



CHAPTER 18

THE CURSE OF THE GREAT TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY. PART 3.

There is nothing like a train trip to blow the cobwebs away. It is 1918 and we have set out from Perth, our destination, Adelaide.

Whether we be good sailors or bad, whether a sea voyage be the one thing in life most to be dreaded or most to be desired, does not alter the fact that by the construction of the Great Western railway we have been brought into much closer communication with the Eastern States. To join the goldfields express at Midland Junction at 5:30 Friday evening and to step off the train at Adelaide at 3:30 Monday afternoon, with no greater inconvenience in the meantime than carrying your luggage across one platform in Kalgoorlie, another in Port Augusta and still another in Terowie, is incomparably less troublesome than to go through all the circumlocutory processes associated with arriving at the same destination by the sea route.

This is a hybrid commentary that has drawn upon a series of articles published in the *Swan Express*, **(Midland Junction), from 29 November 1918** (shown in purple). It has been constructed by filling detail from the resources listed at the end of the next page. Our journey has commenced on the narrow-gauge '3 foot 6' from Perth to Kalgoorlie.

We have, on arrival at Kalgoorlie, joined the Trans-Australian Express. This is the train that takes us halfway across Australia on the standard-gauge railway that was completed a little over a year ago. The construction of this line has been touted as a great feat of engineering, but not because of mountains and rivers to be crossed, but because of the construction through the harsh country.

The country is quite the opposite, flat and mostly featureless. We are in awe of the carriages of the express. They are spacious, wide and high, and tastefully appointed.

At 10:00 am we embark on the long stretch of 1051 miles which separates Kalgoorlie from Port Augusta. This is a 49 hour run which is more formidable in the prospect than the retrospect...at least to anyone who is capable of finding pleasure in the company of his fellows.

The uniforms of the Commonwealth Railways department give the officials a smart, well-set-up appearance, and one is afterwards struck with the contrast to the loose and slovenly garb of the South Australian railway men.

The Great Western, unlike the Perth to Kalgoorlie express, is a 'dry' train and without being suspected of wowseristic tendencies we here set it down as our opinion this is a wise provision. The man whose damnable iteration has run in the direction of orders 'to set 'em up again' can easily become a pest where intimate association with one's fellows is inescapable. The lounge car provides for general assembly during the day. There is the dining car to seat 33 persons which is also attached and as the train at present accommodates a maximum of 100 passengers, three sittings are required for each meal.

THE QUORN LOCOMOTIVE DEPOT. The four locomotives lined up here are the NM class that date from 1925. They were owned and operated by the Commonwealth Railways and were the principal motive power on the Alice Springs line until the arrival of the diesels. **FROM THE LIONEL NOBLE COLLECTION.**

This train has brought civilization to the outback. The carriages for this express were designed by the engineer responsible for completing the railway across the Nullarbor and have been built in the workshops at Port Augusta. That engineer is Mr Norris G Bell. However, it would be remiss of us not to mention Mr Henry Deane, who was the engineer who designed the railway and started construction. Mr Bell has since been appointed as Commissioner of the Commonwealth Railways and has declared his determination to make use of any innovation or strategy that will put the railway travel experience on the Commonwealth Railways up with the best in the world.

The monotony of the Nullarbor is not a concern. We while away the time with card games and sing-along. The Express stops to change engines at Rawlinna, Cook and Tarcoola. We are able to step out of the carriages and delight in meeting the locals who are equally delighted to meet us. And at Ooldea there is the *Tea and Sugar* train. But we will dine in style on the roast beef and horseradish sauce that is the main-course menu item for dinner in the evening. The Commonwealth seems to have thought of everything. They have their own dairy, bakery, meatworks and ice-works at Port Augusta and other locations.

The eastern end of the Trans-Australian Railway is Port Augusta. The evening before our arrival is spent relaxing in the lounge car. Another accolade for Mr Bell. Our conductor explains the arrangements for the morning arrival. We will change trains because the railway south from Port Augusta is narrow gauge and, in a half-apologetic tone, he advises that the ride to Adelaide will be a slow journey that will take 11½ hours.

To reach Adelaide is a round-about route that will require another change of train at Terowie. Then his tone brightens and he tells us that Mr Bell has entered into negotiations with South Australia regarding the construction of a direct line from Port Augusta. That line will be a standard-gauge railway that will enable the Express to proceed to Adelaide without a break-of-gauge.



Mr Bell estimates that the journey to Adelaide on this direct line will take less than 5 hours.

Port Augusta is reached at about one o'clock in the morning, but our considerate conductor allows us passengers to stay in bed until 4.00 am (and just here the writer would like to interpolate a word of commendation of the conductors, who, so far as his personal observation goes, are uniformly courteous and obliging). At 4.00 am morning tea is served when, as usual, one merely nibbles at a biscuit.

We enter the narrow-gauge train on the opposite side of the Port Augusta station, and at 5.00 am resume our journey to Adelaide.

The carriage of the Adelaide train is Lilliputian in comparison to the grand carriages of the Commonwealth Express. They are certainly not a modern design, probably coming out of the last century. We can forgive the early hour of departure and the frugal ambience of the South Australian narrow-gauge train, for we ARE about to experience what has been described to us as the scenic highlight of the whole train journey between Perth and Adelaide. Pichi Richi Pass.

Almost immediately, the South Australian guard, dressed in a garb which is in contrast to the neat uniform of the Federal officials, makes one suspect that he is just stepped out of a 'Comic Cuts', enters the carriage.

ABOVE. The Lounge Car from the Trans-Australian Express is a static exhibit in the roundhouse at Peterborough. **JLW**

LEFT. ED22, or more commonly known as 'Eddie,' was one of the original dining cars of the Trans-Australian Express. It was acquired by the Friends of the Burra Railway Station in a condition that was described as being 'beyond restoration'. **JLW**

Reference sources for items in the story.

LUKE Monte. Riders of the Steel Highway.
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS Weekly Notices 1918.
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS Working Timetable 1904.



DINING CAR. New in 1917. STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA B-14102-80

"How many of you gents are for bacon and eggs?" he enquires.

The train laboriously twists and squirms its way through the intricacies of the Pichi Richi Richi Pass and we become enthusiastic about the charms of the scenery after the monotonous country from which we have escaped. But bye and bye the scenery begins to lose its power to satisfy and the thought of those eggs and bacon recur with increasing frequency and poignancy. When the guard tells us we will have to wait until we reach Eurelia for the breakfast the last lingering traces of the affection we had conceived for him are dissipated.

We consult the timetable and find we are scheduled to reach Eurelia at 8. 17 am - 4 hours and 17 minutes since we nibbled at the biscuit, and 14 hours since we had tasted anything substantial

On arrival at Quorn we look at our map which reveals that we are further north than when we had departed from Port Augusta. We soon learn that our South Australian slow train is reverently referred to as 'the express'.

Our Comic Cuts guard makes a half-apology for the slow rate of progress, and like the Commonwealth conductor, advises that there will soon be a direct railway to Adelaide, but having said that, he continues in a hushed tone, 'but don't hold your breath'.

After another hour of jolting and heaving we have arrived at Carrieton, and a look at the map shows that we are exactly the same distance north from Adelaide as we were when we left Port Augusta.

Eurelia is the next station, and here we stop for breakfast. Just a station building and a goods shed. The latter has been converted into refreshment rooms as a temporary expedient, pending construction of the direct railway.

Inside and out, it looks exactly like a goods shed that had been turned into a refreshment room, but with one surprise. There is a LIQUOR BAR sign above the entrance.

We all agreed that a beer or whisky with breakfast was best avoided but could appreciate the appeal of that sign to the westbound traveller, as the passengers aboard that train would be taking dinner at Eurelia and that would be their last chance at getting a tippie until Kalgoorlie.



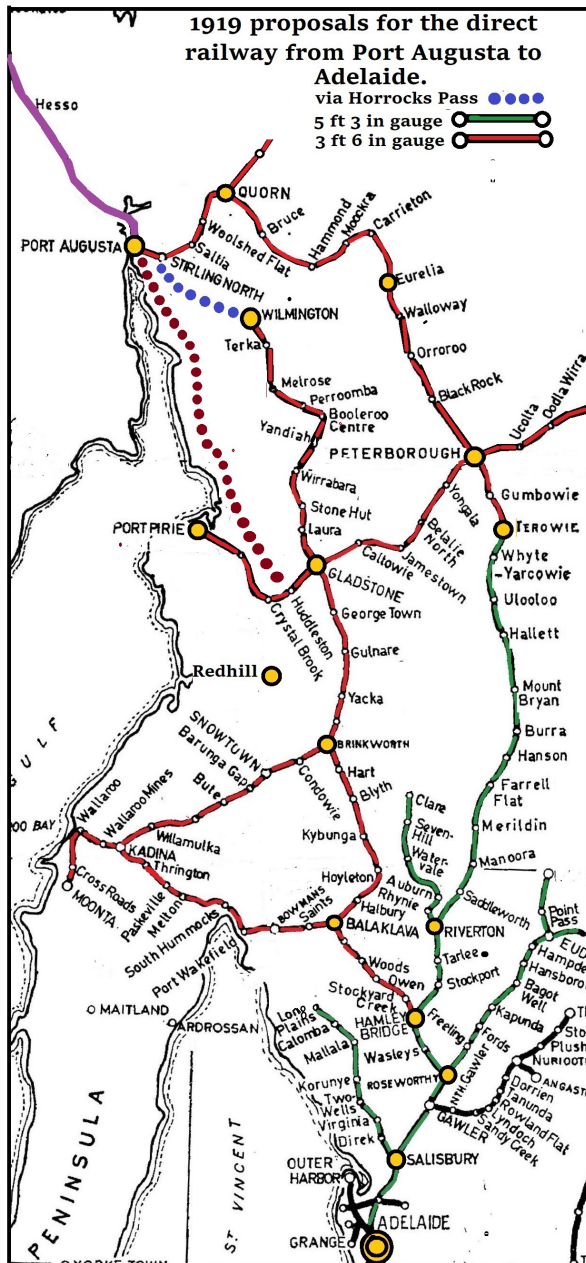
The food is good but it is admitted that it was hard for the kitchen to get the porridge wrong or spoil the toast. Maybe it is that we have been hankering for too long for that breakfast, that any food would have been a treat. The 'refresh girls' who serve us are delightful country lasses neatly turned out in their smart black and white uniforms. They love the job but express some regret that their goods-shed dining room is temporary and will only be in operation until the direct line was completed. 25 minutes after we had arrived, we are on our way again.

At 11:00 am we arrive at Terowie, for there we note the third change of trains for the trip, the broad gauge being greatly appreciated after the narrow line from Port Augusta.

Well, at least we can boast that we have travelled over all three Australian gauges in one day. At Terowie, passengers and luggage spill out onto the narrow platform. As we look around we note that the countryside is one of wide open space, which leaves us wondering why they made the platform such a tight fit. There is an equally tight fitting refreshment stall but a cup of tea has brought some solace and in the few minutes before departure a walk down to look at the engine. Our guard had told us that these engines that work the Terowie express were built for speed and have the largest driving wheels in Australia. That may be so, but a look at the brass builder's plate reveals it was built in 1894.

THE 'REFRESH GIRLS' AT THE EURELIA REFRESHMENT ROOMS. The staffing arrangements at the refreshment rooms on the South Australian Railways was that there was a husband and wife couple who were the managers and they were the responsible persons in charge of the liquor sales. **FROM THE LIONEL NOBLE COLLECTION.**





THE OFFICIAL SAR MAP has been modified to reflect the railways open in 1919. The red dotted line was the preferred route by the Commonwealth to Crystal Brook.

We have lunch at Riverton and land in Adelaide where we give thanks for having come safely through the dry area between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta and the foodless stretch of the upper north of South Australia.

On studying the map we can see that Port Augusta is 215 miles north of Adelaide. The journey has been 11½ hours. That is less than 19 miles per hour. The journey from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta (including stops), was done at an average speed of 28 miles per hour.

We can appreciate what the Commonwealth conductor has told about the concern that Commissioner Bell is experiencing. The railway is in competition with the coastal steamers plying between Western Australia and the eastern states. Mr Bell has done everything possible to make his express competitive but is being let down by the South Australian side. They seem to be stuck in the 19th century.

We shall now turn our attention to that other transcontinental railway, but we shall not be taking a trip on this train.

In 1918 the train to Oodnadatta was a fortnightly event without sleeping cars. It operated during the day and would stop for the night for passengers to stay in hotels at Quorn and Marree. The Oodnadatta railway had passed to the Commonwealth in 1911, along with the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth had come to an arrangement with South Australia whereby the latter continued to work the line with their crews, locomotives and rolling stock.

The light construction of the line dictated the use of Mogul locomotives that dated from the mid-1880s. Meanwhile, at the top end, the Commonwealth had found themselves, by circumstance rather than design, the operators of a railway. In 1917 that railway was extended south to Emungalan which was on the northern bank of the Katherine River. This extension was not part of a joining up with the Oodnadatta end, but for the purpose of conveying stock to the Vestey's meatworks at Darwin.

Archibald Peake, who came to office following the death of Tom Price in 1909, was a Liberal, but it was only with the support of some Labor members that he was able to form government. During the following decade he put steady pressure on the Commonwealth regarding the issue of the north-south transcontinental railway.

On 14 September 1912, the Governor General, Lord Denman, turned the first sod of the (east-west) transcontinental railway at Port Augusta and thus the people of South Australia were coming to terms with the fact that their (north-south) railway would have to wait. That awareness was strengthened with the onset of war.

There was political instability in South Australia with a change of government at each election, and that would continue through until the mid 1930s. Two of the early Labor administrations were led, the first by John Verran, and the second by Crawford Vaughan. Archibald Peake had three separate administrations.

John Verran and Crawford Vaughan did not seriously pursue the Commonwealth over the agreement of the north-south railway. The suspicion is that they held in high regard, the memory of Tom Price, who had been one of the originators of the agreement.

THE EURELIA 'REFRESH'. FROM THE LIONEL NOBLE COLLECTION.





PORT PIRIE, where the trains ran down Ellen Street, the city's main thoroughfare. The rococo building on the right was the railway station that dated from 1902. **JLW.**

There was also some overlap with the term of office of Labor's Andrew Fisher as Prime Minister. By 1919 Peake was again in government and one of the issues for South Australia was the direct railway from Port Augusta to Adelaide.

A look at the map shows Wilmington as a railway terminus not far from Port Augusta and connected to Adelaide by a railway that is as close to a direct line, as near as possible that could be achievable.

It had been one of the failings of past governments, when considering new railway routes, to opt for the shortest length of new track construction. But the usual outcome had been higher operating costs. We have seen this with the railway to Bordertown.

It is only 25 miles from Wilmington to Port Augusta but the map deceives. Wilmington is 1061 feet above sea level and there is a ridge that has to be crossed before the descent. The terrain is quite rugged and is penetrated by a ravine known as Horrocks Pass.

The Wilmington line (from Gladstone) itself was a narrow-gauge railway and not built with the intention of running express trains. The country between Wilmington and Port Augusta was rugged terrain which would have required the line to be converted from narrow gauge.

South Australia by this time was far from being at peace with the Commonwealth and using every possible strategy to avoid the standard gauge coming to Adelaide. It needs to be acknowledged that the direct railway from Port Augusta by the present coastal route presented no great engineering obstacle and that was the logical route considering curves, gradients and speed.

Meanwhile, there was continuing noise coming from New South Wales and Queensland that was a threat to South Australia's ambitions for an early start on the north-south line. That noise was about railway connections linking those states with Darwin. Crawford Vaughan had some interesting ideas.

In 1915 Premier Vaughan had evolved a scheme that may have made sense if Australia had entered the 20th century with a federated railway network, but he was yet to learn that the old colonial mentality had prevailed and there would be no holes in the borders. This scheme was reported in the ***Observer*, 20 November 1915:**

I have pointed out to the Premier of New South Wales that Melbourne is not the natural outlet for Wentworth and the Western Riverina, and if a line were built from Wentworth via Morgan, Adelaide would be 100 miles nearer to Wentworth than that town would be to Melbourne. I have also communicated with the Premier of Queensland and asked him to consider a proposed line from our far northern railway, at a point between Beltana and Hergott to the Queensland border, as recommended by the Abattoirs Commission with a view ultimately to link up with the system of the northern State. The south-western border of Queensland was 240 miles nearer to Port Augusta than to Brisbane. The object the Government has in view is to secure to South Australia the full value of its geographical position. Port Augusta is the natural drainage port for the whole of the interior of Australia. At the same time, we are taking steps not to jeopardise the through line between Oodnadatta and Darwin as guaranteed to us in the Northern Territory Agreement.

It was becoming clear that whilst the Commonwealth was in no hurry to make a start on the north-south railway, they were getting impatient regarding the direct line from Port Augusta. Mr Watt, the Minister for Works and Railway gave the following warning to South Australia regarding the proposal to build the standard-gauge railway from Port Augusta to Adelaide. It also hints at schemes to bypass Adelaide and Melbourne but the suspicion is that these were more bluff than real. From the ***Sun (Sydney)*, 4 July 1917:**

If South Australia and Victoria failed to fall into line in this matter, there is every likelihood of their being cut out of a 4 ft 8½ gauge line between Sydney and Port Augusta. He was anxious that in this state and his own should avoid this calamity.

The Wilmington to Port Augusta railway, or more correctly its survey, was reported in the ***Daily Herald***, **29 July 1919**. Regarding the survey, the Railways Standing Committee was told that:

...the route examined by Mr Graham Stewart, was for a 1 in 40 narrow-gauge line... for 1 in 43 grade, the tunnel would have to be considerably longer... estimated that it would be 3½ miles ...and a viaduct on the northern side of Horrocks Creek. Such viaduct would be 130 feet high and six chains long. The question was put whether there was any idea of the time tunnel construction takes? The reply was that there were many factors to be considered but one could not like to express a definite opinion. It might take two or three years. The committee adjourned.

It would have been a very expensive construction job and a costly line to operate. The idea seems to have faded away and was overtaken by the events of the 1920s.

Archibald Peake died in 1920 and the new Premier was Henry Barwell. He has subsequently been revered by some railway historians as being the man who employed W A Webb, the American railway expert, who became the Chief Commissioner of the South Australian Railways from 1922 to 1930. The SAR had, prior to this time, been decades behind the times. Webb had introduced modern American practices and his Chief Mechanical Engineer, Fred Shea, was able to design and deliver the most powerful locomotives in the country.

But Barwell brought some baggage with him in the form of a paranoia about the Commonwealth being dominated by the larger states and the inequity that arose from the drafting of the Constitution. The non-construction of the north-south railway was high on his list and he used the 4 ft 8½ in gauge as the vehicle by which he vented his ire. It pervaded his administration and would tarnish the thinking of subsequent Liberals in South Australia, Richard Layton Butler, and Tom Playford.

This was what Commissioner Bell had been working against in his attempts to get South Australia to agree to the standard-gauge railway from Port Augusta to Adelaide.

By 1925 Barwell had gone, and the new Premier was John Gunn, who was a step up from the old style of Labor aspirant that preached the Labor gospel in Botanic Park. An agreement was reached that would allow the construction by the Commonwealth of a standard-gauge line to Redhill, that had been the rail-head of the 5 ft 3 in broad-gauge line that had been reached that year. From Redhill a third rail would be laid by the South Australian Railways to bring the standard-gauge trains into the Adelaide Railway Station. The Commonwealth would complete the narrow-gauge railway to Alice Springs

There was also talk about a railway connecting Port Augusta and Broken Hill and this talk became louder in 1927 when New South Wales completed its direct railway between Broken Hill and Sydney.

The basement of the railway station at Port Augusta was home to a wheelbarrow. It had been there a long time and had originally had its day back in 1878 when Governor Jervois turned the first sod of the railway to Government Gums. Its only other outing had been in 1912, when the first sod of the Trans-Australian Railway was turned. It was now destined to Oodnadatta in January 1927, for the turning of yet another sod, accompanied by speeches and cheering. The speeches were all about the spirit of co-operation between the Commonwealth and the State.

There was no turning of the first sod of the direct railway from Port Augusta to Redhill. There had been a curious clause in the agreement that if the direct railway was not commenced in two years that the obligation to build it would lapse. That is exactly what happened. The circumstances have never been adequately explained. John Gunn resigned as Premier in 1926.

The new Premier was Lionel Hill but he only had about 7 months in office. Even Labor-leaning historians opine that he was a premier that South Australia would have done better without. There was the inevitable change of government with the next election. The new Premier in 1927 was the Liberal, Richard Layton Butler, whose thinking was burdened by some of Barwell's old grudges. The legislation by South Australia, to authorise the line south from Port Augusta, didn't happen.



A 700 CLASS MIKADO LOCOMOTIVE

The South Australian Railways, by 1920, had become very much behind the times, both by Australian and world standards. The most visible examples of this antiquated inventory were carriages and locomotives. W A Webb was the Chief Commissioner of the SAR, who was employed by the Barwell Government to bring the system into the 20th century. Fred Shea was Webb's Chief Mechanical Engineer and designed locomotives that were the envy of the other Australian railway networks. The 700 class were the smaller of Shea's big engines. No 706 photographed at Ambleside (near Balhannah) in 1966. **JLW**



THE CEREMONIAL WHEEL BARROW. DES SMITH PHOTO.

The circumstances of history are vague in relation to the failure by South Australia to honour its obligation regarding the authorisation of the direct railway. There was no edict to the effect that it was cancelled. Richard Layton Butler had a window of opportunity to action this but had continued the rage, and had obviously been thinking that he had done some sort of favour to South Australians by keeping the standard gauge away from Adelaide. He had delivered them an injustice.

A word about the third rail from Adelaide to Redhill. We mentioned in Chapter 1, that railway engineers do not like third rail with 4 ft 8½ in and 5 ft 3 in. There is the risk that ballast or a brake block could get caught in the small gap, and thus cause a derailment. To this is the added problem of very complex and expensive points and crossings in station yards.

South Australia's Chief Commissioner of Railways, W A Webb, had approved the third rail. But Webb was a traffic man and not an engineer. If the third rail system had been built there would have probably been quite a severe speed restriction. The journey would have been an improvement on our 1918 train trip, but as an express, it would have been a slow one.

The railway to Alice Springs was opened in 1929. That was also the year that Norris Bell retired as the Commissioner of the Commonwealth Railways. He had been a full decade trying to get the direct railway into Adelaide. In Chapter 12, there had been the example of the 1923 concept of the line from Port Augusta to Hay. It came to naught because Premier Barwell saw the standard gauge as some sort of evil that the Commonwealth would bring to bear on South Australia. So, in 1925 those refresh girls at Eurelia had no cause to fear the imminent loss of their jobs.

By 1935 the transcontinental traveller between east and west was still having to change trains at Port Augusta and Terowie and ride the little train that squirmed its way through Pichi Richi Pass.

The history of the break-of-gauge has been plagued by bad improvements. What was achieved in 1935 was the king of all bad improvements. Richard Layton Butler was again Premier. Joseph Lyons was Prime Minister and of which Harding (p78) wrote 'exerted his influence with the successful result indicated'. Butler had again saved South Australia from the ignominy of the standard gauge reaching Adelaide.

ONCE AGAIN IT IS TIME TO REFLECT THE CURSE OF THE RAILWAY GAUGES

The curse has taken the form of a force deeply embedded in the collective psyche of South Australia. I have defined it as:

We don't like being pushed around by those from the east and we will use whatever means possible to resist their intentions.

It is a destructive force that has taken its toll, both nationally and in South Australia. The curse has effectively destroyed South Australia's regional railway network. Some examples:

There was an intention by the Commonwealth, as far back as 1915, to build a standard-gauge direct railway from Port Augusta to Adelaide and the standard-gauge trains would have terminated at Platform 14 at the Adelaide Railway Station. It took until 1982 for the standard-gauge line to reach the greater Adelaide and even then, there was no connection to the Adelaide station.

In 1920 there was a plan which would have seen the Adelaide to Melbourne railway converted to standard-gauge along with the various branch lines. The Clapp plan of 1945 had similar purpose. These plans had included the Mount Gambier line but when the interstate mainline was eventually converted in 1995, Mount Gambier was left to rot.

We have seen this curse spill into matters, other than railway gauges, where the harmony between South Australia and those to the east has been tested. This is referring to the Commonwealth, New South Wales, as a colony and then a state, and to a lesser degree, a very fickle Victoria.

Some of those other matters have been the Overland Telegraph, the overseas mail service, the drafting of the federal constitution, the disputed Victorian border, the railway from the border to Broken Hill and the Murray River

Federation gave South Australia two sources of power and it had used them effectively in the 1900s. To assert its position. The first was the power of veto in relation to any requirement by the Commonwealth to construct a railway within the State. It is unlikely that there will be any call for that in the future. The other power is that the Constitution has given the states, in certain circumstances, equality irrespective of population. That has given the people of South Australia some extra clout at the ballot box.

Some comment about the origin of the curse. Is it a legacy of the Colonial Office in 1835 that chose to carve up the mainland continent? It required the colonies, rather than exist as a federation at that time, to instead be colonies that were subject to the whim of the Colonial Office. In 1850 there was an intention for a sort of federation to happen, with Sir Charles FitzRoy as Governor General. But the Colonial Office did not give FitzRoy the tools, and FitzRoy was probably not the right man to do it.

As I write these words in September 2023, I see the curse raising its ugly head and there are those from the east who would see their mission being to slay the beast. But like the mythical hydra, it feeds on those desperate efforts.



The new agreement had the standard gauge from Port Augusta being extended south to Port Pirie and the broad gauge extended from Redhill to Port Pirie. It still required passengers to change trains. Once was better than twice.

It would be a natural expectation that such a momentous event would be celebrated at Port Pirie with both Commonwealth and State sharing the podium. But No. They had separate ceremonies.

The opening of these railways was on 23 July 1937 and was scheduled to align with the arrival of Prime Minister, Lyons, on the Trans-Australian Express. He was returning from London, having attended the Coronation.

The South Australians held their celebration at Redhill, and packed in all the speeches and opening formalities to an 18-minute stop, then climbed aboard again for the trip to Port Pirie. Premier Butler, however, was notable by his absence.

South Australia had succeeded in its opposition to the standard gauge going to Adelaide, but we are left to contemplate the cost. It had subjected its own people, and people of the other states, to the costs and inconvenience of those 20 years of its intransigence. South Australia was not finished. It demanded its pound of flesh. The new railway would result in less revenue for the SAR. It was 135 miles (217 km) from Adelaide to Port Pirie. Port Augusta by the old route via Terowie was 258 miles (415 km). The Commonwealth would annually remit to South Australia, the amount of £20,000 for 20 years in consideration of their loss of revenue.

The people of Port Pirie could now wallow in their new found importance of being the only place in the world with three railway gauges in the one yard*. And at exactly 6.49 pm on Sunday 25 July 1937, they rang the three-minute bell to call the westbound passengers aboard at Eurelia for the last time.

*Other locations overseas were Volos (until 1948) and in India, but none approached the magnitude of Port Pirie.



PORT PIRIE IN THE 1960s.

TOP. The morning passenger train from Adelaide is nearly at its end. The locomotive was 526, and the date was 10 August 1965. Those were the days when, by hanging around the engine at a refreshment room stop (Bowmans), there was a good chance of scoring a cab ride. Note the narrow-gauge track and the mixed-gauge track. **JLW**

CENTRE. About a year later (15 August 1966) and no steam, but class leader no.900 (*Lady Norrie*) has brought the morning passenger train from Adelaide. **JLW.**

LOWER. The Budd car is moving from the Commonwealth Railways depot to the The Port Pirie Junction station from where it will depart with the local service to Port Augusta. Note the extensive locomotive and rolling-stock depot to the right. This was an example of an inefficiency of the break-of-gauge. In this case, duplication of major depots with Port Augusta only 54 miles (86 km) away. **JLW.**



PORT PIRIE

ABOVE. A 1957 view by Geoff Grant taken from the coal gantry. **FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM.**

RIGHT. Ellen Street. People have often remarked with the question of why did they let the railway run along the main street? The railway was there before the shops. **JLW.**

BELOW. Some of the old and some of the new. 14 August 1968. The new railway station was another example of an inefficiency necessitated by a break-of-gauge. One of many items of expenditure that could have been avoided if the standard gauge to Adelaide had been built at the same time.

