost Shire

At Weeragua $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles is being reconstructed.

GOULBURN VALLEY HIGHWAY

Alexandra Shire

At Molesworth a $2\frac{1}{2}$ mile deviation is being constructed to eliminate a railway level crossing and provide an improved crossing of the Goulburn River. Drivers should slow down and take care, particularly at the narrow timber

bridge over the Goulburn River.

HAMILTON HIGHWAY

Hampden Shire

East of Lismore, between Duverney and Gnarkeet Creek, a length of 3.4 miles of the highway is being widened. A narrow sealed pavement is available.

HENTY HIGHWAY

Hamilton City

In the built-up area of Hamilton $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the highway is being reconstructed and the width of pavement available to traffic is restricted.

Dundas Shire

A culvert north of Cavenish is being replaced and a side track is in use.

LODDON VALLEY HIGHWAY

Eaglehawk Borough

West of the Eaglehawk Town Hall 0.4 mile of reconstruction is in progress.

MAROONDAH HIGHWAY

Alexandra Shire

North of Buxton and Cerebus Creek reconstruction of 1 mile of the highway is nearing completion. If sealing has not been carried out, a good gravel surface will be maintained.

MIDLAND HIGHWAY

Mansfield Shire

In Mansfield township dual carriageways are being provided. If sealing is not completed a good gravel surface will be maintained for traffic.

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ROADSIDE STOPPING PLACES

A number of additional roadside stopping places have been established by the Country Roads Board during the past 12 months at locations where long distance travellers can relax and enjoy a meal in pleasant safe surroundings.

Rest areas, which include toilet facilities, are now situated at:

Boundary Bend on the Murray Valley Highway;

Garfield on the Princes Highway East;

Blind Joe's Creek near Rose-dale on the Princes Highway East;

Cherry-pool on the Henty Highway;

Box's Cutting west of Beaufort on the Western Highway;

Lochiel near Dimboola on the Western Highway;

Warby Springs near Wangaratta on the Hume Highway;

Albert River near Alberton on the South Gippsland Highway;

Wood Wood on the Murray Valley Highway;

Little River on the Princes Highway West.

Approximately 240 roadside stopping places are available to motorists throughout Victoria. All are furnished with receptacles for the disposal of litter, and are generally kept in a tidy condition by the Board's patrolmen as part of their regular duties. The extensive use of these areas by the motoring public is an indication that the provision of such facilities is much appreciated.

All Easter travellers should note and observe any summer fire restrictions prohibiting the use of open fireplaces.

ROADWORKS SUMMARY

(Continued from page 1)

Rodney Shire

At the Tatura-Undera Road junction work is in progress to improve the intersection. Traffic should proceed with caution through this intersection.

The approaches to the Byrneside railway level crossing are being reconstructed.

OMEHO HIGHWAY

Bairnsdale and Tambo Shires

At Sarsfield 1.4 miles of approaches to a new bridge are under reconstruction.

Omeo Shire

At Cemetery Creek $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile of reconstruction is in progress.

PRINCES HIGHWAY WEST

Footscray City

From Ballarat Road to Ann Street work is in progress to provide dual carriageways. Only one carriageway is available to traffic and should be used with care.

The adjacent section at the West Footscray overpass of the railway is restricted to two lanes for Geelong-bound traffic and one lane for Mel-



Reconstruction of the Ocean Road in progress south of Lavers Hill.

bourne-bound traffic. Major bridge works are in progress.

Warrnambool Shire

Between Allansford and Warrnambool 5.7 miles of dual carriageways are being constructed. Two-way traffic will use the new northern carriageway while reconstruction of the existing carriageway is being carried out.

Belfast Shire

At Codrington a new bridge over the Eumeralla River is being constructed. Traffic is using a sidetrack and temporary bridge 22 ft. wide.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND HIGHWAY

Cranbourne Shire

At Alsops Inlet and Lyall's Inlet the highway is being reconstructed at the approaches to two new bridges. Traffic will use an unsealed surface, and care is required.

Korumburra Shire

At the Lang Lang - Nyora

Road junction work is in progress to improve the intersection with the highway. Care should be taken.

Alberton Shire

At Gelliondale 1 mile of reconstruction is nearing completion. Some short sections could be unsealed for the Easter period.

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ROADWORKS AND BRIDGES IN METROPOLITAN AREA

At the locations listed below motorists may encounter roadworks or bridgeworks which are being carried out with financial assistance from the Country Roads Board.

ALTONA CITY

Millers Road

At Paisley traffic is using a detour road while the construction of a road-over-rail bridge is in progress.

BOX HILL CITY

Elgar Road

South of the Maroondah Highway roadworks are in progress at the new rail-over-road bridge. Half the road width under the bridge is being used for two-way traffic.

CAULFIELD CITY

North Road

From Bambra Road to Booran Road work is in progress to provide dual carriageways.

KEILOR CITY

Lancefield Road

Improvements are being carried out at the intersection of Lancefield Road, Mat-

thews Avenue, and Parer Road. Traffic using Lancefield Road as part of the through route to Tullamarine Airport will not be affected.

OAKLEIGH CITY

North Road

At Huntingdale detours are in operation during the construction of a road-over-rail bridge.

SPRINGVALE CITY

Wells Road and Springvale Road

Preliminary work has commenced to improve the intersection of these roads but should not interfere with traffic.

WILLIAMSTOWN CITY

Kororoit Creek Road

Between Swanston Street and Maddox Street work is in progress to provide dual carriageways.

TOURISTS' ROADS AND ROADS OF TOURIST INTEREST

HEALESVILLE - KINGLAKE ROAD

Healesville and Yea Shires

From Mt. Slide Junction to the Yarra Glen-Yea Road the road is being reconstructed for 2.3 miles. Traffic will be required to use an unsealed surface.

LAKE MOUNTAIN ROAD

Healesville Shire

Realignment and widening of a 1.3 mile section of the road between the Playground and Ski Run 21 is nearing completion.

OCEAN ROAD

Heytesbury Shire

East of Port Campbell realignment is in progress at Sherbrook River. A side track has been provided for traffic.

At Port Campbell a new bridge is under construction

over Port Campbell Creek. Motorists should take care on the narrow road formation.

Otway Shire

South of Lavers Hill work is in progress to improve 3 miles of narrow winding road. Motorists should travel slowly on the unsealed sections. Some detours may have to be negotiated.

WARBURTON - WOODS POINT ROAD

Healesville and Upper Yarra Shires

In the vicinity of Monty's Hut an 8 mile section is being resurfaced. Care should be taken on the loose surface.

WHITTLESEA - KINGLAKE ROAD

Eltham Shire

At Pheasant Creek 1 mile of reconstruction is in progress and traffic will use an unsealed surface.

Roadworks Summary

(Continued from page 2)

WARBURTON HIGHWAY

Lillydale and Upper Yarra Shires

Between Seville East and Worri Yallock a major deviation of the highway is under construction. The new deviation will not be open to traffic, and short sections of the existing highway may be unsealed.

WESTERN HIGHWAY

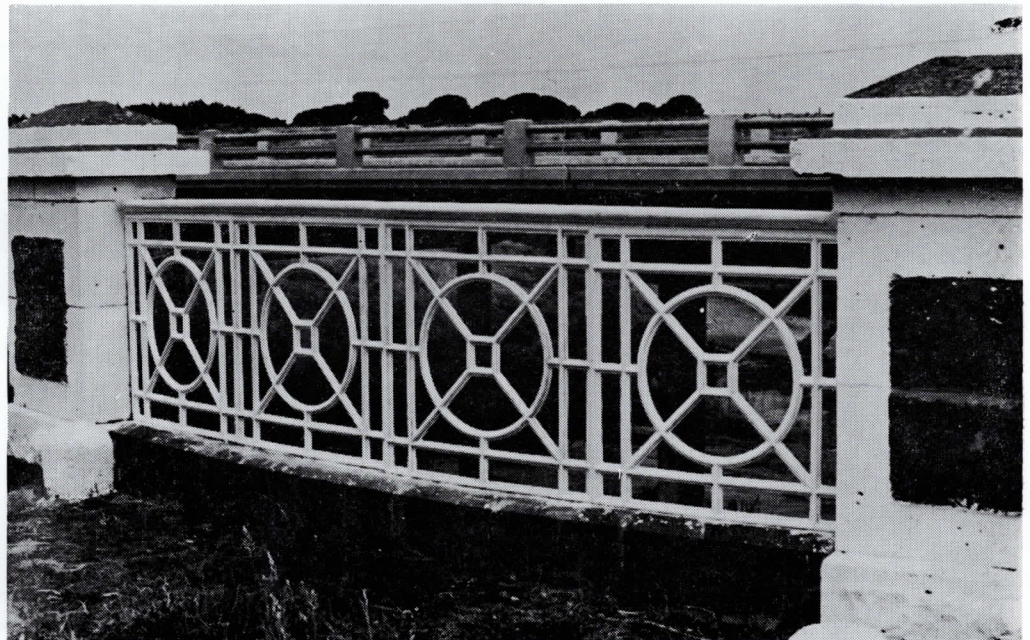
Ballan Shire

One-and-a-half miles west of Gordon a sealed side track has been provided for traffic during the construction of part of the Western Freeway.

Dimboola Shire

At Lochiel a new bridge over the Wimmera River is being constructed together with 3 miles of road works. The existing highway pavement is still being used by traffic, and care is required.

HISTORICAL BRIDGE FEATURE RESTORED AT DARLINGTON



In 1967 a new bridge was erected by the C.R.B. over Mt. Emu Creek on the Hamilton Highway at Darlington, replacing an old timber bridge which was subsequently demolished except for its stone abutments.

These abutments have unusually attractive wing walls of bluestone and cast iron handrail panels. One of the four cast iron panels disappeared from the site during 1969, and efforts by the Board's staff to locate the missing panel were unsuccessful.

With the assistance of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), a Melbourne manufacturer was engaged to make a replacement from a sample panel provided by the Board.

The original and the new panel have now been placed on the old abutments and protective paint-work has been carried out to complete the restoration.

GUIDE POSTS

The most common and basic piece of road furniture used on Victoria's rural roads is the guide post. The simple white post, placed in accordance with a set of standards very often escapes the conscious notice of a motorist travelling in ideal conditions.

Guide posts are a part of the information taken in by the eye, and indicate the extremities of the road formation, the alignment of the road ahead, and give warning of the presence of special features such as culverts or bridge approaches.

On straight sections of road, guide posts are usually placed at intervals of not less than 500 feet and at a uniform distance from the pavement edge on each side of the road. The distance between the posts is reduced on curves and on approaches to a bridge. The use of guide posts on curves requires the posts on the inside of the curve to be short enough to allow unrestricted driver vision.

New Post Designed

For many years, the standard guide post was hardwood timber, 5½ inches square, but in 1970 the Board adopted a new size of 4 inches by 2 inches. The new post is designed to break off at ground level on impact and thus reduce possible damage to a vehicle running off the road formation.

On the more heavily trafficked roads, including all declared State highways, or in areas where additional assistance to drivers is required at night, reflective delineator strips are attached to guide posts so that the driver will see a series of red reflectors on the left hand side of the road and a corresponding set of white reflectors on the right hand side.

A new type of white paint has been developed recently for use on guide posts.

New Paint Used

The paint contains special reflective and colour retention properties and the ability to "self clean" by constantly shedding its surface.

Guide posts make an important contribution to public safety on roads. Their maintenance or replacement to give the best possible service to the motoring public is effectively performed by the Board's patrolmen in the course of their regular duties.

ADVISORY SPEED SIGNS

Motorists using Victoria's primary road system during the Easter holiday period should take full advantage of information included on advisory speed signs.

Advisory speed signs are used in conjunction with yellow diamond curve warning signs on which are shown a black arrow to indicate the direction of a curve in the road ahead. Below the diamond is a figure in miles per hour which is considered to be the safe maximum speed at which the curve may be negotiated under dry road conditions without the driver or passengers feeling discomfort. The advisory speeds shown on the signs are calcu-

lated from the instruments fitted to motor vehicles which measure the side forces acting on the vehicle through its wheels while rounding each curve. Also taken into account is the need to reduce speed where the driver's sight distance is limited.

Drivers should also realise that when the road surface is wet or in rain, fog or darkness, the safe speed on a curve could be considerably less than the figure shown on the advisory speed sign.

MINISTER OPENS CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS



The Hon. A. J. Hunt, M.L.C., Minister for Local Government, addressing the Conference.

The Twenty-eighth Conference of Municipal Engineers was held at the C.R.B. Head Office, Kew from 29th February to 3rd March.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt, MLC, Minister for Local Government, officially opened the Conference. In his opening remarks Mr. Hunt mentioned that the Conference was an important aspect of the partnership between local government engineers and the Board.

Well prepared and researched papers were presented on a wide selection of

topics which included municipal management, the provision of community amenities, road and street planning, and the conversion to metric weights and measures. Approximately 240 engineers attended the Conference.

The Conference concluded with a half-day inspection of the Mulgrave Freeway project.

TRAINING FOR OVERSEAS ENGINEERS

Since 1967 the C.R.B. has provided technical training for more than 50 engineers and other technical personnel from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Nigeria and Kenya.

Recently a group of three Indonesian Government civil engineers completed a five month period of training with the Board under a United Nations Fellowship Scheme. Two other Indonesian engineers will complete a similar period of training within the next few months.

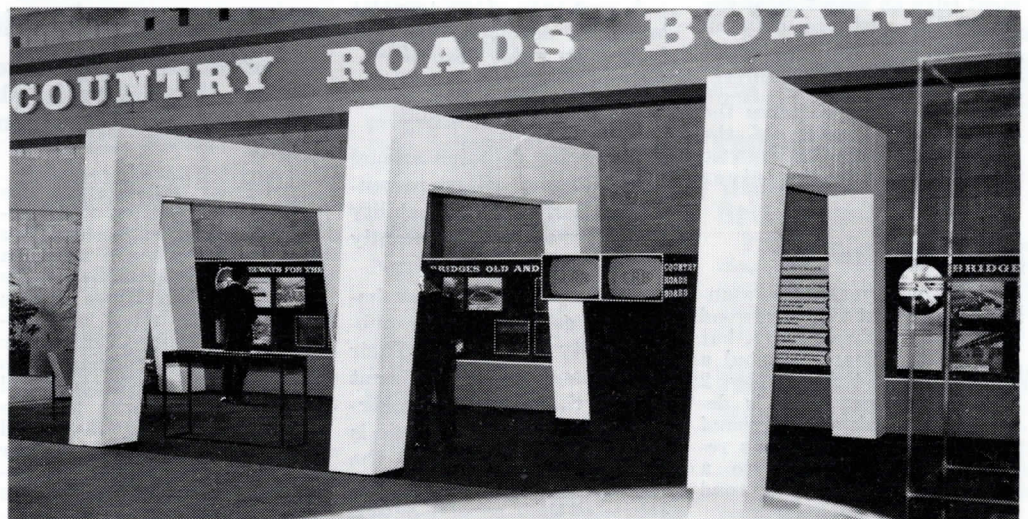
The Indonesian engineers gain experience in the design, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, with

particular emphasis on the techniques used in Victoria on low cost road construction and bituminous surfacing in rural areas. The testing of materials and quality control are also matters of great interest to the visitors.

In March, 1973, the Board will hold a seminar of approximately five weeks' duration on engineering management for senior engineers from Africa and Asia.

C.R.B. DISPLAY WINS AWARD AT MOTOR SHOW

The C.R.B. display at the 1972 International Motor Show featured the Board's bridge building activities throughout the State. The main structure of the stand represented a series of portal frame bridge piers supporting a simulated beam. The stand won first place in the Special Exhibits section of the show. It proved a popular attraction to the huge crowds that visited the Motor Show this year.



THE OMEO HIGHWAY — FIRST STATE HIGHWAY DECLARED IN VICTORIA

The Omeo Highway extends from the Princes Highway at Bairnsdale northerly to the Murray Valley Highway east of Tallangatta, a total length of 179 miles.

“Omeo” is an Aboriginal word for “mountains”, and is a most appropriate name for Victoria’s most mountainous highway. For much of its length it traverses the Great Dividing Range, providing a vital road link between East Gippsland and the Upper Murray region.

EARLY HISTORY

The Omeo region, after which the highway was named, was first explored by a Polish exile, Johann Lhotsky. Lhotsky arrived in Sydney in 1833 and having had little success with a job there decided to explore the land south. His small party travelled through the areas which were later to become Canberra and Cooma. Further on they forded a “crystal clear river” which Lhotsky named the “Snowy” and proceeded as far westerly as Mt Hotham in Victoria. He returned to Sydney in 1834.

As early as 1835 pastoralists had occupied most of the available grazing land as far south as the headwaters of the Murray and Snowy Rivers and in that year, George McKillop, McFarlane and Livingstone crossed the Snowy River and penetrated as far as Omeo. The fertile land in the district was quickly selected but in 1838 and 1839 was beset by severe drought. It was at about that time that Angus McMillan, later to be acknowledged as the discoverer of Gippsland, was an Overseer with one of the early selectors of land in the Monaro district, Captain Lachlan Macalister. McMillan decided to look for fresh pastures further south and in December, 1839, his party, travelling via the Omeo region, reached the shores of what is now Lake King, one of the Gippsland Lakes. On his return McMillan reported favourably to Macalister on the land he had discovered. In order to obtain access Macalister spent £2,000 of his own money cutting a track from Omeo to the Lakes. This was about 1841, and possibly represented the first road construction in the Gippsland area and no doubt the first location of the present Omeo Highway. Part of the road would have followed the route of which McMillan wrote in his diary, “I marked the dray road all the way from Numbla Munjie (Ensay) to the sea.”



The Omeo Highway north of Mitta Mitta.

BAIRNSDALE TO OMEO

The location of the road from Bairnsdale to Omeo in the 1840’s and 1850’s began by following roughly the present route through Sarsfield to about a mile north of Bruthen. There it veered off to the left and skirted Mt Little Dick and the head waters of Monkey Creek, Shady Creek and forded the Tambo River (now Tambo Crossing). It then ran up Navigation Creek and over the Fainting Range and came out at Ensay. From Ensay it followed the east bank of the Tambo fording it at Tongio and then went up the Tongio Gap and over the Dividing Range to Omeo. Bullock teams with supplies from Port Albert used it in the early days, particularly during the gold rush, and it was for many years the coach road to Omeo. The trip to Omeo along this route was slow and

hazardous and was the main reason why the gold rush to Omeo started later than in the Bendigo and Ballarat districts, even though gold was discovered in all these places at about the same time.

It was not until the late eighties and early nineties that the road was located along the Tambo River, and although this reduced the number of steep grades, the road alignment remained fairly tortuous until recent years.

Proposed Railway

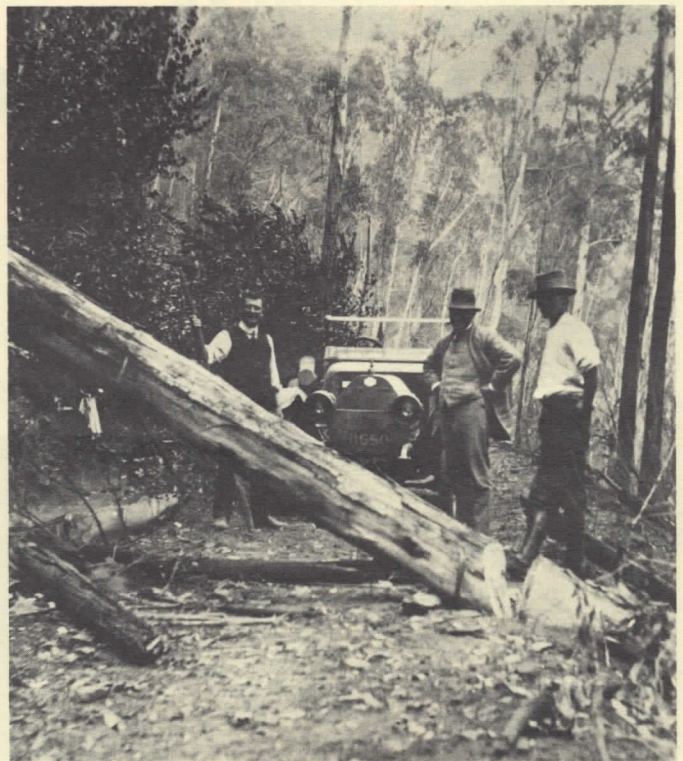
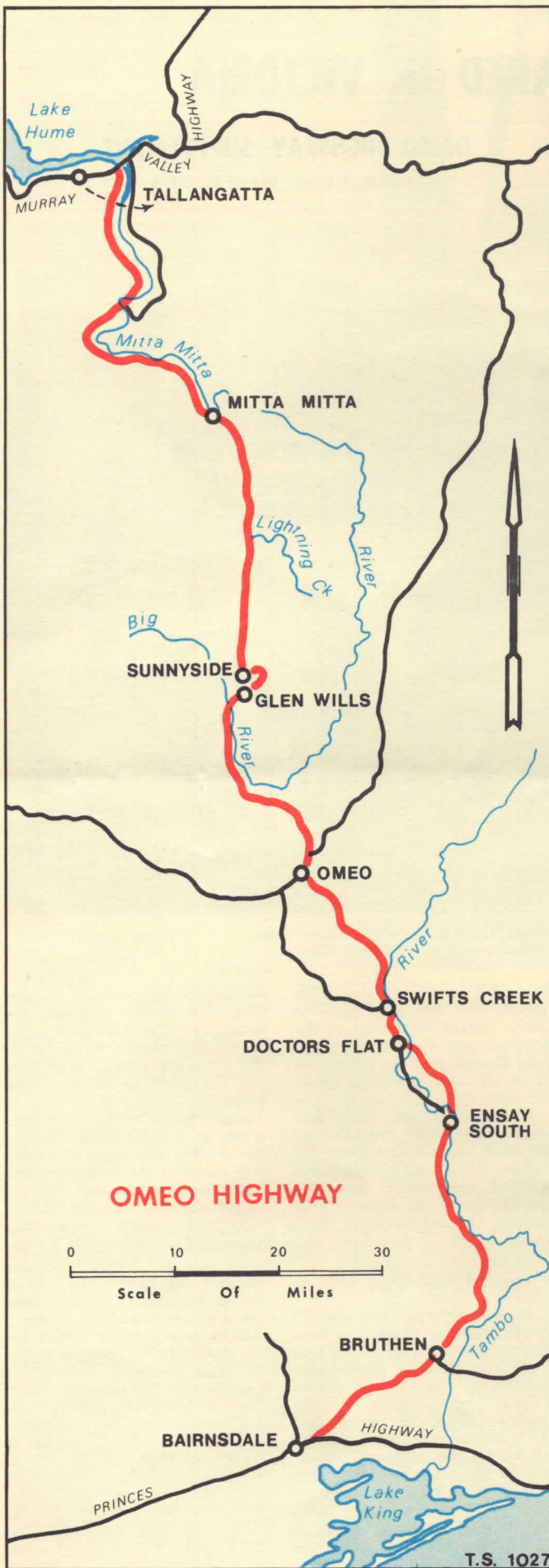
It was hoped, even up till the time of the first world war, that a railway would be built to serve this district. This never happened. The Country Roads Board, shortly after it was constituted, wrote in its first Annual Report published in 1914—“as the proposed railway via Bruthen to Tongio within twelve miles of Omeo will relieve the Tambo Valley Road of most of its heavy traffic it is not proposed to incur the

amount of expenditure on this road that would otherwise be necessary. The first work to be undertaken therefore would be the regrading of the road over the Tongio Gap between the proposed railway terminus at Tongio and Omeo where the grade at present is as steep as one in five and then to gradually improve the worst sections between Bruthen and Tongio where required for local traffic”.

In the early 1920’s the Member for Gippsland East, Mr Lind, later Sir Albert Lind, was pointing out to the Minister of Public Works, Mr Goudie, later Sir George Goudie, during a visit to the region, the difficulties of transport for people living in these remote areas. Mr Goudie told Mr Lind that when the new Highways and Vehicles Act was passed the first Highway to be declared would be the Omeo Highway. The Omeo Highway was, as a result, the first Highway declared under this 1924 Act. The main provision of this Act was that the Country Roads Board would

OMEO HIGHWAY SUPPLEMENT

C.R.B. NEWS, MARCH, 1972



The road to Glen Wills in 1914.

bear the full cost of roadworks on roads declared as State highways. Notwithstanding this, progress on bringing the highway up to a modern standard was slow, no doubt largely due to the depression of the thirties and the second world war. Although the Board provided more and more money in the years that followed, the sealed surface did not reach Omeo until 1969. Due to the very broken nature of the country through which the road is located improvement work is very expensive. Many minor deviations have been made, two notable ones are at Monkey Creek and St Patrick's Creek. There were also some major deviations—one from Ensay to Doctor's Flat and another from the foot of the Tongio Gap to Omeo.

Only general improvement work is proposed on the highway in the near future. For most of its length the alignment is along the valley of the Tambo River and locations such as its present difficulties and high costs for curve improvement and formation widening.

OMEO TO LIGHTNING CREEK

The Omeo Highway north of Omeo was built in the late 1890's and early 1900's some time after the road to the south, although rough bullock tracks from the north served the very early settlers. The original route from Omeo to Glen Wills and Sunnyside was via Hinnumunjie and over "The Knocker", well named because

of its steep grades. In the 1890's Jack and George Fitzgerald were the first men to take a bullock wagon from Omeo to Glen Wills, which set the pattern for the alignment of the present highway.

A well-known landmark on the highway beside the Cobungra River between Omeo and Glen Wills is the now delicensed "Angler's Rest" Hotel. It is more popularly known as the "Blue Duck" Hotel. A wooden carving of a duck painted blue hanging over the entrance door establishes the hotel's identity.

Some years before the road was built, a site for a residence was being pegged out near the crossing of the river and the pegs were covered with tin plates. At about the same time a road survey which came out nearby had just been rejected by the Government, so Tom Fitzgerald scratched "Blue Duck" on top of the tin plates registering disappointment at the latest road move. This is how the name originated.

Gold Miners Served

The present route of this section of the Omeo Highway was located primarily to suit the requirements of the gold fields at Sunnyside and Glen Wills (named after Wills of the Burke and Wills expedition). These two places are now virtually ghost towns and the road in its present position serves mainly the timber industry and winter time ski-enthusiasts. The highest point of the road is about 4,550 feet

above sea level at Christmas Creek and is snow covered for some months in the winter. Snow clearing, however, keeps the road trafficable and a well equipped hut has been erected on the road near Sunnyside and from which is operated a suitable snow plough.

The Board has provided substantial sums over the years to improve the condition of this section of the highway but due to the nature of the country it is not possible to do much more than widen and surface the road on its present alignment. With funds to be provided in the future this type of work will be continued.

LIGHTNING CREEK TO TALLANGATTA

As with much of the far north-east of Victoria, the Mitta Mitta River Valley was first settled during the late 1830's and early 1840's by squatters forced to search for better grazing land after continued dry conditions in New South Wales. The valley was an established pastoral area well before the discovery of gold in 1860.

Up to this time, all goods were carted by bullock drays from Wodonga over narrow tracks, via Kiewa and Lockhart's Gap to Mitta Mitta. Not until Tallangatta was linked by rail to Wodonga in 1891 did the roads from Tallangatta southward achieve any importance.

To cater for the mining interests which remained in the area until the early 1900's, the

The Board's car at Lightning Creek during the 1914 inspection.



The Omeo Highway at Monkey Creek, north of Bruthen.

Towong Road Board (later renamed Towong Shire Council) was formed in 1869. A track was surveyed through Mitta Mitta and Glen Wills to Omeo by the 1880's. Widening and realignment of this track was commenced later in that decade. The present Omeo Highway now largely follows the early route from the north.

Inspection by C.R.B.

The first inspection of this area by the Country Roads Board took place in February

1914. On route to Mitta Mitta, the visitors, headed by the Chairman, Mr Calder, stopped at the "Austral Alps Hotel" at Lightning Creek. The licensee of the hotel, Mr Archibald Blair, was later to become the Board's first patrolman on this section of road. At Mitta Mitta the Board lunched with Councillors Tobin and Cardwell to discuss the future of the road.

During the 1920's and 1930's a great deal of road and bridge construction work was carried out by contract. The depression years also brought gangs of sustenance workers from the

cities. These men built a bridge over Lightning Creek and widened the formation from the bridge to Granite Spur.

The first bulldozer used on this section of the highway was brought to Mitta Mitta in 1949 for a large widening project south of the township.

Between 1952 and 1954 substantial lengths of the highway were first sealed between Tallandoon North and Mitta Mitta. In 1957 and 1958 a major realignment was built between Double Gully and the Murray Valley Highway due to the raising of the water level in Lake Hume. The new work was later sealed and by 1968/69 the full length of the highway north of Mitta Mitta had been provided with a sealed pavement.

Works planned in the near future are the widening of the present 12 ft. sealed pavement through the Noorongong plains to conform with the 20 ft. seal elsewhere, and realignment between the bridges over the Mitta Mitta River at Tallandoon North.

A long term plan to widen and realign sections between Lightning Creek and Mitta Mitta is presently in preparation.

HISTORIC NAMES

Travellers on the Omeo Highway will find many name boards erected at streams and places of historical interest. Some of the more important place names are explained below and their locations are given in miles from Bairnsdale.

MITCHELL RIVER

Discovered and named by McMillan. Sir Thomas Mitchell was then Surveyor General of New South Wales. (0.5 miles)

NICHOLSON RIVER

Named by McMillan in honour of Sir Charles Nicholson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. (8.0 miles)

MONKEY CREEK

This was named by Angus McMillan after the "monkey bears" which we now call koalas. (19.4 miles)

WALSH'S CUTTING

Walsh was a coach driver. Before the road was re-located up the Mountain Ash Range, it ran very steeply, on the Omeo side, down towards a little creek spanned by a small bridge. Walsh's coach raced down this hill and capsized after the brakes failed. The driver was killed. (24.7 miles)

THE SNAKES BACK

The winding nature of the old road at this location gave rise to this name. (36.9 miles)

BATTLE POINT

Some say that this name owes its origin to a battle between two road foremen while others believe that the adversaries were two bullock drivers. Weight of opinion seems to favour the latter version. It would appear that a rival came into the area and forced rather strict competition on the regular "bullockies" operating on the road and this inevitably resulted in "the battle". (38.8 miles)

DOCTORS FLAT

Named after Dr Arbuckle who was a friend and companion of Angus McMillan. (54.8 miles)



Above: The Omeo Highway near Tongio Gap, south of Omeo. Below: David Pritchard, one of the Board's first patrolmen on the section of the Omeo Highway north of Lightning Creek, photographed in 1927.

