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Masonic Club. Mr. D. McNeill presented to Mrs. Kirkpatrick a framed picture of the statuette, and the Mayoress pinned on her breast a gold Australian military badge, which has been procured by the lady members of the library staff by means of a shilling subscription, at the same time handing her a bouquet of roses."

Original article from Box Hill Newspaper, 1918.

MELBOURNE HAS IT'S OWN STATUE TO THE MEMORY OF SIMPSON AND HIS DONKEY. IT IS IN THE VICINITY OF THE SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE.

THE ROLE OF THE RAILWAYS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. 1860 - 1890.

Roads in 1860 were nothing more than tracks cut by the passing of many coaches and buggies. Distances were great, horse drawn transport was slow, dirty and uncertain. Roads as we know them were unthinkable before the age of motorized transport. It is, therefore, understandable that railways were seen as a prime form of communication and transport. Their expansion over this 30 year period was the first determined attempt to overcome the two greatest barriers to Australia's development - scattered resources and vast distance.

Overseas investors provided the capital, and unlike investments made in pastoral and building enterprises, benefits from railway construction were usually considered on a long term basis. Profit or loss was not always the governing factor behind railway investment. The principle standard of judgment and the objectives varied from one colony to another and changed over the 30 years. The most frequently mentioned motives were railway revenue, extension of settlements, and the cutting of costs which would encourage greater productivity. This especially applied to the producers of bulk commodities such as wool and wheat.

Victoria and New South Wales were the major builders in the 1860's. South Australia and Queensland made little progress till 1872 and continued to expand over the following 15 years. Victoria's development was erratic because of its relatively restricted geographical boundaries and its denser settlements of population compared with the other colonies. Projects were completed quickly and basic changes of growth could be implemented with comparative ease. By 1862 Victorian Government Railways were running to the Ballarat and Bendigo gold fields. Goods to the goldfields became cheaper and arrived in better condition.

Development was not always directed towards assisting an undeveloped area although this did happen in Queensland. Extension of the railways here enabled selectors to turn from grazing to wheat growing. Wheat acreage in the Murrumbidgee area increased 900% and in the Riverina, N.S.W., from 8,000 acres in 1861 to 200,000 in 1891. It was, however, often strong political pressure that ensured a particular urban area was favoured by the arrival of the railway. Governments were attracted to other areas by the prospect of lucrative freight, and railways in turn facilitated the development of industries. For instance, the coal fields in N.S.W. which had the advantage of being close to port facilities, were greatly assisted. The building of a short railway line to carry the coal to the port was comparatively easy. Transport costs were cut and in addition the widespread use of steam engines ensured the steady expansion of the coal fields.

External economics and long run profit considerations were sometimes, but not always important. A railway terminal at Bairnsdale was linked with Melbourne in 1888, it acted as a natural outlet for the rich produce of the region and in so doing acted as a stimulant. But it was to be some years before the state would reap any substantial benefit from such activity.

Railways afford one of the best examples of the application of physical equipment to land. It linked population centres, stimulated settlement and industries and enabled ports to tap rich inland trade. In 1868 a line was opened to Echuca on the Murray River. This was an important port for goods travelling down the Darling and Murray Rivers and the railway line was built with the express purpose of attracting the wool and wheat from the rich Riverina district of N.S.W. to Melbourne ports. Country towns were being built near the new railway stations and in every town, in every colony, the station held a place of importance. Clustered nearby would be more buildings holding wool, wheat, timber, etc., arriving in or leaving the area.

The linking of the colonies' railway systems between 1883 - 1888 had some effect on politicians and the people seeing their land as an overall country. The Governors of each state and others expressed the wish that railway unity would in time result in the union of the colonies themselves. W. A. used railways as part of its price for becoming an original member of the Commonwealth of Australia. It demanded.

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Half of the public investment, excluding local government authorities, was in railways, leaving the other half to cover all other needs in the fields of water and sewerage, roads, schools, government offices and buildings. This could not help but detract in some way from development as many of these services were essential to real growth.