



Train of British Australian Oil Co. wagons at Hamilton refinery.

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ting the thunderous exhaust blasts which were characteristic of the class prior to their reconstruction. It was a splendid experience to listen to these engines battling against the 1 in 50 grades leading upwards from Murrurundi to Temple Court and beyond, at 1 in 40, to Ardglan Tunnel. The surrounding steep hills of the Liverpool Range re-echoed every blast with meticulous precision, the whole Page River Valley resounding with their roaring effort, likewise the roar of their "Bull" whistles. Practically every train running north from Murrurundi was assisted by one of these engines, either in the lead or banking at the rear. It may be mentioned that on occasion the shunting trip to Temple Court loop siding was carried out by a "J 67" class 2-8-0 tender engine, known as a "NATIVE BEAR", or by a "B" class 2-6-0 tender engine, both classes being capable of making the welkin ring with their steamy exuberance.

THE ROUTE OF THE AUSTRALIAN SHALE SYNDICATE'S RAILWAY.

From the junction with the loop siding at Temple Court the Australian Shale Syndicate's single line branch curved sharply, on a falling gradient, to the north-east, passing through the confines of a cutting and over an embankment to reach the upper waters of the Page River. This oft-times turbulent stream was crossed by a "skeleton" bridge, a rough hewn log structure of twenty spans which had a maximum height of about twenty feet above the submerged base rock. Leaving the bridge the railway passed over a short embankment and continued its course along the

full length of Cohen Street, crossing the New England Highway and then two secondary cross streets on the level. It was required that trains running in either direction over the branch line be brought to a standstill at the approach to the New England Highway and then "flagged" across road by the guard or shunter. Train speed through the streets of Temple Court village were not to exceed a maximum of four miles per hour.

Leaving the north-eastern end of Cohen Street the branch line entered the company's enclosed land and curved south-eastwards, passing over a narrow tributary creek of Page River by means of a single span bridge about ten feet in length, the girders resting on brick abutments. A brick kiln, evidently used for the needs of the company, lay between this creek and Cohen Street fence alignment, on the western side of the railway, whilst at a short distance to the north-east of the bridge was the palatial two-storied residence of the company's manager.

Beyond the last mentioned curve the track passed through a shallow cutting before a facing point diverged to form a run-round loop, the outer end of which converged to form a short dead-end extension of single track at its terminal. The northernmost of the loop-lines served a loading platform for almost its full length. Near the entrance point to the loop sidings a large capacity crude-oil storage tank, cylindrical in shape, was vertically mounted on a sturdy braced framing some twelve feet in height. As the rail level, at this point, was five feet below the surrounding surface of the land, there was ample height available to permit