

# 'BARALGA' MEN IN MERCY DASH WITH SICK CREWMAN

The best shipping stories are the ones that don't get into the newspapers. The following vivid account of the adventures of a party from "Baralga" is from Mr. B. O'Sullivan, her Chief Officer, who led a mercy dash to hospital with a sick seaman during a recent voyage.

## HOUSING FOR GOVE

"Baralga" has recently taken more housing units to Melville Bay on the Gove Peninsula for the Commonwealth Department of Supply.

The unwieldy cargo, which in all amounted to 596 measurement tons, consisted of two buildings 34 ft. long x 10 ft. wide x 10 ft. high and two similar buildings 40 ft. long.

They were slung aboard No. 2 hatch as deck cargo, and at Sydney had to be off-loaded on to lighters to allow further hold loading and then slung aboard again.

The same procedure was again employed at Brisbane.

On February 10, crew attendant, J. Caesar of the "Baralga" became ill off the north Queensland coast and it was decided to put him ashore for immediate medical attention.

After radioing for medical aid, Captain Gercken turned the ship back to Portland Roads, some 350 miles north of Cairns.

The ship's radio officer and his opposite number at Cairns had done a sterling job and arrangements to transport the sick man were complete when "Baralga" anchored.

Shortly after, the ship's motor lifeboat manned by Mr. O'Sullivan, apprentice Roger Lenehan and six crew members, reached the jetty.

Here a utility truck driven by Mr. O'Rielly, Maintenance Officer at Iron Range, met them and the sick man escorted by the Chief Officer, Roger Lenehan and seaman Lee Evans were driven to the landing strip, about an hour's drive from the coast.

The Flying Ambulance arrived 30 minutes later and the pilot greeted the party with the information that he had to return to Cairns within 15 minutes or

stay the night.

While the plane was refuelled, Mr. O'Rielly and the "Baralga" men put the sick man on a stretcher into the aircraft, which was airborne in a quarter of an hour. It was then the cause of the pilot's anxiety became apparent — torrential rain fell, indicating fierce turbulence above.

The airlift was organised shortly after 12 noon, and the patient was in hospital in Cairns before 6 p.m.!

For the men of the "Baralga" the tropical downpour then played a dramatic role. At 3.45 p.m. they began the return trip in the utility driven by Mr. O'Rielly, but after only 2½ miles in which two flooded creeks were crossed the motor was swamped and Mr. O'Rielly accompanied by Lee Evans went back on foot for a tractor.

During their absence further efforts to start the utility were successful, and they were able to continue the journey with the tractor for escort.

By this time the party were soaked and mud-spattered and it was noticed that the Mate, famous aboard "Baralga" for his loquacity, was strangely silent. His mind, he said later, was on other matters — taipans and bush creatures with unsociable habits — but he has high praise for the hospitality of the O'Riellys.

The 15-odd mile journey took almost 3 hours but eventually the jetty was reached in the continuing downpour and the party rejoined their ship safely.

(Two days later at Townsville, a sequel was enacted when Lee Evans was landed suffering from acute appendicitis.)



Above: Picture shows the key A-frame in position and at bottom how it supports the bridge's main span.

## Unique Bridge For Tasmania

Communications to and from, and between Australian National Line terminals in northern Tasmania will be greatly simplified and shortened by one of the world's most unusual bridges now being built across the River Tamar.

The Batman Bridge, as it is known, is being constructed about 25 miles downstream from Launceston and will provide the first permanent traffic crossing over the river. It is primarily being built as part of a future link between the north-east and the north and north-western areas of the State.

It will also provide a very much shorter route between the rapidly developing industrial centre at Bell Bay and George Town with the port facilities at Beauty Point and Devonport further along the north-west coast.

The bridge is situated at Whirlpool Reach where the river is approximately 700 feet wide, its narrowest point in the lower reaches.

It is one of the world's first cable stayed truss bridges and is dominated by a 315 feet high steel A-frame tower.

This tower situated on the West Bank, is inclined at 20 deg. from the vertical and leans out over 100 feet across the river. The leaning tower construction has not, as far as is known, been used on a bridge of such size before.

The overall length of the bridge is 1417 feet 6 inches between abutments. The main span

over the river of 675 feet is continuous with a side span of 180 feet to the west abutment and approached by four continuous viaduct spans on the eastern shore. Three of these spans are 135 feet each and the fourth is 157 feet 6 inches.

The weight of the main span over the river is almost entirely carried by the tower. It is supported both vertically and laterally at the tower cross beam and at intervals by three pairs of forestay cables suspended from the tower top.

The tower is in turn restrained in its inclined position by a pair of backstay cables running from the tower top down into the western abutment. Further high tensile steel cables extend through this abutment to chambers formed in the bed rock 70 feet underground and filled with concrete.

A minimum clearance of 94 feet above high water level has been provided for shipping.

The principal members of the trusses and bracing are welded steel box members with field joints secured by high tensile friction grip bolts.

Information and illustrations appearing in this Article are by courtesy of "The Batman Bridge" brochure published by the Dept. of Public Works, Tas. the Constructing Authority.

## New Task For 'Darling River'

The 50,000 ton A.N.L. bulk carrier "Darling River" which since her commissioning about a year ago has served the iron ore trade between Yampi Sound and eastern steel making centres, will shortly enter a new operation.

Under special arrangements with the Hastings Shipping Company she will convey bauxite from Weipa to the Queensland Alumina Ltd. which appears likely to fully occupy her for the next three years. "Darling River" will be replaced on the Yampi run by the "Musgrave Range"