Picton Water Supply

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The township of Picton, named after Sir Thomas Picton who was seriously wounded at Quatre Bras in 1815, is on the main southern railway line and the Hume Highway about 51 miles south-west of Sydney. The earliest known reference to the district is in 1795 when it was reported to Governor Hunter that a herd of wild cattle, evidently descended from strays from the main settlement, had been seen along the south bank of the Nepean River. Later in the year the Governor visited the area which became known as "The Cowpastures."

In 1802, Francis Barralier, an ensign of the New South Wales Corps, made an attempt to cross the Blue Mountains from Picton, travelling from Sydney through Menangle and Douglas Park. Barralier refers to the natives in the area shouting the word "Co-ee" (in French "cooy"), this being the earliest record of the famous cry.

View of Picton.

Tahmoor Park House.

Viaduct.

Large stockyards were constructed at Stonequarry Creek following a visit to the district by Governor King in 1805 and in 1822 Major Henry Colden Antill, A.D.C. to Governor Macquarie, received the first land grant of 2,000 acres on the creek. This is now the well-known "Jervis Field" estate, named after Governor Macquarie's home on the Isle of Mull. Further grants were made in 1833 to Major Antill and Charles Louis Rumker.

Two settlements sprang up in close proximity, both bearing the name of Picton. They were subsequently combined when the township was laid out in 1847. The first land sale was held in this year, town lots realising £8 per acre, and land grants were made to the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches. The population was then 120. The first road from Sydney in this direction extended to Liverpool, which by 1820 was connected to Picton by little more than a track.

The early settlers grew wheat, barley, oats, maize, potatoes and grass until about 1862 when rust appeared in the wheat, forcing growers to turn to the production of milk, butter, eggs, bacon and hay.

As far back as 1824 the Kleusendarlffe Inn was built by a German of that name about four miles south of the town. Constructed of stone and timber and with a wide flagged verandah, the building was typical of early Australian architecture. Later named the "Travellers' Inn," the building still stands under its present name, "Tahmoor Park House." In the yard is a huge well built by convict labour, 14ft. square with a raised parapet all around about 3ft. high and capped with flat stones with projecting edges. Adjacent to the well is a large trough about 6ft. long, 2ft. wide and 4ft. deep, cut out of a solid block of stone. The inn was used by stagecoach travellers; Hume and Hovell stayed there in 1824 on their overland journey to Port Phillip.
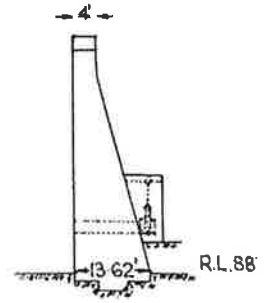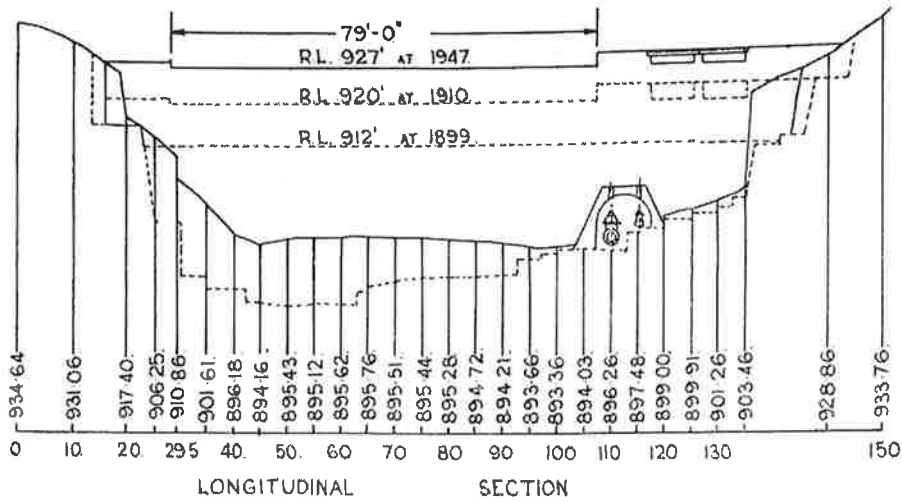
The railway from Sydney to Picton was opened on 1st July, 1863. The viaduct near the town is one of the most substantial and ornamental structures of its

Picton Tunnel.

Bargo River Weir.

79'-0"
R.L. 927' AT 1947.
R.L. 920' AT 1910.
R.L. 912' AT 1899.

SECTION

R.L.88

934·64 931·06 917·40 906·25 910·86 901·61 896·18 894·16 895·43 895·12 895·62 895·76 895·51 895·44 895·28 894·72 894·21 893·66 893·36 894·03 896·26 897·48 899·00 899·91 901·26 903·46 928·86 933·76

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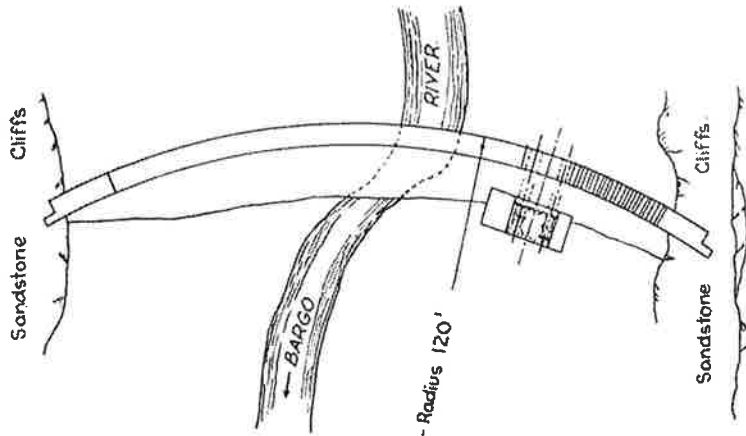
LONGITUDINAL   SECTION

Fig. 1

kind in the State. The Picton tunnel, over 500ft. in length, was the first railway tunnel constructed in Australia. Until the extension of the railway to Mittagong in 1867, the coaching and carrying interests employed many grooms, roadmen, blacksmiths and wheelwrights who were centred in the town. The cost of road maintenance was assisted by a toll-bar on Picton Hill.

A water supply system for the township was installed by the Public Works Department in 1899 and handed over to the local (municipal) council. The water was obtained from the Bargo River where a weir constructed to R.L. 912, impounded 24½ million gallons. In 1910 the level was raised 8ft. increasing the storage to 38½ million gallons. The weir was raised a further 7ft. in 1947, bringing the capacity up to 67 million gallons (see Fig. 1).

The original trunk main from the weir to Picton service reservoir comprised some 25,000ft. of 8in. dia. rivetted steel pipes and 21,000ft. of 6in. dia. cast iron pipes. In 1947 this main was renewed and amplified and now consists of 10in. and 8in. cast iron and 5½in. asbestos cement pipes totalling 8.8 miles in length. The route from the weir follows the

course of the Bargo River to the Hume Highwa thence parallels the railway to Tahmoor station, ne traverses private property to a point near Tahmo Park House and finally follows the main road the service reservoir (see Fig. 2).

Water is distributed to the township through 8 miles of reticulation mains varying in size from 6i to 1in. in diameter. From the 10in. dia. main betwee the weir and the Hume Highway water is pump through a 2in. dia. service to supply Picton Lak T.B. Settlement. In Picton immediately upstrea of the inlet to the reservoir another 2in. dia. servi supplies pumped water to the Queen Victoria T. Homes.

In 1941 the municipality was absorbed in the Shi of Wollondilly. In July, 1952, the Shire Counc asked the Board to consider taking over the syster and on 1st January, 1954, the transfer was complet on a walk-in walk-out basis. In advance and anticipation of this, work was commenced by tl Board in 1953 on the renewal and amplification of tl 4in. and 3in. dia. mains in Menangle Road. Son 3,740ft. of 6in. and 3,190ft. of 4in. mains have bee laid at a cost of £7,539.
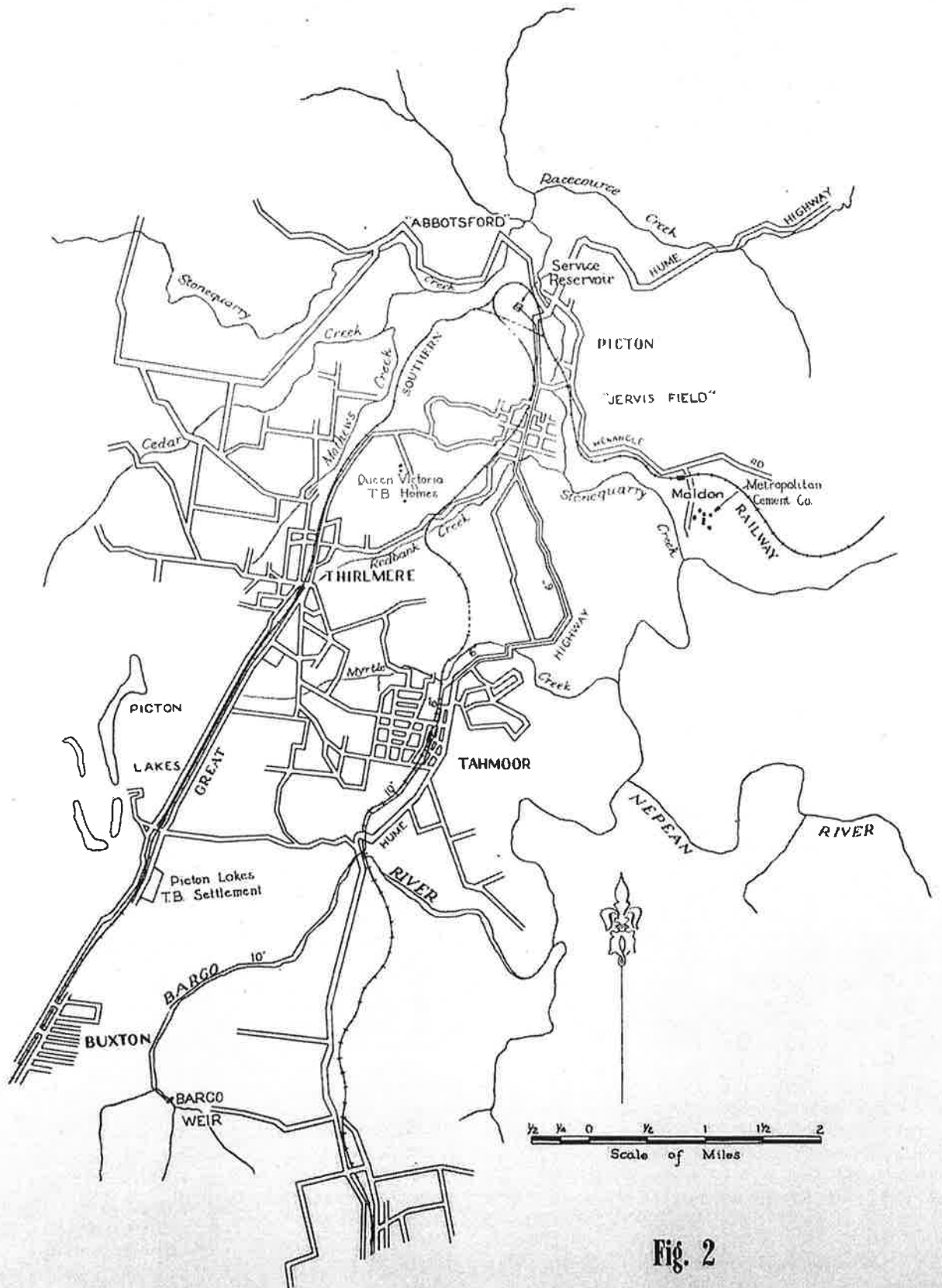
Fig. 2