

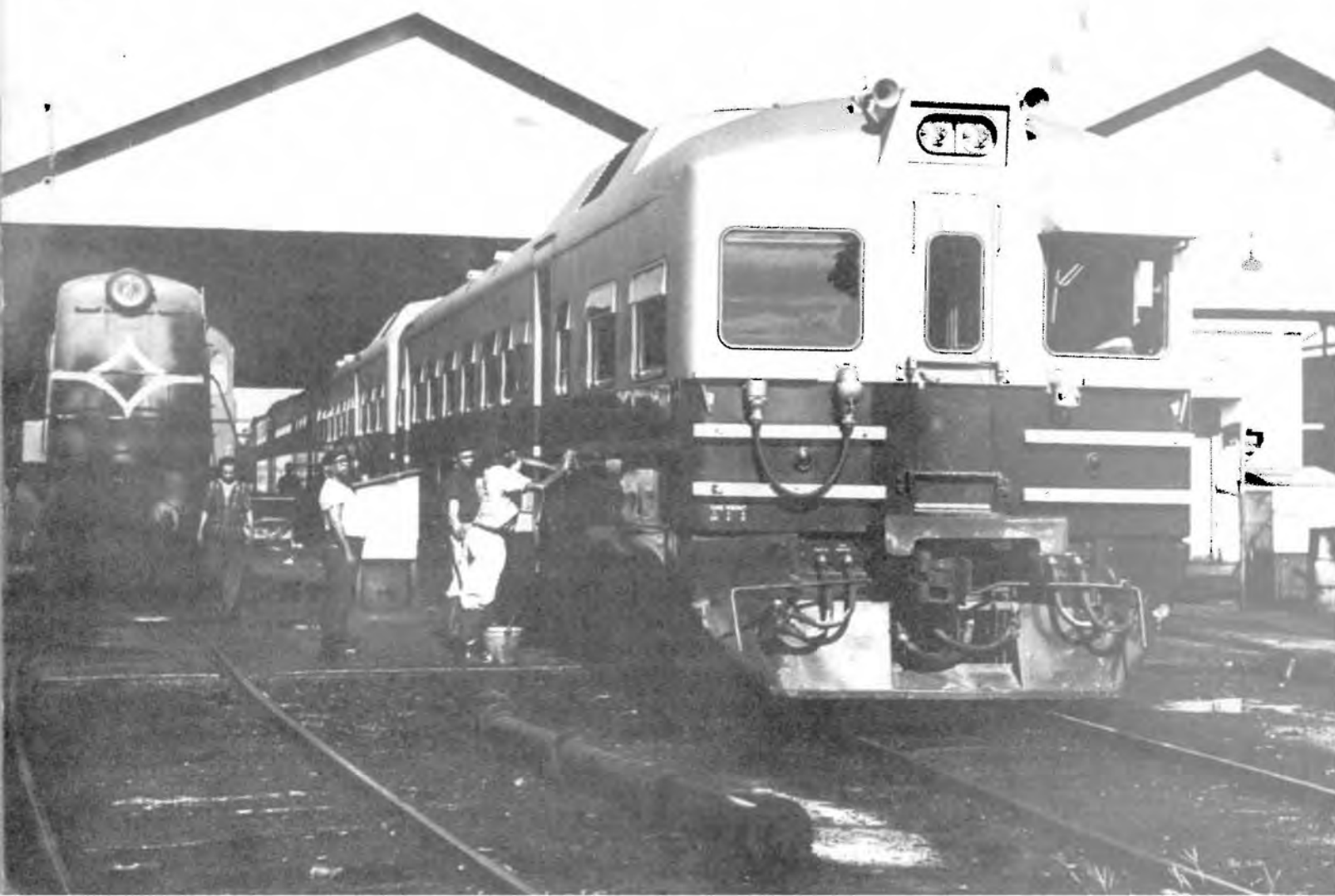
Upper Canada Railway Society

Number 228 January 1965



newsletter

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Jamaica at Christmas

Island of Contrasts



by Chas. W.R. Bowman

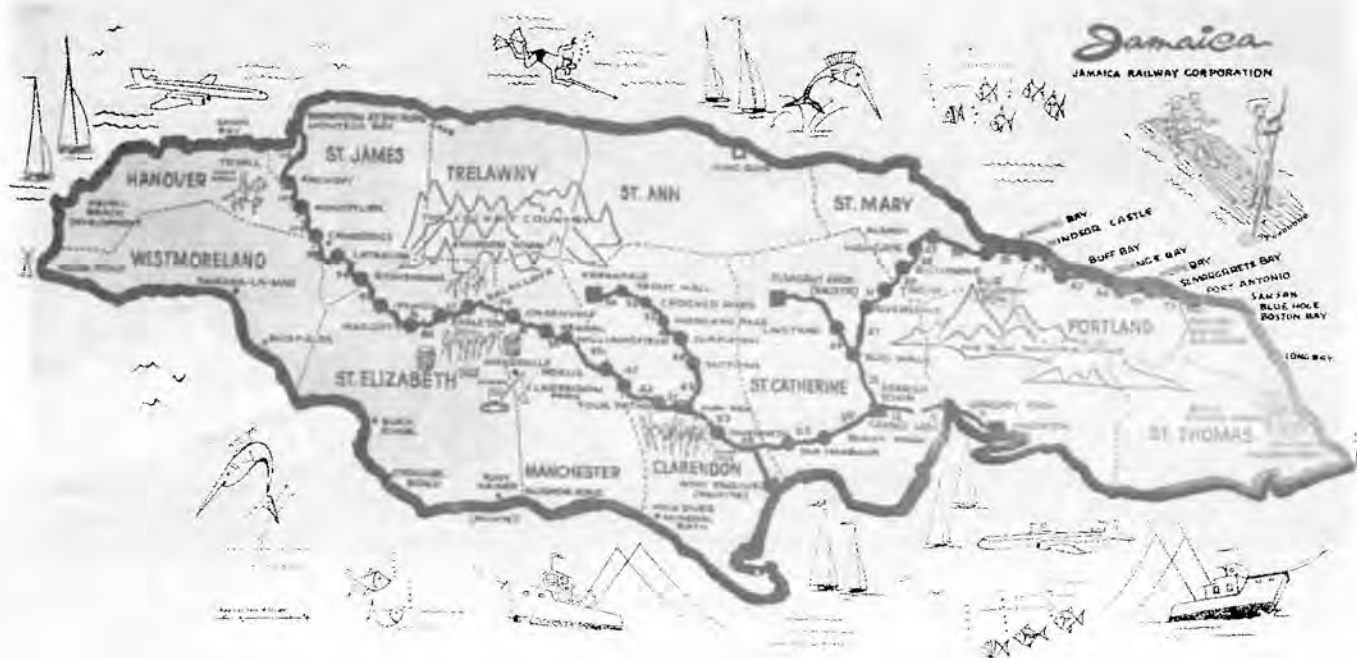
For several years now a desired trip to the Caribbean has been pushed aside in favour of a return to the British Isles to photograph and record the quickly diminishing number of steam locomotives. Christmas 1963 fell on a Wednesday and a company rule says that when this happens, the offices and works remain closed for the rest of the week. Five days off work, if one includes the weekend! The immediate reaction was - back to Britain. That is, until I calculated the cost per day for such a short visit! Added to that, five days are hardly enough to visit my relatives. Here then was a golden chance to go south. But which island? I had already been to Bermuda, so I thought Antigua or Barbados would be fine for swimming, tennis and just lying on the beach. There might even have been girls! The Air Canada girl who was so helpful on the phone, recommended both of these islands, having been there herself. I booked a DC8 flight to Antigua. A short time thereafter the rail joints began to click and it occurred to me that Jamaica had trains while Antigua did not. A fast phone call to Air Canada and Bowman was now flying to Montego Bay on 25th December and leaving Kingston on the 29th. Even the most ardent railfan must resort to air or sea travel for at least part of the trip to Jamaica.

A letter to the Jamaica Railway Corporation's head office in Kingston requesting shed permits, etc., brought a reply from no less a personage than Col. R.G. Jackson, General Manager of the Corporation. He invited me to call at his office on arrival to collect the necessary papers. This I did, more or less expecting his secretary to hand me the permits. But no! Such was the Jamaican hospitality that Col. Jackson personally took me on a tour of the Kingston Workshops Running Sheds, Civil Engineer's Dept. and Operating Control. The "papers" which he gave me included the Rule Book, Annual Report, map of all J.R.C. lines, gradient profiles, historical notes and the passenger timetable. It was indeed a

The Jamaica Railway Corporation, like nearly every other company, has gone over to diesel traction, although two steam locomotives are retained in working order as reserve power. (Anyone interested in a Jamaican fantrip???) The two serviceable steam engines are Nos. 54 and 55, 4-8-0's built by the Canadian Locomotive Company in Kingston, Ontario, in 1944. Also in the now derelict roundhouse and yard were five more C.L.C. 4-8-0's, two of these of 1920 vintage, an 0-8-0T (about 1930) and two 0-6-0T's built in 1943 and 1945 by Vulcan Iron Works at Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Passenger service is handled to a very great extent by twenty Metro-Cammell single unit railcars, powered by 315 h.p. Rolls-Royce engines. Flange lubricators are fitted to these railcars - the curves are tight! Other passenger trains and all freights are in the hands of 750 h.p. English Electric Bo-Bo Diesels weighing 64 tons. To complete the motive power roster there are two Bo-Bo shunters for working the Kingston Yards and Docks. These are of General Electric Co. Ltd. manufacture, powered by the same 315 h.p. Rolls-Royce engines as the railcars, and fitted with trucks which are similar to those on the J.R.C. freight cars. Here is standardization taken to the maximum limit!

Passenger cars, other than the Metro-Cammell railcars, consist of a number of coaches of Belgian manufacture and "market" cars. The latter are unique. They are essentially freight boxcars with a few windows and wooden seats. When Jamaicans go to market, they take with them all sorts of animals and produce, goats, chickens, vegetables and so on. Organisms of the creeping variety are inevitably left behind on the train, and this sort of thing would never do in the passenger stock, so passengers going to market are assigned to these special cars. One other passenger vehicle should be mentioned. It is the Governor's Coach, a smaller railcar than the Metro-Cammell, used for official journeys. It can be chartered and is regularly used for tourist trips out of Montego Bay. Freight vehicles have a distinctly North American appearance.

Railways in Jamaica began in 1843 with the formation of a private company which opened 14½ miles of line from Kingston to Angels, near Spanish Town, in November 1845. Jamaica Railways are therefore the oldest in the erstwhile British colonies. In 1879, the Government bought the railway, but sold it again in 1899, after further construction, to an American syndicate. Due to financial problems, the Government once again took over the railway in April 1900. From that date the railway was operated as a Government department and was known as the Jamaica Government Railway until April 1st, 1960, when the Jamaica Railway Corporation was formed. The Jamaica Government holds all ordinary stock and the unsecured loan of the Corporation, but the latter is free of all Government control except in matters of public importance.



The J.R.C. is not the only railway company in Jamaica. Two of the aluminum companies, Kaiser and Alcoa, also have their own lines, but lack of time prevented me from visiting these. However, the aluminum industry traffic handled by J.R.C. provides about 55% of the Corporation's freight revenue. Some 50,000 tons of alumina (the fine white powder aluminum oxide) is carried from Alumina Jamaica's works to its port in A.J.'s own hopper cars, many of which were built in Canada. They turn the scales at 15 tons tare and could carry 55 tons of alumina but the J.R.C. maximum axle load of 16 tons limits the payload to 49 tons. The alumina is apparently so fine that seals on the hopper doors must be of the highest order to avoid loss of the powder during transit.

With gradients of 1 in 30, I just had to photograph a heavy bauxite or alumina train on such a climb. So having ascertained from Col. Jackson that a freight would leave a place called Porus at 4.02 p.m. headed by a pair of English Electric diesels, I set off on the 46 $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile run by car, as the passenger train times would have meant too much waiting around and the best part of the climb is over three miles from a station. Neither is Porus in a resort area, so you couldn't while away the hours awaiting a train beside the swimming pool. As I approached the mountain range which necessitates this fearsome gradient, the sky grew blacker and blacker (it had been a glorious morning) and it eventually began to rain. Please forgive this understatement. Actually, I believe that was the afternoon that the Caribbean moved over the island. Due to the amount of water on the road, I had to drive at reduced speed and reached Porus (I suggest renaming the place Pouring) at about 4.10 p.m. My fears were relieved when a check with the station staff revealed that the ore train had not gone through. It would arrive any minute, as it had reportedly left the previous station, Clarendon Park. I hastened to my vantage point about three miles further on. Porus is approached at 1 in 80 and the elevation is 436 ft. above sea level. There is then a respite for a little more than 1/2 mile on more or less level track, followed by a fearsome four miles or so at 1 in 30. In this distance the line has climbed

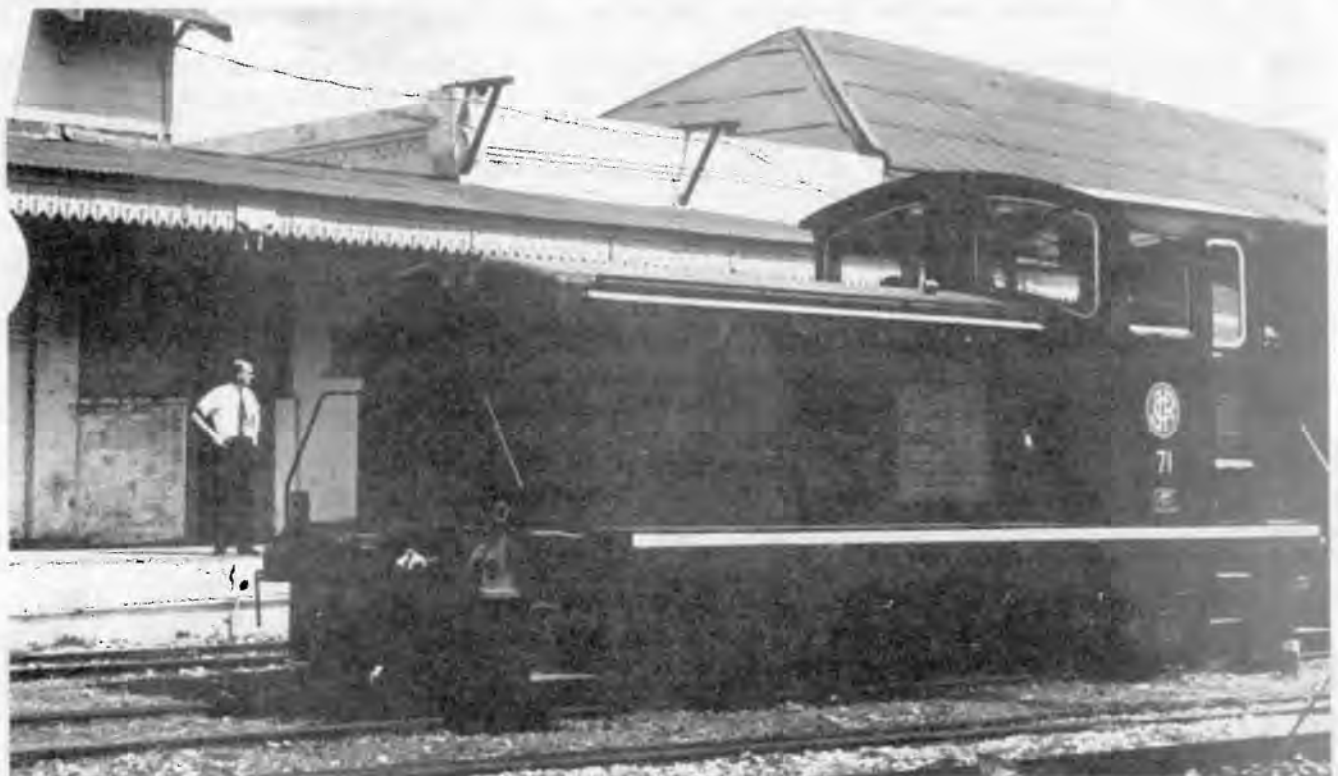


almost 800 ft. It is a winding climb which increases the effective gradient and when these factors are coupled with wet rail conditions it will be realized just how formidable was the task of the two 750 h.p. English Electric engines.

I was in time then, so parking the car at a convenient road crossing and donning the plastic raincoat I set off down the line to find a reverse curve. After about an hour, diesel horns were heard in the distance and shortly around the bend appeared not a freight but the "Capitals Express" the fast two-unit d.m.u. from Kingston to Montego Bay. So the freight had been held to let the passenger ahead. You know, it is surprising how wet you can get with only the water that lands on your head running down your neck! Well, the freight eventually came up the bank at 5.45 p.m. I was drenched, it was almost dark, and although the meter said it could not be done, I tried a couple of shots anyway. You have never seen a nicer piece of clear celluloid in your life. It was an impressive sight though and not soon to be forgotten. The train was barely making walking pace at this point and the engines were slipping violently. Assuming the Porus departure to be immediately after the passenger had cleared Williamsfield (at the top of the hill) at 5.16 p.m., the two E.E.'s had taken 30 minutes for about 3 miles.

The passenger service is not intensive, but appeared to be well patronized. The 113 mile main line from Kingston to Montego Bay has three d.m.u. trains each way on week days and one on Sundays. The fastest, the westbound Capitals Express, is allowed 4 hours for the journey. Train No. 3, however, is booked to reach Montego Bay 7 hours 5 mins. after leaving Kingston. The scheduled time from Porus to Williamsfield (the steep climb mentioned earlier) is 37 mins. for the 6 1/2 miles! A unique thing about J.R.C. is its practice of hauling freight cars behind its diesel railcars - not an odd van like British Railways, but several box cars, tank cars, anything that has to go. The railcars switch these cars at intermediate stations so this partly explains the low average speeds. Curves are severe as well as the gradients and one cannot expect time to be made up going down a tortuous 1 in 30. There is a local train on Saturdays only from Catadupa to Montego Bay in the mornings and a balancing return working in the afternoon. A similar weekday service operates between Porus and Kingston, which could be considered the "Porus Commuter".

The line to Port Antonio, 75 miles from Kingston, has two d.m.u. trains each way daily and one locomotive-hauled mixed each way on week days. There is one



Saturday-only local between Annotto Bay and Port Antonio in each direction. The branch from Bog Walk to Linstead has one train each way on week days which connects with the Kingston - Port Antonio service, while the May Pen to Frankfield branch has a rather irregular timetable. In the westbound direction, there is a Monday to Friday train, a Wednesday to Saturday train, a Monday and Tuesday train and a Monday-only train. The return workings do not follow exactly the same pattern!

Railway photographers are often a greedy bunch when it comes to getting pictures. One picture of each train is just not enough! I am no exception and had selected a spot between St. Margaret's Bay and Port Antonio where I could get a telephoto shot with one camera and a normal lens shot with the other as the Sunday morning train from Kingston approached me. By dint of running along the road for about 50 yards, I could probably just make another telephoto shot as the d.m. u. swept round another palm-fringed curve. On this, my last day in Jamaica, the first thing that went wrong was the time keeping - the train was an hour late. I reckoned I could still make my flight with a bit of hard driving. Well, I got the first two shots as planned but in my haste to move off smartly for the 50 yard sprint one foot slipped on the wet grass (it had been raining all night) and in endeavouring to stay upright to protect the cameras I put just too much load on my left ankle and landed in a heap with only two pictures and one bad sprain. The drive back to Kingston (80 miles) was a bit painful as this was my clutch foot and with the hills and curves there was a considerable amount of gear changing. Fortunately, my right foot was in full working order and I was able to keep the accelerator flat down! I made the airport in time and hobbled out to the DC-8 at a very slow pace. Don't let this happen to you. One picture and two intact ankles are very much better!

Captions

Cover: Top, revenue is obtained from freight car advertising. The Charlie referred to is a brand of rum described as "rum-markable".

Bottom, the running sheds at Kingston with English Electric diesel no. 89 on the left, and a rake of Metro-Cammell units being made ready for train no. 3 to Montego Bay.

Page 2: Metro-Cammell diesel multiple-unit (d.m.u.) no. 222, as train 29 from Kingston, hugs the shore between St. Margarets Bay and Port Antonio. This train is known in the author's books as the "Sprained Ankle Express"!

Page 4: 750 horsepower English Electric diesel no. 90 arrives at Kingston with train 14 from Port Antonio. The passenger cars are of Belgian origin.

Page 5: A detail view of G.E.C. Rolls Royce-powered diesel switcher no. 71 at Kingston station. Col. R.G. Jackson stands on the platform observing operations.

Page 6: Here, train no. 3 leaves Kingston for Montego Bay, made up of Metro-Cammell units 201, 218, 216, 221, 213 and hauling four box cars.

- all photos by the author.



On Stations:

Ottawa

The informative article by Mr. Purves in the December NEWSLETTER prompts one to plead the cause of two groups of people who seem to have been forgotten in these redevelopment schemes, particularly the Ottawa project. These groups are (a) the passengers and (b) the taxpayers. A third, and equally forgotten group might consist of the C.N. Passenger Sales Department, headed by Mr. Purves' ambitious colleague, Pierre Delagrave.

Let us look first at the Ottawa project, as we may soon be the proud possessors of a brand-new, \$5.3 million EMPTY passenger station!

The present Ottawa Union Station (originally called the Grand Trunk Central station) was opened in 1907 on the site of the former Central Station of the Canada Atlantic Railway. It became known as Union Station after the old Union station on Broad Street was closed, although both C.P.R. (M. & O. Subdivision) and G.T.R. (Canada Atlantic) trains stopped there enroute to Montreal. The station is within ten minutes walking distance of the Parliament and many other Government buildings and principal hotels, department stores and business streets, and is served by buses running directly to nearly all parts of Ottawa and Hull.

There are now 15 regularly scheduled (daily or except Sunday) trains in each direction at Union Station. Of these, four run to and from Montreal via Canadian Pacific's M. & O. Subdivision (two of these continue to Vancouver), two are Montreal "North Shore" trains via the Lachute Subdivision, two are Brockville trains with through service to Toronto via C.N., one is the overnight service to Toronto via Peterborough, and the remaining six are C.N. services to Montreal, with three of the latter continuing on to western Canada (including nos. 3 and 4, which are mail and express locals).

The fastest of these trains makes the trip from Montreal in two hours, while the slowest takes three hours and forty minutes. The rest range from two hours, ten minutes to two hours, forty minutes, which compare well with the airline plus limousine time of at least two and a half hours at four times the fare. Bus times are slightly longer than train services, but are often subject to traffic delays near Montreal. Fares are usually five cents less than train fares, but a more frequent service is offered. Montreal to Ottawa driving time (forgetting the speed limits) is about two hours, but severe delays arise at busy periods.

The traffic delays at the westerly end of Montreal Island will be alleviated with the opening of the Trans-Canada Highway to the Ontario border, expected late in 1965 or early 1966. This highway improvement (paid for out of your pocket) may result in a 1½ hour bus service between Montreal and Ottawa. While similar train service is possible to the new station, an inconvenient, expensive and time-consuming transfer will be necessary to reach downtown Ottawa.

It is generally known that the Canadian Pacific intends to withdraw from rail passenger service by 1967, and it seems unlikely that C.N. will alone warrant such an expensive terminal, so that we, the Canadian taxpayers, will end up footing the whole bill for the \$5.3 million white elephant.

Out west, the Saskatoon station is already in operation, but its isolated location (3½ miles from downtown) will almost certainly result in decreased passenger patronage to that city. Its predecessor, opened only in 1938, was one short block from the main street and four blocks from C.N.'s Bessborough Hotel, but required transcontinental trains to make an extensive loop around the city. Now, trains on the Prince Albert line must use the loop to reach the new station.

There are a number of other places where stations have been moved "out of town", due to line relocation, but these were made while the railway was still the prime means of passenger transportation. These include Windsor and Sarnia, Ontario as a result of tunnel building, and more recently, Cornwall, Morrisburg, Iroquois and Windsor, Ontario. Also lamented is the removal of the C.N.'s west-end Montreal stopping place from Lachine to Dorval, where access is much more difficult.

Another "out in the sticks" proposal is the one at Hamilton, Ontario, where a new station would be located at the mainline junction at Bayview, some three miles from downtown. At least, this would be closer than Dundas, where most east-west mainline trains now stop, but it would be a long haul indeed from the opposite end of the city.

If such projects as those at Ottawa and Saskatoon spread to many other cities the efforts of Mr. Delagrave and others interested in the continuance of railway passenger service and the lessening of highway congestion will be futile. The development of air rights above railway tracks, as at Montreal, and the provision of passenger space in buildings mainly intended for non-railway purposes, as at Edmonton, would appear to be more satisfactory solutions to the problems of land use and passenger service in cities.

Forester A. Kemp

Toronto

Thirty-five years ago this month, on January 21st, 1930, the first passenger trains to use the high-level tracks in Toronto's Union Station, arrived with continuous blowing of their whistles, until they came to a stop at 10:25 a.m. They were Canadian National Railways' train 28, with Northern 6121, from Goderich, and Canadian Pacific's no. 601 from Havelock, also with a Northern, no. 3100. The arrival was watched by some 300 railway and civic officials and other guests.

The first trains to leave from the high-level tracks were C.N. no. 33, with Pacific 5610, enroute to Sarnia at 12:55 p.m., and Canadian Pacific no. 38 at 1:00 p.m. with Pacific 2237, enroute to Ottawa.

On the previous day, a strength test was made on the overhead tracks by a one-car train hauled by C.N. 2-10-2 no. 4100. At this time only tracks one to six were opened, and all the other tracks were on the lower level, used temporarily until the complete operation could be switched over to the high level tracks.

(G.W. Horner)

MISCELLANY

* The car shown on page 146 of NEWSLETTER 226 has been identified. The car was originally built for the Lackawanna Railroad and was used in commuter service until it was sold for use by the Ontario Hydro at a construction project near Fraserdale Ontario. It is identical to the cars now used by the steam-powered Arcade and Attica Railroad in upper New York state. This particular car will see similar service as the A. & A. cars, as it has been bought by the Livonia, Avon and Lakeville Railroad, another steam excursion operation, now being established in the Rochester, New York, area. The car was not owned by the Ontario Jockey Club, but was painted as an advertising billboard while it was stored on their siding near their Fort Erie race track last summer.

(Wm. Reddy)

newsletter

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editor: E. A. Jordan, 48 Woodland Park Road, Scarborough, Ontario

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mailing: J. R. Whatford

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NEWS *Railway*
PHOTOS

The newest diesel unit on the Canadian National, numbered 3200 and 3201, were first tested at Montreal Locomotive Works on November 17th, and made their first revenue run, to Toronto on Friday, December 4th. Following minor modifications at the manufacturer's, they made a second return trip to Toronto on December 10th. The units, C.N. class MRS-24a, are Century 424 series, 2400 h.p., B₀-B₀ types.

Photo by J.A. Brown



U.C.R.S. Announcements

FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting of the Society will be held in Room 64 of the Royal Ontario Museum, Queens Park and Bloor Street, on Friday, February 19th, commencing at 8:15 p.m. Entertainment at the meeting will be of traction interest.

HAMILTON CHAPTER MEETING

The Hamilton Chapter February meeting will be held on Friday, February 26, in the Board Room of the C.N. Hamilton station, commencing at 8:00 p.m.

LAST NOTICE OF MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not renewed your membership for 1965 yet, then this is the last issue of the NEWSLETTER that you will receive. Help the Membership Secretary keep his records in good order and not have to send you a renewal notice. **RENEW NOW!**

Newsletter Binders

The Society has just purchased a quantity of 8½" x 11" spring back binders in assorted colours, direct from the manufacturer in England. The savings realised in the large order are being passed on to the members so that they may avail themselves of a useful filing medium for their collections of railroadiana. No holes to punch to deface publications, as spring back action facilitates removal or insertion of contents without the use of tools. Covers can be bent back fully open and will not spill their contents even if dropped. A holder is provided in each binder so that the contents can be replaced easily. Pages are easily removable for study. Some members already have 30 or more in use and are convinced they are the best method for preserving valuable publications. They will hold two years of our NEWSLETTER, two years of E.R.A. Headlights, or a comparable amount of any other 8½" x 11" page size publication, bulletin, etc. Colours available are black, red, green or blue, and any selection of colours may be ordered at one time.

The initial order has now been received, and the price is \$1.50 each, cash and carry. They will be on sale at coming third Friday meetings, but due to the bulk involved, members should place their orders by mail, to the Bulletin Editor, Box 122, Terminal "A", Toronto (mark envelopes "Binders") so that the correct number may be brought to the meeting. Mail orders from out-of-town points will be handled by parcel post; members ordering binders for delivery by post should include 25¢ extra to cover the cost of packing and postage on each binder.

READERS' EXCHANGE

For the BUS enthusiast! Collection of 311 original T.T.C. and G.C.L. bus negatives all taken 1943 to 1949, sizes 116 and 120. What offers? Send stamped envelope to R.F. Corley, 490 Albertus Avenue, Peterborough, Ontario, for list.

WANTED: C.P.R. and C.N.R. public timetables for year 1943 or 1944. State price or terms. Write David Powell, 448 South 8th Street, Salina, Kansas, U.S.A.

A multi-coloured lithographed print, suitable for framing, size 14" x 17" of C.N. Mountain type no. 6065, as drawn by noted cartoonist Doug Wright, is available for \$1 postpaid, from J.A. Brown, Apt. 301, 36 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Toronto 17, Ont.

The black and white reproduction shown here does not do justice to the exacting detail and careful colouring of the drawing, which is reproduced on heavy, white art paper.

