

You are probably tired of rail lines of northern Québec, but a couple of final items before we leave this territory. The ink was barely dry on our column before CN announced that it was setting up its remaining rail lines north of Garneau, Québec as a separate operating entity that should start operation in May 1995. Under this new agreement, reached in just two months, 1,855 kilometres of track will be set up as a semi-autonomous profit centre. This trackage will include the Québec territory from Garneau north via Hervey Junction to Chapais/Chibougamau, including Chambord to Arvida, in the Lac Saint-Jean area and west to Matagami, LaSarre and Noranda-Rouyn. The western terminal for this freight operation on the former National Transcontinental Railway will be Mile 100.5 just west of LaSarre. The remaining 84 miles from there west into Cochrane, Ontario will continue to be used only by VIA Rail's passenger trains. A trip to the Garneau yard late last fall revealed a number of track changes underway in preparation for this change. So this is another facet of the changing Canadian rail scene, and I am certain that Gord Webster will keep you posted on the news of these changes in his *The Rapido* column.

Alma and Jonquières Railway Update

After our first column hit the streets, Jim Gussow of Montreal, contacted me about an abandoned rail, east of Lac Saint-Jean, north of Alma, (Isle-Maligne) that he had come across in his travels. A topo map that Jim provided shows this line extended from the end of the A&J at Isle Maligne in a line slightly east of north, roughly paralleling the county survey grid for about 12 miles north and then turns 90 degrees west and extends for about another 12 miles or so to the east bank of Rivière Péribonka just north of Ste-Monique Lac-Saint-Jean.

A check of Cooks' map of *Québec Rail Lines 1850-1984* shows this line as extending to Chute-a-la-Savane, a community about the same distance north of the abandoned line as Ste-Monique Lac-Saint-Jean is south of it. However, their construction date didn't seem to compute and the map has no date for abandonment. So it was back to the drawing board!

Our member Doug Brown's father, Robert R. Brown, had done a lot of research on many of the smaller and older rail lines of Québec, and again some of his research has come to my rescue. In his article on the Alma and Jonquières Railway published by the CRHA in their February 1950 News Report, Mr. Brown stated that in 1929 construction started on a rail line from the terminus of the Alma and Jonquières Railway at Isle Maligne, toward Péribonka. Péribonka is a community on the north shore of Lac Saint-Jean about three-quarters of the way west of Alma toward Dolbeau. As we mentioned in our December column, various proposals had been made for the construction of a rail line around the north side of Lac Saint-Jean. This attempt by the Alma and Jonquières Railway was the one that proceeded the farthest. Mr. Brown went on to point out that in 1930, construction on this line was abandoned after about 25 miles was completed. While this may not completely answer all the questions; like was there any operation on the line, etc., but it at least closes one more gap on northern Québec's rail lines.

Baie des Ha! Ha!

What's in a name? After a couple of questions about

this name and its exclamation marks, it was to Alan Rayburn's *NAMING CANADA - Stories about Place Names from the Canadian Geographic* for some answers. First Mr. Rayburn points out that Ha! Ha! comes from the French word 'haha' that means an unexpected barrier or dead end. This word can be traced back to the fifteenth century. A look at the map in our December issue reveals how early sailors coming up the Rivière Saguenay could question which branch is the main river. However, a 8 or 10 kilometre trip into what we now call Baie des Ha! Ha! would reveal a haha or a dead end route. In this case there are really two small bays or dead ends, hence the plurality.

Mr. Rayburn traces the exclamation marks to an interpretation of the origin of the village of Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha! spread by surveyors, writers and even the surveyor general and map maker of Lower Canada. Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha! is a village on a haha on the west side of Lac Témiscouata (also a station on the old Témiscouata Railway) about midway between Rivière-du-Loup, Québec, and Edmundston, New Brunswick. These early writers, etc., wrote that astonished explorers exclaimed ha! ha! when they found their route was blocked, and subsequently named the body of water a Ha! Ha!. Once shown on a map it is easy to visualize how it could spread.

A Question on the abandonment of Linton - La Tuque line

In our January column I indicated the information that I had on exactly what happened to the various portions of this 39.6-mile line following its abandonment by Canadian National in 1921 wasn't the greatest. Ray Corley has send along some extra information that better details some of the happenings after 1921. A section of 0.88 miles at the east or Linton end along with 5 miles between Mile 15.53 and Mile 20.53 (Mile 0.0 was at Linton) were dismantled in 1923. The two remaining sections, as was mentioned in January, were leased to sports clubs. Ray's notes indicate that the lease for the eastern section of approximately 15 miles was cancelled effective April 30, 1943 and the track dismantling was completed on September 22, 1943.

The approximately 18 miles of leased track in the west appeared to have remained connected to what became the CN Linton Spur, at La Tuque. Ray's information also states that 10 miles from Mile 20.53 to Mile 30.53 of this western section was dismantled with the work being completed by June 29, 1944. These notes further state that the remaining or most westerly 8 miles of leased track continued to be leased to a sports club under a new lease until 1949. In 1949 the rails and fastenings were sold and had been removed by December 3, 1949. While not clear how extensive the new 1949 leases were, at least this 8 mile section of the right of way was leased to the sports club for use as a road.

Again this information fills in a number of gaps, but in the mind of this writer also leaves a number of questions. I must still question whether there may not have been some type of rail traffic over this line during the 20 years or so that the rails remained in place after CN's abandonment. There's no question that the rails would have been light, probably well below 80 pound. However, one would envisage considerable problems in establishing any type of non-rail roadway with the rails still in place, even light ones. This rail line traversed good hunting and fishing terrain, including its route along the north shore of Lac

Wayagamac and one can expect it was a lure to many outdoor types at least during the 1920s. Perhaps things slowed down during the 1930's and one can expect that the 1943 and 1944 rail removals could have been driven by the need for rail in Europe during the later stages of World War II.

So, while we'll close this subject for now, we will keep our eyes open for anything that could clarify the status of this trackage over the 20 years after CN's abandonment.

A Canadian First

In last month's column, we mentioned some of the advancements that were affecting Canadian railways and their construction including the arrangement between Canadian Pacific and Laurentide Air Service in the spring of 1924 for air service from Angliers, Québec. Well Denis Taylor, who has been supplying me with railway material from *The Cobourg World*, just happened to forward an article on this subject that appeared in the Thursday, September 4, 1924 issue. The article quotes from *The Official Railway Guide*: "so far as we (*ORG*) are aware, this is the first instance on this continent where interchange of passenger traffic between railways and airplanes has been established."

Victoria Bridge Facelift

While the recent newspaper advertisement for the fabrication of an overhead travelling crane to permit extensive work on the floor system of this 96 year old structure probably belongs in the news column. However, this and a couple of questions from Doug Brown is enough to cause me to take a quick look at this, the second bridge on the original stone foundations that have been a major link in the Canadian rail network for 134 years.

The first railways of Canada East had relied of ferry boats for the first 23 years of their existence to get to and from Montréal Island. The rail link from Portland, Maine to Montréal first ended at Longueuil and then near St. Lambert (both on the south shore of the St. Lawrence from Montréal). But as plans were progressed for a rail line from Montréal west towards Toronto, the lack of a bridge across the St. Lawrence would become a real handicap especially in the winter.

An Act of the Province of Canada passed on March 17, 1853 permitted the Grand Trunk Railway to construct a general railway bridge across the St. Lawrence River in the vicinity of Montreal to be known as "The Victoria Bridge". The railway was given authority to receive tolls upon ordinary vehicles, animals and passengers passing over the bridge.

Work on this bridge of its famous tubular design was commenced on July 22, 1853 and it was opened for traffic about 62 years later when the first traffic passed over it on December 12, 1859. The first passenger train passed over it five days later on December 17, although the tubes covering the 14th and 15th spans had not been finished. This original bridge had a single broad gauge track. As was the practice of the day, it was test loaded by operating a train over it. The train consisted of 18 platform cars, loaded with stones as heavily as they would bear, and drawn by two Locomotive Engines. This test was done on December 17, before the first passenger train.

In the spring of 1864, a third rail was laid across the Victoria Bridge, and on July 1st 1864, the standard gauge trains of the Montreal and Champlain Railroad and the Vermont Central Railroad commenced running across the bridge and into Bonaventure Street Station.

The next change the Victoria Bridge seen was in the 1870's as the railways converted their locomotives from wood to

coal burning. To let the coal smoke and fumes escape from the covered Victoria Bridge, a strip of plating 20 inches wide was removed from the top centre of the bridge.

After about 40 years of service, the greatly increased weights of the more modern locomotives and rolling stock, along with the increased volume of trains were overtaking the original single track tubular bridge. In 1898, with only minor modifications to the original bridge's masonry piers, the current double track through truss bridge was erected around the old tube structure. Since this work was carried on span by span with the erection of the new bridge around the old tubes, only short disruptions in rail service were required to remove the old spans and place the rails on the new spans. The new double track steel bridge, became known as the "Victoria Jubilee Bridge."

The floor system of the new structure was cantilevered out beyond the trusses on both sides of the bridge. In 1898, each extension carried a vehicular roadway of 10' 9" wide as well as a pedestrian 4' 3" sidewalk.

Friday, November 1, 1909 was an important day for the Victoria Bridge as the Montreal and Southern Counties Railway started electric rail service between Montréal and St. Lambert with two passenger cars. This new electric rail service used the north or downstream roadway on the Victoria Bridge for its track. Part of this 1909 changeover included the widening of the south or upstream side vehicular roadway to 14', and the removal of the pedestrian sidewalk. This vehicle roadway was further widened in 1927 to 16' between curbs.

The operation of the Montreal and Southern Counties Railway across the Victoria Bridge came to an end on June 19, 1955. Canadian National then undertook to rebuild the downstream cantilevers to provide a new wider roadway for highway vehicles. This was completed at about the end of 1955.

The mid-nineteen fifties also saw the start of the most massive change to the Victoria Bridge since its reconstruction at the turn of the century. This of course was caused by the construction of the new St. Lawrence Seaway. To ensure that both rail and ship traffic could be maintained, a railway lift bridge was constructed at each end of the new St. Lambert lock on the seaway. The seaway lock starts at the upstream side of the original Victoria Bridge and extended almost 1200 feet upstream. It was at this upstream end of the seaway lock that the second lift bridge was constructed. From the river side of this upstream lift bridge a new rail carrying bridge with a reverse curve was constructed towards Montréal. This new trackage connected back to the old Victoria bridge at the 17th span from Montreal. The same track configuration was constructed from the shore side of the upstream lift bridge with bridges over the seaway's spill way and adjacent roads to join the main line near the St. Lambert station. The construction work on this diversion bridge was undertaken between 1958 and late 1960. It is the details of the completion of this bridge work that Doug has been trying to determine. Since the railway work was finished without much fanfare, we are still trying to find date of the first train over the diversion spans and the engine number, etc., so we are still digging for these details.

The next substantial change to the Victoria Bridge occurred in the mid-1960's when the water under the first span at the Montréal end was filled in to permit the construction of the Autoroute Bonaventure under it as part of the preparations for Expo 67.

A visit to the Victoria Bridge over the last while would no doubt reveal bridge workers busy with the first phases of the

planned maintenance work. Most of this work has been limited to the old bridge between the start of the diversion bridge and the St. Lambert end. Because of the magnitude of the required work, it is planned to install temporary crane runways along the insides of the trusses. This concept requires the least amount of time to change between railway operation and working, since the over head crane can remain in place, out of use, while trains are run. So if you are in the Montreal area for the next year or so, you may want to travel over the Victoria Jubilee Bridge to see this face lift in progress. This work will let this historic railway structure have a useful life well into the next century.

Stations

While we haven't touched much on stations in the last few months, the interested parties have all kept up with their lengthy processes to achieve whatever. A few more Canadian stations were declared heritage earlier this year. The communities of Sayabec, Québec, Newmarket, Ontario and Kamloops, British Columbia are all in the process of purchasing the Canadian National stations in their communities.

Keith Pratt pointed me towards an interesting article in last summer's issue of Canadian Rail about railway stations on Prince Edward Island written by Allan Graham. Mr. Graham travelled some 3,500 kilometres around Prince Edward Island to determine what had happened to the province's railway stations. He was able to locate 59 railway buildings, mostly stations, but some engine houses, bunkhouses, tool houses, etc., still existing or in recycled use on the island.

While quite a battle royal raged on Prince Edward Island over what should happen to the abandoned railway right-of-way, it has been settled by the government in its favour. Generally the farmers wanted the land returned to the farms that it severed, mainly to avoid urban trespassers and vandals wandering around their farms. The government and the townies, (wrong island) favoured converting the old rights-of-way into trails for hikers and cyclists. Mr. Graham had a photo with his article of the paved trail across the Hillsborough River bridge at Mount Stewart. A recent article in the Toronto Globe states that 77 kilometres of trail in the Mount Stewart – Elmira area in the northeast part of the province has now been paved and ready for touring by hikers and cyclists.

Books on the Market

The following are recent low-key local interest Canadian publications that may be of interest to railfans and railway book collectors. While we haven't reviewed these publications, I am going to mention them since I often don't hear about local interest books until they are no longer available.

The first book is *The Muskeg Limited*, By Peter Lacey. This new volume is about the first eighty years of the Greater Winnipeg Water District railway in Manitoba. This new book is 94 pages plus cover, 8½ x 11¼" vertical format, hard cover with 89 good black and white photos printed on uncoated stock. There are also three track diagrams, five tariff charts, three time tables, one map, as well as one roster re GWWD.

Price for this new book is \$27.95, plus \$2.00 P&H. Note NO GST. The book is available from Anvil Crafts, PO Box 233, St. Vital Station, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2M 4A5

The second publication is a mimeographed 14 page booklet on the Salem & Hillsborough Railroad that they have put out in the fall of 1994.

It contains a brief history of the original railway, followed by a description of the sights, etc., as one takes a trip along the H&S. The main portion of the booklet describes in

reasonable detail the equipment that the S&H had. It closes with a preliminary list of their equipment lost in the September 16, 1994 fire.

This publication is available at \$5 plus \$1 postage and handling (total \$6.00) from Pat & David Othen, 2 Beverley Street, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada B2X 2K3.

The third book is *Directory of Railway Stations of Ontario* By Dave Savage. This soft covered book details the current location of numerous railway stations in the province of Ontario. This book is volume one of a planned two-volume set, with the goal to detail the location of as many existing railway stations as possible in the province, and where they can be now found. A useful tool, especially to track down relocated depots that may also have been remodelled.

This book is available from Canadian Station News, PO Box 171, Cobourg, K9A 4K5, and sells for \$19.95.

A fourth book is *Ghost Railways of Ontario*, By Ron Brown