

WODONGA TRAIN-BUS CRASH

How 25 People Were Killed

WODONGA, Mon: An inquest was opened today by Mr P. W. Whan, acting deputy coroner, assisted by Mr I. W. Williams, PM, into the deaths of 25 persons who lost their lives in a crash between a light engine and tender and a motorbus on a level crossing near Wodonga on the night of May 8.

The victims were: Lieut Harry Parkinson, Lieut Lyle Brinsmead, WO2 Robert Frewin, WO2 Roscoe Mills, WO2 George Rose, Act-Sgt Ernest Nairn, Act-Cpl Richard Dunne, Sig George Nicol, Sig Adrian Try, Pte Keith Hurst, Pte Patrick Daly, Pte Frank Steele, Pte Albert Goddard, Tpr Roy Barnes, Pte Cyril Alderton, Pte Boyce McKenzie, Pte Ernest Johnson, Pte Arthur Neale, Pte John Quinn, Lieut Allan C. Harris, Pte Anne Anderson, Act-Cpl William H. Roberts, Lce-Sgt Alex P. McFarlane, Lce-Cpl Keith R. Barnett, and William Henry Lord, bus driver, of Victoria st, North Williamstown.

O. R. Midgley, manager of the Symons bus service between Wodonga and Bonegilla, said that Lord, the bus driver, was employed by Mr Samuel Symons, of Kew. The bus was licensed to carry 19 passengers. The lights and brakes were in good order. It was a good bus to drive, and did not impose any limitations on Lord on the number of passengers he carried. Lord was not running to time-table.

CAREFUL BUS DRIVER

Replying to Mr J. V. Barry, KC (for Samuel Symons), Midgley said Lord was a most careful driver. He was not prone to speed. It was not possible for a driver to prevent passengers getting on a bus while there was room. There were 34 passengers on the bus that night. They would not prevent the driver from having proper control of the bus. Following the accident he examined the light-

proper control of the bus. Following the accident he examined the lighting on the tender of the engine. There was only one lamp alight. It was at the top, and hard to see. A piece of brown paper was pasted across the glass for the brownout purposes. There was no lamp on the right of the tender. The light on the left of the tender was not functioning.

To Mr J. F. Mulvany (for the Railways) witness said he could not say whether the brown paper was inside or outside the lens.

T. A. Morton, mechanical engineer, of Hume Weir, said he left Wodonga about 6.30pm in a car with his wife and family. Before he reached the level crossing where the smash occurred 2 buses passed travelling toward Wodonga. About that time he heard an engine whistle approximately 6 times. He saw the lights of a third bus approaching the crossing. He estimated the engine was travelling toward the crossing at approximately 15 or 16 mph. The whistle was loud and continuous. He stopped his car about 60 yards from the crossing. Almost immediately he heard the crash. When he saw the engine it was approximately 200 yards from the crossing. The lights on the front were dull and heavy. There was no beam. He did not think the locomotive decreased speed from the time he first saw it until the crash occurred.

To Mr Mulvany he said he would not swear that there were not 3 lights on the front of the tender. It was clear to him that the lights were on part of the engine.

"ENGINE WHISTLE DISTINCT"

E. C. Maloney, soldier, said that he was walking on the roadway from Bandiana to Wodonga and heard the train whistle approximately 3 times. It was particularly dark at the time. The first time he heard the whistle he could not see anything. When the second whistle blew he heard the noise of the approach of the train. He then saw lights on the engine. They were fairly bright. The driver of the bus slowed down to take the crossing. The whistling was quite distinct. He estimated speed of the engine at 18 mph.

To Mr Barry: He would consider it impossible for the driver of the bus to see the lights of the engine with the street lights behind.

To Mr Mulvany: The lights in the

To Mr Mulvany: The lights in the background came, he believed, from the Wodonga railway yards.

To Mr H. T. Frederico (for the relatives of the dead persons), witness said he was not sure of the number of lights he saw on the engine, but he did see lights.

The hearing is not concluded.

BUTTER PRODUCERS MUST REGISTER

Only 2 days remain for butter dealers and producers of farm and dairy butter to register with the Rationing Commission.

Mr J. B. Cumming, acting director, said yesterday that every farmer or other person producing farm or dairy butter to supply free, by sale, or by exchange to anyone not resident in his household must register as a producer of farm or dairy butter before June 30. Registration was not necessary if butter produced was for household use only. If a producer of farm butter obtained butter direct from another producer to resell, he also must register, as must retailers and dealers obtaining farm or dairy butter direct from a producer.