

a co-operative society to continue the running of the various sections of the plant more or less in their own interest. However, the employer-employee relationship, never particularly amiable, was at a very low ebb indeed and the men placed little faith in the company's proposal.

In April 1922 it was announced that the company-owned houses were being demolished at Torbane Township, thus bringing to an end any hope entertained by residents that the local retorts would again be placed in operation. Then, in May 1925, a gang of men were sent from Newnes to Torbane to fettle and recondition the private railway in order to remove a portion of the oil-plant. With the demolition of the retorts several of the company's railway wagons arrived to bring out fire-bricks destined for the construction of a new petrol refinery then being established at Duck Creek near Clyde.

In connection with the latter petrol refinery it should be mentioned that John Fell and Company, Limited, intended to process petrol from the crude shale oil obtained from Newnes. To this end a Dubbs cracking plant was imported from the

United States of America and came into operation during 1925. To obtain further financial backing for the project John Fell went to England in 1925 but was unsuccessful and when he returned to Australia the sum of £50,000 was contributed by local financiers. The Clyde Refinery did not actually process the shale oil from Newnes on a commercial basis although many tests were made using this locally produced crude oil.

On May 4th, 1925, a siding, 32 chains in length, with a trailing connection to the "Up" line was brought into use between Clyde and Rosehill stations on the Clyde to Carlingford branch of the New South Wales Government Railway. The siding curved sharply due eastwards and followed a straight course in this direction to link with the various tracks within the confines of the company's yard.

During March 1926 workmen employed on maintenance of the Wolgan Railway and also at the oil-works at Newnes were paid off and the weekly train service ceased, thus severing the local mining community's contact with the outside world, as far as the railway was concerned. Many



*Mine skips in use at Newnes on the high level skipway during the last weeks of operation.*

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