

The Ferrophiliac Column Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

February 1992

On my Christmas trip east, after having spent several hours in a library, I stopped at one of the national monuments of New Brunswick – an Irving Oil Gas Bar and Restaurant. While waiting for my coffee and pie, the place mat caught my eye. It had several short stories on it, and one was about an attempt in February 1915 to dynamite the Canadian Pacific Railway's international railway bridge at Vanceboro, Maine, a few kilometres west of McAdam. These stories were out of a series of booklets on general historical facts. While this restaurant didn't have the booklet with this story in it, I figured no problem to get it elsewhere, so I didn't even take the place mat. To date I still haven't tracked down the booklet, but to confirm the story, it was off to another library.

As the placemat story stated, Canada was at war with Germany, while the Americans were not. So, in the early hours of Tuesday, February 2, 1915 an amateurish attempt was made to sever this important CP rail link between the seaport of Saint John, NB, and Montréal, QC. Vanceboro, ME, like much of Canada is subject to frequent snow storms in February. Investigators at the bridge were able to take advantage of fresh snow and track the perpetrator back to the village hotel. Here, they found a German named Captain Werner Von Horn. He was arrested on a charge of "injury and defacing private property". The papers reported that the American authorities were on the verge of letting him go free until Canadian authorities started pushing the Americans to hold him for possible extradition to Canada.

Captain Von Horn said he had escaped from a military prison for Germans at Halifax. He was one of the persons landed from the steamer *Montserrat*.

From Halifax, he had travelled to Boston, where in a city hotel Captain Von Horn and three other Germans hatched their plan to dynamite this bridge. He called this plan an act of war against Great Britain.

The Americans sentenced Von Horn to 30 days in jail at Machias, since the damage caused by the explosion was on the United States side of the border. His departure to jail attracted little attention. A small crowd of men and women gathered at the Vanceboro station. The prisoner who was not shackled, smiled upon the women and waved good bye as the train drew out.

While, there are many stories about the importance of railway operations during wartime, we often forget some of the sidelight stories such as the above. World War II, saw civilian guards protecting many important railway bridges in Canada. A second helper was the original high safety factor designed into Canadian railway bridges that permitted deferred maintenance during World War II.

My trip east dug out another story that I am not sure should be called a railway story or a transit story, so – your choice.

Shortly before 7:00 a.m. on Friday, December 15, 1916 Canadian Pacific locomotive No. 43 was brought out of the Bay Shore round house in West Saint John, NB, and left on a siding. Bay Shore is the junction of CP's original line to St. George and St. Stephen (Shore Line Subdivision) and the original main line to McAdam (West Saint John Subdivision). When the Suspension Bridge over the Reversing Falls was completed, the main line was diverted towards Saint John and the 1.7 miles of the old main line between Fairville and Bay Shore became part of the West Saint John Subdivision.

With no one in the cab or tender, the engine suddenly started down the track in the direction of Fairville.

In Fairville, our errant engine was said to be going

thirty-five miles an hour. At a crossing in this Saint John suburb, a street car was passing over the rails when the locomotive arrived. The motorman, Charles Parker, put on speed and got the car almost across when the engine struck it, demolishing the rear vestibule and throwing the car crossway on the street in the process. The second crew member, conductor John Sommerville, was at the front of the car. The only passenger, George King, a fellow street car conductor was riding as a passenger. They were badly shaken up but escaped serious injuries.

Still in Fairville, at the junction of the West Saint John and the Saint John Subdivisions, the light engine ran through the switch and onto the mainline towards McAdam.

While the engine was racing along the main line, another engine that was under steam in Fairville was dispatched in pursuit. The runaway with no hand to feed its fires, gradually exhausted its steam, and at Ketepec about 6 miles from its Bay Shore home, it was overtaken by the pursuit engine. Upon its return to Bay Shore, no defects were found in the mechanism. Further investigation found that the engine had been carelessly left.

Ian Caie sends along a couple of questions, one of which keeps us mixing of street cars and railways. This often asked question is where was the CN/GTR passenger station in Oshawa prior to the present VIA/GO station at Thornton Road?

This earlier station was south of the Grand Trunk line farther east. The single storey brick building was 30 by 60 feet with a sheet iron roof and had a bay window on both the north or track side and on the west end. In the Grand Trunk days this station was called Oshawa Junction.

Today you travel under CN's Kingston Subdivision along what is called Simcoe Street. This underpass is about 200 feet east of old Simcoe Street. As you travel south and reach the crest of the grade from under CN's tracks you will see a railway track running down Simcoe Street. This track is part of the old Oshawa Railway line. Back in the 1920's this street was called Nonquon Road. Travelling back north along the street track, you will see the track curve west and join into the Kingston Subdivision. Had you been there in 1920 the track and road would have continued northward across the Grand Trunk mainline. The single track of the Oshawa Railway crossed the double track Grand Trunk at grade. Trains of the two railways were controlled from a tower in the north-east quadrant of the crossing. Just south of the Grand Trunk there was an Oshawa Railway siding that ran east for about 400 and was about 100 feet south of the Grand Trunk. The Grand Trunk station was in the gap between this siding and the main line. The station was about 150 feet west of Albert Street. A survey of the traffic volumes on Saturday, February 17, 1923, at the diamond crossings of the two railways indicated that 357 automobiles, 173 other vehicles, 1033 pedestrians, 118 street cars and twenty trains each way that used it. The record shows that the next day Sunday, February 18, 1923, that 340 people used the GTR station. Of this number 175 people caught trains in mid-afternoon. 150 people travelled west on train # 27 and 25 east on train # 28.

Ian also queried as to where was Canadian Northern Railway's station in Oshawa.

Compared to the Grand Trunk Railway, both the Canadian Northern and the Campbellford, Lake Ontario and Western (CP Rail) are new comers to the Oshawa scene. The Canadian Northern and Canadian Pacific at least discussed many joint ventures in the early 1900's. Among these was a proposal for a joint line through the Oshawa area, but this

didn't come to fruition, both railways proceed on their own and the Canadian Northern Railway line through Oshawa was the opened on Monday, October 9, 1911.

Again while both Canadian Northern and Canadian Pacific looked at going around the north end of Oshawa, only the Canadian Northern built along that northern route. The Canadian Northern came through Oshawa roughly along the alignment of Taunton Road (Regional Road # 4). Their line crossed to the south of Taunton Road west of Simcoe Street and continued east, south of Taunton Road. The Canadian Northern station and yard of six or eight tracks was located west of Simcoe Street and was called North Oshawa, at least during the tenure of the Canadian National Railways. The station was located on the north side of the tracks. While I haven't collected much data on this station, it was the site of an interchange with the Oshawa Railway. This Oshawa Railway track was a northward extension of the line along Ritson Road. This spur stayed east of Simcoe Street until it got near the Canadian Northern, where it crossed Simcoe Street and connected with it.

It was only a matter of time for the Canadian Northern following the establishment of Canadian National Railways. The Board of Railway Commissioners authorised the abandonment of operations on the Canadian Northern from Greenburn, 9.36 miles west of North Oshawa to Ronnac at the north end of Port Hope on December 26, 1935. Rail service on the 32.44 miles from North Oshawa to Ronnac was discontinued on February 2, 1936 and the track dismantled in August, 1937. The line from North Oshawa to Greenburn was kept for a siding. This siding of course maintained a connection with the Whitby, Port Parry and Lindsay Railway at Brinlook Crossing.

The old North Oshawa station site was used for years first by a coal and fuel company and later by a lumber company. This company had a major fire in the early 1980s and ceased requiring rail service. The Oshawa Railway spur was cut back to the east side of Simcoe street, where it is still visible. Standing at the end of the spur will still give a feel for the layout of the North Oshawa yard and station.

Speaking of stations, Keith Pratt, our man with the pulse on Prince Edward Island has advised that the CN (nee-PIER) station in Tignish, was so vandalised, that it had to be demolished last year.

Keith goes on to state that much of the track in the Murray Harbour and Montague part of the island (south eastern) has been removed as well as all the track from Borden to Emerald Junction and from there to both Summerside and Charlottetown. On inspection late last summer the spikes has been pulled from Souris to Harmony Junction and on the Elmira Spur, to that community on the eastern tip of the island. Some track had been removed in the Elmira area, from the yard to Munn's Road. Moving back westward on the island, the Kensington Subdivision through Summerside to the wye at the Linkletter Spur has been removed. This spur as well as the spur off it to the airport have been lifted.

The remaining 65 miles of line from this wye near Summerside west to Tignish will be lifted during 1992.

As we leave the island one must think of the difference from 82 years ago when a newspaper account in May 1874 announced that the narrow gauge line from Summerside to Charlottetown had been opened. This clipping closed with the statement that the PIER Superintendent, engineers and conductors were all from New Brunswick.

Ronald L. Colpitts and Jim Frost have sent along some railway equipment news from Orillia. Both members point out that the Ossawippi Express Restaurant made up of eight pieces of rolling stock are for sale. The Toronto Star

advertisement states that this unique restaurant near the Port of Orillia waterfront can seat 246 people including the patio. Anyone offering a party?

Jim Frost also pointed out an advertisement from the November 30, 1991 Toronto Star offering the vintage ex-CNR (nee Grand Trunk) locomotive No. 96 for sale.

In the December, 1991 *Newsletter*, Rusty Railfans described their adventures of chasing C&O (nee-Pere Marquette) stations in south western Ontario. We also had some reference to these lines in our October column. Bill Reddy on reading this material has sent along some goodies including a photocopy of a May, 1942 Pere Marquette Railway Timetable for the Canadian Division. This timetable shows 4 second class passengers trains per day in each direction between CPR Windsor and St. Thomas. In addition there was a mixed train both ways everyday except Sunday between Walkerville and St. Thomas. The footnote in this timetable confirms why train crews need very large lunch buckets. Train and enginemen must provide and familiarise themselves with a copy of the Canadian Pacific Timetable (to travel from Walkerville Junction to CP Windsor); a London and Port Stanley Timetable (for travel from St. Thomas Junction to the MCRR wye in St. Thomas) and an Michigan Central Railway Timetable (for operation over the Canada Southern from St. Thomas to Niagara Frontier) and finally a Erie Railroad Timetable (for American operation from Superior Bridge to East Buffalo, NY.).

This Pere Marquette Timetable shows the full 70.87 miles from Erieau to Sarnia. This line did not have any through passenger service but did have a mixed train between Blenheim and Chatham, each way every day except Sundays. An interesting note in this regard was that these mixed trains will stop at the CNR tower in Chatham for passengers.

After reading last month's review on the book, *The Railway King of Canada*, about Sir William MacKenzie, I went out and purchased it. I had picked up an article on my trip east about a street accident here in Toronto in late April, 1923 in which Alexander MacKenzie, Sir William's older brother had been struck. The accident had occurred on Yonge Street and Mr. MacKenzie had received serious injury including a broken leg. Being curious, I had to start checking my new book, and there is a tie-in. December 5, 1923 saw the death of Sir William and *The Railway King of Canada* describes how Alexander, who had been in bed since his accident got his 87 year old body out of bed to help settle the family dispute as to under which religion, Sir William would be buried. One more case of just how small the world is. See you next month.