TRAIN TO GO ALOFT OR UNDERGROUND

He started with a 2-foot pole. It was a difficult ascent. He sat himself on the ground, put a belt around his waist, then adjusted the strap from the belt round the pole.

Then he heaved himself to the top of the pole. He had done a good job, and would now be allowed to climb a 10-ft. pole.

We were watching one of the 21 future linemen training at the PMG Lineman Training School.

Yard in Lord-st. was filled with 70 poles of different sizes up to 28 feet. Students with belts and ladders were conquering their fear of height and learning to be workmen in the air.

But this is only one of the many phases of the course which covers 18 months before a student is considered qualified to call himself a lineman.

Pass Exams

Before these men even begin training they had to pass educational and health exams. When they enter the school they are thoroughly taught how to cope with the dangerous work and exciting life they are to lead.

Without this training no lineman could handle the difficult modern constructions, without endangering life.

In the days when WA was still on the simple single line construction, linemen had all the training they needed from the older hands on the job. But when the American Automatic Telephone System began, and the city was growing too large for overhead wires, a new type of lineman was needed. He works under the
At the school, many of
the old time linemen re-
lated tales of the exciting
times they had in the
North, camping by them-
selves for weeks at a time,
the only equipment—wire,
the only stores—a gun for
hunting.

Those whom they are
now teaching will only
know half of the life they
led there in the old days.
Then a job was seldom
completed without meet-
ing up with the dead
body of some unfortunate,
who had been following the
line, fighting against thirst
and hunger, looking for
some sign of civilisation,
and when you swam a
river several times a day
to get to some of the
damaged lines.

Cyclone

One of the instructors
of the school used to be
stationed in Onslow. He
was 20 miles out one day
with his horse and cart
when a terrific cyclone
rushed upon them. River's
banks overflowed, roofs of
houses in Onslow were
torn off, cattle and sheep
were drowned.

He managed to climb to
the top of a small hill and
tied his belt round a tree.
He was safe, but he
watched his horse carried
off.

In the morning, after 8
inches had fallen during
that night, he waded back
to his home.

It was under the water,
and all their livestock had
perished. But personal
problems, bad as they were,
had nothing to compare
with the damage done to
the lines.

It took weeks of hard
work and hard camping to
put them up again.

No Wonder

Only known case of
electrocution was to a
horse. The charge went
straight through the man.

Passing under some hang-
ing lines one lineman in
the North accidentally
brushed the wire with his
hand. His horse dropped
from under him. It shook
like a leaf and blood ran
out of its eyes and nose.

And no wonder, a charge
had gone through it.

Only 2 men have been
killed on the job in WA.
Both were before the
school began, and both be-
cause of dry rot affecting
the poles.

This was a good record
to begin with and with
the increase of linemen in
the State the record has
not been spoiled. This is
because the qualifications
are too high to allow line-
men to endanger life
through ignorance.

Every lineman has to
gone through the Training
School, and after that
they can't go wrong.