

QUEBEC CENTRAL RAILWAY

THE
QUEBEC AND BOSTON
LINE

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CHAPTER 1

STIRRINGS IN THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS

The first means of transportation in Canada was by water, so it is not surprising that the first railways built in British North America usually performed a portage function by providing a link between navigable waterways. The first public railway in Canada, the Champlain & St. Lawrence Railroad, was opened in July 1836, and is a classic example of a portage railway. It connected Laprairie (opposite Montreal) on the St. Lawrence with St. John's on the Richelieu River. From there, steamers transported freight and passengers up the Richelieu, through Lake Champlain, into the Hudson River to New York. The only other railroads built in the next decade or so were another short portage line between Montreal and Lachine, Que., eight miles long, to avoid the Lachine Rapids of the St. Lawrence (in 1847); and another that connected Joliette, Que. to the St. Lawrence (in 1849).

At the dawn of the 1850s, Canada was about to embark on its first railroad mania. The original role of railways was but a small cog in a water transportation system, but events soon started to stir in Portland, Me., Montreal, Que., and an area in what is now called the "Eastern Townships of Quebec.

The history of the Eastern Townships developed from the practice under the French regime of bestowing lands in seigniorial tenure, and when this was abandoned by the British authorities in Quebec at the beginning of the 19th century, the then underdeveloped territory lying between the St. Lawrence River on the north, the American border on the south, and the Chaudière and Richelieu Rivers on the east and west respectively, was surveyed and divided into townships of 5,400 to 6,000 acres each and designated as the Eastern Townships, however without any statutory significance.

The Eastern Townships were at this time largely virgin forest. Only the fringes, or certain areas along the south shore of the St. Lawrence, which had been granted in seigneuries, were settled. Ten miles back the land was a virtual wilderness. A few hardy pioneers had straggled in, but colonization lagged because of the slow and difficult means of transport, the only reasonably accessible regions being along, or in the vicinity of, the main waterways such as the Chaudière, St. Francois, Richelieu and St. Lawrence Rivers, and which were available for water transportation during the summer months. Roads were opened up as the settlers came in, but progress was exceedingly slow. A better means of transport being the foremost need, the news of the coming of the railway was naturally hailed with great rejoicing, and by many with a distinct sense of liberation.

The first organized development in the Eastern Townships was through the British American Land Company formed in England in 1831 by one John Galt and his London associates, for the purpose of trading in the lands of the district. The connection leading to the formation of this company was that Galt had, from 1824, been actively associated with the management of a similar land company in Ontario; by the name of the Canada Company, which had purchased from the Six Nations Indians an un-surveyed and largely unexplored area of over a million acres in the western part of the Province, bordering on Lake Huron, and known as the Huron Tract.

The Canadian headquarters of the British American Land Company was established in Sherbrooke, and in 1835 John Galt's son, Alexander T. Galt, later Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, came out to Canada in the service of the Land Company, established residence in Sherbrooke, and started to make a name for himself in the management of that company.

Civic debate about the prospects of linking Montreal and Portland, Me., the closest ice-free Atlantic port in the early 1840s, began to swell. A decisive influence was the eloquence of a young Portland, Me., lawyer, John A. Poor. On a "stump" tour of Canada, he mesmerized the people of Sherbrooke, Que., including Alexander Galt. From thereon in, Galt was at his side, and while Poor found that many Montreal businessmen were at first not interested in railroads, for in the colonies that were to become Canada, canals were still in vogue, Galt ensured that Poor met Montrealers of influence. [2] Poor asserted that Montreal business would be free of the restriction of trade imposed by the ice-clogged St. Lawrence River for five months a year. While Montrealers at first procrastinated about the prospects of a railway to the Atlantic Ocean, gradually Poor won converts. John Poor wanted Portland to be Canada's Atlantic port, and his enthusiasm for the project led to the forming of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad in the United States, and the St. Lawrence & Atlantic in Canada in 1845 [2]

From the outset, Alexander Galt's fortunes had naturally been closely linked with those of the Eastern Townships, to which he devoted his untiring energy and every resource at his command, and it was with the object of opening up the district (and in turn to advance the sale of lands which had been purchased from the Crown by the Land Company), that he had become interested in railway development in general, and the promotion and construction of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad in particular, of which he was to become president. [1]

Meanwhile, railway promoters in Boston, Mass. had also started to court Montreal, and were anxious that a railway be built linking Montreal to Boston (largely for the benefit of the latter). With the attention that Portland and Boston financiers were paying Montreal, the Montrealers started to become eager railroad promoters. The dispute between Boston and Portland as the port of choice could only be settled by a race between Portland - Montreal and Boston-Montreal using sleighs. Part of the mail from England, destined for Montreal, was taken off a transatlantic steamer at Portland and was loaded on a sleigh for transport by land to Montreal. When the same steamer reached Boston, the remainder of the Canadian mail was placed on another sleigh. In the depths of the winter, these two sleighs sped northwards through the mountains of New Hampshire, Vermont and the Eastern Townships. The Portland sleigh reached Montreal 12 hours ahead of the one from Boston, and the dispute was settled. [2]

Alexander Galt supported Poor's route rather than the 'Boston route, as the latter would be too far west of Sherbrooke to benefit his territory. Galt and other Montreal businessmen had a charter to build the St. Lawrence & Atlantic from Montreal into the Eastern Townships through the towns of Richmond and Sherbrooke, and then to effect a connection with the American A&St.L. railroad at the international boundary.

Early explorations indicated that there were three feasible routes from the east coast to approach the international boundary. Of the three, the favoured one was along the upper Connecticut River, then by the Vermont Nulhegan and Clyde river valleys to Island Pond, Vt., Derby Line, Vt., and Stanstead, Que., and then along the shore of Lake Massawippi to Sherbrooke. (Subsequently, the route that was adopted from Island Pond was via Norton Mills, Vt., and Coaticook, Que.)

Although civil engineer Casimir Gzowski [3] (later Sir Casimir) of Gzowski & Company, made a thorough survey of the region south of Sherbrooke and preferred the line through Coaticook, the people of Stanstead were angry at this decision, and accused Galt (with some justification, no doubt) of favouring this route because the British American Land Company, with which he was still connected, controlled large tracts of land in this area. [4]

Construction of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic started in 1846, the line reached Sherbrooke in September 1852, and finally linked up with the American Atlantic & St. Lawrence at Island Pond, Vermont in July 1853.

Both these railway were built to the "broad", also referred to in Canada as the "Provincial", gauge of 5'6". When the St.L.&A and the A&St.L subsequently formed the eastern nucleus of the new Grand Trunk Railway, this gauge became the standard width for railways in Canada for the next two decades. Incidentally, the adoption of the "Provincial" gauge in Canada has its roots in the politics of these two founding railways: the Portland, Me. commercial interests in competition of those of Boston, and also the probable gauge of the first two locomotives delivered to the A&St.L being likely major and minor factors in the "broad" gauge's adoption by the then unsuspecting Province of Canada. [5]

Incidentally, the Grand Trunk also absorbed a railway organized in Quebec City, called the Quebec & Richmond Railway. That railway, opened in November 1854, left Pointe Levis on the south shore of the St. Lawrence opposite the ancient capital of Quebec City and ran through Victoriaville to Richmond, Que., for the purpose of connecting with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, and thence to Portland, Me. A GTR ferry across the St. Lawrence River connected Quebec City with the new railhead. This line will prove to be of relevance to the story of the Quebec Central Railway. (Subsequently from a point on this line at Chaudiere Junction [Charny], the GTR also reached down the St. Lawrence River to Riviere-du-Loup in 1860.)

In a few short years, the Grand Trunk would have broad gauge lines from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and Portland on the Atlantic stretching to the new west frontier at Point Edward (Sarnia), Ont. and the American mid-west. The Bostonians had lost the first round but hadn't called it quits. A railway had linked Boston to the Connecticut River at White River Junction, Vt., where connection was made with the Vermont Central.

The people of Stanstead were disappointed that a railway had not been built to their small border community; and so were the people of the upper Connecticut River valley. Railways were being built all along the Connecticut River. The genesis of the next railway to enter Sherbrooke started at the connection of the Vermont Central and the Northern Railroad of New Hampshire at White River Junction, Vt. Although chartered on November 10, 1838, the Connecticut & Passumpsic Rivers Railroad (C&PRRR) did not start construction until the mid-1840s. Its route extended up the Connecticut River and its tributary, the Passumpsic, to a point on the international boundary, where a connection would be made with the proposed Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly Railway (SS&C). In conjunction with the Champlain & St. Lawrence, it would form an independent through-route to Montreal.

The C&PR RR, or simply "the Passumpsic", as it was known during its life, was built in sections as money became available. The first stage was opened to Bradford, Vt. on October 11, 1848, and weeks later it reached Wells River on November 6, 1848. The line was extended to Barnet on November 4, 1850, but the section that linked Lyndonville and Barton was not opened until November 1, 1857. [6] Construction costs were much higher than planned, but a more embarrassing problem plagued the line during the 1850s. The "Passumpsic", after reaching St. Johnsbury, Vermont, decided to proceed with the northern extension to the border only when money was available. Various towns and individuals on both sides of the border had pledged to subscribe stock in the railway. A contract for the northward extension was entered into in the full belief that sufficient means had been provided. The failure of the stock subscribers to meet the calls was an unexpected embarrassment, and placed the company at the mercy of the contractor with the road incomplete to Barton, and no apparent means of extrication from this dilemma."

The future of the "Passumpsic" was settled in legal battles [7-8] fought between the railway and the stock subscribers between 1860 and 1862, until the investors started to honour their commitments. '

During the early years of the American Civil War, the railway found that money and iron rails were both in short supply. the *Stanstead Journal* reported that the line to Newport and Stanstead could not be completed until money came forward, and further that a group of Boston capitalists were seeking a charter for a railway line from St. Johnsbury to what was now the Grand Trunk Railway at Island Pond. The Passumpsic charter was soon to expire, and if the other charter were granted, the northern extension from Boston would never be built. Boston wanted to be the terminus of the Grand Trunk, and the charter would be favourably backed. [8]

At a meeting held at the Stanstead Academy on March 22, 1862, Passumpsic president Keyes told the assembly the road needed \$60,000 to complete the line to the international boundary. Orleans County in Vermont was putting up \$65,000. The money was needed for grading. [9]

Trains descended into Newport, Vt., at the head of Lake Memphrernagog on October 5, 1863. The international boundary at North Derby was only a few miles north, but the Passumpsic was faced with a new problem: it had planned its Northern Extension to link with the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly Railway at the border, even though this railway was still 45 miles away at Waterloo, Que.

The Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly was incorporated in 1853 with the intention of building a railway from the Champlain & St. Lawrence Railroad at St. John's, Que., through Farnham, Granby, Waterloo, Magog to the Connecticut & Passumpsic Rivers Railroad at Stanstead. Construction began in 1858 and work was completed to Farnham in 1859, and to Granby and Waterloo in August 1861. "Meanwhile the Vermont Central Railroad and the C&PRRR had become bitter rivals for the traffic of northern Vermont, and since the Vermont Central had already established an international rail route to Montreal via Rouses Point, it was determined to prevent the opening of a rival route between New England and Montreal via Newport, Vt. and Waterloo, Que. In the autumn of 1862, the Vermont Central Railroad acquired a controlling interest in the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly, and put a stop to all further construction work. [10-11]

The Passumpsic, in its early years, had also been under the impression that the Grand Trunk planned to build a branch line from Waterville, Que.; just south of Sherbrooke, to a connection with the Passumpsic at a point called Benson Place [12], one-and-a-half miles northwest of Stanstead. However, in 1863 the Grand Trunk was in severe financial straits, and unable to meet up with the Passumpsic.

The failure of both the SS&C and the Grand Trunk to construct lines to connect with the Passumpsic at Stanstead made the Passumpsic look to Canadians to build a new line. A product of co-operation between Passumpsic president Keyes and the Stanstead Member of Parliament Albert Knight was chartered on June 9, 1862 - the Massawippi Valley Railway Company was allowed to build from a point on the Grand Trunk between Lennoxville and Compton to "Place Benson" (Stanstead) in the township of Stanstead or some point of connection on the provincial boundary with the Connecticut & Passumpsic Rivers Railroad. [13]

The *Waterloo Advertiser* reported that shortly after incorporation, the Massawippi Valley Railway conducted a preliminary survey under J. M. Clark, previously assistant engineer of the SS&C. The newspaper reported that opposition to the charter by the Shefford Railway was withdrawn in consideration of the fact that the standard rather than the broad gauge was to be employed, and that arrangements would allow the Shefford running rights when it was in a position to connect with the new line. [14]

A meeting in support of the new railway was held in Stanstead on June 4, 1863, and one of even greater importance was held at Sherbrooke in the rooms of the Board of Trade on July 23, 1863. [15] The merchants and financiers of Sherbrooke were addressed by the Hon. Alexander T. Galt on the importance of the Massawippi Valley Railway, not only to the region, but to Canada. He explained that the new line would shorten the route to Boston. Galt explained that it was important to draw the western Great Lakes trade down the St. Lawrence to Montreal, then overland to Boston, rather than allow the trade to go via the Erie Canal and the Hudson River to Albany, and hence to New York. If Boston would flourish, then so would Montreal. If Montreal became a major terminal, Galt reasoned, the costs of all goods would be reduced. Walter Shanley, C.E. and Albert Knight, M.P. also addressed the meeting on the importance of the undertaking. Another meeting was held on June 28 at West Hatley Village for the purpose of organizing the company. After Galt had addressed the meeting in his customary fashion, the following officers were appointed:

The Hon. A. T. Galt, president;
Col. Benjamin Pomeroy, vice-president;
and directors Josiah Stickney, J. R. Brigham, Carlos Pierce, all of Boston, Mass.;
Emmons Raymond of Vermont, A. Knight, M.P. and C.C. Colby of Stanstead, Que.;
and Charles Brooks of Lennoxville, Que.

The Hon. Alexander Galt [18] attended further meetings with Boston capitalists at the Memphremagog Hotel at Newport in October of that year. After the Americans had toured a part of the proposed route by carriage, it was expressed that the local residents did not want to operate the line, they would only build it. Local residents gave the whole railway scheme the cold shoulder.

The Passumpsic seemed to settle in at Newport, almost resigned that a northern connection would not be built. The charter of the Massawippi Valley was several years old and construction had not started. The Passumpsic claimed there was a shortage of rails that forestalled the completion of the line to the border at Stanstead. The railway started drawing trade from the Canadian side of the border via a number of steamboats, tugs and barges that reached up as far as Magog.

The close of the American Civil War provided the impetus for a second start to the Massawippi Valley. the charter of the railway was revived in 1866, and M.P. Albert Knight had also been granted a charter for a line called the Waterloo, Magog & Stanstead Railway. [18].

The new interest in the Massawippi Valley made the Passumpsic start work to complete the line to the international border in the fall of 1866. The Connecticut & Passumpsic Rivers Railroad opened the portion from Newport to a point on the international boundary called at that time "Walker's Place" (later Linesboro, Que., North Derby, Vermont). On May 2, 1867 a large hotel was completed at the site by one Jerry Drew, who also purchased the stage lines running from the new railhead to the GTR at Compton and Coaticook. The completion of the Passumpsic was the needed impetus that residents north of the border needed to provide the much-needed northern link.

In each of its Weekly editions during April and May 1867, the *Stanstead Journal* cited the needs, advantages and benefits of railways in general and the Massawippi Valley in particular. (The paper's editor, Lucius (??) Robinson, was later rewarded for his support by having a Passumpsic locomotive named after him.)

About a quarter-mile further on, the process was again necessary until the railway was once again able to use the lower hillside terraces along the lake shore. South of the location that was to become Woodland Bay there was a final earthwork - Putney Cut - through which track was laid to avoid circumnavigating the rocky point. From Woodland Bay to the outlet of the lake at North Hatley, the railway ran along the lake shore or up to a few hundred yards inland. Leaving North Hatley, the railway crossed the Massawippi River on a pile trestle to the west bank, on which side of the river it remained for the remainder of the distance to Lennoxville. At Capelton and-Eutis, copper mines were later to provide traffic for the railway. [25]

At Lennoxville, the new railway came to an interchange with the Grand Trunk. For the first year of operation, all passenger and freight had to be transferred because of the difference in gauges. July 1, 1870 saw the formal opening of the Massawippi Valley Railway. To mark the occasion, a special directors' train, pulled by a Passumpsic locomotive, the Emmons Raymond, left the Memphremagog Hotel and station at Newport and ran to Lennoxville. There it was met by Sir Alexander Tilloch Gait and a party of gentlemen representing the towns along the new railway. The special train then returned, carrying both the American and the Canadian dignitaries south to Newport for further celebrations. The lease was now in effect between the Passumpsic and the Massawippi Valley. The Passumpsic would provide rolling stock for the next two decades." Work on the branch line to Stanstead was completed in the late summer of 1870. Regular trains started running on the Stanstead branch on October 7, 1870. Trains connected with all main line trains north- and southbound. The station was known as Stanstead and Derby Line (??) Station. The Passumpsic extended the railway into Sherbrooke in the next year over the tracks of the Grand Tmnk. Lennoxville and Sherbrooke were now railway junctions.

Such was the extent of railway development prior to 1870 in the Province of Quebec.

END NOTES

Chapter 1

1. *History of the Quebec Central Railway Company* - Fonds, Chambre de Commerce de la Ville de Sherbrooke.
- (2). G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways, Sixty Years of Trial and Error*, Vol I, Clarke, Irwin & Co., Toronto, Ont. 1960, p.53.
2. Robert F. Leggett, *Railroads of Canada*, p. 37
3. Robert R. Brown, *Road to the Sea*,
- 4.W. E. Greeing, *The Construction of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic*, Annals of Richmond County and Vicinity. Vol. 2; Richmond County Historical Society 1968.
5. Omer Lavallée, *Home of the 8400s*, Upper Canada Railway Society, January 1968.

In the summer of 1867, the four British colonies Canada West (Ontario), Canada East (Quebec), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia became Canada; and the Massawippi Valley, after two false starts, was ready to provide a link between the Grand Trunk at Lennoxville, Que., and the Connecticut & Passumpsic Rivers Railroad at Newport, Vt. New plans included a branch line from the proposed main line to Rock Island] Stanstead, Que. Also, there were still plans to connect with the SS&C near Hatley, Que.

The *Stanstead Journal*, in its May 2, 1867 edition, recalled somewhat drily that when the Massawippi Valley was first chartered in 1862, president Keyes of the Passumpsic and the Hon. A.T. Galt had both been given the cold shoulder by the local citizenry, and that in 1865 the Passumpsic had offered to build the line, provided that \$200,000 were raised. The railway would rent (when, in 1865??) the line, provide rolling stock and pay 6 per cent on the bonds. [19]

The first indication of new support for the Massawippi Valley project came in May 1867, when the mayor of the Town of Hatley called a meeting to drum up support. In June 1867, the Town of Lennoxville and the County of Ascot pledged financial support for the line. (The railway would later be discovered to have pledged to make Lennoxville its northern terminus in return for financial support, but by year-end the required money had been raised and the line was assured.

The spring of 1868 saw formal plans and contracts drawn up for the construction of the new line as well as the proposed lease submitted to the Passumpsic at its annual meeting in August 1868. In early November 1868, contracts were signed with three contractors to build the Massawippi Valley in three segments: the section from Lennoxville to Ayer's Flats by Mr. McGovern, Ayer's Flats to Smith's Mills (Tomifobia) by Ryan and Brooks, and Smith's Mills to the international border by Morrill and Williams. [22] Several weeks later it was reported that work had started at Smith's Mills.

Work progressed during the summer months in each direction, both from Lennoxville, Que. and North Derby, Vt. The Sherbrooke Gazette reported in September 1869 that a Passumpsic standard gauge engine was delivered by the broad gauge Grand Trunk on a flacar to Lennoxville for use on construction trains on the northern section. [23]

Major flooding occurred in the first week of October 1869, which delayed construction work. Two major wash-outs occurred between North Derby and Newport, and south of Newport four Passumpsic bridges were swept away. However, by the end of the year only the section along Massawippi Lake had not been graded. [24] Rails had been laid on the main line in May, with the Stanstead branch having to wait for shipments of iron rails from England.

From the Passumpsic at North Derby, the railway descended into the valley of the Tomifobia River. At Smith's Mills the river valley narrowed into a gorge for a mile or so, obliging the railway to follow a curving alignment along the west side of the valley. This resulted in a short, curving grade of something more than 1.5 per cent. Normally this would not have been an obstacle but with the reverse curve, the memory of the construction engineers who located this part of the line would remain roundly cursed in the vocabularies of the firemen on the southbound trains. There was poor visibility around one of these curves and on a dark rainy night 15 years later, this situation would cost the lives of the engineer and fireman on train Number 18, the night express from Sherbrooke to Boston.

Reaching the lower levels of the river valley, the line entered upon a succession of crossings of the Tomifobia River, which wound across and through the valley in sprawling ox-bows. Approaching the outskirts of the village of Ayers Cliff, the railway curved west away from the river to the station, about three miles from Massawippi Lake. On a slightly descending grade, the railway then crossed the Tomifobia River for the last time, and was soon running along the eastern shore of Lake Massawippi, past the modest station of the same name.

The four-mile stretch of the line from Massawippi to Putney Cut was and is one of the most scenic portions of the Massawippi Valley Railway. Here the substratum of hard rock erupts into 70 ft-high cliffs, arbitrarily christened "Rock Donald" by local writers. There was no subaqueous ledge for the contractors to build the line upon, so they were obliged to carve a ledge for several hundred feet along the base of the cliff.

CHAPTER 2

THE SHERBROOKE, EASTERN TOWNSHIPS & KENNEBEC RAILWAY

The beginnings of a network of local railways in the Province of Quebec surfaced in the years following the American Civil War, and the Confederation of Canada in 1867.

Concern was developing about the almost daily accounts of trainloads of Canadians emigrating to the United States. Land suitable for the traditional agricultural Quebec society existed in a strip along the St. Lawrence, and in 1868 the members of the Quebec legislature decided that they were going to have to model the American system of development by heavy investment in colonization railroads. The majority of the rail lines in the province were the iron way of the Grand Trunk Railway, but the GTR seemed more interested in getting from the Atlantic seaboard to the American midwest, and it was almost incidental that its tracks ran through Canada at all.

In 1868 there came to Quebec a railway promoter and civil engineer, one Jerome B. Hulburt from Boonville, N.Y. Like many railway promoters of the day, he was selling a railway system that was cheap to construct — one using wooden rails. During the 1870s every region developed its own local subsidiary feeder railways — in Ontario there were 3'6" light gauge railways, in Maine it was the 2' gauge, and in New Brunswick, a 3' gauge was popular. Admittedly all these operated with iron rails, but they were "narrow gauge" to save costs and to negotiate sharp curves, and often hilly or even mountainous country. They enjoyed popularity because they promised economical construction ~ and after all, it seemed that every hamlet wanted to be connected by means of some kind of track to the emerging railway network.

There came to Quebec in 1868 a railway promoter and civil engineer Jerome B. Hulbert from Boonville, New York. Like many railway promoters of the day, he was selling a railway system that was cheap to construct — a wooden-railed system. During the 1870s every region developed its own local subsidiary feeder railways — in Ontario there were 3'6" light gauge railways, in Maine it was the 2' gauge, and in New Brunswick, a 3' gauge was popular, admittedly all with iron rails, but "narrow gauge" to save costs and to negotiate sharp curves, and often hilly or even mountainous country. And every hamlet, it seemed, wanted a track of some kind.

The wooden railway of the Hulburt design was very strongly built, being formed of maple scantling 6 by 4 inch, wedged 4 inches deep into heavy ties about 3 feet apart. The top of the rail, 4 inches in width, and well sprinkled with pitch, or with fine sand from the locomotive box, soon formed a hard and gritty surface which did not wear, and greatly facilitated traction. The rims of the car wheels were all 5 inches in width. [1] Mr. Hulburt had built a 23-1/2 mile wooden railway in 1868, called the Clifton Railroad. It ran from the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railway at DeKalb County to the Clifton iron mines. Its unique motive power consisted of two "dummy" engines and one conventional locomotive. (A "dummy" engine was a small industrial-type locomotive with its exterior disguised as a car.) Forty ore cars rounded out the rollingstock. It must have appealed to developers where it could open up sections of country, where the expense of iron rails, even of a narrow-gauge road, was quite out-of-the-question. [2]

Another wooden railroad, incidentally, was built from neighbouring Carthage, N.Y., to Russell, N.Y., where it connected with the Clifton Railroad. This was the Black River & St. Lawrence Railroad. [3]

Mr. Hulburt was devout in his belief in the wooden railway concept, and news of this cheap and simple system soon spread. What Mr. Hulburt did not mention was that his system had shortcomings that were easy to recognize by anyone without an immediate fervour for having some kind of railway in their burgh, but in the 1870s that would have been a rarity.

Every town wanted to be linked somehow to the railway network that was rapidly emerging to the forefront as the state-of-the-art form of public transportation. Hulbert was devout in his belief in the wooden railway concept, and news of this cheap and simple system soon spread. What Mr. Hulbert did not mention was that his system had shortcomings that were simple to recognize by anyone without an immediate interest in having some kind of railway in their burgh, but in the 1870s that would have been a rare individual.

The Quebec provincial legislature bowed to public clamour, and introduced a bill during the 1868-69 session entitled "An Act for the Encouragement of Certain Colonization Railways". The intent of the bill was to encourage the construction of wooden railways. By means of this bill, the provincial government guaranteed the interest on the bonds at the rate of 3 per cent for 20 years upon the cost per mile not exceeding \$ 15 ,000. [4]

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These would be small feeder lines - designed to exploit the hinterland of the province, and to open up areas that at the time were virgin timberland, so that they might become productive for agriculture. Trains were to creep over these lines at little more than walking pace, hauling lumber and mineral products.

On April 15, 1869, the Quebec & Gosford, the Montreal Northern Colonization, the Richelieu, Drummond & Arthabaska, the Missisquoi & Black Rivers, the Lévis & Kennebec Railroads, and the Sherbrooke, Eastern Townships & Kennebec Railway, all wooden rail projects, were incorporated on that same day.

The provincial treasurer at the time was the Hon. Joseph Gibb Robertson, MPP, the Conservative member for Sherbrooke. A native of Stuartfield, Aberdeen, Scotland, he came to Canada with his father in 1832 at the age of 12. Mr. Robertson served as the mayor of Sherbrooke for 18 years. He was elected to the provincial assembly in 1867, and was appointed provincial treasurer in 1869. In 1870 he married Mary J. Woodward, a union that was to prove propitious for another office, that of his presidency of one of the proposed wooden railways: the Sherbrooke, Eastern Townships & Kennebec.

This railway was chartered to run north from Sherbrooke for 100 miles to a connection with another wooden railway — the Lévis & Kennebec, which was proposed to run from Lévis-Quebec City through the Chaudiere Valley to connect with the Somerset Railway in Maine.

At the time the SET&K was being incorporated, other regional entrepreneurs were promoting an iron railway eastward across Maine to the ice-free port of Saint John, N.B. Originally the St. Francis & Mégantic International Railway, this challenger was renamed the International Railway Company in 1877. Both the SET&K and the International planned to use the St. Francis River valley. The SET&K would follow the river northward past Lake Aylmer, while the International planned to build up the St. Francis to the Eaton River, near the present town of East Angus, and then turn eastward to Cookshire. The International felt that because it was to be an iron road, it should have been allowed the right-of-way along the St. Francis River, and to obtain the provincial subsidies as, well. It proposed that the SET&K branch off the International near East Angus and continue its route north. The fight between the two railways developed to the point that the town of Sherbrooke split into two camps, one favouring the wooden SET&K, and the other the iron International. The latter and the town of Bury attempted to block the SET&K's incorporation in the Quebec legislature. [7] President Robertson and the SET&K faction stumped the countryside for general and financial support in the various communities along the proposed route.

In these early years, the SET&K's chief objective was to reach Lake Aylmer, where a number of sawmills were to be built. The lime quarries in Dudswell Township (in which the promoters had an interest), were another incentive. For these reasons the SET&K became known in the local press as both the Wooden Railway and the Weedon Railway (Weedon being its immediate destination).

Tenders for construction of the line were called for by September 25, 1869. [8] Work began in the summer of 1870 when over 100 men were employed grading the new railway. The first ten miles were completed and ready for rails by October 1870. Sufficient maple rails had been prepared and stocked all along the right-of-way. Yet the battle between the "Weedon" and the International railways continued in the local press. The proponents of the International appealed for a "union of the Wooden and iron railway before another dollar is pledged [9], and that the wooden railway should feed traffic to the iron road in Westbury Township.

One letter to the editor of the *Sherbrooke Gazette* attacked the SET&K, telling potential investors to be wary of warped rails and poorly graded lines, and going so far as to describe the SET&K as a "dump without culverts" [10] (a reference to what the SET&K espoused as "blind" culverts, a practice of "loose rock thrown together in sufficient quantity to admit the free passage of water.") [11].

In another time and place, certainly there might have been a response to this sort of allegation, but in 1870 in the scramble for a railway, such dissent fell on deaf ears.

SET&K director the Reverend T.S. Chapman "took pleasure in assuring the citizens of the Eastern Townships that the grading was nearly complete, and that any fears of failure were ill-founded. A uniform "boilerplate" press release was circulated to every newspaper in the province as follows:

"The directors of the Sherbrooke, Eastern Townships & Kennebec Ry. propose laying the track on their line at once and procuring an engine and rolling stock. A further portion of five miles is nearly located and tenders will be asked for grading in a short time. This looks like business and probably during the next season the road will be completed and in running order to Weedon." [13]

This announcement gave the impression that the wooden railway was close to completion, when the truth was quite the opposite. Even though the International had not yet begun construction, the Reverend Chapman and other SET&K directors still attacked the International on the scope of its line. Citing the present carrying trade of the west as everyone knows scarcely keeps the breath of life in the Grand Trunk, how then can capitalists see their way to commercial success in building another railroad to the Atlantic. [14]

For the time being, the wooden railway adherents had won the battle. The SET&K would remain in the St. Francis River valley, and the International was forced to climb the hills to reach Cookshire and Mégantic, the route that the Canadian Pacific Railway, who eventually acquired the International property, was forced to endure for another century.

While all this was going on, and Mr. Hulburt was still selling his wooden railway concept to the people of Quebec, the precursor Clifton (wooden) railway was abandoned in 1869. At most, it had only seen two years of service, but in the desperate scramble by promoters and local populaces to obtain new railways and subsidies to go with them, few noticed the failure of the Clifton Railroad. Even the Quebec Mercury, in reporting its demise in December 1870, said

"the Clifton Wooden road has, we understand, been abandoned for the last two years and We hope the Gosford [Quebec & Gosford Railway] will inaugurate a new era in the use of wooden roads for colonization purposes". [15]

By the fall of 1870, the Quebec & Gosford had been built several miles north from Quebec City to St Raymond, and had been opened for service during the summer of that year. In April 1871, Mr. Hulburt leased [16] not only the Gosford, but was building and equipping most of the other wooden railroads. Only a few days after leasing the Gosford, Hulburt went on to start construction between Sorel and Richmond on the Richelieu, Drummondville & Arthabaska Railroad." He had already obtained the contract to build the Lévis & Kennebec in January 1871. [18]

In January 1872, the directors of the SET&K determined that their contractor was unsatisfactory, in that work had not progressed during the summer of 1871. The directors had apparently lost confidence in the wooden railway concept because the Gosford railway was unable to operate during the winter season (whereas the iron-railed narrow-gauge Ontario colonization railways were operating year-round). Moreover the word was out that neither the Richelieu, Drummondville & Arthabaska nor the private Huntington Mining Railroad were considered successes. Despite the failure of the Clifton railway, the apparent success of the Ontario iron-railed colonization railways, and the adverse rumours about the other two wooden-railed projects, there must have been confidence in Mr. Hulburt as a contractor, for the SET&K now turned to him to finance, construct and equip their line to Weedon.

Effective February 1, 1872, the SET&K directors awarded him the contract for "building and running the

wooden railway from Sherbrooke to Weedon with iron *[author's italics]* rails". [9] In commenting on Mr. Hulburt's acquisition of the SET&K contract, the *Quebec Mercury* again prophesied somewhat optimistically "with the great public works now being constructed by this gentleman he will, during the coming season, give employment to at least over ten thousand men" [20]

Mr. Hulburt, the champion of the wooden concept, could surely be forgiven for having assumed that his new contract continued to stipulate for wooden rails, but when he evidently read it a little more closely, only a few days later he told a reporter for the newspaper *Le Pionnier* that he intended to build the line using wooden rails and not iron rails as per the contract. [21] The other fine print was that Mr. Hulburt would "build the 31 miles from Sherbrooke to Weedon on receiving as a bonus the debentures of the Sherbrooke, Weedon and Dudswell counties and the Quebec government subsidy; accepting the work already done at cost, and when was finished would belong to him". [22]

While Mr. Hulburt did make a start on the work during the summer of 1872, again no rails were laid, either wooden or iron. In February 1873, Mr. Hulburt reported to the directors that he was in New York obtaining rails. [23] Three months later Mr. Hulburt was still in New York, assuring the directors everything was fine. [24] At the same time press reports were beginning to swirl about, telling of judgments [25] against the promoter, and there was additional cause for concern in the spring of 1873 as rumours became persistent that the Gosford railway was about to fail. The directors could no longer be appeased. They were resolved to look elsewhere to get the SET&K completed, and this time their search ended right on their own doorstep. When the 1873 annual meeting was convened on July 7, they expressed their unhappiness at the lack of progress and awarded the same contract to two young men from Sherbrooke, J. R. Woodward and E. C. Bowen, working under the company name of Woodward & Bowen.

James Robertson Woodward had just celebrated his 27th birthday only days before being awarded the contract. His father Albert Woodward was the district coroner, and his brother-in-law was none other than the provincial treasurer and president of the road, J. G. Robertson. [26] Woodward's partner Edward Charles Bowen, was the son of the sheriff and first mayor of Sherbrooke. [27] He was also a distant relative of the SET&K vice-president and currently mayor of Sherbrooke R. D. Morkill. [28]

Woodward & Bowen immediately purchased 20 miles' worth of iron rails and planned to start major work in 1874. The grading to Ascot was finished in the fall of 1873. Work had started a number of years earlier on the St. Francis River bridge, but it had to be completed before the railway could leave Sherbrooke.

The intention of the firm was to sell all the wooden rails on the property to the Gosford railway, but before this could be arranged, that line was bankrupt." So instead they were used to build proper culverts along the line.

These two young men had the confidence of many people in the Eastern Townships for immediately after their appointment various towns and counties met with officials of the SET&K to attempt to lure the railway into passing through their bailiwicks.

After four years of false starts, this railway blossomed forth in the summer of 1874. Two engines were delivered from the Mason Locomotive Works of Taunton, Mass. Rails were being shipped from England. It all came together on July 7, 1874, when a celebration was held at Sherbrooke to mark the driving of the first spike in the Grand Trunk Railway yards. The *Montreal Gazette* gives the most detailed account of this event:

At 3:30 p.m. the interesting ceremony of driving the first spike of this road attracted a large crowd to the Grand Trunk station yard where the engine 'J. G. Robertson' gaily decorated stood ready to steam up to Lennoxville on a test trip." [30]

President Robertson made speeches about how the line was to reach Dudswell that year, and Weedon the following year. Shortly after, he ventured to England in his dual role of railway president and provincial

treasurer, to raise money for all the railways in Quebec, and indeed he returned with a promise of four million dollars in aid. [31] The reasons, incidentally, that money for this railway and so many other Canadian railway projects had to be obtained in England is that cautious Canadians would not invest in these enterprises; and also because Canadian law regulated the interest on such borrowings, so that few Americans were willing to participate in these schemes, when they could obtain higher yields for their money in the United States. [32] for the SET&K, in London, England the railway found a willing financial agent by the name of John Langham Reed, and its financial affairs came to be allied, as also in the case of the Lévis & Kennebec Railroad with English investors.

In the weeks that followed, the bridge across the St. Francis was completed, rails were quickly laid and work trains were running daily.[33] Unfortunately, just two months after the first spike ceremony,

"a rail train and gravel train collided on the SET&K near Mulvena's (Newington) owing to a misunderstanding as to time". [34]

On October 23, 1874, the Sherbrooke, Eastern Townships & Kennebec Railway was formally opened to Westbury, a distance of about 12 miles. The railway ran an excursion train of 12 cars, carrying almost 700 people over the completed line. Arches had been erected at Ascot and Westbury to welcome the train. A luncheon was served to guests at Westbury, and on returning, the train stopped at Ascot for the traditional speeches, first by SET&K president Robertson, followed by the Hon. Blanchet, Speaker of the Quebec legislature and president of the Lévis & Kennebec road. A Mr. Brandigee of New Haven, Conn. made an interesting speech of how a large wharf was being built on Long Island Sound to handle timber originating from Quebec and New England railroads. These and other speakers honouring Mr. Robertson that same night were the first indication of interest by American railway and other interests in the region to be served by the SET&K. The attendance of Mr. Brandigee, Governor Smith of the Vermont Central Railway, and Frank Johnson of the Norwich Bank, indicated the interest New England capitalists started to take in Quebec affairs. [35, 36, 37]

The opening of the line should have brought financial success to the railway, but this was not the case. Notices started to appear in the *Sherbrooke Gazette* advising employees that if any of them served the railway company with writs for back wages, they would be at once discharged. [38] To help cure the financial distress of the railway, Mr. Robertson introduced a resolution to the 1875 Quebec legislature to allow an additional \$1,500 per mile subsidy, to be made payable for each additional ten miles of track completed. The ten mile provision allowed the new railways to receive a portion of their subsidies as the line was being built, rather than on completion. [39]

Furthermore, in order to enhance the company's image and to permit it to raise mortgage capital in Great Britain, it was reorganized on February 23, 1875 [40], changing its name to the Quebec Central Railway Company, but continuing on with the same president and general manager, Robertson and Woodward.

CHAPTER 3

THE QUEBEC CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY:

The Quebec Central Railway was inspected March 1875 by the Government Inspector Mr Gauvreau and he declared it open to Lake Weedon (St Gerard) Milepost 41. The most noticeable feature on the line was at a station called Basin between the present towns of East Angus and Bishopton the St Francis river was

"a great cauldron like place which catches the St Francis river as it comes dashing along and whirls it about for time before it releases its waters to flow onward."

The railway hugs the banks of the river but it is forced along the side of this cauldron on a five hundred foot long wood trestle. The river was seventy feet below the rails.

The railway had reached its first goal and was now determined to reach a connection with the Levis and Kennebec when the first scandal struck. The *Sherbrooke Gazette* in its April 9th edition drew attention to the fact that Mayor Morkill while acting in the double capacity as Mayor of Sherbrooke and Vice President of the SET&K (Quebec Central) had obtained a loan of \$30 000 from the Bank of Montreal for the purpose of making advances for loans to the railway. As a result a petition was circulated by local ratepayers attempted to stop the transfer of any SET&K stock. Mr Morkill was forced to personally guarantee the loans with the bank.

During the rest of 1875 and 1876 construction work stopped. Work recommenced in the summer of 1877 and rails reached north of Black Lake to milepost 65. In February 1878 the QC transferred its terminal from Lake Weedon (St. Gerard) to Garthby (M.P. 47)

The company built its first branch line in 1877 when it constructed a short 2 1/2 mile span from Marbleton Station westward to the Line quarries of Dudswell (Lime Ridge). The story is told that when the QCR line passed through Dudswell Township that Reverend Thomas Shaw Chapman, a QC director, tried to persuade the railway to build to Lime Ridge. The engineers objected to the severe grade but the line was built after Rev. Chapman surveyed the routes for the span. The grades were so severe that a locomotive could only pull two cars at a time over this branch line.

November 28, 1877, the Quebec Central Railway line between Sherbrooke and Coleraine was inspected by both railroad and government officials. Woodward and Bowen went out of their way with elaborate preparations.

The reporter for the *Montreal Gazette* was on board the train and his report gives an insight into the early days of the Quebec Central.

"The ride to Marbleton along the north side of the valley of the beautiful St Francis River was very romantic and delightful to the encounters, but it must have been disheartening to the engineers who located the line and to the contractors who built the road. It is a succession of curves, deep cuttings and fillings that were sufficient to appeal to any but skilful men who undertook to surmount them. However, the difficulties have been nearly all overcome and when the work now being done to lower some of the grades, straighten some of the curves and to fill in the ??? is completed, the road will be a safe and substantial one." [Montreal Gazette, December 1, 1877]

"At Big Hollow (Basin) the train was stopped to allow the inspectors to examine the budge. The trestlework at this place, over Big I-lollow Creek, is seventy two feet in height and it is a slight sufficient to make a nervous person shake to pass over it on a train. Mr Fred Bowen pointed out the spot where a locomotive with a construction train leaped the rails at the end of that bridge a couple of years ago, and a gang of over forty men; seized with a panic, jumped from the train over the bridge standing on the spot and looking down into the black looking gulf below, the thought of seeing men take such a leap makes one shudder. Several of the poor fellows who did jump over were maimed for life; but owing to the depth of snow no lives were lost."

From Weedon the officials had a chance to inspect the newly completed line to Coleraine eighteen miles. This was through Crown Land but already 200 settlers had moved into the area after the excursionists enjoyed on the train, the engine was turned and the run back began.

At Marbleton, they switched the excursion train on to the Marbleton branch line. Even though it was dark, Fred Bowen improvised a torch with cotton waste saturated in oil. As the train was backed up the branch, the dense forest on either side, and the black sky overhead made the road look like a tunnel.

The reporter said the quarries were well worth a visit:

"The cars run alongside the four huge kilns, which are situated at the base of an immense cliff of limestone rock. The rock is thrown down by blasting, broken into sizes with sledges and wheeled into the top of kilns only a few yards from the base of the cliff; when, after passing through the kilns it is loaded into the cars as lime." The lime kiln employed over 200 men. The kilns were owned by Messrs Loomis and Chamberlain. Much of their product was shipped to the United States. Late that night the train arrived back in Sherbrooke.

December 11th 1878 marked the completion of a new stretch of line seventy three miles from Sherbrooke to the town that still bears the name of QC president - Robertsonville. A special train carried Premier Hon Joly and Government Inspector Peterson to the end of the track. It is reported that while the party lunched on the cars J.G Robertson used the opportunity to ask for additional subsidies from the Government representatives.

This section of line opened ran from Coleraine to Robertson was to become the most important section of the entire railway. Underneath of the right of ways is one of the largest veins of asbestos to be found in the world. Legend has it that it was during the construction of the Quebec Central that workmen discovered a strange and particular rock in 1878.

The arrival of the Quebec Central at Black Lake and Thetford Mines and subsequent discovery of asbestos has long been attributed to the Quebec Central. Asbestos was discovered on a lovely mid August day in 1876. Joseph Fechteau, Joseph Roy, Onesime Gilbert, Gedeon Gilbert and Joseph Gilbn discovered the important mineral while picking blueberries. It was not a mineral readily identified, and it took a number of years before it was considered a valuable mineral deposit. The Quebec Central was initially built to exploit the timber resources along Lake Aylmer and the lime kilns at Dudswell. The QC could have built a little to the left of the Thetford Mines area and in fact the original route was to be through Leeds to Scotts Junction. A decision was made to climb to the summit of land between the St Francis and Chaudiere watersheds but to do this without the knowledge of the mineral's existence would have made such a decision fool-hardy.. But when one realizes that King asbestos, one of the original mining operations, list of directors were all Quebec Central directors such a decision is understandable.

It is known that by November 1878 60 tons of asbestos was shipped to the United States and the Le Journal de Quebec (November 21, 1878) mentions that a large quantity of asbestos had been shipped to Boston for the last two winters over the QCR, two years prior to the railway's arrival in the area.

Much of the land owned in Thetford Mines was purchased from the crown, at low prices, to be used for agricultural purposes. Coincidentally many of the Quebec Central directors purchased land for "agricultural purposes" in the area. Land obtained for mineral rights had a more expensive price per acre. If the QC management knew of the asbestos the land should have been purchased for a higher price.

Subsidies were later lost because the railway failed to follow its intended route. It is the author's opinion that in the Coleraine region there are both chrome and asbestos deposits. It is the chrome deposits that may have excited railway officials first.

Father Thomas Walsh tells a more interesting story, that as a young man J. H. Walsh, while working for the QMO&O, was sent to examine a barrel of molasses that had been damaged by the QCR. The owner of the general store was a gentleman by the name of Johnson. The shopkeeper asked the lad if he knew what type of rock this cotton rock was? Walsh on a visit to Montreal, had it examined at McGill University. On a later trip to Thetford Mines he explained to the shopkeeper that it was asbestos and the rock was indeed valuable.

The rails of the Quebec Central had reached the rim of the broad Chaudiere valley by the fall of 1880. It had only to cascade off the slopes and bridge the Chaudiere River. The Chaudiere was different from the wilderness the QCR had been built through. A QCR tourist brochure written at the time tells.

"The traveler is at once struck with the vast image of fences and the curious ribbon-like farms which stretch up the hill in variated stripes, as the harvest ripens in long narrow patches. These are the "Seigniories " which have passed from one generation to another with but few changes in boundary. These humble French-Canadians, whose whole life is bounded by their visual horizon are not given to trading in real estate and but little to migration. Through the Chaudiere Valley the absence of woodlands is noticeable. All of the lands seem in demand for tillage or pasturage, and the universal fencing in of the small possessions of each owner, who seems to subdivide his farm as often as possible makes the country look like a vast stockyard".

During the winter of 1880-1881 the company built its tracks down the slopes of Chaudiere on a severe grade exceeding 2%. The Chaudiere was bridged using a four span covered wooden bridge. While connection was made with the independent Levis and Kennebec joint or through Service never occurred. Quebec Central trains in the early months of 1881 ran only from Sherbrooke to Coleraine. The line north through Thetford, East Broughton and Tring was served by Work trains on an irregular basis.

The Quebec Central had completed the requirements of its charter to build a railway line north from Sherbrooke to a connection with the Levis and Kennebec. The first regular train service would run May 23, 1881.

QUEBEC CENTRAL

1881-1906

CHAPTER 6

SHERBROOKE TO QUEBEC

The purchase of the Levis and Kennebec by Woodward and Bowen was accompanied by the sale of a £556,000 Bond Issue in June 1881. The bonds had the Provincial Guarantee for interest until they were due July 1st 1886. Most of the 5% Bonds were sold to English investors. The money from the bonds were used to purchase the L&K from the contractors.

The Quebec Central now had a direct line between Sherbrooke and Levis and the first through train went over the line on May 23, 1881. There were no speeches, celebrations or excursions to accompany the first run.

The silence that surrounded the first train Was only too soon to erupt into a maelstrom of scandal. It was publicly disclosed that Quebec Central lawyer George Irvine, and a member of the provincial legislature "had entered into a conspiracy to defraud the creditors of the Levis and Kennebec and the government". While Mr Irvine had publicly championed the redemption of the L&K from its creditors, and having scourged Sénécal the previous year (Irvine had imitated fifty four suits against Sénécal on behalf of the English creditors of the L&K) was deeply involved in a conflict of interest.

The accusations asserted that Irvine had acted on behalf of the Quebec Central Interests rather than those connected with the Levis and Kennebec. Edward Bowen [3] had gone into partnership with Levis and Kennebec financial agent John Reed in 1879. It was not a secret that the L&K was in financial difficulties. The bondholders of L&K and the QC were all one and the same and for the price of \$192,000 the L&K was a bargain not to be passed up. The Quebec Central saw it as a merger of the assets of the English bondholders. The creditors and stockholders did not. The charges against Mr. Irvine were that he had paid a rival not to bid on the L&K at the Sheriffs Auction (4). Having stated prior to the auction his desire to work on behalf of the L&K interests the sale to the QCR and subsequent disclosures placed the QCR in the midst of a public scandal.

To make matters worse the City of Québec had just become a bondholder in the Levis and Kennebec. The failure of Baron Grant of that city, Québec came into possession of \$225,000 of L&K bonds. The city commenced legal action against the Quebec Central [5, 6].

In July 1881 the Liberal newspaper The Montreal Herald attacked the Quebec Central Railway in a number of issues, particularly the July 8th editor describing the railway as one of the worst built railways in Canada and it implied that false reports were made about the conductor of the road to allow the granting of subsidies. The *Montreal Gazette* jumped to the defense of the company.

In late August and the month of September 1881 the company ran special excursion trains from Levis to Newport, Vermont in conjunction with the Passumpsic Road.

October 18, 1881 the Quebec Central ran two inaugural trains one from Sherbrooke and another from Levis. They met halfway and both trains ran to Sherbrooke where a banquet was held honouring the railway and its promoters.

The Levis station and yards were located in the upper town section some distance from the cliffs overlooking the St Lawrence and the City of Quebec on the opposite shore. Freight and passengers had to be hauled up and down the cliffs by horse carriages to meet the ferries. The Grand Trunk has had for many years a terminal directly on the river. The Quebec Central decided to build a deepwater extension from a point inland, to descend the cliffs, to arrive at tidewater.

The Intercolonial Railway had purchased the GTR line from Riviere du Loup to Chaudiere Jct (Charny) August 13 1879. Quebec City had pressed the GTR first and the Intercolonial later to build a direct line from St Charles Station to Levis, to provide Quebec with a direct line to the Maritimes rather than having to change trains at Chaudiere Jct. The Quebec Central officials were sensitive to this need. Within days of the first through train over the QC, the surveyors were at work locating the new "deepwater extension". During the fall of 1881 the surveys had been completed and 200 men were at work. Four miles of grading had been completed by mid October and rails had been obtained. The company attempted to interest both provincial and federal governments to participating in its deep water extension. The Quebec Central offered to build the line from Harlacka to Chabots Wharf, Levis, and turn it over to the Intercolonial, if the Dominion Government would build the line from, St Charles to Harlacka and wharfs. The governments rejected the idea. The feeling was that the Interconloial was a trunk line and the QCR was a "second class line" and the latter should not play such a dominant role. The GTR had arrived at Levis in 1855, the ICR dated from the 1879, and the QC arrived at Levis in 1881 yet in a few years the St Charles Cutoff was completed due in no small part to the fear that the QC just might build it themselves and the ICR would always then beholdent to the later.

A short one-mile spur was built in the fall of 1882 by the QCR. It connected new pulp mill of Wm Angus and Company with the mainline at East Angus.

Woodward and Bowen at the beginning of 1882 purchased a property in East Sherbrooke known as the Meat Factory. It was the contractors intention to build rolling stock for the Quebec Central and other railroads they had planned to build. The buildings had been built as the Canadian Meat Packing Company in 1874; utilizing a bonus provided that year by the city of Sherbrooke. The factory bought in cattle as far away as Chicago. A fire swept through some of the buildings in November 1876 . While there was talk of rebuilding the structures this never did occur and the company moved on to manufacture Bouvril in South America.

The Quebec Central had used the Grand Trunk roundhouse facilities at Sherbrooke from its earliest days. The roundhouse had been built in 1852 upon a plan by Col. Gzowski. It was a circular domed enclosed roundhouse approximately 160 feet in diameter. It was jointly used by locomotives of the Grand Trunk, the Quebec Central, the Connecticut and Passumpsic Rivers RR and the St Francis & Megantic International Ry.

During the early morning of July 6th 1882 a fire started:

"in the oil room used by the Passumpsic Railway in which were stored some fourteen barrels of oil. The Quebec Central employees succeeded in getting out two of that company's locomotives but before any other in the building could be removed the fire drove the men from the wheel which moved the turntable, and which, unfortunately was situated near the burning oil room. The roof fell with a terrible crash within half an hour after the fire commenced burning. The fire remaining engines underneath are a mass of girders and sheet iron. The Grand Trunk loses a Mogul engine, the Passumpsic two passenger engine, the Intemational one, the Quebec Central part of a locomotive undergoing repairs the tender, smokestack, headlight and connection being in another building." [14]

The Passumpsic started to build their own engine house and turntable , and the Quebec Central completed renovations to the old meat factory at Newington so that it was suitable as a workshop and engine terminal .

In July 1884 the Intercolonial Railway opened its St Charles Cutoff from St Charles Jct to Levis . The Quebec Central had built its own line from St Henry Jct. (Carrier Jct.) to Harlacka the previous year. The Quebec Central was then given running rights over the Intercolonial from Harlacka to Levis five miles. The joint ICR-QCR station in the lower town was adjacent to the river and the ferry to Quebec City. The station at Levis was used by the GTR, Intercolonial and the QCR.

The opening of the new Deepwater Extension came just in time for the Quebec Central, July 31 1884 the Provincial Railway inspector condemned the trestle bridge at Cutures Hill on the old Levis upper town line. The bridge was temporarily strengthened so as to allow trains to pass over the bridge until November 1884 when train service was inaugurated on the new Lower town line. The railway immediately abandoned the old line and the rails immediately torn up and used on the Chaudiere Valley line.

The Levis and Kennebec plan (and subsidy) of extending their line down the Chaudiere were not lost to the QC management.

The purchase of the Levis and Kennebec already gave the QC a six mile branch from the main line at Beauce Jct. to St Joseph. A subsidiary company was formed called the Chaudiere Valley Extension. It seems it was credited more to acquire capital in England then to build railway tracks. Rails were laid five miles along the Chaudiere River bank in 1882 and it reached St Francis (Beauceville) 1515 miles from Beauce Jct in December 1884. An additional forty miles of track were planned and bonds issued under the new company name.

It was now the intention at this time to extend this Quebec Central branch down the Chaudiere River to Lac Megantic. It was then wanted to continue southward to a connection with the Franklin and Megantic Railroad in Maine. It may be difficult to understand why the QCR entertained talks with Mr Sargent of the F&M. The Franklin and Megantic was one of those unique Maine two-foot gauge railroads so through connections were not going to be possible.

Another two footer the Wiscasset and Quebec also had dreams of a connection with the QCR. In this latter case it might be explained that the contractors for this bantam were the Mitchells of Sherbrooke .

During the eighties three serious derailments occurred. A construction train running tender first was two miles south of Weedon Station when the engine hit some cattle and tipped over killing Engineer Charest. That was on May 31st, 1882.

Eight months later, in January 20th, ' 1883, engine number **one** with the regular train ran off the tracks and the engine turned over three miles south of St Henedine. The fatality was Engineer Derocher.

June 30th, 1885, express train number two was running from Levis to Sherbrooke. As the result of very heavy rains for two days previously, the Chaudiere River was flooded. The water reaching an almost unprecedented height and the railway track near Beauce Jct was covered with water. Conductor Lothrop went forward to the engine, which was proceeding at a very slow speed and was standing between the engine and tender when suddenly the track gave way over a culvert at a point where the surface of the track was covered with about three inches of water. The conductor was the only fatality.

The railway was prone to extreme snowfalls, especially in the regions adjacent to Levis. *The Stanstead Journal* reported the severity of a January 1884 storm:

"At the Levis Station on the Quebec Central Railway some men attempted to house an engine but could not make no headway in clearing the rails with shovels. They then attempted to plough through the yard to the engine house but ran the engine off the rails and in a short time only the top of the smokestack was visible above the tremendous drifts. There are said to be boxcars in the siding they are entirely covered up under the snow not a trace being seen"

The Ontario Car Company of London, Ontario, who themselves were in financial distress, seized rolling stock of the railway. The QC threatened heavy legal action, in the press against Ontario Car for what they termed an illegal seizure of cars.

The shops at Newington were seized in December 1884 on a private debt, which the railway had assumed and sold to a Mr James D. Mowry of Philadelphia. This Mr Mowry claimed rent or interest that was due since the railway occupied the buildings. Woodward and Bowen refused to pay this money so the railway was asked to vacate the premises immediately, Quebec Central engines and equipment were forced to seek shelter elsewhere and all forty workmen were thrown out of work. The railway used the Passumpsic facilities at Sherbrooke and constructed a small car repair shop at Beauce Jct.

The company Woodward and Bowen besides building the Quebec Central, also built another railroad into Sherbrooke that would much later be a part of the QCR.

The Vermont Central subsidiary; the Waterloo and Magog Railway's Sherbrooke Extension was built by the firm. Remember the Vermont Central had arrived at Eastern Townships town of Waterloo in 1869 by leasing the Stanstead, Shefford and Chambly Railroad as a measure to block the Passumpsic. The Vermont Central, in the eighties, now wanted to expand into Quebec using the charter of the Waterloo and Magog. The VCR W&M reached Magog in January 1878. The City of Sherbrook at this early date was attempting to secure the extension of Vermont Central system to Sherbrooke. The line languished for a number of years at Magog. when J .R. Woodward, in his role as a city councillor, proposed a bonus during an October 1882 town meeting. He proposed the city should provide a \$20,000 bonus if the Waterloo & Magog would extend their line from Magog to Sherbrooke. The bonus was ratified by the ratepayers of Sherbrooke a short time later. Curiously Woodward & Bowen were given the contract to build sixteen miles between Sherbrooke and Magog and five miles in gradient improvement in the Eastman vicinity.

Construction proceeded during the summer and winter of 1883. The first Vermont Central train arrived at Sherbrooke January 22 1884. The first station of the Vermont Central was located at the top St Francis Valley and connected with no railroads. In January 1886 the Vermont Central built a steep connecting link down the side of the valley then crossing the GTR - Passumpsic line on a long curving wooden trestle then slipping over the St Francis River to a connection with the Quebec Central at Newington. Shortly afterwards trains from Montreal stopped first at the small upper town Belvidiere Street shelter then descended the valley to Newington, then backing across the Quebec Central's bridge to the old Grand Trunk covered station. The GTR Sherbrooke Station for GTR, QCR, International, Passumpsic and Vermont Central trains all arrived and left the one station.

Regular service did not start and when the city council realized that J .R. Woodward had first proposed the bonus in 1892. The city refused to pay the bonus to the Vermont Central feeling that Woodward had profited from his position at City Hall. In retaliation the new railway sat dormant until July 1885

The Vermont Central - Central Vermont had fallen on hard times and were interested in ridding itself of all its lines in Quebec, while the Canadian Pacific was expanding its line to the Atlantic. The CPR made arrangements to purchase both the Waterloo and Magog and the St Francis and International Megantic railroads in 1887-1888 as part of a line from Montreal across Maine to St John New Brunswick. For a brief period the Canadian Pacific also used the Grand Trunk station until a line could be built the three miles between Sherbrooke and Lennoxville to link its Sherbrooke - Montreal and Sherbrooke - Megantic sections. The C.P.R. trains called at Newington on its way to and from the GTR Central Station. The Waterloo & Magog was used only to supply work trains on the CPR for the CPR relocated most of its line from Foster to Sherbrooke. Very little of the W&M survived, more than five years after line was opened. The Canadian Pacific kept the old Waterloo & Magog line from upper town Sherbrooke to Newington to transfer freight with the Quebec Central.

The first sleeping cars ran over the Quebec Central in July 1885 in conjunction with other Connecticut Valley railroads. The combined Monarch parlour-sleeping cars ran directly between Springfield and Quebec.

The Monarch car was a unique design first used on the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental in 1881. John White in *The American Railroad Passenger Car* describes the development of this small challenger to the monopoly of Pullman and Wagner Companies:

"The genesis of the Monarch Company appears to be a patent issued September 5 1876 to Gustave Leve of New the designs main objective was to provide a day night car seats. The revolving chairs were collapsible, and the chairs stored in narrow closets along the sides of the cars berth enclosures as in the ordinary American mechanism and cabinetry to accomplish this transformation was complex and probably not worth the trouble or expense." [33]

The Monarch Parlour-Sleeping Car Company was formed in July 1885. The thirteen cars were seventy-five feet long, with sixty-six foot bodies, and offered 24 rotating parlour seats by day and 12 double-berth sections by night. The 35 tonne cars were carried on eight or twelve wheels and cost \$22,000 each. The cars were named after ancient rulers, and soon sleeping cars named **Zenobia**, **Cleopatra** and **Rhodope** were running under the Monarch letter-board. The cars used on the Quebec Central had buffets serving luncheons to passengers. The summer only service had the cars leaving Quebec, on the express at 2:15 PM arriving in New York 1:45 AM next day. These Monarch cars were replaced by Palace cars in 1891.

A meeting of the English bond and shareholders was held May 11, 1885 at the offices of the English Association of American Bond and Shareholders, Great Winchester Street, London, England was held to protect their interests in the Quebec Central Railway. The Times of London reported the proceeds of the affairs of the company, at the meeting:

"Mr J .H. Hutinson presided, and in opening the proceedings stated that an informal meeting of the bondholders had already been held to consider the condition of the railway. The Ontario Car Company had made a claim on the company for £12,000 for rolling stock, and the car company having obtained a judgement had threatened to sell the railway on the 15th of June. Although there were three and a half years in which the guarantee of the province of Quebec had still to run, existing circumstances had necessitated the calling of the meeting. They had written out endeavouring at least to obtain a postponement of the sale. At the informal meeting a resolution was passed requesting the Association to act in conjunction with a committee consisting of Mssrs. Bremner, Dent, Norman, and Sheppard, but it was for the present meeting to state what steps should be taken. Mr. Brandon expressed the opinion that the railway could not be sold but 'any loose stuff about it' could be. The total amount of the judgement obtained by the car company was £12,000 but only £4,000 was due."

The immediate result of the meeting was a motion passed unanimously:

"that the English Association of American Bond and Shareholders be requested to take such action for the protection of the interests of the bond and shareholders of the railway generally as may be agreed on between them and a committee of bondholders of the Quebec Central Railway and of the Chaudiere Extension thereof."

The Association had been created in 1884 by a group of members of the London Stock Exchange for the purpose of protecting British Investment in American railway stock. The Association was able to form committees to represent the various shareholders. The committees started to gain powers that individual investors would not be allowed Mr Woodward had attended the meeting with the bondholders in London in the fall of 1885. Woodward landed at New York and had travelled by rail to Newport, Vermont. At the border police entered his sleeping car and arrested him on a warrant issued by Mr Mowry for the \$300,000 due him on the debt for the Newington shops. Mr Woodward contacted QCR director and Sherbrooke lawyer R. N. Hall about the situation, Mr. Hall obtained clearance from the Passumpsic to have a QC engine run down from Sherbrooke to Newport. Shortly after the engine arrived and was turned. Mr. Woodward was allowed to go to his room but he took a short cut through the lower part of the Memphremagog House raised a window jumped out and ran to the engine followed by Constable Bowley, leaped upon the engine, the engineer then pulled the throttle and the train was off in a flash.

Woodward and Bowler had contracted the debt in securing the Newington workshops. The partnership between J .R. Woodward and E.C. Bowen had been dissolved in September 1884 so that Mr Bowen could pursue a partnership in London with Mr Reed, and the new firm was Bowen and Reed. It was their intention to build railways in South America but problems arose with contracts in Brazil. Reed and Bowen were forced into bankruptcy Mr Woodward had taken over all the assets and liabilities of the first partnership , the Mowry debt being one of them.

The committee appointed reported its finding at a meeting of the bond and shareholders February 8th 1886 at the offices of the English Association of American Bond and Shareholders of Great Winchester Street, London .the *London Times* again gives us the details of the meeting:

"Mr. F.H. Nomqan (chairman of the committee) presided. He stated the committee had obtained an independent survey of the line, which had been undertaken by Mr. Thomas Swinyard (formerly of the London and North Western and afterwards of the Great Western Railway Company of Canada) assisted by Mr Lumsden, one of the engineers of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and Mr. A. J Power, the accountant of the Grand Trunk Railway These gentlemen had absolutely no connection with the Quebec Central".

In regards to one of the committee's questions regarding the construction of the line, the committee's questions regarding the construction of the line, the committee explained

"There were no specification in the contract with Mssrs. Bowen and Woodward the contractors, as to the particular mode in which the lines were to be constructed, they could not say whether the contract had been properly carried out in that respect, but as regarded the rolling stock and steel rails there were specifications, and there were deficiencies in the supply contracted for estimated to be equal to \$200,000 in the case of the rolling stock and \$43,680 in that of the steel rails"

The deficiency of the steel rails was of concern for the railway had issued £556,000 of bonds on 139 miles of main line and £200,000 Bonds on the Chaudiere Valley Extensions. The Chaudiere Extension bonds were issued on 64 miles of which only 15 miles existed.

Mr Swinyard said that for the period 1881 -1885 the average operating expenses were 76% but felt this could be reduced to 65%. In 1884 it reached its high of 82%, due to the extreme snow conditions that reduced net eamings from \$46,000 in 1883 to \$30,383 in 1884.

He also informed the bondholders that the matter with the Ontario Car Company was still involved in litigation and it was uncertain that the railway might be sold.

Both Mr Lumsden and Mr Swinyard informed the British investors that \$503,000 would be required to put the machine in order providing for new steel rails and rolling stock. Seven hundred thousand dollars would be required to complete the Chaudiere Extension that would be reduced by \$500,000 Government Subsidy.

The suit was still pending between the City of Quebec and the QCR over the method of purchasing the Levis and Kennebec and that \$80,000 might be required there. The committee felt that the general prospects of the Quebec Central warranted further investment. The committee presented their recommendations that were adopted. They suggested the issue of £306,000 bonds having a first lien on the whole railway, tolls, and revenues of the company, to provide the means for finishing the Chaudiere Extension, paying off the floating debt, repairing the main line.

In the 1886 session of the Quebec Parliament an Act authorizing the issue of new bonds was asked. In 1886 a special act of the Quebec Legislature rested control of the Quebec Central in the income bondholders and allowed the issuing of new securities providing financial security to the bondholders and allowed money to improve the railway.

September 19, 1887 Woodward & Bowen made a judicial abandonment of their property for the benefit of their creditors, the same day *Le Pionnier* carried a legal notice on behalf of Mowry seeking judgement. J. R. Woodward retired from the Quebec Central Railway Christmas Day 1887 and a reception was held by the QC employees. Mr Steele the General Superintendent of the Quebec Central spoke for his fellow railway men.

"Many of us have been with you through many and difficult years and critical financial stages of the enterprise, from the commencement of construction to a completed railway line extending from Sherbrooke to Quebec and Beauce Junction to St Francis a distance of one hundred and fifty eight miles; and feel that it is due to your great determination, persistence and administrative ability that so much as been accomplished."

A provisional board was elected on November 14 887 with R.N. Hall, M.P., being appointed Managing Director in Canada. The new Board of Directors consisted of Edward Dent, President, H. Brandon, A. Bremner, EH. Norman, Joseph Price Representatives on the Board consisted of R.N. Hall, R.D. Morkill and the Hon. J.G. Robertson.

Robert Newton Hall Q.C. Member of Parliament for Sherbrooke was born at Lapraire Quebec only five days after the first train in Canada ran in 1836. He was a respected lawyer, a director of the Q.C. President of the Massawepi Valley and one of the original directors of the Canadian Pacific.

On June 4, 1888 the provisional board was replaced by a permanent English Directorate in which the new board had six members, five representing the English interests and one appointed by the Quebec government. The new board asked Frank Grundy to make a inspection of the company and report to the bondholders.

During the summer of 1887 the Dominion Lime Company built a five mile railway from Dominion Line kilns at the Lime Ridge to the QCR at Dudswell. The company's principals were none other than QC's president J. G. Robertson and J.R. Woodward. In the early years it was operated by Quebec Central equipment. This railway while it served the same lime kilns the QC's Marbleton spur served. The gradients were not as radical as the QC so the Marbleton Branch was pulled up in 1887, except for a short stretch.

The regional builders of the Quebec Central Railway were out. Both Robertson and his brother in law Woodward went on to go develop the Dominion Lime Company. They died in 1899 and 1925. R.D. Morkill lost the mercantile business as a result of advances made to the QCR. But his sons remained in the railway business — one son Jack Morkill was the QC chief engineer, and somewhat unofficial photographer, another son went onto a career as general manager of both the Mexican Southern and in 1903 G.M. of the Peruvian (Railway) Corporation. Bowen and brothers also built and operated railways in Argentina and Brazil.

The Quebec Central was in bad shape. What with the Canadian Pacific, Boston and Maine and Maine Central Railways all extending their networks into the eastern townships none offered to lease the QCR.

Frank Grundy was fifty-three years old when he was appointed General Manager of the Quebec Central in March 1889. Born in Bury, England in 1836 he entered railway served in 1850 with the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. Between 1851 and 1869, he worked in various capacities for the East Lancashire Railway, Bedford, Worchester and Wolverhampton Ry and the West Midland Ry. He served as general manager of the Mid Wales, Swansea and Carmanthes Jct. Ry. from 1869 until his appointment to the post of Q.C. general manager in 1889. [45]

FRANK GRUNDY - QCR GENERAL MANAGER 1889 - 1906

Grundy immediately initiated a program of rehabilitation and improvements to both the permanent way and the equipment. The grade was reduced by fourteen feet between St. Alselme and St. Henri. The bridge over the Etchmin River at St Alselme was raised several feet. New locomotives and rolling stock were acquired for a new quality train service between Quebec and New England.

Monarch sleeping cars were replaced by the Palace Cars of the Wagner Company in the summer of 1891 on a new direct train that ran between Quebec and Boston via Newport in conjunction with the Boston and Maine Railway.

The most important improvements were made in grade reductions in the Chaudiere Valley where the line climbs wouth out of the river valley between Beauce (Vallee) Junction and Tring. The old iron rails were replaced with heavier steel rails. It was the beginning of a fifteen-year period of upgrading the roadbed and bridges. All wood bridges were to be replaced by steel and concrete structures.

The new aggressive management of the QCR impressed Quebec Government officials, for in July 1891, the Quebec Superior Court gave Mr. Grundy and his staff the responsibility of upgrading and running the Montreal and Sorel Railway for a short period while the latter was under receivership.

Jack Tar Special

A special CPR train carrying expired marines from the British warships *Champion* and *Pheasant* received press attention as a new way of carrying British troops from Asia, December, 1891. The CPR ran the 9-car special train from Vancouver to Sherbrooke then it ran the QCR and Intercolonial to Halifax so as to avoid going through American territory.

"During the 1890 session of the Canadian Parliament the QCR obtained the necessary amendments to its charter permitting the railway to build a line to a junction with the CPR at Megantic. Its route was not the original Levis and Kennebec line along the length of the Chaudiere to a junction with the CPR."

Instead the engineers mapped a new route in the fall of 1891. The new route left the mainline at Tring Station, near the summit of the railway, then went dovm into the valley of the St Victor River and then commenced to climb back out of that valley again into the watershed of the Chaudiere, to the highest point on the CPR east of the Rockies at Megantic.

The citizens of the village of St Georges protested that the older Chaudiere Valley branch would not be extended to their village as they originally planned. In April of 1892 a delegation from the Beauce region attempted to impress on the QC officials the needs of the village for a railway. The pressure for the extension to run through St. Georges resulted in a promise from railway officials that after the Megantic line was built, a new extension would be made to St Georges.

Although the railway claimed it was building a new short line between Quebec and St John it would seem the location, with its accompanying large, numerous, twisting grades must have been built to maximize the lumber resources the line would tap. Why else would it not have chosen to follow the Chaudiere River directly to Megantic.

Work began on the Megantic line in July 1892 with a small work force of only fifty men under the direction of contractor Meadows of Megantic. Work slowed down during the depression of 1893. In the summer of 1893 work resumed with new contractors, Hult and Lukes, so by the winter of 1893 ten miles of rail had been laid. October 4th, 1894 the Quebec Central celebrated the inauguration of the first twenty miles from Tring to St Evariste. Over 7000 people attended the celebration at this small town. Among the dignitaries to attend were Mr. Begin, Cardinal Tachereau, Lieutenant Govemor of the Province of Quebec Chapleau, and CPR President Van Home.

The government inspector Mr. Vallée described the work that had been completed as;
"in a workman-like manner, including two bridges over the "Le Bras" rivers, with

metallic "Deck Lattice girder and plate girder" superstructures laid on massive masonry with steel rails, weighing 60 pounds to the lineal yard, throughout the whole length, the ballast of the best kind of gravel, passenger and freight stations, also tool-sheds at St Fredric, St Victor and "St Ephrem de Tring," with sidings -1000 feet long - at each of these stations, and a water tank, of a capacity of 15 thousand gallons, - at St Ephrem Station".

The engineer added that 1500 men were still at work, and rails were laid an additional twelve miles, and grading completed even further. Work continued on the Megantic line until a final inspection of the line, September 24th, 1895.

The first train between Levis and Megantic ran over the new line at the beginning of October 1895. The QC station, yards and other terminal buildings were completed by February 1896.

An extension south of Megantic was planned for many years but was never built. As late as 1910 the Maine Central was planning on building the Indian Head Railway to connect with its line at Rumford Falls, Maine.

While the new Megantic line was touted as a short line between Quebec and St. John, New Brunswick, and it is was the shortest route between the two points, through train service never did materialize. The QCR and CPR had planned to run an express train as a section of CPR's Imperial Limited. The Intercolonial Railway was concerned by the QC advertisements proclaiming the new shorter route via Megantic River was longer than their St Lawrence - Matapedia Valley line. The ICR withdrew QC ticket representation from ICR Stations to points reached by the Quebec Central via Levis and Halacka Junctions. The QC retaliated at this Government Railway in the local press. While the QC claimed that the embargo by the ICR ended on friendly, mutual terms; through train service over the new line never did occur and it remained largely a local line over the years.

In 1894 the Quebec Central turned to the Pullman Company for through cars to Boston and New York. It was during this period the service was at its maximum with three passenger trains running in each direction over the Quebec Central. The company ran a night passenger train arriving at Sherbrooke, from Quebec, at 3:40 AM complete with sleeping cars.

April 1896 saw flooding along the length of the entire Quebec Central. The bridges across the Etchmin River at St Alsleme, and the St Francis River at Sherbrooke were carried away. In a special dispatch dated Eighteenth April, 1896 from Sherbrooke Quebec the *Montreal Star* carried the following news:

"The Quebec Central bridge crossing the St Francis a quarter of a mile above the Grand Trunk Railway Station here was swept away at two-thirty this morning by the ice and high water. It is an under deck trestle bridge. The water reached the upper frame work in the evening, and the ice coming down struck it with increasing force as the water rose. In this city from 1:00 PM till the structure went out, the percussion of the ice was like distant thunder and attracted hundreds of persons to the scene.

Two spans measuring about two hundred and fifty feet went out, but the third span remained attached to the Eastern Bank.

At twelve-thirty last night when a Star Correspondent was sitting on one of the beam structures, the ice struck with terrific force, each stroke casing the ponderous timbers to sway and quiver. About that time orders were given to have heavily loaded freight cars in readiness to rtm on the bridge to keep the structure weighted down. At two o'clock the cars arrived, but very fortunately, it was then ascertained that the bridge had swayed three feet from a straight line and braces could be heard cracking. So the cars were returned to the Station. Then the additional quantities of ice, announced by telephone from East Angus, to be coming from Weedon Lake finally arrived. At the expiration of another half hour during which there was wild excitement among the numerous employees of the road who were there, unable to resist that fearful habit of the elements, a terrific percussion of ice resounded; an ominous crackling and crashing was heard and the next instant the bridge was hurled down the stream"

The QCR had been cut at both its northern and southern ends, it was left with two connections, the Maine Central at Dudswell and the CPR at Megantic. The QC ran its through trains over the Grand Trunk between Levis and Sherbrooke via Richmond and local service was maintained by running over the CP to Cookshire, the Maine Central to Dudswell then on its own rails to Vallee Jct. Temporary bridges were built to allow the resumption of service by mid May.

As early as 1882 there was talk of building a "Royal Albert Bridge" to link the north and south Shores of the St Lawrence River at Quebec. The Quebec Central became involved in the bridging of the St Lawrence when General Freight and Passenger Agent John H. Walsh wrote a three column letter in the December 16th issue of the Quebec Chronicle wrote of the necessity of a bridge spanning the St Lawrence. The letter included data on the location, recommending construction at the Chaudiere River, and other data on the proposal.

The letter appeared at a most opportune moment because of the fact that many prominent railway men and Government Officials were being entertained at a Winter Carnival in Quebec City and naturally all read the letter. People began to discuss the ideas set forth by Mr. Walsh. The Honourable R.R. Dobell in the summer of that year brought the matter before several Members of Parliament. The Honourable Mr. Dobell said publicly:

"A plan has been proposed by Mr. J .H. Walsh, the General Freight and Passenger Agent of the Quebec Central Railway, that is without a doubt, most feasible; and the idea that he advances is to interest the different railway in the matter and in addition to this, to issuance of bridge stock, he advocates that subsidies be granted by the Federal Government and the Government of the Province of Quebec."

The Quebec Central took some stock in the Quebec Bridge and Railway Company. Shortly work commenced after a contract was given to the Phoenix Bridge Company of Phoenixville Pennsylvania. The plans were for a cantilever span 3,238 feet across the St Lawrence.

Mr. Grundy at the turn of the century received concessions from the town of Sherbrooke, that enabled the railway to enlarge its roundhouse and shops at Newington.

Floods again ravaged Southern Quebec in April 1900. The Boston & Maine line was inundated along Lake Massawippi, and the Quebec Central had its bridge at St. Alselme carried away once again. This bridge was at the same location that was washed out in 1896 floods. The replacement had been built 25 feet high, 10 feet higher than the previous span. It was 120 feet long, 25 feet longer than the previous bridge, but the increased height and length had not protected the new bridge.

Flooding wasn't the only calamity to befall the QC region. In July 1899 the town of Garthby was swept by fire. Fifty houses, two pulp mills and the QC Station burnt down. The telegraph lines were destroyed initially and a messenger was set to Weedon whence a call for assistance to Sherbrooke. A fire engine from Sherbrooke was soon loaded on a Quebec Central flatcar and with a coach attached the start for the doomed village forty-seven miles distant began at a few minutes past three o'clock. No time was lost on the way. Stops were made at Marbleton and Lake Weedon (St. Gerard) where several section men were taken on board. During a greater portion of the run a new mile post appeared every minute and it was a few minutes past four when in rounding Lake Alymer the burning town was spotted. Many homes were saved that day due to the public service the Quebec Central Railway offered the region.

Commencing June 4, 1900 a through service started between Quebec (Levis) and St John, New Brunswick over the Quebec Central and Canadian Pacific via Megantic. First class coach and sleeping car passenger's were carried in through cars without change between Levis and St John. The train left Levis daily 6:45 PM as part of No.6 at Tring Junction, the cars became part of mixed No.22.

Railways at the turn of the century were carrying much larger loads on faster schedules; and while the technology of speed, power and capacity had increased, the telegraph and signal systems had difficulty keeping place. Almost weekly accounts in the newspapers told of derailments and collisions. Prior to 1900 the QC had only one or two derailments that resulted in loss of life.

January 15, 1900 saw the derailment of the Boston Express two miles north of Beauce (Vallee) Junction. One first, one second class coach plus the Pullman cars left the tracks. Injuries were slight that day.

On October 3, 1901 the northbound express No. 15 left Sherbrooke one half hour later than normal. Under normal circumstances the express met the southbound passenger train No. 2 at Tring Junction, but because of the late departure of No. 15, the meet was planned south of Tring Junction. Orders from the dispatchers office in Sherbrooke were sent first to the southbound train to meet the northbound at Black Lake and orders to the northbound was to meet No. 2 at Robertson. Each train received their orders at Robertson and Black Lake. Dispatcher Keeler realized the mistake immediately but had trouble contacting the respective stations due to technical problems in the telegraph line. The trains had left the stations by the time they were notified of the error.

"The trains were gone and were speeding towards each other. There chanced to be freight train at Thetford in charge of Engineer Wark. There was but one chance to avert the impending accident. The engine was detached from the freight and with throttle wide open started in pursuit of No. 15. Time and distance however were too short. Engineer Wark gained on the express train and came up to half a mile of it but could not attract attention. The crash came. Meanwhile the terrible suspense in the dispatchers office at Sherbrooke and at stations along the line may be imagined but not described. At the Sherbrooke office the dispatcher lived an age in a few minutes. 'What news? What news?' was the frantic message which travelled the wire from Sherbrooke to Thetford and Robertson, at last the message came. 'Collision, some killed.' The suspense was over"

A special train was immediately ordered out of Sherbrooke carrying Doctors and Nurses. The Trains had met on a curve two miles north of Thetford. Engineer Conan of the southbound train saw the impending disaster only moments earlier he and his fireman Dodds jumped to safety. Engineer James Atto, Fireman Richard Dean, and Mail Clerk Roy of the northbound train were killed. Engines **18** and **19**, only four years old, two baggage, one mail car and two coaches were destroyed. The three Pullmans escaped unscathed.

In 1902 the Quebec Central's charter was amended to allow it to construct a branch line north from Scotts to the monumental Quebec Bridge then under construction. The railway wisely decided to wait till the bridge was completed before construction started on the new line.

September 5, 1904. Heavy rains caused a small culvert to washout under the weight of the passenger locomotive one mile south of Tring Junction. The engine and tender were derailed as the bridge collapsed. The passenger cars derailed with one falling into the trestle. One passenger was killed while standing on the platform of one of the passenger cars. Fireman Ransenhousan jumped from the engine landing in a stream of water and managed to swim with the current. Reaching safety he proceeded to Tring where he signalled the alarm. The rest of the train crew had thought he had been lost in the wreck and were surprised to find him waiting at the Tring Station. If this fatal wreck wasn't enough a freight train following derailed four miles north of Thetford when it ran into a big washout and the engine and several cars were derailed. The four span wooden covered bridge across the Chaudiere River was replaced by a new steel bridge supplied by Dominion Bridge in 1905.

The replacement of all the old wood bridges and the replacement of the 56 lb. iron rails with 70 lb. steel rails marked the term of General Manager Frank Grundy. The *Railway and Shipping World* wrote the legacy of Mr Grundy in this manner:

"When Mr. Grundy came to the QC in 1889 the railway owing to the failure of the contractors and London agents of the company, a considerable amount of the money originally subscribed was never expended on the railway, and the new General Manager took over an unfinished line, inadequate equipment and a floating debt of over £80,000. Equipment in 1888 consisted of nine engines and 238 cars, in 1905 the railway had 19 engines and 651 cars. The line had been almost entirely rebuilt and both the mainline and branches had seen new steel rails and the replacement of wood bridges with modern steel ones."

Frank Grundy left a railway that could handle the increased tonnage, that asbestos and wood products would give the railway in the next decade. On the first of January, Nineteen Hundred and Six, Mr Frank Grundy, the General Manager of Quebec Central Railway retired from his position and John Henry Walsh received the appointment as his successor. Grundy continued in the role of Vice-President, an appointment given him in 1904 and continued until his death in 1910.

QUEBEC CENTRAL

1906-1912

JOHN HENRY WALSH - QCR GENERAL MANAGER 1906 -1931

John Henry Walsh was born in Quebec City in 1860. In 1876 he started his railway career in the office of the contractors engaged in building the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway. In January 1881 he was appointed auditor of the Levis and Kennebec at Levis. A number of months later he was transferred to Sherbrooke when the QCR purchased the L&K. He was auditor of the Quebec Central until 1885 when he became the General Freight and Passenger Agent of the company a position he held until his appointment at General Manager. He was also named Vice President of the Temiscouata Railway in 1901.

In his previous position he inaugurated the Quebec-Boston sleeping car service in 1885 and in his role of General Freight and Passenger Agent had enlarged the establishment of quality passenger service. The Quebec and Boston Line was his creation, therefore it is not surprising that the role of through passenger trains reached its maximum service when he was the General Manager.

Almost immediately new equipment bearing the unique stamp of the Quebec Central began to appear. Moguls and tenwheelers replaced the smaller and older American Standards. New Vestibule coaches and dining cars ran in elegant trains. Car production at its shops increased.

The Quebec Central management had become involved in the affairs of the Temiscouata Railway in eastern Quebec in 1901. The line ran between Rivière du Loup and Edmundston with a small branch in the St. John River Valley. The TMC had been built in 1889 but was an unprofitable line from the beginning and in 1901 the line defaulted on its bonds and reverted to the English bondholders. The investors were represented by the same group that controlled the QCR. It was only natural that the QCR management, with its excellent record should manage the Temiscouata. There was talk as early as 1902 that the QCR and the TMC should be linked. It was proposed that the Chaudiere branch should be extended to St Georges and then turn north east along the Famine River then enter the St John River watershed to effect a connection with the TMC at Cabano.

This move would have given the QCR an entrance into the Maritime Provinces and it is also suspect that if this connection had been made a number of bankrupt shortlines, all controlled by English Investors, would have given a through route to the Gaspé.

The construction of an extension from Beauceville (St Francis) to St. Georges, by Clarke Gordon of Sherbrooke began July 1st, 1906. This section was placed in service December 17th, 1907 when engine 17 pulled the first regular train.

The line between Beauce (Vallee) Junction to Beauceville was relocated during this same period. This portion of the Chaudiere branch fifteen miles along the river had been built as early as 1881 as part of the Levis and Kennebec. At the time of its original construction the tracks were believed to be well above the high water mark but owing to the gradual clearing of the timber, the water was rising higher than formerly and during the spring, for weeks at a time, a portion of the line was submerged. A new line was relocated to much higher ground. A frequent shuttle service ran between St. Georges and Beauce Jct. to meet all trains on the mainline.

The Quebec Central extended the Chaudiere branch to St Justine in 1909. This portion was built by Powers & Dussault of Quebec. A large bridge had built over the Black Stream, thirteen miles from St Georges.

The Company reached Ste. Sabine in December, 1910, and St Camille in 1911. The Chaudiere Branch was extremely profitable for it tapped extensive lumber and pulpwood tracts. In the early years each station had huge lumber yards. The area was one of the few areas exempt from provincial controls on the cutting of pulpwood for export. The companies involved in cutting trees were John Breakey and Sons of Breakeyville, Brompton Pulp and Paper with mills at East Angus and Bromptonville and the Brown Company of the United States. Pulpwood from this area served by the QC were shipped to mills at Mechanicville, N.Y. and as far as Wisconsin in entire trainloads.

Work was progressing on the southern span of the Quebec Bridge when on August 29th, 1907 it collapsed under the weight of a locomotive, a travelling crane and a load of steel. Seventy-four workmen lost their lives. The President of the Quebec Bridge and Railway Company S. M Parent asked to be relieved of his duties and suggested the election of J. H. Walsh; but the sentiments of the shareholders was strongly in favour of his retaining his position, a Royal Commission was established to determine the cause of the disaster. It was determined that the collapse was the result of a faulty design. The Canadian Government decided to complete the bridge as part of the new National Transcontinental Railway being built between Moncton, New Brunswick and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In late September 1908 the whole county between Scotstown and Megantic was ablaze, as a forest fire threatened to bum the entire town of Megantic. September 28th, 1908 at six o'clock in the evening the fire assumed such proportions that the inhabitants began not to think of saving their property but to save their lives. The CPR and QCR were called upon and steps immediately taken by both companies to place every available car at the disposal of the women and children. By seven PM the smoke was so dense women and children began to wend their way towards the railway stations. Special trains were made up, and the CPR hauled two trains out, one to Springhill and the other to Scotstown, while the QCR had three special trains to Ste. Cecile. That night at 3 AM the rain fell, the town of Mégantic was spared, the fire was checked on the very edge of the village. At 5 AM it was deemed safe for the civilians to return, the QCR returned eleven coaches filled with people from Ste Cecile.

The summer of 1910 saw the height of passenger service. During the summer months three name trains ran over the line between Sherbrooke and Levis, The Boston Express, The New York Express and the White Mountains Express each carrying a Pullman in conjunction with B&M and MEC. The trains departed Sherbrooke at 7:15 PM and arrived Vallee Junction at 8:05 AM. The Winter timetable had the New York and Boston trains combined leaving Sherbrooke early in the morning. It was at the gradual clearing of the timber, the water was rising higher than formerly and during the spring, for weeks at a time that dining cars first appeared on the road. The railroad had just purchased two elegant dining cars second-hand. The QCR dining cars ran north only to the point where it would meet a corresponding southbound train. In 1910 the dining car ran Sherbrooke to Robertson then back to Sherbrooke; then later that afternoon to Black Lake then back to Sherbrooke. By 1914 the dining car was interchanged at Tring Junction in the morning and Leeds Station in afternoon. Later, in 1918 the dining car was transferred at Thetford Mines for all the trains.

The Quebec Central was authorized in 1912 to build a bypass line from Leeds Station to Scotts Junction. It would have bypassed East Broughton, Tring Jct., Vallee Junction, and Ste Marie. The new line would have reduced the severe grades between Leeds and Vallee. It would have been part of the new route to Quebec City using the new Quebec Bridge. The line would have been used by through trains only for it would not have generated much freight.

AMERICAN PRETENSIONS

In the spring of 1911 General manager John Walsh was contacted by Charles S. Mellon, the Chairman and President of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, that he, and William Rockefeller, "Diamond" Jim Brady and J. P. Morgan were planning a trip to Quebec City via the Quebec Central on a train composed entirely of private railroad cars. Mr. Mellon requested not only the necessary permission, but that John Walsh should join the railway magnates.

Car "*Sherbrooke*" was attached to this special train. In the course of the trip Mr. Mellon explained to Walsh that the N.Y. N.H. & H. was envious of a direct line from New York to the Quebec Harbour. The American system wanted to take over the Quebec Central and amalgamate it with their other Canadian holdings, the Boston and Maine's Massawippi Valley and the Maine Central's Hereford railroads into a new New York, New Haven and Harford Railroad of Canada. Mellon requested that Walsh should discuss such a proposal with the English Board of Directors.

The reasons why the Hartford wanted to expand into Canada varied. During the late 1890's control of the New Haven went into the House of Hartford-born J. Pierpont Morgan. Fond of the "Hartford" Morgan viewed the system not just as a lucrative commuter road, but one able to unify all forms of transportation in Southern New England with the rest of the west. To execute these ambitions, Morgan brought in his obedient servant Charles Sanger Mellon the future "Railroad Lord of New England" who had been running the Northern Pacific Railroad on his behalf. Mellon had arrived as captain of the New Haven in October 1903. Mellon during his term with the Northern Pacific had built the Midland Railway of Manitoba, a N.P.R. subsidiary, into Winnipeg, so he was familiar with the wheat trade and experience with Canada and Canadian Laws. Mellon had campaigned for the consolidation and the absorption of the New England railway territory as completely as possible into the Hartford. He had gained control of the Boston and Maine and the Maine Central railways by 1911.

Mellon planned to use his New England railway system as an eastern terminal for western grain shipments, from both the United States and Canada. The New Haven was also interested in securing passenger routes to vacation area's that could utilize its massive commuter passenger rolling stock. To these ends Mellon and the New Haven had acquired the New York Ontario and Western in 1903, and had jointly with the New York Central controlled the Rutland in 1911. Both these acquisitions gave the New Haven, the B&M, MEC system access to the Great Lakes Grain Trade and the Catskill, Vermont and the White Mountains areas.

The Quebec Central in 1911 had these same credentials. The Boston to Quebec City train service with its elegant Dining Car and through Pullman Sleeping cars was evidence the capacity of the Quebec Central for servicing and providing a tourist market from New England. Quebec City in 1911 was the eastern terminus of the Canadian Northern and was the only Atlantic Port directly served by the new National Transcontinental Railway. The Grand Trunk, Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific were all at Quebec and even the Delaware and Hudson was building towards Quebec with its QM&S. The Canadian Northern nor the Intercolonial had a direct connection with New England or New York. The Quebec Bridge was under construction and was expected to be completed shortly. There was a feeling on the part of many that Quebec City would be the new "New York City" of Canada in the Twentieth Century. The new large and fast Atlantic steamships, like the "*Titanic*", were planning to berth at Quebec for this port was one full day closer to Europe than New York City.

There had been a few rumours as early as the 1890s that the Boston and Maine had been interested in the Quebec Central for the B&M had acquired rights in the still-born Quebec and Boston Air Line in the late 1880s. Two events occurred to promulgate the New Haven system to seek control of the Quebec Central. The Grand Trunk, with its English Investors, planned with its Central Vermont, to extend into New England, and the Canadian Northern had reached an agreement to lay it's rails no further than Quebec City and to extend to the Atlantic only by running rights over the Intercolonial.

Several years earlier the New Haven had entered into an agreement with the Canadian Pacific whereby all New England territory was to be opened to the CPR through Newport, Vermont and the Boston and Maine. This arrangement to include the joint operation of the Quebec Central.

Another reason was that in 1910 the Quebec Government enacted legislation, under which all pulpwood cut on Quebec Crown Land must be manufactured within the Canadian Boundaries. What was exempt was pulpwood on private lands. Railway subsidies in Canada often had large land grants and sold off this was private land. It was in these private forests, mainly in the Allegheny Zone, the very forests served by the Quebec Central almost exclusively, that would be able to furnish most of the raw pulpwood exported to the mills of the United States. The New England railroads were making moves to protect the raw supply of pulp for the mills located in their territories.

Mr Walsh subsequently went to England to attend the spring annual meeting and made Mellon's offer to the Quebec Central Directors. The entire plan was rejected by the English Government because of the increased threat of war in Europe. England did not want any American ownership in Canada of what could be an essential industry. German interests had a considerable involvement in the asbestos industry in Quebec at this time.

Mellon when informed of the British decision told John Walsh to go and visit their mutual friend Sir Thomas Shaughnessy President of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Shaughnessy, it turned out, not only knew of the situation, but had made a deal with Mellon and the New Haven lines by which the Canadian Pacific would obtain the Quebec Central. The CPR would either sell or lease the Quebec Central to the New Haven in exchange for the Canadian Pacific receiving direct running rights into Boston and possibly New York. Sir Shaughnessy sent Gerald Farrell, a Montreal stockbroker with John Henry Walsh to England with the following proposal for the English Bondholders:

Under agreement the Quebec Central Railway was to be leased to the Canadian Pacific for 999 years at a Guaranteed Rental based upon the interest on the outstanding First, Second and Third Mortgage Bonds and 4% dividend on the outstanding stock for five years and 5% afterwards.

It was explained to the bondholders that it was in their best interest to lease the line to the CPR for their was increased anxiety that the Delaware and Hudson's proxy the Quebec Eastern was planning to link the Boston and Maine at Sherbrooke with both Quebec City and Montreal with branches to Lime Ridge and Thetford Mines. The Canadian Northern had also made an announcement that it would parallel the QCR.

The *Railway and Marine World* in August 1911 announced that the New York New Haven and Hartford and the Canadian Pacific were planning to jointly lease the Quebec Central. The local *Sherbrooke Daily Record* August 24th, 1911 told that the agreement between the QCR directors and the CPR was completed August 23rd by Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, subject to the ratification of the bond and shareholders.

October 2, 1911 the lease to the CPR was ratified by both the Quebec Central and the Canadian Pacific stockholders. On January 1st, 1913 the lease with the Canadian Pacific was in effect.

The Quebec Central was leased by the Canadian Pacific on behalf of the New York, New Haven and Hartford as part of a large scheme by Mellon and Morgan in an attempt to Morganize New England, that is to monopolize interstate commerce by controlling all the transportation facilities. The QCR - CPR lease came into effect just when the Morgan - Mellon castle fell apart. Early in 1913 J. P. Morgan died and Mellon was left in the mud of a large Sherman Anti-Trust debacle. On one day alone, November 3rd, 1914, twenty-one past and present directors of the NY, NH, & H were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury. Among those twenty-one named were the late J. P. Morgan, William Rockefeller, and Chauncey Depew. The Railroads involved besides the NY, NH & H, were the Boston and Maine, the Maine Central, the New York Ontario and Western, the Rutland, the Boston and Albany and numerous Steamship Companies. The Government compromise demanded that the New Haven abandon control over the Boston and Maine and the Boston and Albany Railroads immediately. There was to be no New York, New Haven and Hartford Railway of Canada.

The Canadian Pacific was left with a profitable orphan; for at the time of the lease the CPR only connected with the Quebec Central at Megantic, and over its tortuous interchange at Sherbrooke. The QCR interchanged with the Boston and Maine, the Grand Trunk twice, the Maine Central, the Intercolonial, the National Transcontinental and even the Canadian Northern. The Canadian Pacific was and still is an East-West railway system and only has a few short routes that run North-South. The Quebec Central was the Quebec and Boston Line. It could feed the CPR with long haul asbestos traffic, but the bulk of its passengers, and freight travelled North and south. Tourists from New York and Boston; working Canadians to and from the Mills of New England, Lumber and Pulp went south and Agriculture moved north to Quebec City. The New York Central, Delaware and Hudson, and Canadian Pacific even had their own New York City to Quebec route. For these reasons the Quebec Central head-office was Sherbrooke and not Montreal. It was to be independent.

An important element to the lease of the Quebec Central to the Canadian Pacific was the freight rate structure. The Quebec Central was maintained as a separate independent shortline leased by the Canadian Pacific but not owned by Canadian Pacific. Most of the QCR's traffic originated on its line from the asbestos mines, the pulpwood and lumber mills, paper mill and various mineral plants. Short lines that originate traffic have a preferential rate structure, whereby a greater portion of the freight rate or charges go to the originating carrier. This can only occur if the railway is a separate identity and it is this reason that the Quebec Central did have its own identity within the Canadian Pacific. It was important that as long as the freight rates were set by Quebec Central officials in Sherbrooke rather than by the Canadian Pacific it was deemed separate railroad from the CPR. The ICC upheld this principle more than once.

The traffic patterns reflect why the Quebec Central was separate. In a 1916 QCR Annual Report, it reported of the 29,132 cars interchanged from the QCR, 10,132 cars were interchanged with the CPR. This was all the competitive traffic originated on the QCR that could be routed over the CPR. Grand Trunk received 7,700 cars consisting of copper ore for Portland and pulpwood for Berlin, New Hampshire all non competitive points that the CPR did not reach. The Boston and Maine received 6,656 cars. In other words the CPR got 37.2%, the GTR 36.6%, and the B&M 22.8%, leaving the Intercolonial with 3.4%.

The management and policies of the Quebec Central did not change with the lease by the Canadian Pacific. In fact four new steam locomotives arrived in 1913, numbers **42** to **45** from Canadian Locomotive Company lettered in the Quebec Central large Gothic lettering. A new Quebec Central office building was opened on Wellington Street in Sherbrooke on January 3rd, 1914. The major noticeable change for the next twenty years that new engines did not come from locomotive works but were second hand Canadian Pacific locomotives. The youngest engine for the next forty years was QC No. **45** built in 1913; the bigger CPR G-2s were all older. The other was the implication of the Bury style of lettering in the period 1920 to 1928. The Quebec Central expanded its Newington shops, increased its own freight and passenger rolling stock. Even the use of the Grand Trunk station at Sherbrooke continued.

QUEBEC CENTRAL

1912-1931

PROGRESS IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA

The Quebec Central operated the National Transcontinental Railway from St. Anselme to Monk a distance of 77 miles from February 9th to May 13th, 1914. The NTR was completely blocked with snow, difficult to open up and regular train service was not inaugurated until March 2nd when one regular accommodation ran each way between St. Anselme and Monk. The reason, Brown Corporation had a large quantity of pulpwood it needed at its Berlin New Hampshire plant. The first train was a plow QC engine **21** and **27** engineers Charlie Wright and Arthur Ball. Engine **25** with engineer Duncan Ross was also used. An official train with engine **16** drew car **Sherbrooke** and boarding cars. It followed that engines **36, 37, 40** and **41** were used to power trains of 70 cars of pulpwood.

The return of Quebec Cardinal Begin from New York as the first Canadian Cardinal was a matter of great rejoicing in Catholic Quebec. The QCR put car "**Sherbrooke**" at his disposal. It was a great celebration along the entire Quebec Central June 1914.

The Chaudiere Branch expansion continued and on January 3rd, 1910 the railway opened to Ste. Justine. May 1913 work started at Ste Camille but with the commencement of World War I work was stopped at Riviere Noire in August and it wasn't until December 21st, 1915 that the line opened to Ste Sabine. Part of the reason for the delay was forest fires, one September 9th 1914 destroyed QCR's roundhouse and freight shed at St Camille. The terminal was transferred to Ste Sabine and finally to English Lake - Lac Frontiere, June 9th 1916.

The Quebec Central started an expansion of its shops at Newington in 1914, but the entire program had to wait until 1920 due to war restrictions. The terminal at Megantic was consolidated with the CPR facilities at this time.

In 1914 work started on a further extension from Ste Sabine on the Chaudiere Valley extension. Ten miles were completed to Daquam by May 1915 and an additional four miles completed by June 9th, 1916 to a point originally called English Lake but shortly renamed Lac Frontiere, an obvious reference to the station being located only a thousand feet from the Quebec-Maine border. It was always the intention to link with the Temiscouta Railway. Subsidies had been voted but it was explained by Mr. Walsh, at a trial held in conjunction with subsidies in 1938, that *"there was a desire on the part of the Minister of Railways not to spend any more money on railways during the war years and the government encouraged the railway to discontinue that development, and we were so advised and we stopped there."* When construction ceased it was impossible to secure sufficient labour to complete the work due to wartime conditions.

While the QCR still planned to build to the Temiscouta, it should be mentioned that the Aroostock Valley, an electric railway running between Washburn and Presque Isle, Maine planned in 1913 to become a part of a newly chartered company, the Quebec Extension Railway. The AVR connected with the CPR and has been controlled for many years by the Canadian Pacific. The Quebec Extension had obtained approval to construct an electric line from Washburn west 111 miles to a connection with the Quebec Central at Lac Frontiere. This dream continued until the late twenties, but eventually it died.

A short spur at Lac Frontiere allowed the company to take loads from Maine. This terminal was in the centre of a large lumbering district. Only two logging spurs were built, a one mile long railway was built at Daquaam, for in eastern Quebec the lumbermen did not built logging railroads. Instead they first used horses and sleds and transported only in the winter and then a modern marriage of a saddle tank steam engine and a tracked mechanism similar to a bulldozer, the Lombard Tractor. They hauled trains of pulp cars riding on skis. These trackless trains were used to bring pulp to the railway sidings or to frozen lakes during the winter months. Another railway was the Carter Brothers line that ran to the Maine border.

August 1st, 1917, a massive storm flooded the Chaudiere Region. The four span steel bridge, built in 1905 across the Chaudiere at Vallee Junction was lifted off its piers and swept several hundred feet down river during the greatest flood of the Chaudiere River. The railway was once again cut in two. Through trains were

routed over the Grand Trunk and local service was maintained between Levis and Scotts and Sherbrooke to Leeds. The railway immediately started the repair. A temporary wood trestle was built across the Chaudiere using borrowed CPR and B&M pile-drivers. Two weeks later through service was restored.

The Quebec Central prospered during World War 1 as shipments of asbestos and chrome came out of the Black Lake - Thetford Mines area. The end of World War I allowed the expansion of the Newington shops as originally planned in 1914.

The *Sherbrooke Daily Record* reported June 19th 1918 The French Arms Famous Blue Devils from Verdun travelled over the Quebec Central and were given a warm reception at each station they passed they travelled from Sherbrooke to Levis. A special welcome was given at Thetford where the mills had closed for the day.

December 13 1921 French Marshall Foch left Quebec on board a special double-headed passenger train comprised of Pennsylvania Railroad cars. At Tring Junction the train was turned on the wye to save time in Sherbrooke. Marshall Foch travelled in the car **Loretto**. Crowds turned out along the QCR. The train was composed of six coaches a private car, two Pullman sleepers, one diner, one club, and a combine.

Work on a new Quebec Bridge began in 1913, on the north cantilever span. Erection of the south span began in 1915 and work on both spans completed by September 1916. On September 11th during an attempt to lift the suspended span into position it crashed into the St Lawrence. The contractors took full responsibility for the accident. Work on a new center span progressed during the summer of 1917 that allowed the successful lift of the centre span on September 20th, 1917. The first National Transcontinental Railway train crossed the bridge on October 17th, 1917. The first NTR-CGR regular train crossed the bridge December 3, 1917.

The QCR had the right to built a line from Scotts north to the bridge as early as 1902, yet war conditions precluded an immediate connection in 1917.

The contract for the construction of the Scotts Junction - Quebec City line was awarded to J. T. & J. F. Davis and was signed April 7, 1920. At the time the contract was signed two routes were available to a connection with the C.N.R. One was only 8.1 miles from Scotts to the NTR (CNR) station at St. Isidore or a 19.3 mile route via St Lambert and Breakeyville to Diamond Jet (Charny). There was an agreement that the contract was originally for a line to St Isidore Station but that should the longer route to Charny be adopted the contract would apply for 8 miles on the new line and the contractor had the right to take the balance of the contract on the same terms. The first four miles were common to both lines and so construction would begin on that section while the management decided on the route. Work started on May 13, 1920 at Scotts Jct and then on July 16th the longer route 19.3 miles was adapted. Work commenced on the Quebec Bridge branch during the summer of 1920 by the contractors J.T. and J.F. Davis and work continued during the winter. This extension of nineteen and half miles from Scotts Junction to Diamond Jct. and a connection with the Canadian National Railways near Charny. Running nights over the Canadian National gave the QCR direct access into the city of Quebec. It was originally planned that the QCR would run over the CNR to the Champlain Street Station in preference to the Gare Palais or Parent Square terminals which are six miles further from the bridge. The Quebec Central commenced running through trains over the Quebec Bridge via the CNR, and into Quebec City over the rails of the CPR to Palais Station on Sunday, October 2, 1921. The through trains from Sherbrooke, Boston and New York all used this route, and the Levis to Scotts Jct was operated as a branch line.

The Scotts to Diamond Jct (Walsh) follows the Chaudiere River valley passing through the settled agricultural sections of Dorchester and Levis countries. Stations were erected at St Lambert de Levis and Breakeyville. At the latter point the pulp and lumber mills of the John Breakey Company were located. There are no major bridges on this portion of the QCR line. The maximum grade is 1%. The QCR first connected with the NTR (CNR) and by passed the town of Charny. Later this was changed and trains were routed along the old GTR-ICR line to the Charny station.

A tragedy occurred March 12, 1923 when the passenger train 35 from Lac Frontiere derailed one mile north of St Georges. The train left the track and the first and second class coaches slid down the embankment and toppled over, both catching fire from the oil lamps by which they were lighted. Both the cars were well filled and a wild scramble ensued. Three people lost their lives but unfortunately many more were saved.

Forest Fires

September 21, 1921
Ste Cecile

Large amounts of lumber were destroyed. One of the first places the fire attacked was the Quebec Central water tank. The water tank building was completely destroyed and in spite of the efforts of fire fighters was entirely destroyed and collapsed. It was the village's only reliable water supply. The lumber yards belonging to Laliberte and Gagnon were swept by the flames.

May 18, 1922

St. Fabien

A fire started at St. Fabien swept westward two miles to attack lumber piled along the QCR siding at Daquaam.

May 2 1922

Lac Frontiere

A serious fire at Lac Frontiere when millions of feet of lumber were destroyed in the mill of P.J Salls and Mr. Proulx.

October 5 1922

St. Juste and Roy's Siding

Fires destroyed a large quantity of lumber at St Juste and Roys Siding between St Camille and Daaquam on the Chaudiere line. At one point the village of Daquaam was threatened. Its one thousand inhabitants were prepared to desert the village. The Quebec Central kept trains in readiness all night to move the people who had no other means of escape since their village was surrounded by wood.

Trouble broke out in April 1923 when a strike by miners in Thetford Mines came to a head when strikers went to the residence of C H McNutt Asst. General Manager of the Asbestos Corporation took him from his bed, marched him around town; then put him on the 10:24 QCR train for Sherbrooke. There were false stories of further violence and the Province of Quebec sent the Provincial Police. Instead a few days later a conference was held in the Quebec Central Board Room in Sherbrooke, presided over by QCR's John H Walsh with Mining Company Officials, and local politicians to reach a friendly end to the labour issues.

The *Record* reported the QCR was completing a parlour cafe car at its Newington stops for service between Sherbrooke and Quebec on its Nos. 2 and 5 trains starting April 29, 1923. The dining car between Sherbrooke and Thetford Mines was expanded to run to Quebec on trains Nos. 1 and 6. Later in June 1923 a through buffet parlour car would commence between Quebec and Portland via Dudswell Junction and the White Mountains on the Maine Central and trains Nos. 2 and 6 along with the aforementioned Parlour cafe giving ample space.

Flooding in the area caused a number of disruptions to rail service in the fall of 1922. Owing to a washout just north of Ascot trains were routed via the CPR to Cookshire and MEC to Dudswell. When the CPR Cookshire Bridge was threatened by floodwater in September 1924 the CPR routed at least one St John-Montreal train over the QCR Sherbrooke - Tring Junction route to Megantic. The company experimented with Ledoux-Jennings a Rail Car between Levis and St Georges in 1922-1923.

The Maine Central in a surprise move, cancelled all operation of its trains on the Hereford Railway between Lime Ridge, and Beechers Falls effective November 1st, 1925. This brought to an end the direct through service between Quebec and Portland.

A Boston & Maine special train left Wells River May 13 1926 carrying B&M officials. Those B&M officials were D.S. Brigham, Asst. General Manager B&M, H.E. Folsom retired General Superintendent and President C&P.R.R.R. S. E. Miller, General Superintendent; F. C. Mayo Suptz, W.J Brackes, W.O. Forman and Mr Parke all of the B&M. The train travelled through Newport to Sherbrooke. The train then went to the QC Newington shops. The B&M officials were joined at the St. George Club in Sherbrooke by QC officials, Grant Hall, J. H. Walsh, J.T. Reid, G. D Wadsworth, C. H. Temple. John Walsh announced to the various assembled local business men, local government officials, and railway representatives that the Quebec Central would take over the operation of the Massawippi Valley Railroad from Lennoxville to the International Boundary with running rights directly to Newport.

The Boston and Maine and the Canadian Pacific railroads approved an agreement whereby the CPR subleased a portion of the Connecticut & Passumpsic Rivers Railroad for a period of thirty years.

"Boston and Maine Railroad, as well as its competitors, began to experience the effects of New England's decline as the major industrial heartland of the nation. Declining revenues, loss of passenger business and the inroads of interstate

trucking, forced the B&M management to take measures to protect the profitability of the company. A thorough study of the company's operation resulted in the implementation of a three prong program to reverse the decline in business."

In an effort to reduce losses by competing forms of transportation B&M General Manager E.S. French initiated a program of abandonment of unprofitable lines, improved passenger and freight services and a further reorganization of the company. In northwest Vermont a number of railroads were cast off. its principal markets in the west and the two principal Canadian railways rate structures were extremely attractive. The B&M secured only the short-haul to the CPR gateway at Newport. The CPR was desineous of competing with the Central Vermont - Canadian National route just not in the granite trade but on goods to and from new England at the White River Junction gateway.

According to *Canadian Railway and Marine World* the B&M had planned to relieve itself from operating the Massawippi Valley Railway. It was the only line operated by the B&M in Canada. At I.C.C. hearings the B&M testified that the Massawippi Valley originated little local traffic and that traffic was bound for Canadian roads except for unprofitable pulpwood.

The CPR agreed to pay the B&M \$246,000 annual rent. The acquisition of the Passumpsic lines was one reason the Hereford line of the Maine Central was abandoned, for two roads to New England were no longer needed. The deal between the QCR-CPR-B&M was the product of Mssrs French and Walsh, for the later besides his role as Quebec Central's General Manger was a director of both the Massawippi Valley and Hereford Railways.

Massawippi Valley Railway

It would be appropriate to review the history of the Massawippi Valley Railway Company at this time. The company was chartered in 1862 to provide a northern connection between the Connecticut and Passumpsic Rivers Railroad and the Grand Trunk. In 1869 work commenced on grading the line; at the same time the Massawippi Valley entered into an agreement with the Passumpsic to lease the railway for 999 years provided trains ran by July 1, 1870. The Massawippi raised money in Canada from various towns along the proposed route and from the Passumpsic itself.

July 1, 1870 saw both the formal opening of the Massawippi Valley Railway, and the lease to the Passumpsic for 999 years. The railway ran from Passumpsic connection at North Derby north along Massawippi Lake to Lennoxville with a short spur that ran to the border town of Stanstead - Rock Island - Derbyline. Interchanges were made at Lennoxville with the broad gauge Grand Trunk. An express train ran at this time leaving Lennoxville at 4:40 PM and arrived at White River Junction VCI'1'1'101'11 at 11:42 AM. The return train left White River Jct at 8:20 PM and arrived at Lennoxville at 3:27 PM.

It was in May of 1871 that the *Stanstead Journal* disclosed that the Passumpsic had decided to run trains into Sherbrooke over three miles of the GTR by dual gauge track into the Grand Trunk Station. This proposal aroused the ire of more than one Ascot Township resident for several weeks later a letter of complaint was sent to the *Journal* editor. It recalled

"that only a few short years earlier when the railroad was soliciting funds that meetings were held in Ascot for the purpose of inducing the ratepayers to authorize the said municipality to take \$40,000 of said stock without which, said road can not be built. That at first only \$25,000 was asked from Ascot but that subsequently the sum was increased to \$40,000 on condition that the terminus should be at the village of Lennoxville."

A third rail between Lennoxville and Sherbrooke was laid between July 1st and July 4th, 1871. Delays due to protests from Ascot-Lennoxville, and the dual-railing did not allow the Passumpsic to send its first train into Sherbrooke until November 1st, 1871. Besides laying a third rail on the inside of the Grand Trunk tracks, two tracks on the north side of the GTR yards were dual gauged. Two stalls in the round covered brick engine house were used by the Passumpsic. The annual rental was \$1,750 plus track maintenance costs of \$450. The engine house rental was \$20,000 for a 99 year lease. The dual rail system did not always work out for according to the *Stanstead Journal* an *"unusual collision occurred in June 1873 between a Passumpsic freight train and the southbound passenger train of the broad gauge Grand Trunk. The latter overtook the former on that part of the line with a third rail and smashed up one passenger car attached to the rear of the freight train and injured a number of cars. The engine of the Grand Trunk was disabled."*

This was not the first wreck to occur on the Massawippi Valley that event occurred in August 1871 when the southbound mail train derailed at Ayer's Flats after the tender of the engine crashed through a culvert. The engine that took the wrecked cars to the Passumpsic shops at Lydonville was itself involved in a collision with another train at Newport latter that day. The Passumpsic innovated the use of refrigerator cars in June 1873 as part of the Monday stock train that ran over the Passumpsic and the Boston, Concord and Montreal Railroads through to Boston.

The Passumpsic found that the connection with the Grand Trunk wasn't the prosperous venture it should have been. The GTR preferred to route its traffic bound for Boston via its Portland connections rather than turn it over prematurely at Sherbrooke. The Passumpsic looked for its own Montreal connection and to these ends, the Southeastern Railway came into the plan to play an important role. The Southeastern Counties Junction Ry ran from the S.S.&C at West Fanham to Richford, Vermont. The Passumpsic backed the Missisquoi and Clyde Rivers R.R. to connect Newport with the Southeastern. Passumpsic notes were issued in 1871 to build the Missisquoi & Clyde Rivers Railroad to fill the gaps, and the road opened shortly afterwards. The sum of \$350,000 was advanced to the little road, and the Passumpsic held all the first mortgage bonds. In addition the Passumpsic lent some \$60,000 to the Southeastern Railroad which agreed to lease the Missisquoi & Clyde Rivers Railroad to enable the road to be opened to Newport sooner than expected.

The Southeastern Railroad therefore made connection with the Passumpsic at Newport, Vermont and this provided a shorter route to Montreal than via Sherbrooke and the Grand Trunk. The Southeastern made arrangement with the Passumpsic whereby the S.E.R. would run their Montreal trains from the S.S. & C. Junction

at West Farnham to Newport. Then their trains were to run north over the Passumpsic line to Stanstead (Beebe) Junction and then to run over the short branch to Stanstead (Rock Island) Station. Stanstead-Rock Island was to become the eastern terminus of the Southeastern. The SER was to be given the exclusive use of the branch line between Stanstead J ct. and Stanstead with both passenger and freight trains to Montreal using this route without a change of cars. The Passumpsic built a turntable, and the SER built an engine house at Rock Island in the fall of 1873. Through train service between Rock Island and Montreal started running over this route via Newport December 15, 1873. This arrangement was short-lived with the management of the two railroads falling into a disagreement. After six months of Southeastern trains running over the Massawippi Valley they stopped running past Newport July 1, 1874, and instead settled to interchange with the Passumpsic at Newport. The Passumpsic began running a shuttle train on the Stanstead Branch from Stanstead to Newport.

In 1873 the International Railway, whose terminal was at Lennoxville was given running rights over Passumpsic's dual gauge line to Sherbrooke. In the fall of 1874 the Grand Trunk changed from Broad Gauge to Standard Gauge and the necessity of the dual gauge between Lennoxville was no longer required.

Through direct express trains ran between Montreal and Boston with the joint lease of the SER by the Passumpsic and the Boston, Concord and Montreal railways in April 1875. Problems arose with the Vermont Central portion of the route between St John's, Quebec and Montreal, forcing the Passumpsic to build their own entrance into Montreal. The Passumpsic and the Southeastern acquired the Montreal, Portland and Boston Railroad that ran from West Farnham to St Lambert, opposite Montreal. When the lease of the Missisquoi & Clyde River RR (that portion of the SER in Vermont) expired in 1876 it continued to be operated under a temporary contract.

Then in October 1877 when the Passumpsic lease of the SER expired. Colonel Foster, President of the latter road entered into a dispute with the Passumpsic that the popular press described as a "Railroad War". Colonel Foster attempted to seize the SER and M.&C.R. Track was torn up at North Troy, Vermont, and a northbound Passumpsic freight was seized at West Farnham. Tensions increased with SER trains seized in Vermont. Colonel Foster was arrested at Newport for a debt owed the Passumpsic. With the SER - CVR route severed the Passumpsic returned to routing express trains over the Massawippi Valley route to Sherbrooke. Talks were held with the Grand Trunk to extend Passumpsic running rights to Richmond where the GTR line connected with the Sherbrooke - Montreal route.

Eventually the Passumpsic took over the complete responsibility of the Southeastern and made arrangements whereby the SER was extended to Sorel, on the St. Lawrence and it secured a direct line, the Montreal, Portland and Boston, from West Farnham to Montreal.

The GTR Sherbrooke engine house fire of 1882, besides forcing the Quebec Central to move to Newington, also forced the Passumpsic to build a new engine house in Sherbrooke.

George Baker describes the system of railways developed between Newport and Montreal "*cost the Passumpsic much money most of it lost. The Southeastern went bankrupt in 1882, and the Passumpsic ceased to operate it and the Montreal, Portland and Boston after its sale, while the Missisquoi & Clyde Rivers Railroad was foreclosed two years earlier to reappear as the Newport & Richford*".

The Canadian Pacific Railway acquired both the Southeastern and the Newport and Richford Railways in 1883.

The Connecticut River Railroad had started to acquire an interest in a number of railroads along the Connecticut River including the Passumpsic around 1877. When the Boston & Lowell acquired both of the Passumpsic's Boston connections - the Boston Concord & Montreal and the Northern Railroad of New Hampshire the Passumpsic developed a very close relationship with the Connecticut River Railroad. Monarch sleeping cars used this route when the combined sleeping-parlour cars were inaugurated in July 1885. The cars originated on the Quebec Central ran over the Passumpsic and Connecticut River to Springfield where connections were made for New York and Boston. The Connecticut River Railroad allowed the Passumpsic to be leased by the Boston and Lowell effective January 1, 1887. The B & L had the first through route from Boston to Sherbrooke. The history of the railroads of New England was marked by aggressive competition between the Boston and Maine system and the Boston and Lowell system. Legal battles between the Boston and Lowell and Boston and Maine threatened to destroy both systems. Only a few months after the Lowell leased the Passumpsic, the Lowell was leased by the Boston & Maine April 1, 1887. The Boston & Maine had been soliciting connections in Canada. The B&M had backed a number of short lines, the Upper Coos, Hereford, Dominion Lime (Wolfe and Arthabaska), Breakey Lumber (Chaudiere Valley), that collectively would have become the Quebec - Boston Air Line that would have been direct challenge to both systems. The B&M backed

out of these extensions, when, it acquired the Sherbrooke extension.

The Passumpsic locomotives were taken into the B&M roster and most remained on the former Passumpsic until they were scrapped.

Both the Passumpsic and the B&M had contemplated extending their lines to Magog on the Vermont Central-CPR and Coaticook on the GTR. The Massawippi Valley Junction Railway had been incorporated in 1883. Lake Memphremagog and Lake Massawippi had gained a reputation as a summer resort area. Lake Memphremagog touched the Massawippi Valley at Newport. A steamboat, the *Lady of the Lake* ran for many years during the summer months between Newport and Magog. The wealthy Sir Hugh Allan had one of the many well maintained large summer villas along the lake. Massawippi Lake has also a reputation for being a summer watering place for wealthy Americans. Stately summer homes dot the lake. At North Hatley there were at least five major resort hotels and at Ayers Cliff there were a couple more.

On the night of March 12, 1894 the Night Express South from Sherbrooke arrived at Capelton to meet the northbound Night Mail train No. 11. No. 11 was supposed to be running half an hour late. No. 18, the Night Express, felt there was time to rim a little south, then to back into the siding to expedite the meet. The mail train came around the curve and crashed into the express train. Engineer McDuffer and Fireman Robinson were killed.

An extension was made to the Massawippi Valley Railroad in the summer of 1896 when a contract was awarded to M. M. McCarthy of Sherbrooke for an extension from Rock Island up the hill into the town of Stanstead. This was an extension of about one mile. The line left the old line, just before the Rock Island Station and enginehouse, climbed the hill to the new Stanstead station. Facilities included a small turntable for turning engines, and a single-stall engine house. The first train service commenced in November 1896. The old station and terminal at Rock Island - Derby Line were converted to a freight shed. A new Rock Island station half way up the one mile spur was also built. At this time a spur from Linesboro to the Stanstead Granite Quarry was built. The Boston and Maine switched the quarry.

The operation of the two mile Stanstead spur has been interesting from the earliest days of the Passumpsic. The operation officially called "Stanstead and Derby Line" but local residents preferred "Pollywog" and "Shoofly". Its usual consist was an old locomotive and an ancient combination baggage passenger car. It ran on a frequent schedule between Stanstead and Beebe Junction meeting all the trains between Newport and Sherbrooke, a couple daily trips to Newport and performed all local switching on both the Stanstead and Graniteville spurs.

Although the run was short, wrecks occurred on the Stanstead Branch. In 1893 the Stanstead train collided with a Canadian Pacific freight train diverted to the B&M due to construction on the CPR line, about two miles north of Newport. The CPR engine was wrecked.

In April 1899 the branch train derailed on the Martin Curve above Beebe Plain. The engine had been running tender first when the flange on the tender broke. The tender first fell on to the tracks and then twisted across the rails.

October 1900 saw another serious collision when B&M light engine 89 ran into the Stanstead Branch train at Linesboro.

A number of new structures were built around the turn of the century by the Boston and Maine. These included new stations at North Derby and Newport after fires destroyed them in April 1901 and January 1902 respectively. A new turntable and two stall engine house was built at Sherbrooke.

March 15th, 1904 a northbound Boston and Maine freight train was running over the Grand Trunk, just northwest of Lennoxville, met with a serious accident. B&M engine **754**, a Manchester Ten Wheeler, ran into the side of a CPR double-headed freight pulled by CP engines **991** and **997** at the diamond crossing where the mainlines of the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk crossed.

There were thoughts in 1910, when the B&M and Grand Trunk were at odds, over the latter plans to extend into New England, of terminating B&M trackage rights. Thoughts were expressed of moving the B&M terminal to the CPR yards. Nothing more was done to this proposal for relations between the GTR and B&M improved.

The Boston and Maine in conjunction with the Canadian Pacific began running a milk car in 1897. The car ran from Stanstead to Lennoxville then to Montreal.

The only name train that ran over the Massawippi Valley exclusively was the "*Golden Gate*". The Boston and Maine inaugurated it in 1893 to North Hatley. This provided service to the rapidly expanding resort area

along Massawippi Lake between Ayers Cliff and North Hatley.

The Boston and Maine dispatched many locomotives from White River Jct through to Sherbrooke. The locomotives used by the Boston and Maine on this route were composed originally of engines of the Passumpsic, Boston, Concord and Montreal and other earlier B&M components. In the early twenties B&M B class 2-6-0s, K-8 2-8-0s, 4-6-0 and even P-2 Pacific types ran north.

The driving rod on the northbound mail train broke in January 4th, 1909 1 1/2 miles north of Capelton. The broken rod, hit the cab, went right up through the cab, tearing off the entire side and the engineer Rickaby was thrown through the roof, then he fell back down, but the seat and the whole side of the cab was gone, and he ended up beside the rail only slightly bruised. The rod on the fire's side then broke, the air brakes on the train went on and the whole affair finally stopped.

The Boston and Maine for official purposes in 1916 had three passenger, seven freight, three switching engines, nine first class passenger coaches, six baggage-mail cars and 440 boxcars, 180 flat cars 5 cabooses and 5 work cars assigned to the Canadian Massawippi Valley.

June 1st, 1926 saw the lease of the Passumpsic and Massawippi Valley Railroads to the Canadian Pacific. The Quebec Central was assigned the task of operating the Massawippi Valley from Lennoxville to the Boundary and from Beebe Junction to Stanstead. The portion from the border to Wells River was leased by CPR subsidiary the Newport and Richford Railway. The Quebec Central was given running rights over the Newport and Richford from Newport to the border five miles.

The last Boston and Maine train left Sherbrooke at 9:15 PM pulled by a B&M "Grass Hopper" 4-6-0 number 2115. That night the Quebec Central ran a special train of three locomotives and 25 loaded cars as well as the necessary cars needed to establish operation of the line. Engineer Whitecombe took the first Quebec Central train to Newport pulled by QCR engine number 42.

In 1926 Quebec Central Railway trains continued to operate out of the Grand Trunk - Canadian National Sherbrooke Station. Newport trains operated as before over the CNR line from Sherbrooke to Lennoxville at least for the first year of QCR operation. The company had continued to use the CNR station, fourteen years after the CPR lease. A dispute between the CNR and QCR over the rental of space, especially for the dispatching office, divorced the two railroads. The QCR went to the Canadian Pacific station June 26, 1927.

The lease of the Massawippi Valley meant a number of improvements had to be made. A connection between the CNR and CPR lines at the Lennoxville diamond was made. Quebec Central trains from Newport connected with the CNR just east of Lennoxville, and ran 0.3 miles over that line through the heart of Lennoxville to the interlocking tower. QCR trains then rode the CPR mainline up to the Canadian Pacific upper town station.

The Quebec Central used Canadian Pacific's tracks from Newington to the CPR Sherbrooke station. There were improvements to be made to the CPR connection between Newington and the CPR station. The Quebec Central took over the one mile line originally built as part of the Waterloo & Magog - Vermont Central in 1885. It is the only portion of the Vermont Central's Sherbrooke extension that survived. This is a most dramatic operating portion of the QCR what with the long curving wood trestle at the bottom of a steep grade. The wood trestle was rebuilt; steel girder bridges replaced certain portions in 1924. The CPR had used the one mile spur to interchange with the Quebec Central and Grand Trunk railways in Sherbrooke. This trestle had seen a most unusual incident in 1899. The CPR shunting engine was returning from the Quebec Central yards, when it was halfway across the trestle, which is about fifty feet high, the engineer noticed something was wrong and at the same time one of the large driving wheels on the engine came off and fell from the trestle. In its descent it smashed several of the supports and cross beams. The engine much the worse for the experience succeeded on limping up the hill to the CPR station minus one driving wheel.

A Montreal - Newport parlour car started as part of the summer schedule commencing June 26, 1926, to better accommodate the summer residents along Lake Massawippi. In the first year the parlour car had to be taken down to the lower CNR - QCR station.

Flooding November 1927. Five washouts could be counted in the first between Lennoxville and North Hatley. From North Hatley along Lake Massawippi to Ayers Cliff the track was underwater. Five miles of track along the lake were completely undermined. Of the nine miles of track between Ayers Cliff and Tomifobia only three miles of line were intact. South of Tomifobia there was a washout fifty feet long and twenty feet deep. On the Stanstead Branch the Tomifobia bridge was displaced. Through regular service did not resume until November 28th, 1927.

Floods had plagued the Chaudiere valley lines during the spring of 1927 disrupting train service for a week. The railway was underwater from Scotts Junction to St Georges de Beauce. Washouts also plagued the line between Weedon and Coleraine. No sooner had these lines been fully rebuilt, when, in November 1927 extensive areas of southeastern Quebec and New England were inundated. The histories of the Rutland and Central Vermont are vivid with accounts of the great flood. While the QCR Massawippi Valley line was almost washed away the Sherbrooke to Quebec mainline remained open as well as its other branches. This allowed parent Canadian Pacific to route seven of its Montreal - Saint John trains over the QCR via Montreal - Quebec City - Sherbrooke - Saint John.

When QCR Newport service was restarted CPR trains from Montreal to New England were routed via the QCR while the CPR Richford Bridge was rebuilt. The water did not start to recede until November 6th, and then the repair work could start. Local traffic resumed November 16th but the CPR lines south of Newport were not reopened until a month later. Through passenger traffic had to be routed via the Grand Trunk to Portland. The lines north of Sherbrooke were not seriously affected.

About one year after the QCR commenced operation on the Newport line the railway wanted to cancel passenger service on the Stanstead Branch from Rock Island to Stanstead. This involved only the one mile portion built in 1896. This section had an excessive 3.5% grade. The QC had tried a rail-motor car on the line in the spring of 1927 and it was unable to cut the high costs of operation on the one mile line. Railway officials explained to angry citizens at town meetings that despite the proposed cancellation that a new passenger and freight facility would be built to serve the three communities of Stanstead - Rock Island, Quebec and Derbyline, Vermont. The site chosen would be the original location of the railway terminal built in 1870.

The railway assured residents that the tracks and the freight shed to upper town Stanstead would remain. Mr. Walsh explained:

"the proposal was to discontinue the passenger service only, between Rock Island and Stanstead. Fourteen local passenger trains were being operated daily with an average of only two passengers per train on the Stanstead extension and for each of these the railway received only five cents. The new plan was to do away with all branch trains and to run all main line trains through to Rock Island "solid". Adequate terminal facilities would be provided on the lower level at Rock Island, and local passengers would have the advantage of entering or leaving sleepers here."

Construction of the new terminal in the border town began in the spring near the site of the Rock Island freight shed. The railway brought in their steam shovel to evacuate the site so that the tracks would be below street level. Since the 1896 Stanstead extension a number of warehouses and garages had located in old Passumpsic yard.

The last passenger train ran over the Stanstead extension December 22nd, 1928 when QC passenger trains commenced operation from the new combined Rock Island - Stanstead - Derby Line Union Station. Freight service was still maintained on the Stanstead spur. An unusual feature of the new layout was the twin freight sheds. One shed was situated in Canada and another identical shed in the United States with the International Boundary running down the middle of the tracks. The mainline Quebec -Boston trains backed up the line from Beebe Junction to the new facility. While it might seem to be a major inconvenience, this was accomplished during the customs inspection. This procedure continued until the mid thirties when buses provided service to Rock Island.

In 1927 the Quebec Central developed a herald that was applied to its timetables and a sole motor inspection car.

The new international route gained additional passenger traffic during the prohibition era as dry Americans took trains north to the lenient Province of Quebec. Smuggling has always been a problem, it increased during prohibition but one unusual went stands out. One night in October 1929 the QCR were switching a car of beer at Stanstead and to the surprise of the crew it got away from them going down grade through the switches at Beebe Jct entered the mainline heading south disregarding the international boundary rolling south into the United States. The crew gave chase and succeeded in capturing what had quickly become a car of illegal contreband at Lindsay's Beach near Newport. This must have been the first case of a railway car voluntarily attempting to smuggle booze into the United States.

In the late twenties the Quebec Central passenger trains between Sherbrooke and Quebec carried a

recently rebuilt Parlour-Cafe car. Pullman cars still ran to Boston and Springfield, where at the later point connections were made for New York City.

During 1930 two of the old wooden covered bridges over the Tomifobia River between Ayers Cliff and Boyton, on the Newport line were replaced by through steel girder bridges. Further a number of trestles on this division were reinforced to permit the operation of the company's heaviest locomotives between Sherbrooke and Newport and to avoid the necessity of double heading heavy trains with lighter locomotives which has been necessary owing to the limited capacity of the bridges.

John Henry Walsh retired from the position of the General Manager of the Quebec Central on January 31st, 1931. Mr Walsh's contribution to the Quebec Central cannot be understated. When he was appointed the General Manager in 1906 the gross earnings were \$789,000 but by 1929 it had climbed to \$3,223,000. The railway had 218 miles of track in 1905. It had increased to 362 miles by 1929. The most important contribution was the independent status the company enjoyed under the umbrella of the global Canadian Pacific. The Quebec Central, not only, kept its identity after 1913, due in no small part to Mr. Walsh the company had expanded. The maximum number of locomotives the company owned was 52, in 1930. The maximum number of freight cars the company owned was 1067 in 1928. There wasn't a piece of equipment on the property that wasn't lettered Quebec Central in the twenty-five years Mr. Walsh was General Manager Mr Walsh continued his connection with the railway through his role as Vice President an appointment given him in September 1, 1927.

Gifford D Wadsworth assumed the role of General Manager of the Quebec Central upon the retirement of Mr Walsh. Mr Wadsworth joined the Quebec Central in 1899 as a messenger boy rising to the position of general freight and passenger agent in 1918. Mr Wadsworth became assistant general manager in 1928. Mr Wadsworth also continued the role of the Quebec Central in the affairs of the Temiscouata.

The Quebec Central maintained two passenger trains on the Lac Frontiere line in 1931. The depression forced a change to reduce the operating deficits of the branch line trains. Lumbering had been curtailed in the district, so revenues in 1931 had declined dramatically. In this sparsely populated region the railway could not diminish or abandon train operation without substituting another form of transportation. The first move was to turn Morrisett into a small engine terminal, complete with bunkhouse and turntable. The two daily trains running between Lac Frontiere and Levis were cancelled in their place a mixed train ran between Lac Frontiere and Morrisett. At Morrisett it met a daily passenger train that ran from Morrisett to Vallee Junction. The mixed train continued later that day to Vallee Jct.

Quebec Central Transportation Company

Quebec Central officers J .H. Walsh, G.D. Wadsworth, A. Brooks and J . Roy incorporated, the Quebec Central Transportation Company, a highway subsidiary in 1931, to serve the same area served by the railway. Its purpose was to stop an outside bus threat to QCR operating area while, at the same time reducing the operation of unprofitable passenger trains. The power included the QCT: "to establish in the territory served by the QCRy Comp. and in the interest of and co-ordination with its railway, a system of motor vehicles and other conveyances to transport persons and goods of all kinds that may be found convenient not to carry by railway.

August 30, 1931 the QCT obtained its first twenty-one passenger G.M. coach with a mail compartment to a Levis-Morrisett run. This would seem to be an evolution of the railcar run a decade earlier. The bus left Morrisett 5:30 AM arriving at Levis 9:50AM with the return trip leaving Levis at 5:35 PM arriving back at Morrisett 9:45 PM daily. The coach stopped at any point to pick up passengers, and QCR tickets were honoured on QCR buses. The motor coach replaced the previously mentioned passenger trains 30 and 33, so that those trains could be downgraded into mixed trains.

This service was so successful that in the following year a bus route in 1932 between Sherbrooke and Newport, Vermont replacing mixed trains numbers 50 and 51. Buses would soon replace the practice of running mainline passenger trains backwards up to Stanstead-Rock Island for two miles.

Railway passenger service declined dramatically during the thirties, as previously mentioned Pullman and coaches ran through daily to New England. In 1933 the Quebec to Boston sleeping car was semi-weekly leaving Quebec Tuesday's and Thursday's, the Pullman leaving Boston on Wednesday's and Fridays. A Pullman left Sherbrooke Sunday's and a car ran from New York Fridays. Through coaches had been cancelled and even a parlour cafe car was removed from trains No. 2 and 5. Travellers on these trains had to be content with box lunches sold by news vendors. These trains had reverted to using the Levis terminal, no doubt a result that Levis was a terminal station in the Montreal - Quebec Pool Zone. This was part of an agreement between CNR and CPR to honour each other tickets in the Ontario and Quebec regions. Trains 1 and 6 still maintained parlour-cafe cars.

QUEBEC CENTRAL

1931-1945

In 1930 and 1931 a number of the small stations were closed as open agencies and caretakers installed. During the depression year much of the QCR's traffic was generated from pulpwood sidings on the Megantic Branch particularly the Breakey Lumber operations at Dorset near Courcelles. In fact a survey was made in 1930 for a logging spur eight miles long from Dorset Siding to the Breakey's timber limits. The QC ran so many extra trains that they contemplated putting in a turntable so that engines didn't have to run backwards from Courcelles to Tring Junction.

Commencing June 28 1931 the QCR started running passenger trains 2 & 5 to Levis to help holster traffic on the branch line and also an effect of the new "Pool train" program worked out by the CNR & CPR that had Levis as the furthest point.

John Henry Walsh couldn't fail to note: *"That the good, old Quebec Central was an amazing evidence of the worldwide depression. The side tracks were full with empty box-cars, which were weather-beaten and in a state of disrepair and looking for all the world like forlorn and ragged tramps, standing in line, awaiting a bowl of soup, which, in this case would have been freight. Everything was at a standstill. Where, in years gone by, comfortable prosperous and charming little villages, with the platforms of the stations loaded with happy, well-clothed people, were the usual sights that greeted traveller's eye - there were now numerous deserted towns, an absence of smoke from the stacks of the mills and the asbestos mine, which, in the past had given off great clouds of dust, were now idle and disorganized."*

Between 1930 and 1931 there was a dramatic 41.6% decrease in Revenue Tons carried and a 37.2 decrease in earnings.

During the early years of the bus operation of the QCR, the roads in the Province of Quebec were not ploughed during the winter. Motor operation was curtailed during the winter and passenger trains regained all the passenger traffic that abandoned the railway in the summer. A bus service between Sherbrooke and Thetford Mines was inaugurated in May 1934, and a month later QCT service was extended between Beauceville and Lambton. Passenger trains on the Megantic subdivision were reduced to a tri-weekly service as a consequence during the summer. Additional bus service was placed on the Sherbrooke to Rock Island route. This service operated all year round.

The depression years saw asbestos mills closed and timber lands logged out. A large source of traffic was the Breakey Lumber Company, Nomqally, they floated their wood down the Chaudiere to their mill at Breakeyville. Breakey owned a very large strand of timberland just north of Courcelles, midpoint on the Megantic line. Breakey reached a large deal with Brompton Paper, in 1932. With two paper mills on the St Francis River and mountains in between water transport was not an option. Pulpwood cut at the site was hauled by Lombard Steam Tractors, pulling log sleds, over ice road miles to a log pile at Courcelles in the winter. A five mile railway had been surveyed. The logs were then loaded into special or extra trains, hauled up to Tring Junction, then the train would roll south, to St Gerard on the St Francis River. Brompton Company had a long trestle that allowed cars to empty the pulpwood into the St Francis, where it could be floated down the river to it's paper mills at East Angus and Bromptonville.

July 31, 1936 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made the first Official visit by an American President to Canada. Travelling from his summer home at Campobello Island, in his special train, routed by the Maine Central and then Canadian Pacific's International of Maine it arrived at Megantic. The train was composed of a CPR steel baggage car, two CPR and two Pullman sleeping cars, two New York Central Dining and Club cars and the Pullman Private Car "*Pioneer*." The Quebec Central coupled engines 42 and 45 to pull this enormous train over the light railed Megantic Branch from Megantic to Tring Junction. At Tring Junction QCR 2554 waited, then pulled this train, down the Chaudiere to Quebec City. The QCR train then travelled through the new CPR tunnel to Wolfes Cove Landing. The crew consisted of Engineers; H. J. Wark, S. Lehuray, and Firemen Forest and Dunn. The Conductor was L. Legendre.

In 1933 the Old Colony Coach lines of Boston extended service from Boston and Portland to St Georges were it connected with QCT buses. This service ran July 4th to Labour Day only.

In 1933 trains 2 and 5 Sherbrooke to Levis became mixed trains and remained as such during the depression years.

The bus route between Beauceville and Lambton was extended through to Megantic in 1937, allowing a through Levis - Megantic run. In the same year the company acquired its first streamline bus for, operation between Sherbrooke and Newport. During these early years QCR engineers after transferred to the bus company as drivers during the summer.

The QCT had served as a parallel operation to the QCR but in 1938 it expanded down the Chaudiere Valley via the Levis-Jackman highway on a route reminiscent of the early Levis and Kennebec Railway. A new service was run between Levis and Armstrong. An additional service was provided between Black Lake to Vallee Junction.

1939 was a year of change for the Quebec Central, patriarch John Henry Walsh died in February, the Newington roundhouse and shops ceased to be railway facilities, a dramatic number of QCR rolling stock was scrapped and the through Pullman to Boston and New York was cancelled after fifty-four years of through sleeping car service between Ancient Capital and The Hub. Soon the bus would be called to maintain tradition of the Quebec and Boston Line.

In 1939 Canada experienced its longest and most elaborate Royal Visit of a reigning monarch and his consort. In that year, Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth toured the country from coast to coast and visited the United States as Well. Canadian Pacific played a major part in the transportation arrangements. After travelling across Canada, the royal couple paid a visit to President Roosevelt. The monarchs returned to Canada in the early morning of June 12, 1939. The Delaware & Hudson delivered the special train, to the Canadian Pacific at Delson, Quebec. Canadian Pacific engine **2850**, latter the "Royal Hudson", sped the royal blue and silver train eastward one hundred miles to Sherbrooke. The Royal Couple made a brief auto tour of the city jammed with 100,000 people along the two mile route while back at the station the Quebec Central prepared to take over the Royal Train. The company had ran many special trains, earlier that day, to Sherbrooke for the surrounding roads into Sherbrooke, had been closed. Canadian Pacific Hudson Engine 2850 was cut off at the station, and put into a siding, and the switch promptly spiked closed. The Quebec Central planned to use a double-headed combination of two CPR G-2 class Pacifics, engines **2625** and **2658**. The engines had been stored at "Armstrong" siding near the Alexander Street crossing. With the "Royal Hudson" safely stored away the two engines backed up to the station and coupled on to the Royal Train. The engine crew in the leading **2625** were engineer A.D. Ball and fireman W.E. Pettes and in the cab of **2658** were engineer H.J. Wark and fireman D. Brault. The conductor was J. Roy with A. Doyon and L. Legendre as trainmen. Mr R. F. Thomas the General Air Brake inspector and P.J. Johnson division Master Mechanic of the CPR also travelled on the two engines.

With every switch spiked between Sherbrooke and Charny Engineer Ball gave two blasts on the whistle at 12:30PM. and the train pulled out of the CPR station with the 1195 ton 12 car train. The Royal Train was run over the QCR as third No 1 for a pilot train carrying the press preceded as second No. 1. The pilot train, with engines **2609** leading and **2629**, was manned by engineers B. Dean and A. Spry, with E.J. Forrest and W.S. Varney as firemen. The conductor was H. Nadeau with R. Dovvnes and H. Samson assisting him. The Pilot Train ran forty-five minutes ahead of the Royal Train. When the Royal Train left Sherbrooke the Pilot Train was just arriving at Ascot. It started to rain. The Royal Train passed the stations at East Angus and Thetford Mines at a very slow rate of speed so as to allow the people to see Their Majesties the King and Queen on the back observation railing. The heavy train and wet rails taxed the two light engines so that the train arrived at Thetford Mines at 3:50 PM more than an hour late, behind the scheduled arrival time. Rain was falling, the rails were slippery and the grades severe. The engines took on water at the Leeds tank near the summit, and then the Royal Flyer charged down the Chaudiere grades to the Beauce. News correspondents started phoning into the Quebec City newspapers from Vallee, Ste. Marie, and Scotts. The train was coming, the train was moving, the train was running fast, the senior engineers were making up time, running like the Boston Express and the New York Flyer of earlier years. The train arrived at Charny on time, and the train was turned over to the Canadian National Railways. CNR engines **5263** and **6028** took over the train from the QCR and proceeded to pull the train to Levis, and then eastbound to the Atlantic. Sadly that 1939 eastbound special was a prelude to other eastbound specials that would all too soon dominate Canadian dispatchers trains sheets for the next six years.

September 1939 saw Canada at War and for the most part the lower St Lawrence was soon closed to navigation due to the U-Boat menace, and Halifax and Saint John, NB, became Canada's Atlantic ports year round, and train movements reflected this. Eastbound grain extras were routed over the QCR between Quebec City to the CPR at Megantic.

A military camp at Megantic involved the railway in a number of regular and special movements. The Newington Shops, closed only months prior to the war, were taken over by the government and converted into a "jewish refugee internment camp" and then latter a POW camp.

In 1938 a number of Canadian Pacific D-10s were sold to the Quebec Central and they replaced most of the original inventory of motive power by 1940.. They were only slightly heavier than most of the QCR engines.

"Previous to 1926, the Quebec Central Ry, in conjunction with the Maine Central Railway, operated a through Passenger train service between Quebec and Portland via Dudswell Junction, which, however, was discontinued that year due to the abandonment by the Maine Central Rd. of the link between Dudswell Jct and Beechers Falls. The Quebec - Portland line was a lucrative passenger route and for many years it was in the minds of both the Quebec Central and Maine Central officials eventually to resume a through service between these points over the highway the idea was consummated with the inauguration in 1940 of a through daily bus service between

Quebec and Portland Maine."

The Quebec Central-Maine Central service had started July 3, 1940. A through motor coach was operated by the highway subsidiaries of the two railways between Portland Maine and Quebec City. Due to wartime restrictions it was operated on a tri-weekly basis rather than a daily run as was originally planned. The service was continued the following year, but for various reasons was changed in 1942 to a connecting service at Jackman, Maine. The Quebec Central Transportation Company buses operating between Quebec and Jackman with the Maine Central buses running between Jackman and Portland. With the entrance of the United States into the Second World War restrictions were placed on the operation of Maine Central buses that precluded MEC participation during the duration of the War.

War restrictions also forced the discontinuance of some QCT bus services and their replacement by trains. These cuts were, June 28 1942, the Sherbrooke - Vallee Jct route and, in the following year, the through Megantic - Vallee - Levis route was cut back to a Vallee - Megantic local service.

Due to the fact that shipping was restricted in the St Lawrence during the war years the Megantic Subdivision took renewed interest as a through route between Quebec and Canada's Atlantic Ports and through freight service was inaugurated between Quebec City and Megantic.

December 4th, 1942, through coaches from Lac Frontiere were attached to the mainline trains at Vallee Jct. This eliminated the trouble of having to change trains at Vallee Junction. Due to complaints of the local residents about the delays in running the mixed train on the Lac Frontiere line the Board of Transport Commissioners ruled February 13th, 1943 that the QCR mixed train No. 34 three times a week should consist of the regular passenger equipment and only one LCL car and that three times a week all regular freight traffic should round out the consist. The Lac Frontiere - Morrisett would carry regular freight every day.

Mr Wadsworth retired in June 1944, the last total QCR career General Manager. His tenure of office spanned the depression and war years and he left as his major contribution the development of the bus line from a solution to the expensive local trains, to an international service linking Quebec with the major New England cities. Mr F.A. Pouliot was appointed the new General Manager. Mr. Pouliot was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1896 and entered the service of the CPR in 1911. He had served in a number of positions prior to his appointment to the Quebec Central. His appointment as we noted was a marked change from appointing Quebec Central employees and showed that in regards to the QCR administration the Canadian Pacific had started to look on the QC more as a division than a separate railroad.

1945 saw the war end, and the QCT acquired a Flexible Clipper and two buses transferred from Canadian Pacific Transport Company of Brandon Manitoba. The bus routes reduced during the war years were reinstated June 1st, 1945.

Quebec Central during the summer of 1945 aided in the handling of military returnees; QCR engines were used on the CPR Saint John-Montreal route and in August, Quebec City became a point of debarkation and a number of special troop trains were operated.

The most disastrous train wreck in the history of railway occurred on a quiet Sunday morning, March 10 1947. A double-headed northbound extra freight crashed into the rear of a standing freight train, heading for the Levis Branch waiting at the Scotts Junction Station. Two engines and ten cars smashed into the rear of the train rolling off the tracks demolishing the station. Engineer N.E. Lyford, fireman W. Billings, trainman L. Cyr and A Cloutier were killed. Mr Cloutier was killed while standing in front of the station when he was struck by timbers from the station, as it was demolished. J. A. Lambert, the station agent was buried in the smashed building and was dug out alive. Three other employees, engineer A. Fuller, fireman J. E. Davies and L. G. Lachance were injured. Mr Lachance, the conductor on the train standing at the station was literally blown right out of the caboose. When the train hit the wooden caboose the car was splintered and ripped apart, throwing Mr Lachance clear of the wreck alive. The caboose was torn to pieces with only the wheels left on the tracks. The station and Quebec Central's **878** and Canadian Pacific **885** were demolished.

The entire administrative and operational organization of the Canadian Pacific was expanded from a two region to a three regional system in an announcement made August 1947. Mr Pouliot was transferred to Montreal, Mr Fraine a native of Medicine Hat, Alberta, was to become the new Quebec Central General Manager. He had started his career with the CPR in 1927 and his prior assignment was superintendent of the CP Laurentian Division. He served in this capacity from 1947 to 1950. A. M. Hand assumed the post of General Manager from Mr Fraine until 1956. Mr. Hand had joined the CPR in 1923 as an office boy in the Montreal office. He had served as Asst. Superintendent of both the Laurentian and Bruce Divisions, Superintendent Toronto Terminals then Assistant to the Vice President Eastern Region prior to his term with Quebec Central.

QUEBEC CENTRAL

1945-1960

General Motors modern *Train of Tomorrow* - diesel powered pulling astra domes travelled over the Quebec Central Sunday October 9th, 1949.

In 1946 the Asbestos Corporation asked the Quebec Central to divert a portion of its line near the Beaver Mill at Thetford Mines. The railway purchased a portion of land from the mining company years earlier but the later retained the mining rights and had the right to require the diversion of the railway. During the realignment of the city of Thetford Mines pressed for the need to reduce two grade crossings. The railway company was required by an order of the Board of Transport Commissions to rebuild two miles of its line to accommodate the mine and to build two underpasses on its line at mileposts 66.0 and 67.2 south of the Thetford station. The work was completed by December 22nd, 1949. This section was short-lived, its useful life extended only five years and rails were removed as part of the larger realignment of 1954.

October 31, 1951 saw the discontinuance of passenger service by train over the Massawippi Valley between Sherbrooke and Newport. Bus service by the QCT continued to provide part of a direct Quebec - Boston service.

May 3, 1948 the QCT had acquired the equipment and local franchises of a local operation in St Georges from a Mr Hunse of Victoriaville. A number of school buses were acquired at this time as part of the purchase. The school buses were used to transport children from the surrounding area to school in St Georges and return under contract with the school commission, but it was not the type of business that the QCT desired to operate and later the buses were acquired from the QCT by two of its drivers, who then entered into contracts with the schools. Also sold were the local services the QCT operated within St Georges and the surrounding area.

Gradually buses replaced most train service, not only the local services. In connection with American bus companies, the QC operated through services between Quebec City and all the major New England destinations. A major bus accident occurred at Lambton October 30, 1948 when a bus from Megantic descended a hill into the village and over ran an intersection. It hit the tanks of a gas station and overturned with a resulting fire. Many people were killed or injured. Heavy claims on the company affects its position for a long time.

Lambton Wreck October 30 1948. Four people were killed when a QCT autobus while travelling between Megantic and Tring Jct ran out of control, tipped over and crashed into a gas station at Lambton. In the ensuing explosion that engulfed the bus and garage the driver and three passengers were killed and thirteen people injured.

Asbestos Corporation, Bell Asbestos and Johnson's Company had been mining the same ore body for many years. The open pits of each company had come together. Since 1932, block caving had been used underground. Problems were arising from the subsidence of the ore body as it extends to the surface endangering buildings from collapsing into the mine. The three mining companies formed a company called Relocations Limited. Relocations Limited acquired all the dwellings, schools, stores and industrial establishments and relocated them elsewhere. In determining the maximum area of danger, it was found that the move would involve Provincial Highway No. 1, the Quebec Central tracks, passenger and freight facilities, 150 houses, a school and a few stores. The first phase included the removal of the highway and railway facilities and replaced them one mile to the west. In 1953 the Quebec Central built a new route from a point halfway between Thetford Mines and Black Lake sweeping across the Becancour River on a high deck girder bridge to a new station facilities. The relocation caused 8.23 miles of mainline track to be laid with 24 turnouts and 4.45 miles of new yard track. A wye was built with a short spur that ran east the old mainline, which then became part of the spur used to reach the asbestos mills and oil tanks. The railway station dating from 1908 was demolished the rails were pulled up from the station south to the Beaver Mine. The Beaver Mine was served by a short spur from the mainline at Black Lake. The new mainline was opened to traffic on September 16, 1954. The last train to use the old station was on September 16, 1954, and the first train to use the new station was at 6:00 PM engine **2536** Engineer Alfred Vachon heading north.

The line from Rock Island to Stanstead saw only a few cars of feed, but most of its traffic was coal brought in for the school in the fall, and this became a problem for crews as the grade is steep and the grass was high causing engine wheels to slip. September 1954, Quebec Central officials met with the Stanstead town council regarding the proposed abandonment of the one mile spur from Rock Island to Stanstead the line built in 1896, and last saw passenger service in 1928. It was in November 1955 that the town and railway reached an understanding to allow the railway to pull up the track that month. The rails from Stanstead station to a point close to the Rock Island Station were taken up.

The large annual snowfall has meant that the railway operates more snow plow extra trains than any division of the Canadian Pacific. Railroaders talk of plow trains immobilized in mountains of snow, of endless hours snowbound, but no other event symbolizes the Quebec Central's battle with snow than the events of March 22nd, 1955. The Sunday night passenger train left Quebec City at 4:10 PM for its nine o'clock arrival in Sherbrooke, with snowplow, baggage car, three coaches, one restaurant car, and 150 passengers on board. Its

departure was amidst a raging blizzard that had hit southern Quebec. It left in its wake ten-foot snow drifts, and such a drift occurred in a cut near St Lambert de Levis. At 5:10 PM that Sunday night Quebec Central train number 6 stalled in that drift. It became helpless as an additional ten feet of snow tumbled onto the train sitting in the cut. The conductor and trainman were forced to fight their way through the blizzard for two miles to get help. The Quebec Central immediately responded with a double-headed plow extra that night. It failed to reach the stranded train and the plow extra itself became stuck. The townspeople of the St Lambert area responded, more than one hundred volunteer snow-shovellers rallied to the train. They worked from dawn to 9:00 PM Monday night. Bertrand Fontaine, the owner of a local general store ferried food and blankets to the passengers using snowmobiles. A plow train succeeded in reaching the stricken train at 8:35 PM Monday night. Passengers on the train who had played cards, sung and slept during their unscheduled stop over, cheered their rescuers as the train pulled out of the cut. But celebrations were kept to a minimum in St Lambert de Levis as dead tired workers trudged home to their farms for a good night's sleep. The train had been snowbound twenty-nine hours. It had received front page national newspaper attention - complete with aerial photographs. Sherbrooke put on an impromptu welcome when the train arrived in the early morning hour of 4:00 AM Tuesday March the 29th.

Mr Hand was succeeded by J. U. Brazeau, previously Asst. Superintendent of the Smiths Falls and Laurentian Divisions. Mr Brazeau was the QCR General Manager between 1956 and 1961.

Hearings were held January 28 and 29, 1957 by the Board of Transport Commissioners at Levis regarding the discontinuance of train service between Levis and Scotts Junction. In an order 90891, dated February 5th, 1957 the BTC authorized the railway to discontinue passenger trains Nos. 2 and 5 on the Levis Subdivision provided the company would operate a trial mixed train from Vallee Junction to Levis. The application to discontinue the mixed train between Lac Frontiere and Vallee Junction was dismissed.

February 17, 1957, saw the inauguration of "Dayliner" service on the Quebec Central. Two RDC-1 or "Budd Cars" leased from the Canadian Pacific were placed in service between Sherbrooke and Quebec City. The units were operated as single units weekdays and in tandem on weekends. They cut one hour and thirty-five minutes from the previous steam train schedule.

Under the new schedule train 2 left Quebec at 6:30 AM arriving Sherbrooke at 10:15 AM. Train 1 left Sherbrooke fifteen minutes later at 10:30 AM arriving Quebec 2:15 PM. Train no. 4 left Quebec at 3:45 PM arriving at Sherbrooke at 7:30. The railway achieved maximum utilization of its equipment under this schedule.

Between February 18, 1957 and August 6, 1957, mixed trains 27 and 28 ran daily except Sunday between Levis and Vallee Junction. A review for the BTC of the record of passengers showed an average of 2.9 passengers were handled each trip and that 65% of these were between Levis - Ste. Henedine Station. The BTC allowed the discontinuance of the mixed train August 7, 1957 and the service on the branch was handled by a three days a week way-freight.

The Levis subdivision was the second branch to have passenger trains withdrawn. The Newport line had seen its gas-electric car 9007 removed October 31, 1951. It must not be forgotten that the company was not abandoning passenger service but was simply replacing the trains with buses. Mixed trains ran on the Lac Frontiere and Megantic subdivisions until August of 1960.

With the coming of the Dayliners the five G-2 engines that had regularly pulled passenger trains were transferred to freight and mixed train service. Quebec Central engines were often used as helpers on the CP Sherbrooke - Megantic route. As CPR's dieselization program progressed, more and more, D-10s and G-2s, from the parent turned up on the QCR. The Atlantic Region was one of the last to be fully dieselized and that was in 1960. Most of the systems last steam engines were transferred to the Atlantic Region prior to scrapping.

But even in the late fifties CPR diesels started turning up on the QCR. Most of the diesel proven in the Atlantic Region has been Montreal Locomotive Works equipment. The Canadian Pacific had dieselized its yard services in Sherbrooke in the late forties. These Montreal and Alco switch engines helped QC freight trains up the grade from Newington to the Sherbrooke Station. On more than one occasion two S-2s were coupled on to a steam doubleheader for the pull and drag to the upper town yards.

March 1960 saw the end of steam operation on the railway. It appears that event went unrecorded and it is not known which steam engine pulled the very last train. During the last years of steam, the Quebec Central was not unlike other railroads when the trains were pulled by whatever engine could run from Sherbrooke, so engines from the CP and QC were used interchangeably. What ever could run on a given day went out to Farnham, Megantic, Vallee Jct or Newport. August 1960 saw the end of mixed train service on the Lac Frontiere and Megantic lines.

After 1960 individual diesel units were not assigned the Quebec Central, for all units were assigned to St Luc Yard, Montreal. There was little equipment owned by the Quebec Central Railway after 1960.

Automobile, and competition from taxes, as well as other bus lines together with the debt from the Lambton accident caused the QCT to be offered for sale. Although there were a number of offers they were

unattractive and the General Manager and the Manager of Freight and Passenger Traffic Clarence G. Blake made representations to continue to operation where upon they were given a year to affect an improvement. They succeeded in putting the operation "in the black". The Provincial Transport Company then made an attractive offer, but the company was then reluctant to sell, countered with a higher offer and certain guarantees, which to the amazement of Quebec Central Transportation management, was accepted. Like the railway, in an earlier period, the bus company catered, in the beginning, to local traffic, but later improved its services with more modern equipment on routes between Quebec, Portland, Hampton Beach and Boston towards the sixties a daily through service was provided from Sherbrooke to New York City. July 15, 1965 the Quebec Central Transportation Company was sold, so the company was left with only the Dayliner operating between Sherbrooke and Quebec, and that was now down to one round trip per day.

The Quebec Central Railway filed its application to discontinue the operation of passenger trains Nos. 1, 2 and 4 between Sherbrooke and Quebec City on November 26th, 1965. A hearing of the Board of Transport Commissioners was held at Thetford Mines October 5th, 1966. Mr. F. S. Champagne Manager of the Quebec Central, Mr. Clarence. Blake, Manager of Freight and Passenger Traffic and Allan E. Brown senior research analyst of the CPR were in attendance. Mr. Blake explained that nine local bus companies served the territory and had in past years provided competition to its service. The railway had attempted to reverse a decline in patronage that started in 1950. Mr. Brown explained that the average number of passengers carried by the single RDC had declined from 68 in 1962 to 26 in 1966. The low carrying of revenue passengers and an annual loss of \$54,100 were reason the railway wanted to curtail its last passenger operation. The Bus Companies expressed a willingness to replace the train with additional bus service. An order was subsequently given by the Board of Railway Commissioners dated March 6th 1967 authorizing the Quebec Central Railway to discontinue the operation of its trains Nos. 1, 2 and 4 between Sherbrooke and Quebec City. On Sunday April 29th, 1967 saw the last regular passenger train to operate over the Quebec Central when RDC **9062** ran Quebec City to Sherbrooke.

A number of special trains operated over the line. The Canadian Railroad Historical Association ran two excursions over the Newport Subdivision. On March 2nd, 1968, the CRHA ran an excursion from Montreal to Newport then to Sherbrooke. The train comprised of RDC units **9105** and **9065**. The last excursion was made over the same route, October 5th, 1974. The train on this occasion was composed of locomotive **4094** and another FPA-2 and five coaches. A very successful excursion was run by the St Lawrence Valley Railway Society October 6th, 1973 when two of the CPR remaining E-8A passenger diesels (**1802** and **1800**) pulled a nine car consist including two dome cars from Montreal to Sherbrooke then to Tring Junction, then Megantic then back to Montreal via the CPR.

Any mention of special train movements over the Quebec Central must recognize that between the 12th and 16th days of November 1967 the Confederation Train ran over the QCR allowing it to set up a display at Thetford Mines.

July 1967 the Canadian Pacific announced the move of its Farnham Division headquarters from Farnham to the Quebec Central office building on Wellington Street in Sherbrooke. It enabled the CPR to coordinate certain mechanical operations of Farnham Division with those of the Quebec Central. This move was completed August 1, 1967.

During this same summer of 1967 the Canadian Pacific demolished the wooden trestle between Sherbrooke and Newington that had become a landmark. The bridge had been built in 1885 by the Vermont Central and was owned by the Canadian Pacific with the QCR given running rights over it in 1927. It was replaced by a modern concrete bridge. During the several months that it took to demolish the old bridge and build its replacement; Quebec Central's northbound trains ran from Sherbrooke to Lennoxville over the CPR then through the interlocking at Lennoxville, the train then backed up the three miles to Sherbrooke over the CNR. Trains then headed north up the old QC connection to Newington and then on to Vallee Junction. At times the Newington switch run was combined for the operation so that engines were at both ends of the train.

The Quebec Central in 1969 received permission to close most of its stations in favour of a Sherbrooke based customer service centre. Agents were removed from East Angus, St Gerard, Leeds, Ste. Marie, Ste. Justine, St. Georges, Courcelles, Rock Island, St. Alsime, Bishopton, Disraeli, East Broughton, Scotts Jct., Ste. Germaine, Beauceville, St. Evariste, Ayers Cliff, Levis, Weedon, St. Joseph, Beebe Jct., Ste. Hendine, Black Lake, Lac Frontiere and Morisset. Caretakers were removed from Coleraine, St. Ephrem and St. Henri Village. Some stations were sold as private dwellings but most were demolished leaving only a handful remaining in use by the railway at East Angus, St. Gerard, Thetford Mines, Tring Jct., Vallee Jct., Scotts Jct., Breakeyville, St. Georges and Daaquam.

In the late sixties the asbestos industry found it to be advantageous to switch to containerization for its export shipments. They found there was savings in demurrage charges because railway stock was no longer tied

up at a port while awaiting the arrival of a freighter, and break-bulk asbestos did not conform to the dust standards in Europe. CP Rail converted thirty eight 57 foot Flatcars specifically to handle two containers. A container terminal was located at Robertson.

In April 1970 several movie scenes were photographed on the QCR as part of the film "*Mon Oncle Antoine*", a movie that depicted the life in the asbestos towns in 1922. The scenes were photographed on parts of the 1954 Thetford Mines Diversion.

During the nineteen seventies very few changes were made to the operation of the Quebec Central. The railway starting thinking about abandoning its Megantic subdivision. The Megantic line had few carload customers and its prime utilization in the winter months was shipping asbestos from the Thetford area bound for an Atlantic port, by routing Tring to Megantic.

For many years the only equipment lettered for the Quebec Central consisted of one Burro Crane and a fleet of trucks used by the Maintenance Department. While the author was researching this work in the summer of 1980 he happened to drive past the National Steel Car works in Hamilton, when to the writer's amazement NSC was just finishing an order of two hundred newsprint boxcars and they were lettered Q.C. The reason behind lettering cars QC. was to ensure their return from American railroads via Newport Vermont, rather than on any point on the CP Rail System.

The Quebec Central had maintained in operation all of its lines in the 1970s but the 1980s were to be a different matter. The Asbestos health concerns that may have been regional for years exploded. What had been Le Blanc D'Or - The White Gold became Le Mort Blanc - The White Death. Markets disappeared, the United states imposed a ban. The asbestos traffic on the Quebec Central came to an end. By 1983 trains ran only from Sherbrooke to Thetford Mines on a casual basis. The East Angus paper mill had Wood chips delivered by truck and paper shipped out by truck. The Dominion Lime company found that it had few customers that had rail service. Abandonment requests started to be made, the first line to torn out was the sixty-mile Megantic Subdivision in 1987. Two years later, in 1989, the old Massawippi Valley line from Sherbrooke south to Beebe Junction and Stanstead - Rock Island would disappear; a large part converted to a bicycle trail. Canadian Pacific then applied to have the entire Quebec Central abandoned. The last CPR train with RS-18 **1859** picked up the last two cars at Thetford Mines November 10th, 1994. Oddly, the man in charge of dismantling the Quebec Central was CP Vice-President Jacques Cote, the grandson of John Henry Walsh.