



The History of the West Australian Road Transport Industry

By Russell McKinnon

THE ROARING 20s



disastrous, about £500 being lost in three months. This was due to the opposition of the Master Carriers' Association, which did not favour Mr Sumpton (with whom debtor was working the Fremantle business) because he had introduced motor transport. Debtor had to toe the carpet for a breach of a technical rule. He was suspended, which meant that other master carriers would not accept employment from him, and he had to sell plant at heavy loss.' — From proceedings in the Bankruptcy Court. The next time the 'West' prints a leader on Preference to Unionists or Go-Slow, will they please elucidate the above paragraph. If favouring horses in preference to motors, isn't going slow we'd like to know what is. Also, while Mr Harry Mann is busy sympathising with non-unionists at the Labour Bureau he might drift around to the Master Carriers' Association and get them to reinstate the gentleman who told the" above hard-luck story in the Bankruptcy Court."

From the Mirror of March 27:
"SENSATIONAL SMASH. ON FREMANTLE ROAD. EIGHT CARS INVOLVED. Butler's Spur on the main Perth-Fremantle road was the scene of a sensational motor smash this morning, involving damage to half a dozen vehicles and resulting in the hold up of probably two hundred cars. Butler's Spur is on the top of the hill up from the North Fremantle rope works, and about 10.40 this morning during the rainstorm a lorry with a trailer from Sumpton's transport, stalled. William Lawrence Drabble, of William

1926

From The Mirror of January 16:

"On Monday night the Master Carriers' Association held their annual smoke social and meeting, which was largely attended not, only by local members, but by those of the Perth association. The report showed that much good work had been done during the past 12 months, particularly in view of the reduction of rates on heavy vehicles. President Courtaine (sic, Corteen) occupied the chair and Secretary Bastin acted as MC whilst Mrs Parry, of the Orient Hotel, where the social was held, looked well, after the creature comforts of the guests. The toast list was a long and varied one in which no one seemed to be missed. The most interesting portion of the social was when Mayor Cooke presented past president Mr

Freddy Perkins, of Frank Cadd and Co, with a framed picture of the members of the Association as a memento of his three years of office, during which he laid the basis of a good understanding at present existing between employers and employees. A visitor passed eulogistic references to Mr Perkins' career, alluding to the time when he started as an office boy with the firm of F H Graces and Co, Adelaide, the founder of which, Mr Harry Graves, 94, still attends his office daily. The musical programme was in the hands of Messrs Bert Gibson and Tommy Bolger, and was much appreciated."

From Westralian Worker of March 26:
"WHAT THE BOSSES ASSOCIATION DID — PUSHED A MAN INTO BANKRUPTCY. 'This enterprise was

Street, who was driving a car towards Fremantle, noticed the truck pulled up on the road and swung out to go around him. As he did so another truck loaded with lumber came at him out of the rain. Jamming on his brakes he skidded to the right and pulled up. Randolph Werranga, who was following behind, was unable to pull up in time and ran into the motor truck, the driver of which, Fred George Smedley, shot straight across the road against the railway fence. A charabanc, bearing down on the scene of the accident pulled up sharply and a following taxi driven by Eric McCormack crashed into it. Allan Banfield, following on behind McCormack, added to the confusion by running into him. Ten minutes later Mrs Nellie Miles, of South Perth, returning from Fremantle, ran into the timber at the back of the truck. Fortunately no one was injured and the police, Sgt. Baumgarten and PC Hickson, succeeded in clearing a way for the 200 cars that had been held up by the series of smashes." ■

With the appointment of the Main Roads Board on June 6, the staff, organisation, works and responsibilities of the roads and bridges branch of the Public Works Department were taken over by the Board. The re-decking of the north Fremantle Bridge was undertaken during 1926-27 at a cost of £4418 and on the maintenance of the Perth-Fremantle Road £1710 was expended.

There was much discussion on the haulage of wheat and where it should be shipped from with the Minister for Railways, Mr J C Willcock, being quoted in the Western Mail of August 26: "The Government is anxious that each port should be the outlet for the export of produce for which it is the nearest port. If consignors desire to send their produce to other ports they are subject to additional freight, but as a common carrier we could not refuse to transport produce wherever, the consignors desire to send it. However, in order to assist in inducing the trade to go to its natural port, during any busy seasons, when there are always more orders than trucks available, preference is given to consignors ordering trucks for export produce going to the nearest port. In these circumstances, if it is desired to send produce to other than the nearest port, the probability is that trucks will not be available for the purpose. The effect of this should be to divert trade to the natural outlet."

From the West Australian of November 2:

"Metropolitan Carriers Foregather. — The competition of the road was forgotten for a brief space last evening on the occasion of the annual meeting and smoke social of the Master Carriers' Association of Perth, held at the Bohemia Hall. Those present included representatives of the — kindred organisation at Fremantle, the Chief Traffic Manager of the Railway Department (Mr C B Gallagher), members of the goods shed, and 'Mr Elder (of Mollwraith, McBacham Ltd). The solace of instrumental and vocal items, however, did not

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On December 1, the Metropolitan Omnibus Company came into being. This was an amalgamation of various companies — Bell's, Primrose, Daffodil, Weir's, Molloy's, Irish Lass and Westralian — with Spicer and his company. Its combined fleet featured 13 Reos, six Federal Knights, two Federals, plus a republic, a Brockway, a Ruggles and a Graham. They were repainted in green and cream.

constrain the members from venturing opinions on pressing matters relating, to their calling. (Responding to the toast of Kindred Organisations, Mr P J Hevron of Fremantle, referred to the activities of the motor in the carrying field. The horse carriers at the Port, he declared, were holding their own, but he thought it would redound to the benefit of both divisions of the industry if the two organisations were to amalgamate. At the annual meeting held earlier in the evening a resolution was carried directing the management committee to deal with the question of motor transport, and, if necessary, to compile a schedule for the members of the association. The following office bearers were elected:— President, Mr J D Boylson; vice-president, Mr G F Hill; hon treasurer, Mr J R McGrath; committee, Messrs J Barnes, T Harman, J Murray and D Wallett."

From The Daily News of November 16:

"IN THE TRADE. The Winterbottom Motor Company, Ltd, report excellent business in all lines. The September sales exceeded those of any previous September, whilst October sales totalled 93 vehicles, establishing a record for any October. Dodge Brothers' car sales are increasing steadily from month to month, whilst rapid strides are being made in Graham Brothers' truck sales and Austin car sales. Graham Brothers' truck sales for October are 24 new vehicles, and up to the 10th inst, 11 new Graham trucks have been sold this month. The new standard track Austin Twelve is responsible for greatly increased interest in the Austin line. The lines of motor vehicles being handled by the Winterbottom Motor Company, Ltd, are capable of catering for every need in passenger and commercial transport as they range from the diminutive Austin Seven, which is the smallest car on the road, to the two-ton Graham Brothers' truck. This Western Australian company of motor distributors, who have been established 11 years, have agents and service stations in every leading town in the State."