

Well, the weather here is typical Maritime – if you don't like it wait a minute and it will change. Presently, I am not sure whether I should be getting out the gardening tools or a snow shovel, so while the weather makes up its mind, I will put together a column.

### **Train Travel is Still Fun!**

One advantage of living in the wild east is our ability to be able to still spend an evening in a lounge car on a train. While there are always moments to remember from these adventures, my recent trip on the way to Toronto added one more. The first order of the day as we left Moncton was a visit to the dining car for a relaxing meal as the miles sped by. While VIA's meals have followed the general trends of modern society, to me they haven't changed as fast as the rest of the world. True, they aren't the old style fresh roast beef dinners, served on railway china with heavy silver cutlery, etc., but they are still ahead of most of today's restaurants, especially when cost is considered.

After a enjoyable meal, I wandered back to the rear lounge-observation car for an evening of relaxation. With a coffee in hand, I started to glance at some of the day's newspapers, then four older gentlemen wandered into the car. As soon would be known, these gentlemen were merchant navy men from Saint John on their way to Ottawa to hassle the politicians some more about getting recognition for their war service. The evening passed quickly as stories of their wartime adventures came forth and along with discussions about various politicians they had tangled with over the years. Many of the stories from their sea-going days would make most censors blush. At Bathurst, the

local Member of Parliament joined our now noisy crowd. This definitely livened up the political discussions. As we approached the Quebec border at Matapedia, our barperson announced that the bar was closing, and one of the merchant seamen stated fine, but that would not close his bar. The discussions of sea-life and politics continued for a couple of more hours. So more memories to add to one's memories. The joys of train travel!

### **Maritime Stations**

On a number of occasions I have mentioned the small New Brunswick Railway (C.P.R.) station at Upper Woodstock, NB. This single room frame station has been used for years as a private workshop. My spies are now reporting that a local historian has purchased this station along with a nearby long dormant tavern, with the aim of restoring both of them. This station house was constructed about 1880 as the New Brunswick Railway constructed its second bridge across the St. John river about a mile upstream from their first short-lived bridge that had been opened lived in early April, 1877. The ice of the St. John river apparently didn't like the intrusion of this first frail timber structure that was built to carry both the narrow gauged New Brunswick Railway and a road way, since each spring it would inflict its damage. The new upriver bridge site enabled the railway to use an island and hence construct two shorter bridges over the river. While this relocation established a new station at Upper Woodstock, it did cause the abandonment of the New Brunswick Railway's original station at Grafton or Northampton.

We definitely wish this chap luck with his Upper Woodstock station project.

It always seems a real step back in time to visit these little wooden stations and especially note the various initials carved on their walls. In total, Canada has a generous number of the larger station houses protected under various heritage legislation, but very few of the small flag stations that dotted thousands of Canadian hamlets during the days of railway supremacy.

Here in the Moncton area, the Village of Hillsborough and the Salem & Hillsborough Railroad are starting to put together plans for adding a couple of new buildings to the Hillsborough Railroad terminal. The one phase involves the physical relocation of their museum building. This would permit improvements to the displays as well as providing temporary facilities for ticket sales, etc.

The other phase involves the construction of a replica of the Albert Railway's 1881 station house as part of their Vision 2000 project. The original "Hillsboro" station had lasted about three years before it succumbed to fire in November, 1880. A new storey & half station house to replace that one was constructed during the summer of 1881. This station house lasted until about winter of 1945 when it too burned. This fire occurred during chilly weather, the station agent added some coal to the pot bellied stove and walked down the track to get some car numbers. On his return the whole interior of the station was on fire.

Since Hillsborough is the home to New Brunswick's only operating tourist railway and on a main highway through Albert County, these proposed buildings will no doubt make this an even more

enticing destination for people with railway interests.

Besides Hillsborough, it is reported that the Town of Caraquet, in northern New Brunswick is also planning to construct a station replica. They are proposing to construct a replica of one of the mid-sized C.N.R. standard stations. They are building a replica of a community from the late 1930's and are also aiming for about a kilometre of track and a steam powered train. Caraquet is located 48.48 miles east of Gloucester Junction. This junction, just south of Bathurst, is located on the Intercolonial.

In the winter of 1873-74 Sanford Fleming surveyed a rail line from Gloucester Junction to Shippegan. Shippegan Harbour was found to be a suitable harbour in a location that could form a short mail route to Britain. The Caraquet Railway was provincially incorporated in 1874, but no real construction started for ten or eleven years. A July, 1887 report advised that the rails had been laid for 50 miles and that some 300 passengers had been carried over the line in the previous week. The remaining 7 miles into Shippegan were planned for construction in the following year.

In December of 1887 heavy snow blocked the rail line between Bathurst and Caraquet. On Saturday, December 17, a crew of men left Caraquet Bathurst bound to attempt to open the line. About five miles west of Caraquet, near Bertrand, the crew noted that the snow had blocked the line west of a bridge. The passenger car was unhooked and thirteen men jammed into the cab of the engine. They then made a run for the snow bank, then horror, the

bridge gave way as the engine's weight went on it. The result was eight killed, one of the worse railway accidents in New Brunswick history. It was found that ice and tide pressure, had moved and destroyed some of the supports, and the impact loading of the engine caused the collapse.

A separate 13.5 mile Gulf Shore Railway Company line was constructed from Pokemouche Junction mile 59.57 Caraquet Railway, to Tracadie about ten years after the Caraquet Railway. The two railways carried on a joint operation until 1911 when they amalgamated under the name Caraquet and Gulf Shore Railway Company. In May 1918, the Canadian government purchased the Caraquet & Gulf Shore Railway for \$220,000. It became part of Canadian National's operation until the trackage beyond Mile 4.34 to the two terminals, Shippegan and Tracadie was abandoned on May 2, 1989. Most of this abandoned right-of-way has been converted into hiking trails.

So Caraquet's proposal for a station and short operating railway should enable them to better highlight the railway role in their area.

### **New Brunswick Recreational Rail Riders**

The motor car people here in New Brunswick now have some new home rails. As the rail lines of New Brunswick continued to disappear over the last few years, the putt-putt crowd were finding it more and more difficult to find usable rails. Well now, apparently in a deal with the provincial government, they have been able to obtain the former CP Southampton Subdivision in western New Brunswick. This line originally 13 miles long, was constructed by the Southampton Railway

Company, which had been incorporated in 1910. The line extends from Millville on the now abandoned CPR Gibson Subdivision, to the east bank of the St. John river at Lower Southampton. This western rail terminal was first called Crocket. However, since there was already another station in Madawaska county with the name Crocket, one needed to be changed to avoid confusion. The story is that Mr. V. A. Harshaw, the Superintendent, Woodstock Division (1911-14) received a letter from the General Superintendent in Saint John requesting him to suggest a name. He happened to notice a calendar of the Otis Car Company, hanging in his office and at once selected "Otis". This new name first appeared in Supplement 2, of the CPR Timetable 27, dated April 4, 1915.

While only a short branch, the construction of Southampton Railway created more political uproar than most. Since both it and the St. John & Quebec Railway were being constructed about the same time, it seemed like every paper of the time had a story about line or the other. In the case of the Southampton Railway, Mr. J. K. Pinder, a local businessman and a member of the provincial legislature, had several lumber mills along the route, He wound up being the prime contractor for the railway's construction. One example of the scandal was that it came to light was that Mr. Pinder, as the contractor, just happened to be paid a subsidy for the line twice.

Physical construction started in 1911, the same year that the Canadian Pacific Railway first leased the line for a year.

In September 1912, a construction

report indicated that the six miles, from Millville to Pinder's Mills, had been graded, track laid and ballasted complete, with the exception of final dressing. A daily train service was operated over this six miles. Grading has been nearly completed on the remaining seven miles to Lower Southampton.

It had been expected that the full line would be ready for operation during 1912, but it didn't. The spring freshet of 1913 resulted in the ice carrying away the bridge over the Nackawick River. Regular train operations over the full line commenced on December 1, 1913 by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In 1914 Canadian Pacific leased the line for another year, and then on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1915, under a federal act, the CPR leased the branch for 99 years from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915.

While never a real profitable line, operations continued. The first major change came with the creation of the Mactaquac Dam headpond in 1967. The line was shortened, and the new western terminal was called Nackawic. About the same time, the construction of a pulp and paper mill at Nackawic helped maintain some rail traffic. This line was eventually turned over to the C.P.R.'s subsidy, the Canadian Atlantic Railway. Then in the spring of 1992, the Canadian Pacific Railway applied to abandon this line. In 1993, the National Transportation Agency authorized the abandonment of this line effect the first of 1994.

Since this line had been a private company, things had dragged over the removal of the rails. This worked to the advantage of the New Brunswick

Recreational Rail Riders, who now have about 10 miles of track, apparently mostly 100 lb. that they can call their own. Hopefully we will hear of some interesting events occurring along this now preserved line.

### **Saint John Streetcar**

Streetcars last ran on the streets of Saint John, New Brunswick in 1948. While street car No. 82, was rescued in 1962 and shipped to the Railway Museum at Delson, Quebec, for display, no cars to date have been really preserved in New Brunswick. In 1980, the New Brunswick division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association acquired five of the old tram bodies along with other salvaged parts. They wanted to restore one or two of them. However, now nearly 20 years later, they are still in storage! The New Brunswick Museum is now spearheading a move to acquire them with the aim of restoring at least one for a static display. Hopefully, this will become an interesting project to keep track of.

### For Next Month:

### **Railway Shops of Moncton**

Moncton (The Bend) with the opening of the European & North American rail line to Point du Chene on August 20, 1857 saw the start of train service. This line was destined to connect Point du Chene via Moncton with Saint John. While construction from Saint John saw various western portions of the line opened in segments, it reached Sussex on November 10, 1859. The completion of the segment between Sussex and Moncton saw the opening of the full 100 miles on August 1, 1860.

Saint John and Point du Chene, being the terminals of this line became the homes of the main shops. Then of course, the start of the Phoenix Foundry and Machine Shop, to construct locomotives helped reinforce the railway activities in Saint John.

One of the terms of Confederation was the construction of an inter-colonial railway. Surveys favoured keeping this new line somewhat inland to avoid the various tidal waterway inlets along the east coast of southern New Brunswick. Moncton was chosen as a point to start the new line northward, since not only was it on the European & North American Railway, but it also it could be reached by ships on the Petitcodiac River.

In 1872 while work was progressing along the line on the grading, etc., the Duncan farm containing some 95 acres was purchased in what is now downtown Moncton for a terminal site. In addition to the E. & N.A.'s small station house, work was started on some shops in 1872. A fire in the Point du Chene shops in late 1872 pushed their construction. In 1876, as the Intercolonial was opening its line to connect with the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada East at Riviere du Loup, the shops in Moncton consisted of: a machine and blacksmiths' shops; two car shops; a paint shop and stores warehouse (where a novel machine tests lubricating oils); and a roundhouse of 17 stalls.

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Moncton Main Shops demolished  
January – March 15, 1990