

to sea in Newcastle Harbour. The site is now occupied by the Shell Oil Company."

The above letter, penned by the late George Firth, a keen observer of the Newcastle scene throughout his long life, is most illuminating in more ways than one, and serves to illustrate the attitude adopted by Government circles against the production of fuel and other oils obtained from the shale deposits of New South Wales. The letter also illustrates the sublime indifference to the pollution of the waterways, which still today characterises the refineries distilling imported crude oil.

The demolition process of 1918 extended to the

oil-works at Temple Court and there is mentioned that the Exchange Siding was closed on May 15th, 1918 and re-opened for traffic on August 30th, 1918, when Departmental engines of a heavier type than the "J 131" class were not permitted to run over the company's branch line. Both the Exchange Loop and the private line were finally closed on August 24th, 1931, after which date the rails were taken up. The abandoned formation can be readily traced, apart from the section along Cohen Street. The retort site is marked by a huge ash dump, an eloquent reminder of the one time activities at this now tranquil rural scene.

Opposite:

Builder's photo of British Australian Oil Co. wagon No. 15.

Clyde Eng. Archives.



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