

October, 1956 - Number 129

The Society meets on the third Friday of every month in Room 486, Toronto Union Station at 8:30 P.M. The next meeting will be held on October 19th and will consist of movies of electric railway interest.

➤ Kingston Centenary Observance - The one hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada between Montreal and Toronto will be the subject of a joint observance by the Upper Canada Railway Society and the Canadian Railroad Historical Association of Montreal on Saturday, October 27th. Included in the day's activities at the meeting place, Kingston, ON, will be a tour of the plant of the Canadian Locomotive Company and dinner in a Kingston hotel.

U.C.R.S. members will travel to Kingston on C.N.R. #14, leaving Toronto at 9:15 A.M. and arriving at Kingston at 1:32 P.M. The return trip will be made on Train 15, leaving Kingston at 6:47 P.M. and arriving at Toronto Union at 9:45 P.M. A good attendance on the part of Ontario members is hoped for. Members who have not already signified their intention to attend should do so immediately on receipt of this *Newsletter* so that the necessary reservations may be made for dinner at the hotel.

➤ Recommended reading - In connection with the subject of the G.T.R. centenary, mention is made of an article which appears in the Canadian Geographical Journal for September 1956 entitled "A Birthday to Remember". Written by Mr. Frank N. Walker, well known to U.C.R.S. members as the author of Bulletin 37 and 39, the article, illustrated and seven pages in length, reviews the events leading up to the opening of the first line of railway between Montreal and Toronto, on October 27, 1856.

EXCURSION OF SEPTEMBER 30TH.
LONDON & PORT STANLEY CENTENARY TRIP

Despite unfavourable weather, 28 excursionists boarded Car 6 at noon on September 30th. The car proceeded southward with many a photo stop and several excellent "run-pasts" for movie photographers. A brief side-trip to the N.Y.C. station in St. Thomas was followed by a short stop for lunch. Car 10, representing the only regular service under the greatly reduced winter timetable, passed at Whites, and after another picture stop was again met just north of Port Stanley station. Operation over the many level crossings in Port Stanley was livened by a near-collision with a surprised motorist who obviously did not expect to find a car operating to the Beach out of season. One further picture stop was arranged northbound, followed by a spectacular high-speed run to Philip Street carhouse, London, where No. 10 was once again passed, and the trip then terminated at the station. Besides Toronto members, passengers also came from Hamilton, Detroit, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and other points.

➤ Future of L.& P.S. passenger service now in grave doubt - The L.& P.S. management some time ago announced that passenger service would terminate on January 1st, 1957 for at least five months owing to the frequency changeover (25 to 60 cycle) affecting St. Thomas and requiring the railway to install a \$40,000 rectifier unit to operate on the 60-cycle current. This unit has, at last information, still not been ordered, and even if it were now on order, could not be delivered until next May, requiring a five-month abandonment of electric operation on the part of the L.& P.S.

There was talk in London during September of the holding of a referendum of London voters to decide on the future of the railway's passenger service. However, late word is that the London

Railway Commission has now applied for permission to abandon passenger service permanently at the end of this year, without putting the matter before the voters. It has not been disclosed whether or not the intention is now also to abandon electric operation permanently, but this so likelihood.

MOTIVE POWER NOTES

- C.N.R. 1240 (1200 H.P. road switcher) was received from G.M.D. August 22.
- Central Vermont 462 passed through Toronto on August 18th en route to Lauria Brothers, scrap dealers.
- C.N.R. road freight "A" units 9050, 9058 and 9158 arrived in Toronto in five gondola cars on August 30th. There were three of the four locomotives involved in the head-on collision near Fort Frances, ON, some weeks previously. The badly damaged locomotives were inspected by G.M.D. and C.N.R. officials in Toronto but it has not been learned whether the decision was to scrap or rebuild the units.
- Diesels 4457 and 9330-9336 were the locomotives involved in the later wreck at South Parry, ON. These were not as badly damaged as were those mentioned in the previous item.
- C.N.R. self-propelled car 15832, which had been in storage at Lindsay for a long period, was moved to Richmond, Quebec, on August 8th, presumably as a standby for R.D.C. units.
- It has been learned that there is a possibility that the trucks of the Thousand Islands Railway's locomotive 500 (See Bulletin 43) are to be replaced with the trucks from the scrapped car 80 of the Niagara, St. Catharines & Toronto Railway.
- Associate Member G. R. Hearn of Victoria BC, has advised that the Pacific Great Eastern locomotive roster in the last issue requires a certain amount of "bringing up to date". He reports that Mikados 162 and 163 were recently scrapped at Squamish. No. 160, the last steam locomotive on the property, was standing at Squamish awaiting the torches as of September 25.

A further change is that road-switchers 561-568 have had the special 6-wheel trucks replaced with conventional four-wheelers.

Four of the seven RDC cars ordered earlier this year by the P.G.E. have arrived and are operating as one 4-car train making two round trips per-day on the newly-opened North Vancouver - Squamish line. Mr. Hearn reports that patronage of the train is extremely good.

Mr. Hearn reports further that CPR 9056, the Dayliner on the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway is also well patronized: on September 14th, 129 passengers disembarked from the 89-seat car at Victoria.

- CPR trains 706 and 707, Owen Sound - Toronto, were replaced by RDC's early in October, and the schedules greatly speeded up.

OBSERVATIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND — SUMMER, 1956

A. NEWFOUNDLAND LINES, CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

By R. J. Sandusky

The average railway enthusiast, surprised though he may be to find the Official Guide listing standard sleepers on the main line of the Newfoundland Railway and a buffet-sleeper on one branch, will probably manifest a degree of interest proportional to the amount of space allotted to the system in *The Guide*. It seems unfortunate that Canada's newest province should be regarded so apathetically not just by railfans but by most people in general.

A daily overnight ferry is operated by the Canadian National Railways between North Sydney, NS. and Port aux Basques, Nfld. The 100-mile trip is usually completed

in about nine hours.

Even before arriving at the rocky coast one has an indication of the type of terrain to be encountered as the inland peaks of the Long Range (snow-bearing as late as June) grow along the horizon. As soon as the train leaves the ship's side it heads north-west along the coast, then north-east as it skirts the western side of the range. At times the track is on a beach where salt spray will spot the train windows on a windy day; while at other times it is inland, running up some river valley; but always it is draped over the landscape like an endless piece of string. At St. Andrews station, for example, one can observe "The Caribou" resting on five different grades simultaneously, with a curve thrown in. Beyond Deer Lake the temperature drops and the terrain changes character as the train climbs to Summit, the most desolate section of the line. Here Nature has thrown up a pair of obelisk-shaped mountains which dominate the horizon like the sails of a ship, and which are named Main Topsail and Mizzen Topsail. Here too are the tall characteristic snow fences which frequently appear along the line. They are constructed of long thin spruce trunks and can often be seen on hilltops miles ahead of the train, indicating where it is eventually going to arrive.

In the Avalon Peninsula the line struggles eastward over hills and valleys which lie in a northeast-southwest alignment. This has resulted in spectacular grades and zigzags on the main line and at many places on the Carbonear branch, which spends most of its time circumnavigating hills and bays. A point of interest on the Bonavista branch is at Mile 51 (from Shoal Harbour) where there is a complete loop, with a water stop on its circumference and one of the province's innumerable lakes in its centre.

Soon after boarding the train the traveller assumes the customary position of leaning out the top opening of the Dutch doors, from which vantage point he can obtain full benefit of the show put on by the locomotives as they rush over mile after mile of curves, grades and the occasional barachois (sand spit thrown up by the sea across the mouth of a deep inlet in the coast).

Motive power on "The Caribou" has usually been a pair of Mikados, or occasionally a Pacific has replaced one Mikado. Top speed is about 40-45 M.P.H., though the amount of work done by the engines makes it look like 70. One locomotive works on downgrades and level stretches while the other cuts in on upgrades. Water is taken about every 40 miles.

Despite the impending dieselization, most steam locomotives appear in good condition with some even displaying fresh coats of paint. On June 21 engines 321 and 325 were in St. John's shops, while 599 had been there only a few days before. 590 and 304 were out of service at this time and will likely be the first of their classes to be scrapped in Newfoundland. By June 24, cap-stacked 594, the yard switcher at Port aux Basques, had been replaced by diesel 775.

Motive power is used indiscriminately in all types of service. A Mikado observed on "The Caribou" one day might well be seen on a freight or work train the next, perhaps doubling with a 900-class 1200-H.P. road-switcher. During July six more diesels were delivered. Numbered 800-805, these 875-H.P. locomotives have MU control and 6-wheel trucks. At last report 801 had been used twice on trains 1 and 2 ("The Caribou") together with a Mikado which supplied steam for the passenger cars. 804 and 805 were seen working between St. John's and Argentia, but it is understood that this class of engine is too heavy for use on the branch to Carbonear.

Anyone making his first trip over the NR may be surprised at the profusion of work and maintenance trains. On one trip between Port aux Basques and Corner Brook, train 2 passed one freight and a wrecker at Codroy Pond siding, a wreck at Codroy Pond, 309 and a short freight at St. Fintan's wye, 313 and a freight at Stephenville Crossing, USAF 6000 at White's Road, and then two freights and #1 at Harry's Brook, making four trains where there is a siding long enough to hold only one train.

All revenue rolling stock appears to be in reasonably good condition while the maintenance

equipment varies. Boarding or service cars are seen at almost all important stations that have sidings. One rather distinctive variety of boarding car has been produced by cutting a $\frac{2}{3}$ width platform into only one end of a boxcar, leaving a lavatory space in the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$. Many of these yet remain upon a variety of ancient trucks equipped with body-suspended brake beams. On the sides of many freight cars the lettering "N. R. The Overland Route" is still in evidence but only a few seldom-used passenger cars retain the faded remains of the varnished red livery of the Newfoundland Railway.

One of the more interesting pieces of "varnish" is the buffet-sleeper Harbour Grace, used on the Bonavista branch. Previously a sleeper, it has had one drawing room replaced by a galley while the lower spaces of former sections 1 and 2 have been converted into a dining section for eight people. The crew uses the upper berths of these sections. Accommodation for passengers is provided in sections 3 to 8 and the former men's smoking compartment has been made into two washrooms. This car leaves St. John's Thursday and Sunday evening on the end of freight 51 which deposits it at Clarenville, whence it completes its journey to Bonavista behind train 11. One day this latter train was observed to consist of engine 902, 22 assorted freight cars, scale test car 52103, one steel coach, "Harbour Grace" and a cabin car. Also, on another occasion, the train was seen proceeding up the line pushing a flatcar before the locomotive.

Vans on this railway are a mixed breed. Any combination of short or long cars, with or without cupola, with many or few side windows, can be found, some converted from passenger equipment.

Snow fighting equipment is located at key places along the lines and seems to consist mainly of wedge ploughs, although rotaries 3650-3652 are on hand if required. As an indication of the severity of the winters in Newfoundland, it might be noted that in 1941 a passenger train was stalled in the snow for 17 days.

There are six roundhouses. At Port aux Basques there is a 3-stall engine shed with a 3-way stub switch lead and a nearby turntable. At Humbermouth is a roundhouse with indoor turntable. Four other houses may be found at Bishop's Falls, Clarenville (3 stalls), Bonavista (2 stalls) and St. John's, which has five bays, one of which serves as a machine shop.

Oil fuel is almost universal. Probably the only operating coal-burning locomotive on the island belongs to Newfoundland Hardwoods at Clarenville. It is a Davenport-built saddle tank 0-4-0 numbered 30. Another independently-owned engine is United States Air Force #6000, a steeple-cab industrial diesel used to transport USAF and CNR cars over the former's railway from Stephenville to the CNR main line at White's Road, just north of Stephenville Crossing. The USAF also owns a red and yellow arch-roof metal centre-entrance self-propelled railcar lettered PM3. This vehicle was found disused at Argentia.

The Newfoundland lines of the CNR still possess some traits which remind visitors that they are not riding on "just another train". All steam locomotives have retained their red pilot beams while the large headlights and 'standard gauge' tilted-square insignia (appearing much too large on the small tenders) are about the only immediately noticeable features which allow them to be compared with mainland engines. It is only when one returns to Nova Scotia, after a week on the island, and enters a cavernous standard-gauge car, that to 42" gauge equipment assumes its proper perspective.

The atmosphere on the passenger runs is one of unhurried amiability. This is graphically illustrated at Harry's Brook, passing point for numbers 1 and 2, where the first train to arrive is almost emptied of passengers who disembark to converse with local residents or other passengers.

When the opposing train is passing, a multitude of arms on every car wave at the travellers going in the other direction. One may still hear "The Caribou" referred to as "The Express", recalling pre-Confederation days when people took "The Foreign Express" to Port aux Basques and the boat to Canada.

Though the trip to the island may be a long one, it is highly recommended to the railway enthusiast. The equipment and operations of the CNR, their coastal steamer services which touch the ends of all railway branches, a number of privately-owned railways, plus the distinctively rugged landscape, should make this journey an interesting one in addition to giving him a greater appreciation of Canada's "undiscovered" province.

B. MILLERTOWN RAILWAY AND BUCHANS RAILWAY

By J. D. Knowles

These two industrial roads form a Y-shaped private rail system traversing an area which is virtually unpopulated save for the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company's wood cutters and the Buchans Mining Company's staff. At the base of the Y (Millertown Junction), connections are made with the C.N.R. The centre of the Y is Buchans Junction where about 16 families live. One branch of the Y (the Buchans Railway) runs to Buchans, while the other branch (the Millertown Railway) stretches out to Millertown, Exploits Dam and Lake Ambrose. The area abounds in typical Newfoundland place names, such as Joe Glodes' Pond, Harpoon Hill, Hungry Hill and Noel Paul's Brook. This section is just now becoming accessible by road.

The Buchans Railway's tonnage consists mainly of ore concentrates from Buchans Mines: lead, copper and zinc. The road has some of the best trackage in Newfoundland.

The Millertown Railway is a supply line serving the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company's wood-cutting operations in the area around Red Indian Lake, which is one of the largest bodies of water in central Newfoundland. The line is not a tonnage carrier; wood cut along the banks of the brooks tributary to Red Indian Lake does not move over the railway, but is floated down the Exploits River 50 miles to the paper mill at Grand Falls.

Nowhere is the contrast between the Millertown and Buchans Railways more obvious than at Buchans Junction. While the Millertown line continues straight ahead with light rail and a weed-grown roadbed, the Buchans line with its heavy rail and rock ballast swings away to the west.

Both roads are dieselized, but the Millertown's four and six-wheel dinkies are very small beside a Buchans 50 or 75-ton double-truck locomotive.

The Millertown Railway's headquarters are at Millertown, on the shores of Red Indian Lake. Here is located a small car shop (which also repairs mechanical equipment for logging operations) and a three-track engine house with a three-way stub switch. Nearby is a turntable which has been covered because of the snow problem. The table is used for turning two small four-wheel wedge ploughs.

As Millertown is still not connected to the outside world by road, the railway enjoys a brisk passenger and express business. Road construction is under way though, and the railway is expected to last only about another four years. As yet there is not even a local road system within the village; local transportation is by foot or bicycle. The peace and quiet of this community is a welcome change from the noise of big city traffic.

The rail line from Millertown to Lake Ambrose crosses the top of the Exploits Dam, where Red Indian Lake flows into the Exploits River. The dam has been under repair this last summer, and the rail line was broken at that point, with walking transfer across the top of the dam. Service north of the dam was provided by engine 23 with cars 3 and 5 (for description see *Newsletter 119*). The service from the dam south into the woods was provided by engine 20, an old four-wheel chain drive Whitcomb, hauling way car No. 2, which has open platforms, sheet metal sides and longitudinal benches for passengers. Engine 21 was also on the isolated section of line south of the dam in work train service.

Engine 22 stands in dismantled condition at Millertown. A four-wheeler built by Vulcan in 1930, it featured electric transmission using Westinghouse 250 volt mining engine motors.

Also in storage at Millertown is old track auto A-1, obtained from the Botwood Railway.

In contrast to the Millertown Railway, the Buchans Railway appears to have a secure future.

Its passenger business has dropped considerably since the recent opening of the highroad to Buchans. (Formerly the automobiles in Buchans were "marooned", and could reach the of Newfoundland's road system only by being transported out on flatcars on the Buchans Railway)

Buchans open platform coach described in *Newsletter 119* burned up on March 16, 1956. The company rented a coach from the C.N.R. for a time, and then put their own ex-standard gauge coach in regular service. This latter car is the former Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo 302, the trailer for gas-electric car 301, having been converted from a regular steam road car. It is still painted the T.H.& B. red and cream, and carries the number 302. The car dwarfs all other Buchans rolling stock, and in spite of a wide overhang rides well at the relatively high speeds attained on the Buchans Railway. It was found necessary to make an extension on the bottom of its coupler knuckles for use with other narrow gauge stock.

One obsolete steam engine still remains at Buchans after a recent visit by a scrap buyer. This is No. 2, a 4-6-0 built by Baldwin in 1930. White striping on the tender, running board and driver tires indicate that this rusty hulk was once a fine looking engine.

Present motive power consists of two 50-ton steeple cab Whitcombs numbered 4 and 5, which usually run multiple unit, and a 75 ton 675 H.P. Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton with a switcher type body, numbered 6.

While the Buchans Railway is now a prosaic wilderness ore hauler, it very nearly became part of the Newfoundland Railway's main line almost 20 years ago. A scheme to build a rail line from Buchans to Deer Lake in order to by-pass the Gaff Topsail snow area actually reached the construction stage. A roadbed was graded and some steel was laid from the Buchans end before the plan was abandoned because it did not accomplish any mileage reduction.

➤ After more than four months reprieve, operations of the Montreal & Southern Counties Railway ceased effective October 14th, 1956.