

## Annual medal

The Foundation is pleased to announce an annual award for engineering excellence in Local Government. This award has been named in honor of Cedric Elmer Tuxen, a member of the Local Government Engineers Association of Victoria for many years, the former City Engineer of Brighton and a man who has devoted his life to the community in general and Local Government Engineering in particular. It is planned to make the first award in March, 1965, during Conference Week. It is to be known as the Cedric Tuxen Medal for Local Government Engineering Excellence and will be

## will encourage LGE excellence

available to Fellows and Members only of the Local Government Engineers Association of Victoria. Only those who are financial members and are working in Local Government at the time of selection will be eligible. The award will be for:

- The quality of a paper presented at a Conference.
- An outstanding work completed under the applicant's control.
- The applicant's devotion and contribution to Local Government.

Nominations are:

- To be made by a member of the Association.
- To have the consent of the applicant.
- To state clearly the category under which the award is being sought, having regard to the above.
- To provide a curriculum vitae of the applicant.
- To fully describe in 500 words the reason why the applicant is being nominated.

Nominations are to be lodged with the secretary of the Foundation, Miss Barbara Fraser, 71 Palmerston Crescent, South Melbourne, 3205 (phone 03-699 1700) before December 14, 1964.

# Cedric E. Tuxen — engineer extraordinaire

An assessment by ROBIN NUTTALL



WHERE do I start a short narrative on the long life of this eminent engineer who commenced his career in 1911 and retired in 1963; who was basically responsible for the Uniform Building Regulations; who is revered by all who know him; who has an unparalleled knowledge of municipal engineering



GIPPSLAND settlers contended with "roads" like this. Cedric Tuxen and early CRB engineers faced primitive conditions.

history in this century; who served as a Special Constable during the 1923 police strike — who *truly* fits the description "gentleman and scholar". Perhaps a good starting point is to give thanks to the undoubtedly stolid army medico of 1910 who refused that

dux of the Camberwell Grammar School entry to the newly formed Duntroon Military College because he had flat feet! The day before I interviewed Cedric to obtain some of this material, this sprightly 91-year-old had played 15 holes



A SAMPLE of Korumburra mud, into which this horse sank a foot outside the old Austral Hotel. Challenges like this were commonplace to road-making surveyors and engineers.

of golf and, in his words, "My feet haven't given me any trouble yet."

It that medico had been blessed with more foresight, Municipal Engineering would not have had the benefit of this remarkable man.

Cedric's father emigrated from Denmark in 1878 and, after two years with the Lands Department in New South Wales to improve his English, he joined his brother's Melbourne practice of Surveying and Mining Engineering.

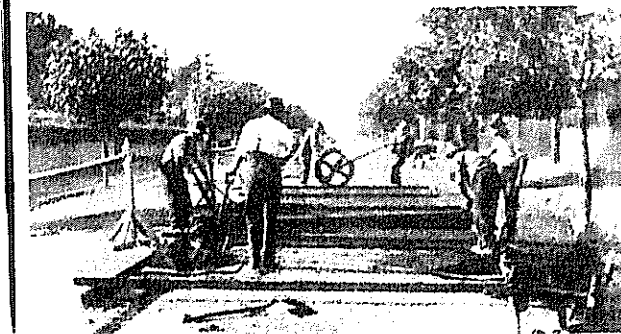
His mother was of Scottish descent and her family lived in the Hamilton area in Victoria's Western District, where Cedric was later to spend a number of his pre-school years. At the age of 10 he was attending the Christ Church West school in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn. Because he was singing in their choir, his school fees were reduced.

When his voice broke in 1905 he was sent to Camberwell Grammar School and completed his education by matriculating as dux of school in 1910.

Being rejected from the first intake of Duntroon he had no choice but to join his father in his uncle's firm and he continued his studies as a Cadet Engineer.

This arrangement did not last long: his father became ill and the management of the firm changed, so Cedric looked for greener pastures.

He was appointed Assistant Engineer to the Shire of



PAVING IN 1931 (right) used coarse and fine layers when placing asphaltic concrete. Below, screeding asphalt, 1932, in New Street, Brighton.

Glenelg in Western Victoria in 1913, a position he held for only six months when he was invited to join the newly formed Country Roads Board.

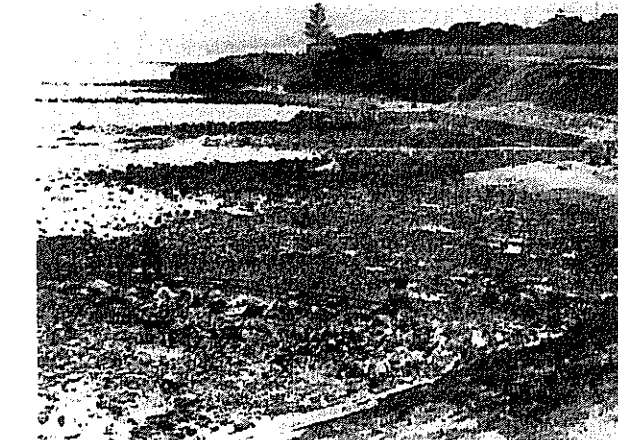
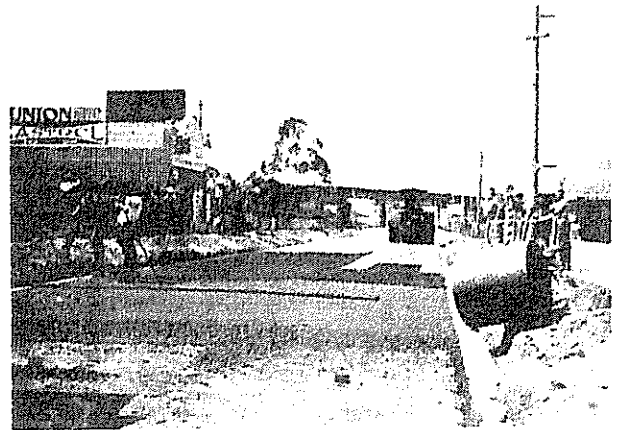
He was Assistant Engineer and Personal Assistant to a Member of the Board from 1913 to 1922, with a break of three years in the 8th Field Company of Engineers in France.

During his period of service with the CRB Cedric spent much of his time locating new roads in the east Gippsland area of Victoria under very difficult and primitive conditions.

With an urge to obtain urban experience, Cedric applied for and obtained the position of Assistant Engineer, City of Brighton, in 1922.

Some 18 months later the City Engineer had a fierce argument with the Council, which resulted in his immediate removal from that position. Overnight Cedric became City Engineer on six months' probation — and held the position for the next 40 years.

An interesting diversion in 1923 was his appointment as a Special Constable in Brighton during the great Police Strike. He was issued with a short length of 25 mm. rubber hose fitted with a wooden handle and a loop of cord and given the chief task of keeping an eye on the Terminus Hotel at Brighton Beach, to see that it was cleared at closing time.



**FORESHORE RECLAMATION** has been a continuing problem. Erosion made great inroads over the years. Work here was a Depression project.

Fortunately the patrons treated him as something of a joke and were kindly disposed towards his efforts.

In 1922 the City of Brighton was an expanding dormitory suburb with much of its eastern area under market gardens. The major problems facing the new City Engineer in 1924 were vast mileages of unmade private streets, a non-existent drainage system, and thousands of beautiful elm trees causing their well-known suckering problems.

Construction was by horse and dray and, as Brighton had its own gas-works, retort tar was the main binding medium. This was broomed onto the road pavement and covered with earth thrown in from the road shoulders.

Tar was used long after bitumen became available and more economic because the ratepayers were major shareholders of the gas-works; however, engineering logic eventually prevailed and bitumen and asphalt became the main mediums.

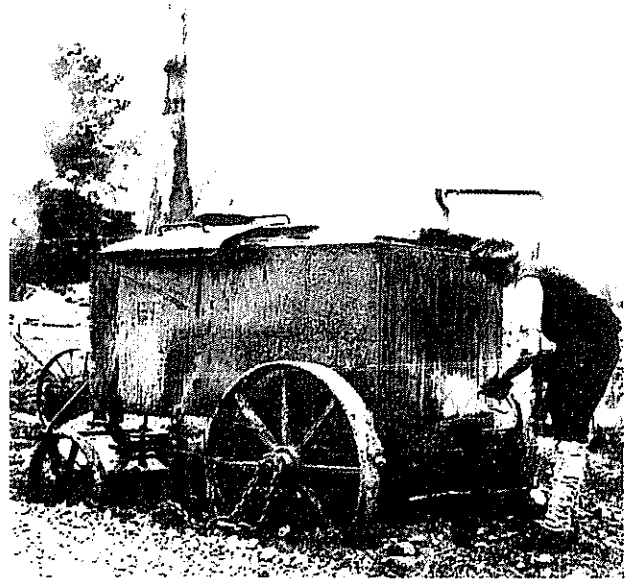
It is interesting to note that the Brighton City drays were fitted with time-clock devices which showed when the drays were standing still and enabled the management to determine if down-time was excessive!

One of Cedric's first major tasks was to install a garbage destructor at Brighton. This was a significant engineering project at that time and this destructor served successfully for the next 30 years.

Many experiences during the following years included significant foreshore problems, the employment of over 400 men on sustenance labor, attempts to implement early Town Planning, and the evolving of Building Controls.

In 1925 Cedric drafted a building by-law which, although not accepted in total by the City of Brighton, became the basis of the Uniform Building Regulations which applied in Victoria from 1946 to 1984.

Cedric's role in Building Control cannot be overstated. Not only did he draft the first major by-law, he served with a multitude of committees during the '30s and '40s which investigated the need for and format of Regulations.



**AS IT WAS** in 1920 — this road worker drew trinidad from a kettle at Myrniong on Western Highway.



**REGULAR FLOODING** presented problems to the City Engineer in Brighton (Vic.). The Council area was on the receiving end of a number of large drains.

He was chairman of the Building Regulations Commission from 1940 to 1943, chairman of the Municipal Building Surveyors Board of Victoria from 1943 to 1975, and chaired many committees of inquiry into such matters as the testing of materials and other items related to Building Regulation.

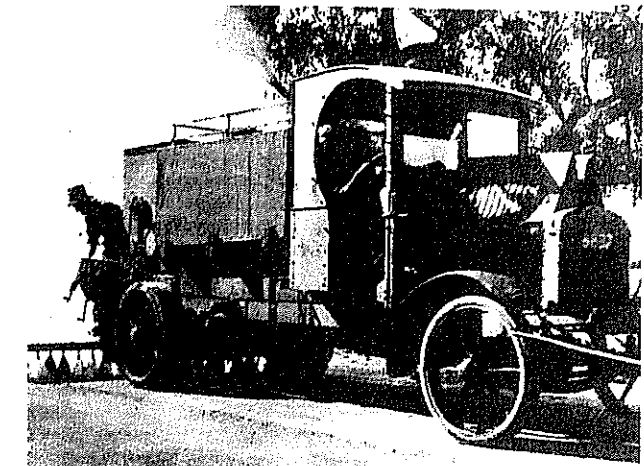
In 1958, at the age of 65, his Council asked Cedric to stay on for another five years; he retired in 1963.

Since then he has travelled extensively, particularly to his father's homeland of Denmark. He has also retained a vital interest in the affairs of Municipal Engineering and retains regular contact with the Local Government Engineers Association of Victoria.

Cedric was the second president of Local Government Engineers Association of Victoria and first chairman of the Foundation for the Technical Advancement of Local Government Engineering in Victoria (a position which he held from 1960 to 1970).

When I asked Cedric what he considered to be the most significant change during his period as a Municipal Engineer, he answered "attitude".

In the '20s, '30s and '40s the Councils relied on their professional officers and trusted them implicitly. Cedric said that, because he had developed the confidence of his



**ARCHIVAL** picture shows early road-making equipment with which the young Cedric Tuxen was familiar. This record of spraying trinidad was taken near Woodend on the Calder Highway in 1930.

Council, he had no desire to leave them and only once applied for another position (that of chairman to the Country Roads Board in 1945). Sadly, at this time his first wife was very ill and Cedric believes this severely affected his interview with Cabinet; he was subsequently offered a position as Member but remained with his Council.

In that period, according to Cedric, the Council would indicate to its staff its wishes on Rating and the Estimates prepared on this basis with funds provided as bulk sums. The Engineer determined the work program and the Council was satisfied.

In the '50s and '60s this attitude was changing, and we are all aware of the very different approach to policy and decision-making now.

This brief dissertation cannot in any way do justice to the remarkable career of this remarkable Engineer. Nor can it in any way indicate to you the warmth and generosity in the character of Cedric Tuxen.

On his retirement Cedric received accolades that are rare indeed and he continues to receive enormous respect and admiration from all who come in contact with him.

As a mark of this respect the Foundation has struck the Cedric Tuxen Medal for Municipal Engineering Excellence in the State of Victoria. The citation relating to this Award appears as the introduction of this article.

**CEDRIC TUXEN** (third from left) retired from Brighton City in March, 1963. Others here (from left): City Engineer-elect John Godfrey, newly appointed Town Clerk Clem Degaris, Mayor Matthews, former MHR and Justice Joske, and then recently retired Town Clerk Claude Furgeson.

