

CORRESPONDENCE

Stranger than Fiction

by R. Vollprecht

Weather Bureau, Perth

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It is not unusual to hear of demands for increased efficiency from various Government Departments. Somewhere in West Australia there is now a firm believer in the efficacy of this procedure.

On the afternoon of the 12th May, 1955, a lady arrived at the Perth Weather Bureau, and approaching a Cadet Meteorologist, complained bitterly about the lack of rain in the Ashburton district, and demanded in no uncertain terms that something should be done about it.

The Cadet, feeling a little unequal to the occasion handed her over to a Meteorologist, who received instructions to send rain to the Ashburton district, and to send it fast.

His disclaiming ability to do this was taken as a sign of inefficiency, and the visitor immediately demanded "to see the Boss".

Unfortunately the Boss was not available. The Meteorologist, whose professional pride was by now a little ruffled, ventured to remark that the Boss would not have been able to send the rain up there either.

"How do you know?", he was asked. That stumped him for a while, but he maintained that even if he couldn't be absolutely sure, he was pretty certain of it.

"Well you're wrong", said the lady. "He can! And he's done it before".

Faced with this information, imparted in a loud and somewhat menacing voice, the weather man decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and raised no further objections. Shortly afterwards the visitor left.

In due course the Boss was informed of the strange events taking place during his absence. Surprised, but rather pleased by this unusual reputation, he discussed the day's charts with the duty forecaster.

That night rain was forecast in the Ashburton district. By 9 a.m. the next morning light rains had fallen, and during the following week they became heavier and more widespread. By the 17th all roads in the Ashburton district were quagmires, and closed indefinitely. Air transport was disrupted due to the closing of most of the airstrips north of Meekatharra, and on the 18th headlines in the "West Australian" reported "Onslow Rains End Years of Drought".

Who is entitled to the bouquets - the Boss or the lady?