

Historical Officers Report From the Pages of the Camden Advertiser November 1941

13th November

The Editor Writes— Prevent Bush Fires: Chief Secretary's Appeal The opening of the 1941-42 campaign of the Bush Fires Advisory Committee is made the occasion by the Chief Secretary, Hon. J. M. Baddeley, M.L.A., for a personal appeal to the public for co-operation in bush fire prevention. It is now more important than ever, it is pointed out, that we should preserve our national resources. We in Australia have been spared the physical horrors of war, our fields and forests have not been scorched and desolated, but there always confronts us at this season of the year the menace of bush fires, a danger of the first magnitude.

In Victoria, for example, the fires of 1939 not only took a heavy toll of life, but almost wiped out an industry. They laid waste 7,850 square miles of countryside and left in their wake much poverty and unemployment in fact, the State suffered so fearful a blow that the scars will be evident for many years to come. A conservative estimate of bush fire damage in that year was £580,000 for New South Wales alone, but that alarming loss did not take in to account soil erosion, situation of streams, loss of fodder and other consequential damage. It is emphasised that the same scrupulousness should be observed in bush fire prevention as one exercise in the prevention of fire in one's home. In the summer months the danger from bush fires never disappears. Even when good rain falls during the summer season, clothing bare stretches of land with a cover of waving green, the risk remains. The grasses are seldom eaten off and by late summer are brown and inflammable. The bushland, too, is nearly always dry and the flickering match or cigarette butt discarded in a moment of carelessness may start a fire which will ravage thousands of miles of countryside and leave many without a home. In New South Wales, Mr. Baddeley reminds us we have about 30,000 bush fire fighters who have performed herculean tasks in the past. These men are volunteers, and their unselfish example and high sense of civic responsibility entitle them to our fullest co-operation. It is they in company with permanent firemen and police, who have to bear the sweltering heat arid burden and grave personal risk frequently caused by our carelessness and neglect.

The Editor Writes— Welcome Rain!

The 104 points of rain registered at Camden Post Office to 9 a.m. on Tuesday, constituted the "second-best" day's fall this year. Depleted tanks were replenished during a heavy storm in the early hours of the morning.

Drought Years at Camden. Not since 1934 has Camden enjoyed a "better-than-average" rainfall. At least 35 inches are needed to ensure a good seasonal year in this district. From a weather point of view, the past three drought years rank with the worst in local history. In 1939 only 20 inches were recorded. The position further deteriorated in 1940 with 16.91 inches. This year's figures (including Tuesday's fall) total 19.56 inches. Its "tough going" for the local farmers!

18th November British Offensive in Libya began



19th November HMAS Sydney lost with all hands



20th November

The Editor Writes - Hospital Tea Rooms Alight: The front portion of the tea-rooms and staff quarters, known as "Grassmere Cottage," in the Carrington Convalescent Hospital grounds at Camden, was destroyed by fire on Thursday evening last. Members of the Camden Fire Brigade, who worked strenuously for three hours, saved the rear portion of the building. The firemen's effort was praiseworthy as they were hampered by poor pressure in the water supply. The fire was first noticed by Mrs. Simonsen who was resting in her quarters, when she heard a crackling noise and then saw smoke issuing from an adjoining room. Mrs. Simonsen rushed across to the main building and gave the alarm. The hospital staff helped to retard the flames by the use of extinguishers. Good work was also performed by the staff, neighbours and townspeople who removed furniture and effects from the building.

Dried Milk from Dry Cows: One of the few M.L.A. with an understanding knowledge of the dairy farmer's economic difficulties is Mr. R. N. Beale, independent representative for the South Coast. Dairy farming is one of the main industries in his electorate and he knows that the farmer is getting a raw deal. Speaking to constituents recently, Mr. Beale said that some of his fellows M.L.A. were ignorant on the subject of cows. When he spoke of dry cow on one occasion, a fellow Parliamentarian said: "Dry cows? Oh of course that's where the dried milk comes from."

Menangle News

The failure of the Postal Department to connect the telephone at Menangle-Park has resulted in Campbelltown Council lodging a protest against the delay. Ald. J. Farnsworth mentioned this matter at the monthly meeting of the Menangle Park Progress Association.

27th November HMAS Parramatta sunk on Tobruk run



Ray Herbert, Historical Officer