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**A REVIEW OF RAILWAY OPERATIONS AROUND OTTAWA AS OBSERVED DURING
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By W. T. Sharp

Ottawa is a centre of wide interest for the enthusiast. Although it is not a railway centre of importance, like Toronto, Montreal or Winnipeg, it has compensating advantages. The points of railway interest in the city are readily accessible and the city is small enough that it is easy to get a comprehensive view of railway operation hardly possible for an amateur in a centre such as Toronto. A wide variety of locomotive types, almost as great as in Toronto or Montreal is to be observed.

The layout of trackage around Ottawa is a headache to everyone concerned, the railways and city included. The main line of the C.P.R. runs from Montreal to Smith's Falls, Carleton Place and the west thus avoiding Ottawa completely. The regular passenger trains, however, are run through Ottawa, leaving the main line at Vaudreuil and joining it again at Carleton Place. The route of these trains through the city is via Hurdman's Bridge, Union Station, Hull, Hull West and Ottawa West although the main C.P.R. station used to be at Broad Street near the present Ottawa West station. The locomotive terminal and freight yards are still located here although all passenger trains now run into Union Station. On the north side of the Ottawa the C.P.R. has three branches; one up the river to Gatineau, Buckingham; one up the river to Aylmer, Shawville and Waltham; Montebello and Montreal, and one up the Gatineau River Valley to Maniwaki. In addition, there is a branch from Ottawa West to Bedell and Prescott (Bedell is on the Montreal to Smiths Falls DT main) with a spur to Hurdman's Bridge from Elwood. The two day trains to and from Toronto run to and from Smiths Falls via Carleton Place, Ottawa West and Hull, but in order to avoid reversal at Smiths Falls, the two night trains in each direction run via Bedell and Hurdman's Bridge. All lines around and in Ottawa are single track except the joint track between the coach yards and Riverside. The difficulties caused by this track arrangement are obvious. All the trains from Carleton Place and the three Quebec branches have to reach Union Station by a single track low speed line through Hull and over the Interprovincial Bridge, with severe curvature at the Ottawa end. Nearly 50 movements a day, mainly bunched at peak hours, must be made over this section. Thus the C.P.R. has to move all its locomotives for passenger trains to and from the Union Station by train order, and frequently because of track congestion, engines have to be moved by the much longer route via Elwood and Hurdman's Bridge. To make matters worse, the Interprovincial Bridge is old and inadequate, so that there are severe weight and speed restrictions which means that only Hudsons without boosters can be used on the transcontinental trains. The bridge connects with just two of the Union Station tracks and when these are being used, the line is blocked.

The Canadian Nationals' track layout is not as difficult. The old Canadian Northern line to Montreal along the south shore has been abandoned as far as Hawkesbury, so that all operation is via Coteau. Westbound passenger trains run into the Union Station via Hurdman's Bridge, back up and wye behind the roundhouse and leave via Hurdman's and Billing's Bridge; eastbound trains follow the reverse procedure. The transcontinental line leaves the Smiths Falls - Napanee line at Federal a few miles south where it crosses the Rideau River again. The freight sheds are on the crosstown line between Pretoria Bridge and Bank Street, but there are also L.C.L. sheds and yard next to the Union Station. West from Bank Street runs the branch to Arnprior and Barry's Bay (formerly to Depot Harbour). There is also a freight only branch to Chandiere Yard which serves the Eddy Ottawa mill.

The Union Station is jointly operated, as are the coach yards on the east bank of the Rideau Canal south of the station. Switching here is performed by the CNR, usually two switchers of the 7300 series are on the job. The CP passenger trains on the Waltham and Maniwaki branches are usually assembled by their road engines. The Union Station, with 9 platform tracks, is fairly adequate for the traffic, except for the fact that there are just two through platforms and unfortunately only one other is capable of handling long trains.

Passenger trains on the CNR out of Ottawa are relatively few and easy to describe. Apart from 1 and 2 there are two daily locals to Montreal and one daily except Sunday train to Barry's Bay, with a weekend extra during the summer. These locals usually have two express and two coaches handled by a 5000 series Pacific. 1 and 2 are heavy between Montreal and Ottawa (about 13 cars as a rule) but lighter west of Ottawa. Locomotives are usually changed at Ottawa, 4-8-4's working east, while U1F

Mountains are used to the west.

The power used on the Montreal locals is highly irregular. These trains run from 5 to 9 cars and are hauled by a wide variety of locomotives, from light Pacifics to 6400 series Northerns; the power assigned seems to be utterly unrelated to the size of the train, and 6200's pulling five cars are common. Many Mimico engines are used here, probably test runs after visits to Point St. Charles. To complete the CN passenger picture, there is a daily mixed to Belleville and a weekly mixed to Pembroke. The mixed trains run into Bank Street, rather than the Union Station.

On the CP passenger traffic is more important, and there is a good local service on most of the branch lines radiating from Ottawa. The locomotives on the three trains to the west run through with only a brief inspection stop at Ottawa West. 2800 series Hudsons are regularly assigned to these trains which consist of 11 or 12 cars between Montreal and Ottawa, but usually less than 10 cars west of the capital. On 1 and 2 the locomotives are changed at North Bay; 2461 and 2812 were regulars until July but now new Pacific 2470 (built 1948) has replaced 2812. 2800 - 2819 are used primarily in freight service but are available for passenger when needed. The two Montreal locals are directly competitive with those of the CN, and are consistently 2 or 3 cars longer (on weekends they run up to 14 cars. New Pacifics are beginning to be used on these trains also.

The Toronto trains are of considerable interest. The two overnight trains are usually heavy, but the day and afternoon trains quite light. For some time the regulars, which run right through to Toronto, were 2391, 2392, 2400 and 2401. These have now been replaced by new CP's 2465 - 2468. The day train to Brockville making connections there with CN #5 is usually handled by 2927 (4-4-4) and the fast afternoon train connecting with #15 by light Pacific 1227. These trains usually consist of five or six cars, sometimes with through cars for Toronto. Over weekends these trains run up to 12 or 13 cars and are frequently double-headed, using one of the 2200's assigned to Ottawa as assistance for 1227.

Passenger service on the Waltham and Maniwaki branches can be described rapidly. The daily to Waltham is handled regularly by 449 and usually consists of four cars. Until a few years ago this branch was regularly operated with 4-4-0's, but now three D4 ten-wheelers, 425, 449 and 472, have been specially fitted with small tenders in order to negotiate the branch. 425 is used on freights and 472 is available as a spare when needed. The Maniwaki line has daily local, leaving Ottawa at 16:30 (12:30 on Saturdays) daily except Sunday, returning, the following morning. Summer traffic is heavy, and the daily local usually has six or more old cars and the Sunday night train often ten or twelve. Until about 1945, 2100 series ten-wheelers were used, but to-day Pacifics 2602, 2603 and 2624 are regularly used. Traffic is heavy and grades severe, but schedules are assured as well. In addition a morning commuter train from Alcoue to Ottawa is shown in the public timetable; this runs up deadhead from Ottawa West about 4:00 and is usually handled by 471.

To provide local service to Ottawa Valley towns, two local trains are operated daily in each direction between Ottawa and Chalk River. Traffic is light and four cars usually suffice except on Saturdays. 1230 is regularly assigned to the morning train and 1265 to the evening train out of Ottawa. 2200's were used before advent of the 65's.

To complete the picture of passenger service, it remains to discuss the North Shore line.

Here it becomes necessary to cover passenger and freight at the same time. Along the tracks are located many industrial developments mainly concerned with Forest Products at Gatineau Mills, Buckingham, Thurso and Lachute for example. The territory is non-competitive, a fact which is reflected in the rates and must help make the line one of the most profitable branches in the CP system. Six freight trains are scheduled daily in each direction on this branch. This imposing total is made up of four daily paper trains, a way freight and an overnight pick-up freight. Usual motive power is D10 ten-wheelers although 2200 and 2600 series locomotives are common on the pick-up freight. These trains are frequently operated in sections thus the line is very busy. Two daily passenger locals are operated in sections thus the line is very busy. Two daily passenger locals are operated in each direction: the morning train from Ottawa runs to Place Viger and comes back in the evening; it usually consists of four or five cars pulled usually by 1253. The other local runs from Windsor Station in the morning, carrying a cafe-parlour car and usually consists of a total of 8 or 9 cars, pulled by 2393 or substitute Pacific from Glen. In addition, an express train is operated in each direction on Saturday afternoons.

Freight traffic on the other CP lines out of Ottawa is less impressive. Two freights are scheduled

daily (one on Sundays between Ottawa and Smiths Falls via Carleton Place with one in the reverse direction. A daily except Sunday way freight is operated to Maniwaki and a thrice weekly way freight to Waltham, normally handled by 425. The Vaudreuil - Ottawa line has only a daily way freight in each direction and the Prescott branch likewise has only way freight service, except for sporadic coal trains between Smiths Falls and Ottawa via Bedell. Thus the main channel of freight traffic is the North Shore, line to Carleton Place and Smiths Falls. Six 2-8-O's are assigned to Ottawa for yard duty and for the daily trains to Hull, Eddy's and Sussex Street. Switching into Eddy's formerly performed by the Hull Electric Railway now falls to the CPR although the company has some locomotives of its own.

On the CN, freight traffic is less easy to describe. Transcontinental freight service is highly variable at the moment, little grain being moved, so traffic is low and the main line sees only the daily scheduled manifest 401-402, and one or two extra in direction. An additional overnight pick-up freight 437-438 is operated between Ottawa and, usually handled by a Pacific or Mikado. In general 6200's handle most freight trains between Montreal and here, but Mikados operate west. No engines seem to be definitely assigned, and it appears that these Mikados regularly wander long distances. It seems clear that no main line locomotives are assigned to Ottawa. Most of the Northerns are known to belong to Turcot. The daily way freight between Ottawa and Coteau is regularly by Consolidations a large number of which are assigned to Coteau. A daily except Sunday way freight service is also maintained on the Barry's Bay branch the scheduled being so arranged that the two engines in this service at any time also handled the mixed trains west from Barry's Bay. Consolidations or 5000 series Pacifics are the usual power on this service. Service in the Smiths Falls - Napanee branch is largely confined to the daily mixed train with an extra on Sundays when the mixed does not run. Motive power on the line, usually provided by Belleville, is Mikados and Pacifics. The weekly mixed to Pembroke and the weekly way freight are usually worked by one of the two ten-wheelers that seem to be assigned here. The schedule is so arranged that the engine which works the way freight to Pembroke works the weekly mixed from Pembroke to Brent and return before returning to Ottawa.

The Ottawa roundhouse is large and commodious, but only very occasionally does one find more than 6 or 8 engines in it at any given time. Quite a few switchers are required for the Union Station, coach yard, freight yard, Bank Street yards and Chaudiere branch. Several light industries are located along the CNR crosstown tracks and Chaudiere branch and these require a fair amount of switching. However, as regards main line freight, the CN assigns locomotives on a more or less "hand to mouth" basis. At one time, there is unlikely to be more than one or two Mikados in the roundhouse and no Northerns beyond any being used in passenger service. This means that engines working in from Montreal and the west must be turned around fast and sent on their way again; any emergency power must be sent in from Montreal. It seems a pity that the railways cannot make some arrangement to allow the CP passenger engines to use the vacant stalls at the CN roundhouse and save some of the bother of working them to Ottawa West.

The CP is somewhat better off as regards a reserve of power, although to run passenger extras they usually have to send to Smiths Falls for an extra 63. Smiths Falls of course, is an important operating centre and always seems to have spare Pacifics and Hudsons on hand. Passenger extras into Ottawa are not very frequent, and are usually run in conjunction with conventions, etc.

The New York Central reaches Ottawa by a branch line from Helena through Cornwall. The New York Central's service in northern New York State (St. Lawrence and Adirondack Divisions) is a far cry from their main line and compares unfavourably with even Canadian standards. In order to economise the daily passenger local from Helena; no longer uses the Union Station, but runs into the ramshackle NYC station on the outskirts of Ottawa, near the CNR roundhouse. A motor train was used several years ago, but class F ten-wheelers now provide the motive power for the branch. There used to be through connections for New York City, but now there are no passenger connections to anywhere. Despite this, there is still a fair amount of local passenger traffic, and the train usually carries four cars out of Ottawa. Express connections are provided by truck between Helena, and Massena, NY, accordingly express business is good. There is also a fair amount of freight traffic on the branch.

This completes my general description of railway operations around Ottawa at the present time.

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COMMENTS ON W. T. SHARP'S OTTAWA REVIEW

By F. H. Howard

The two day trains to Toronto run of course to Brockville for the C.N. pool trains, but 562 and 563 connect at Smiths Falls with 35 and 36, and sometimes an express reefer is picked up there.

The assignment of power on the C.N. Ottawa - Montreal service does seem unrelated to the size of train, but I think you will find this is the reason for a 4-8-2 or 4-8-4 on trains 51 and 48, normally 5 or 6 cars. They want a big engine in Ottawa for protection in case of engine failure on 1 or 2, so they send one up on 51 ahead of 1 and bring it back on 48, behind 2.

I know that is the reason for the C.P. using 2810 (I believe it is a new G-3 now) on 505 and 502, although those trains ran 9 and 10 cars, not 5 or 6.

The operation of 7 and 8 through Ottawa was of great interest. 7 was nearly always in 2 sections, although we would doublehead with a 2200 on Sunday nights from Ottawa to Chalk River. But on 8, sometimes it would be doublehead, sometimes two sections. Now doubleheaders cannot cross the river, so we would send 502's engine, 2810, over ahead of it or cut off the leading engine on 8, and use 2810 to doublehead it into Montreal. The engine we took off 8 would go over to the station behind it, and handle 502. If 8 was over an hour late, we would run a "local 8" from Ottawa, with a 2200 and 2 coaches and 2 parlour cars, so all the Ottawa people would get to Montreal on time. 8 usually lifted these 4 cars. Now of course with 9 and 10, things are different. The 2200 used to come back doubleheading 1.

It is interesting to note that 7 picks up its driver at Ottawa, the same one that came up on 505, thus getting an extra meal in, on the earlier train.

The regular engines on 7 and 8 would be 2823, 2858 and 2859 Montreal to Chislehurst, with 2825 handling the extra section or doubleheading to Chalk River and right back again on 8.

2927 is now on the Prescott branch I am told, but it used to go to Brockville, on Sundays when its train would not run, we frequently would doublehead the afternoon Brockville with it on Sundays.

You will notice that 562 is the number of the train from Brockville to Ottawa, and also from Ottawa to Prescott, and 563 vice-versa. Actually they are not the same trains. The train comes in from Prescott, the engine then moves over to the Brockville train and crew then take over, with the reverse at night. You might think that one engine could go from Prescott to Brockville and back, but there was difficulty in getting coal at Brockville, and it is about 270 miles round-trip.

It is interesting to see 425 on the Waltham freight and 449 on the passenger. When I was there it was the opposite, but 449 has recently been to Angus and is now the better engine. That road is very hard on engine truck springs.

We used to use 2927 on the alcove run because it would be back before 563 was due to go. 2927 also used to handle the one or two-car "millionaires special" or "MP's special", running as 2nd 504 Friday only to Montreal West for connections to Quebec, then head back to Ottawa. This was only while Parliament was sitting. An interesting operation on the North Shore took place on Saturday. Instead of 2600 or 2601 arriving on 85, the fast freight, it had a G-3. This engine was sent right back to Montreal on 428. Saturdays only. The engine that came up from Montreal on 427 - also - Saturday only went back on 86. (We had to deadhead a crew to Montreal on 2 to come back on 427, and the crew from 428 deadheaded back on 7 unless there was a 3rd section). In the meantime 2600 and 2609 would be used on ski trains or week-end traffic in the Laurentians.

You mention cove trains from Smiths Falls via Bedell. Actually they were from Prescott, and ran whenever cove boats came in from Ogdensburg. We would get them at all hours, and were hard put for power. There is also a small turntable at Prescott, so any big power had to back down from Bedell. However we seldom had any big power to supply except on Saturday afternoons, we could use 24's engine, as there was no 23 on Saturday night. 503 and 504 used to be pulled by 2459, fitted with an experimental air horn to be used instead of a steam whistle so as not to annoy the 8000 citizens of my town.