

QUEENSLAND

On 21/6 overhead power was turned off to permit erection of masts at Roma Street for the wiring of the line to Mayne via Exhibition (via both legs of the triangular junction). To avoid disruption to timetable, and to save run-around delays, two five-car stainless steel sets ran between Darra and Bowen Hills, with a 90-tonne diesel electric locomotive on each end. Units 1550 and 1561 operated on one set with 2418 and 2405 on the other. The locomotives were back to back, with the carriages in between, presenting an unusual but pleasing symmetrical appearance. Both units were crewed. The pushing unit was mainly used to provide quick acceleration out of each station.

The 100-wagon coal trains now operating in the Central Division are known as "R.C.E." (Remote Control Equipped) Coal trains, and were introduced on 5/5. The composition of these trains is:-

Lead Portion - two diesel electric locomotives with 2450 class command unit leading thence 50 VAH/VAJ/VAK/VO/VAO class coal wagons of which the leading seven wagons must be VAH/B class;

Trailing Portion - three mid train 1270/1300 class diesel electric locomotives and an LRC class Locotrol wagon and thence 50 VAH/VAJ/VAK/VO/VAO class coal wagons and a TGVS class brakevan.

The average unit length of an RCE train including locomotives is 321.8 units (1609 metres). Average gross weight loaded is 7153 tonnes; average net weight is 5400 tonnes.

A new and distinctive class of wagon has appeared on the QR, the WFO class. Converted from QFC or QFX class wagons, they have had fixed ends fitted plus removable side panels. They are designed for bagged fertilizer on pallets. Each wagon has its own tarpaulin of a design tailored to the wagon.

Diesel electric locomotive 2479, Clyde 81-985, fitted with Apac Air-conditioning and Locotrol command equipment, was delivered on 2/6 and trialled to Toowoomba the next day.

Electric Multiple Unit set 19 was accepted by the AR after trials on 3/6. Set 20 comprising EM 120/220/320 was towed from Maryborough on 26/6.

The withdrawal of a further three locomotives in the last half of last year is noted. On 22/9/1980 diesel electric locomotives 1203 and 1207 were officially written off whilst on 3/10 1151 was similarly treated. There are now three 1200 class in service together with eight 1150 class.

Commonwealth Engineering (Qld) Pty. Ltd. and Vickers Australia Ltd., Scotts of Ipswich have been awarded a contract to manufacture, supply and deliver 250 bottom discharge VAL class coal wagons.

A side-tip problem has been solved for the QR by the design and manufacture of a wagon which dumps loads of ballast and similar materials beside the railway lines. Initial

proposals were for each wagon to be equipped with an air receiver, fitted beneath it, which would be filled as the train ran towards its destination in readiness to supply power for pneumatic rams. However, the air vessel would have had to be very large, and the installation bulky and clumsy. An alternative proposal was evolved using an air-driven hydraulic pump. Instead of large volumes of air being stored, lesser amounts of hydraulic fluid are stored in hydraulic accumulators. The pump uses compressed air from the locomotive, while en route, to pump hydraulic fluid into the accumulators and automatically cuts out when a sufficient volume has been stored. At the dump site, the tipping operation is controlled by a single lever which opens the side gate, raises the bin, and reverses the process when the tip has been completed. Two bins are mounted on each wagon, with the power unit located between them. The bins tip to either side, and separate control stations on each side of the train enable the operator to watch the operation closely. Each bin can carry up to 15 tonnes of ballast. After acceptance in principle by QR, the design and manufacture of the hydraulic power units was carried out by Pongrass and Indeng, using a Haskel pump and Pongrass hydraulic cylinders. The wagons were manufactured by Industrial Engineering Ltd. (Indeng). The first five are now in service after undergoing performance appraisal by the QR.

The QR has ordered another nine diesel electric locomotives from Clyde Engineering (Qld) Pty. Ltd. This brings the number to be built under an extended contract to 26.

Tramways

Bundaberg Fowler No. 6 of 1952, known at Millaquin/Qunaba as Dobbin, will be the star attraction of a new tourist venture of Mossman Central Mill, expected to begin about July. Tourists will be conveyed in three carriages of steel construction. The seating is wooden, using timber from the old barracks at Mossman. The template for the lath bench seats has been taken from the passenger carriage preserved at Port Douglas. The new train will be named the Ballyhooley Steam Express after a halt on the former Mowbray branch, originally built by the Port Douglas Shire. The train will leave a station in the mill yard formed by converting an old ranch with its side verandah into a station platform. Initially the train will pass through the town along Mill Street and either to Drumsara and the Golflinks or up the Mango Park branch, showing tourists the harvesting process in operation. Fares will be \$4 Adults, \$1 Children and \$10 Family.

Some of the new Elaroo Tramway for the Proserpine Mill will parallel the QR North Coast line.

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