

# Canadian Rail



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## MONTREAL'S CENTRAL STATION



1943 - - FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY - - 1993



# CANADIAN RAIL

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Canadian Rail is continually in need of news, stories, historical data, photos, maps and other material. Please send all contributions to the editor: Fred F. Angus, 3021 Trafalgar Ave. Montreal, P.Q. H3Y 1H3. No payment can be made for contributions, but the contributor will be given credit for material submitted. Material will be returned to the contributor if requested. Remember "Knowledge is of little value unless it is shared with others".

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*FRONT COVER: Canadian National's Central Station in Montreal as it appeared in the spring of 1943 shortly before it was completed and opened for service. Neither the "Canadian National" sign nor the clocks are in place. The view was taken from Eaton's department store. Notice the electric locomotive hauling the old wooden cars towards the entrance of the Mount Royal tunnel.*

*Canadian National photo No. 43490-3.*

As part of its activities, the CRHA operates the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson / St. Constant, Que. which is about 14 miles (23 Km.) from downtown Montreal. It is open from late May to early October (daily until Labour Day). Members, and their immediate families, are admitted free of charge.

# The Wreck of CPR Train No. 9

## A Century Old Mystery

By Fred F. Angus

The recent announcements that Canadian Pacific has applied to abandon its lines east of Sherbrooke have caused railway historians to recall the varied historical events concerning these lines. One of most mysterious, and least remembered, stories is the apparent sabotage of overnight train No. 9, running from Montreal to Saint John, in the depths of northern Maine. To the best of our knowledge this crime, if indeed it was a crime, was never solved, and the case remains a mystery after almost a century. The account of this wreck contains all the ingredients of a first-class melodrama; the wreck of the train, the self-sacrificing heroism of the engineer, the gruesome details of the tragedy, the hairbreadth escapes, the quickly improvised emergency measures, even a marathon run to report the wreck to the outside world. Above all, it tells how a group of widely differing people, suddenly thrown into a traumatic situation, can cope with the events. Finally it contains that prime ingredient, the unsolved mystery. Despite all this, the story is almost unknown today. This is that tragic story.

Canadian Pacific Railway train No. 9, popularly but unofficially known as the "Montreal Express", was running about 20 minutes late, heading eastward through Sapling Township in northern Maine in the early hours of Monday, July 2, 1894. It had left Montreal at 8:00 the previous evening and was scheduled to arrive at Saint John N.B. at 1:20 in the afternoon and Halifax at 11:00 that night. As usual, the train consisted of a CPR ten-wheel locomotive, a mail-express car, a baggage car, a second class coach, a first class coach and, finally, a CPR sleeping car. On this run the locomotive was No. 567, a class SR 4-6-0, which had been built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works (Builder's number 12173) and delivered to the CPR in September 1891. All seemed in order as the train neared the West Outlet of Moosehead Lake, 12 miles west of Greenville Maine. Fred Leavitt of Megantic was the engineer while Angus McDonald was fireman. In addition, Alfred C. Foss of Sherbrooke, station agent at Greenville, and Charles Grant, station agent at Jackman, were riding in the locomotive cab. In the mail-express car mail agent Walter Starkey of Saint John and mail clerk John L. Miller had worked until Megantic and had then gone to bed, Miller in the lower berth and Starkey in the upper. Further back in the train, most of the passengers were sleeping, both in the coaches and sleeping car. One of the first class passengers was R.B. Van Horne, son of William C. Van Horne the President of the CPR. Despite worrying news of increasing labour unrest on the U.S. railways, no one on board train No. 9 had any idea that this was going to be any different than a routine trip over the "Short Line".

After leaving Jackman, the track runs along the shore of Long Pond and Little Brasua Lake, before turning inland near Tarratine (then called Askwith) and climbing slightly over a ridge. There are some curves on this section until the track straightens out about 2000 feet before reaching the deck plate girder bridge over the West Outlet of Moosehead Lake at a place later called Somerset (or, sometimes, Somerset Junction), but which, in 1894,

had no name. The western approach to the steel bridge was by means of a wooden trestle 244 feet long and of a height varying from 10 to 25 feet over the ground which was covered by rocks and tree stumps. The final curve before the straight track is an easy curve to the right, thus the bridge would first become visible on the engineer's side, when only about 2000 feet away down a slight grade. Beyond the bridge the track is straight for more than two miles, before another curve, and relatively straight track followed by the bridge over the East Outlet of Moosehead Lake just before the station at Moosehead. No stops were scheduled between Jackman and Moosehead, and the thirty miles were scheduled to be covered in 57 minutes, an average speed of 31.5 miles an hour. Although it was only 5:15 A.M., there was already considerable light. In the eastern end of the time zone, and only eleven days after the longest day in the year, the sun rose early; by the Standard time then in effect, sunrise was before 4:00 A.M. The morning was somewhat overcast, but visibility was good.

Suddenly someone in the locomotive cab, probably engineer Leavitt but no one knows for sure, saw something on the track ahead, just at the beginning of the wooden trestle. Even at the average scheduled speed, the train would reach the trestle in 43 seconds, however on the downgrade, and considering the possibility that the engineer was trying to make up time, the train was likely exceeding the average speed. It is also quite possible that the engineer was momentarily distracted by something, perhaps one of the riders in the cab, and did not see the obstruction until some of those vital seconds had passed. In any case, there was little time to think and not enough time to stop, although engineer Leavitt applied the air brakes and reversed the engine, sticking to his post in the true heroic tradition of railway engineers. Fireman McDonald, having done all he could, "joined the birds", either jumping or falling from the locomotive and suffering a fractured skull and other serious injuries. The other three in the cab had no time to escape. Seconds later, No. 567 hit the obstruction, derailed, and ran along the decking of the trestle for at least 100 feet before running off the bridge on the right-hand side and plunging 25 feet into a gully, landing almost upside down. The forward momentum carried the locomotive forward another 85 feet bringing down four spans of the trestle. Behind the engine, the train piled up into the gap. The first three cars were shattered and wrecked along side of and partly under the fallen trestle. The first class coach was derailed and the front end dropped over the bank, however it was not heavily damaged. The sleeping car was only partially derailed and was almost completely intact; its passengers were uninjured except for being shaken up. In less time than it takes to read this it was over. the locomotive and three cars were wrecked, four men were dead and four more critically injured (one fatally). In addition, many more had lesser injuries and all were badly shaken and in a state of shock. No one was sure just what had happened, and the speculation and theories continued to make headline news for weeks.

A few details of contemporary conditions might be of interest. By July 1894 the "Short Line" through Maine had been in operation for more than five years. The idea of a railway through northern Maine to connect the seaport of Saint John with Montreal and points west had been advocated for many years and, following completion of the CPR main line to Vancouver, the company proceeded with its eastern extension. The last spike on the "Short Line" was driven in December 1888, and through passenger service began on June 2, 1889 as the first through train left Montreal's Windsor station bound for Saint John and Halifax. The line was a success, and patronage had increased during the next five years in spite of the hard economic times that had begun in 1893. It is important to note that, in 1894, the line was still new, all structures between the western border of Maine and Mattawamkeag were scarcely five years old. This included the trestle at the West Outlet of Moosehead Lake.

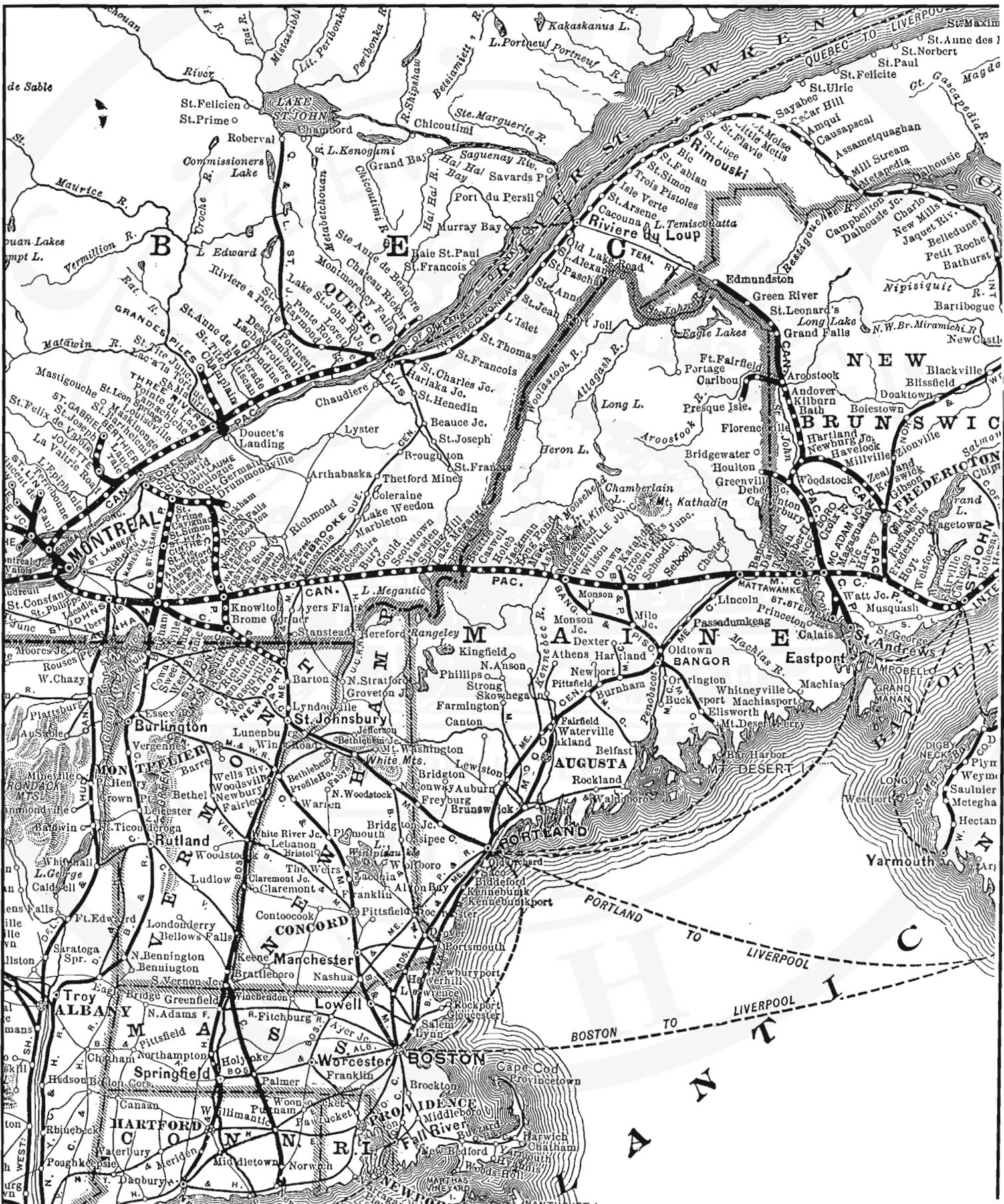
Despite the modern day tendency to be nostalgic about the "Good Old Days", there was not a great deal to be overjoyed about in that month of July in the year of 1894. It was a time of depression, violence, murder and assassination. The previous year there was a major financial panic throughout North America, caused originally by the collapse of silver-speculation bubble, and by 1894 the effect was being felt as a full scale depression, one of the worst of the nineteenth century. Thousands were unemployed and those who still had jobs had their wages reduced. Everywhere prices were falling and, while this may sound good today, it is of little use if one does not have the money to buy goods, or even food. The trouble was not confined to America; it was scarcely a week since an anarchist had assassinated the President of France. In the Far East tensions were rising between China and Japan which would result in a full scale war before the month was over. All over the world it was an unsettled time. The railways were not immune from the trouble. In June a strike began at the Pullman works near Chicago and this soon spread to railways handling Pullman cars. By July many U.S. railways were shut down and acts of vandalism were taking place. Before the month was over there had been rioting and many deaths as strikers and soldiers clashed. This railway strike did not spread to Canada, and there was no proof that there was any connection between all this unrest and the events of July 2 near Moosehead. Even though the wreck occurred in the United States, it was on a line owned and operated by a Canadian railway. Still, one speculates that there may have been a connection in view of the strong evidence of sabotage. If so, there was an irony since the only car undamaged was the sleeper, and that was operated by the CPR and not by Pullman.

RIGHT: The timetable showing the schedule of the CPR trains between Montreal and Saint John in 1894. No. 9 was scheduled to arrive at Moosehead at 5:04 A.M., and would have crossed the ill fated trestle at about 4:55 A.M. if on time. It was, therefore, about twenty minutes late when it was wrecked at 5:15 A.M.

OPPOSITE PAGE: A map of about 1894 showing the "Short Line" between Montreal and Saint John. The wreck occurred between the points shown as Askwith and Moosehead at the approach of the bridge over the river shown as flowing out of Moosehead Lake towards the Kennebec River.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY											
SHORT LINE											
HALIFAX, N.S., ST. JOHN, N.B., AND MONTREAL											
GOING WEST, Read Down						GOING EAST, Read Up					
Mixed	Mixed	Shrbk Local	Wes'n Exp.	Miles.	STATIONS	Exp.	Shrbk Local	Mixed	Mixed		
			112.200	756	Lv. Halifax... Ar	11.000					
			1.60	716	Shubenacadie...	9.47					
			3.00	695	Truro...	9.00					
			8.36	678	Londonderry...	8.26					
			5.15	656	Spring Hill Jc...	6.55					
			5.47	636	Macoon...	6.34					
			8.08	618	Amherst...	5.19					
			8.34	609	Sackville...	5.51					
			5.22	597	Dorchester...	5.24					
			2.00	589	Memramook...	5.06					
			7.50	570	Pt. du Chene...	9.30					
			8.31	548	Monoton...	4.15					
			9.12	526	Petitcodiac...	3.32					
			118.15	490	Sussex...	2.52					
			10.38	481	Rothsay... Ar	1.48					
			10.40	469	Ar. St. John Jc. Lv.	1.30					
			2.55	459	77... Ar	1.20					
			7.00	440	Fredericton...	1.15					
			9.50	432	Fredericton Jc...	1.10					
			8.00	449	St. Andrews 79...	11.50					
			1.48	398	St. Stephen...	11.50					
			2.14	391	Woodstock...	12.35					
			2.29	379	McAdam Jc. Ar	10.25					
			2.37	375	Vancouver 76 Jc.	10.10					
			2.46	370	Lambert Lake...	9.50					
			3.18	365	Tomah...	9.37					
			3.36	356	Forest...	9.30					
			3.81	353	Easton...	9.23					
			3.86	344	Danforth...	9.14					
			4.35	328	Bandroft...	8.56					
			4.58	314	Wytopitlock...	8.51					
			5.80	292	Kingman...	8.35					
			7.25	275	Mattawamkeag 93.	8.20					8.45
			8.53	259	Chester...						8.17
			7.17	249	Beboos...						5.30
			3.37	225	Brown View...						4.48
			3.51	226	Brownville Jc. 74.	6.50					4.18
			4.45	219	Onawa...						2.17
			8.98	208	Bangor Me. Co.	10.05					2.20
			8.30	196	Greenville 75...	5.27					1.26
			7.15	191	Moosehead...	5.04					12.25
			7.30	175	Askwith...						11.57
			8.15	167	Mackamp...						11.28
			8.45	161	Long Pond...						11.07
			9.26	137	Jaokman...	4.07					10.42
			9.52	128	Holeb...						9.57
			10.06	123	Lowelltown...	8.20					9.20
			10.15	121	Boundary...						8.10
			10.28	117	Ar. Lake Jc. Lv.	2.80					7.15
			10.45	110	Lv. Megantic Jc. Ar	2.25					8.15
			11.00	108	Spring Hill...						7.50
			11.20	100	Milan...						7.35
			1.50	89	Boctouche...	1.23					7.00
			2.50	88	Bury...						6.17
			4.10	78	Cookshire...	12.26					5.52
			4.28	75	Birohton...						5.38
			7.55	74	Bulwer...						5.27
			8.05	70	Johnville...	11.48					5.15
			8.40	67	Lennoxville...	11.25					4.50
			6.22	61	Ar. Sherbrooke Lv	11.25					4.30
			5.42	60	Lv. Rook Forest...	8.20					12.10
			5.50	54	Magog...	8.85					11.45
			7.10	44	Eastman...	10.52					11.10
			9.80	40	South Stukely...	10.31					7.18
			11.02	30	Waterloo 66...	7.40					9.14
			11.10	20	Foster...	19.14					8.50
			11.15	16	Fulford...	6.52					8.50
			1.45	11	West Sheford...	6.47					7.44
			2.45	8	Adamsville...	6.38					7.14
			3.30	5	Brigham Jc...	6.22					6.55
			4.15	4	Farnham Jc...	6.15					6.55
			4.30	3	St. Johns...	6.03					6.25
			4.45	2	Montreal Jc...	6.12					4.22
			4.50	1	Ar. Montreal Lv	6.10					4.10
			5.00	0	Windsor St. Jc.	6.05					4.05
			5.10	0	Ottawa 10...	11.40					11.40
			5.20	0	Peterboro 16...	11.45					8.45
			5.30	0	Toronto 19 Jc.	4.00					4.00
			5.40	0	London 90...	4.00					4.00
			5.50	0	Detroit Jc. Time	12.30					3.00
			6.00	0	Chicago... Time	11.35					3.00

\* Daily. † Daily, except Sunday. ‡ Daily, except Saturday. †† Daily, except Monday.  
 / Fitz Station. Western Express leaves Halifax daily, except Sundays; St. John daily, except Saturdays. Saturday's train from Halifax remains at St. John until Sunday night. Through Sleeper Halifax to Montreal and Montreal to Toronto.  
 ††† Eastern Express leaves Montreal daily, except Saturdays, and arrives St. John and Halifax daily, except Sundays. For connections from West see page 1. Through Sleeper Montreal to Halifax. ● Buffet Cars.





*Walter Starkie (1846 - 1894) of Saint John, the mail clerk who was killed in the wreck of CPR No. 9. Originally from Ireland, he had resided in Saint John for many years, and left a widow and four children to mourn his death.*

*Saint John Telegraph, July 3, 1894.*

News of the wreck first reached the outside world as one of the passengers ran five miles to Moosehead station. Despite the remoteness of the area a connection was soon made to the telegraph line and Conductor Dales sent a message to Superintendent H.P. Timmerman in Saint John. Within hours the news spread, at first only the basic facts, but later more details came in. Originally it was thought that it was the westbound train that had been wrecked, and people in Saint John worried about friends and relatives they had just seen off. As more facts emerged, the Saint John Globe produced an extra edition on Monday afternoon with the black headline "FIVE MEN DEAD". "Dreadful Accident on the C.P.R.". As more and more details were reported, the papers printed extra editions giving the latest particulars of the disaster. Gradually the facts became clearer, and they were grim indeed. Engineer Leavitt was pinned down by a heavy bar which had crushed his head and killed him instantly. Alfred C. Foss (riding in the locomotive) was also killed instantly by suffering internal injuries. Charles Grant (also riding in the locomotive) was badly scalded to the extent that he later died. Fireman McDonald was badly injured although he eventually recovered. Walter Starkie was killed. G.C. Hoyt, a passenger from Fort Fairfield Me., suffered a ghastly wound to the stomach and was found dead beneath the wreckage of the second-class car. The death of Starkie was particularly gruesome as a large sliver of wood had struck him under the chin and had been driven completely through to the top of his head. As his co-worker John Miller stated "Poor Starkie and I worked to Megantic and then laid down to sleep. Starkie was in the upper bunk and I in the lower. Suddenly I was awakened by a terrific crash and found myself lying on the mail bags on the floor

*with something heavy across my foot. I crawled to the door and the first man I saw was Conductor Dales. I then went back and called Starkie and placed my hand on him. He gave one gasp and died. His head was terribly bruised and I think something sharp passed up through his throat. My foot was badly hurt". Miller had miraculously survived by being thrown on top of the wreckage.*

## C. P. R. DISASTER.

The Atlantic Express  
Goes Through a  
Trestle

Over Moosehead Lake---Baggage,  
Postal and Second Class  
Cars Piled on Top

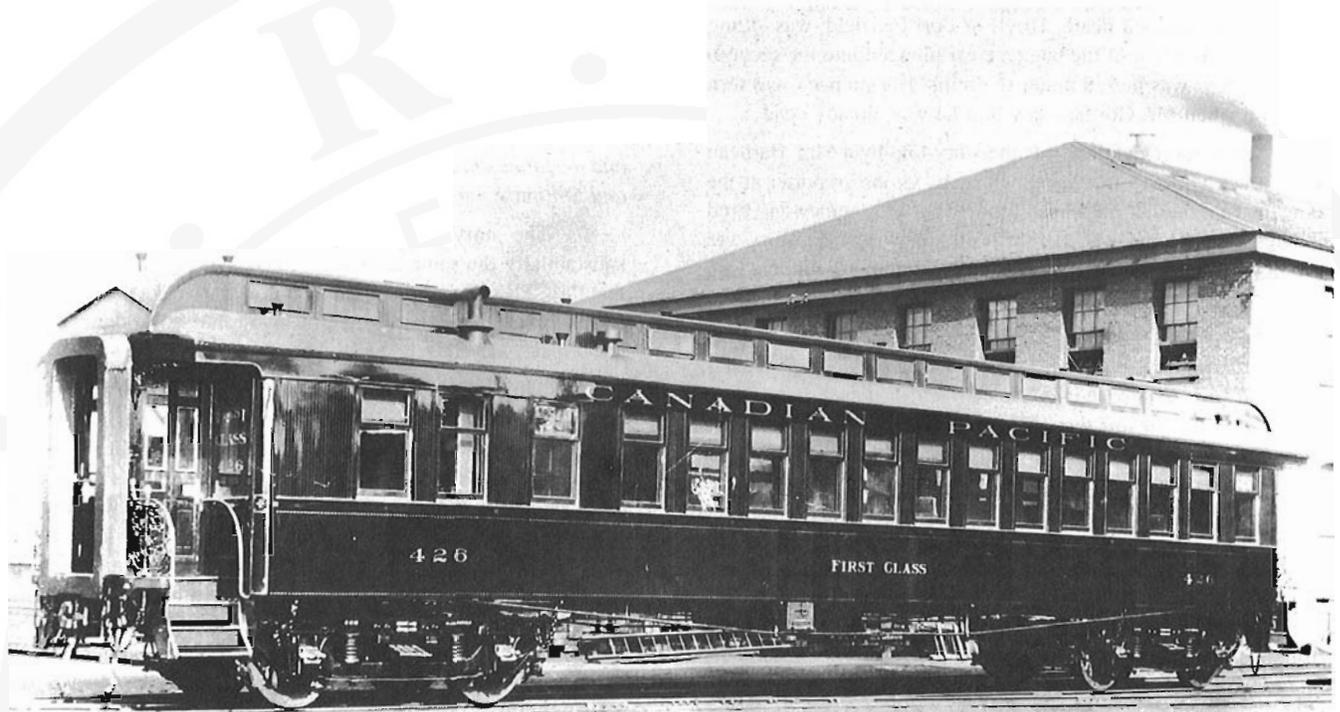
Of Each Other---Five Persons Lose  
Their Lives in the Wreck.

Walter Starkie, Mail Clerk of This  
City, One of the Victims.

The Killed and Wounded---Sloppers  
Found Piled on the Track  
Near the Bridge---The  
Obstruction

The Work of a Human Hand---A Tele-  
graph Reporter's Interview With  
the Passengers on the  
Wrecked Train.

*The headlines in the Daily Telegraph of July 3, 1894. This was known in newspaper terminology as a "seven-decker" and was only used for major events. It would be the equivalent to a page-wide headline today. Note the continuous flow of text between paragraphs; typical of the layout in those days.*



*CPR First-Class coach No. 426 was one of four built in 1890 for the Montreal - Saint John service on the "Short Line". One of these cars was likely in the train which was wrecked on July 2, 1894.*

*Canadian Pacific photo. Courtesy of Leach Collection.*

The first inspection of the wreckage did not reveal the reason for the disaster. However one fact came to light early in the investigation. The brakes on the locomotive and what was left of the cars were "hard down", and, in addition the engine had been reversed. This was positive proof that the engineer had seen something on the tracks and had applied brakes and reversed the engine. This important evidence went far to refute those who said that there was no obstruction and the trestle had simply collapsed beneath the weight of the train. It, with other evidence soon to be discovered, would play an important part in the formal inquiries which were held in the days ahead. Meanwhile, however, the prime concern was to get help for the survivors, and to protect westbound train No. 10.

In 1894, the schedules were somewhat different than they had been when the line opened in 1889, and also different from what they were in later years. Between about 1891 and 1895 the westbound train, No. 10, was scheduled to leave Saint John at 10:40 P.M. and pass No. 9 near Onawa about 6:00 A.M. During this four year period, therefore, if both trains were on time, the eastbound train would reach the point at which the wreck occurred two and a half hours before the westbound. Before 1891 and after 1895, in fact right up to the present time, the westbound train left Saint John earlier and met the eastbound considerably farther west of its 1891-1895 meeting place. For many years there were two passenger trains in each direction, thus two meets each night; however in 1894, as in 1993, there was only one passenger train in each direction.

At the moment when No. 9 was wrecked, No. 10 was preparing to leave Brownville Junction, on time. The first news that the crew of No. 10 had that anything was wrong was when they reached Greenville about 6:50 A.M. and were told that a telegraph message had been received that No. 9 had been wrecked an hour and a half before. Immediately emergency measures were taken. The passengers were disembarked from the front part of the train, the rear cars were shunted into a siding, and the train crews proceeded, with the engine and first three cars, to the scene of the wreck. They arrived at the scene about 9:30 A.M., walked over the trestle to the broken section and climbed down to where the engine and cars had fallen. The passengers of No. 9 were "working like beavers" and they welcomed the arrival of the reinforcements with delight. Although more than four hours had passed there was still a great deal to do in rescuing the injured and looking after them until they could be evacuated.

While this was taking place, a wrecking train was run west from Brownville Junction to the wreck scene and began work. The first priority was to bring out the survivors, and this was done using the equipment from No. 10. Many of the first class passengers rested overnight at McAdam before proceeding to Saint John. Soon the survivors were being besieged by questions from newspaper reporters, who quickly got these stories into print. Mr. William Gorman of New Glasgow N.S. said he was dozing in the second-class car when the shock was felt. "Quicker than a flash" he was thrown over the seats and jammed under the debris. He managed to crawl out, with only a scratch on the back of his head, but did not

know how he escaped death. Hoyt, of Fort Fairfield, was sitting back of him. The rear of the baggage car plunged into the second-class and Hoyt was buried under the ruins. His stomach was torn open, and when Mr. Gorman saw him he was already dead.

Much more detailed was the story told by a Mrs. Barbeau of Montreal who was tracked down by a "Globe" reporter at the home of her mother in Saint John. She was somewhat tired although none the worse for her thrilling experience. Her story was a major part of an account which is so vivid that we reprint it in full:

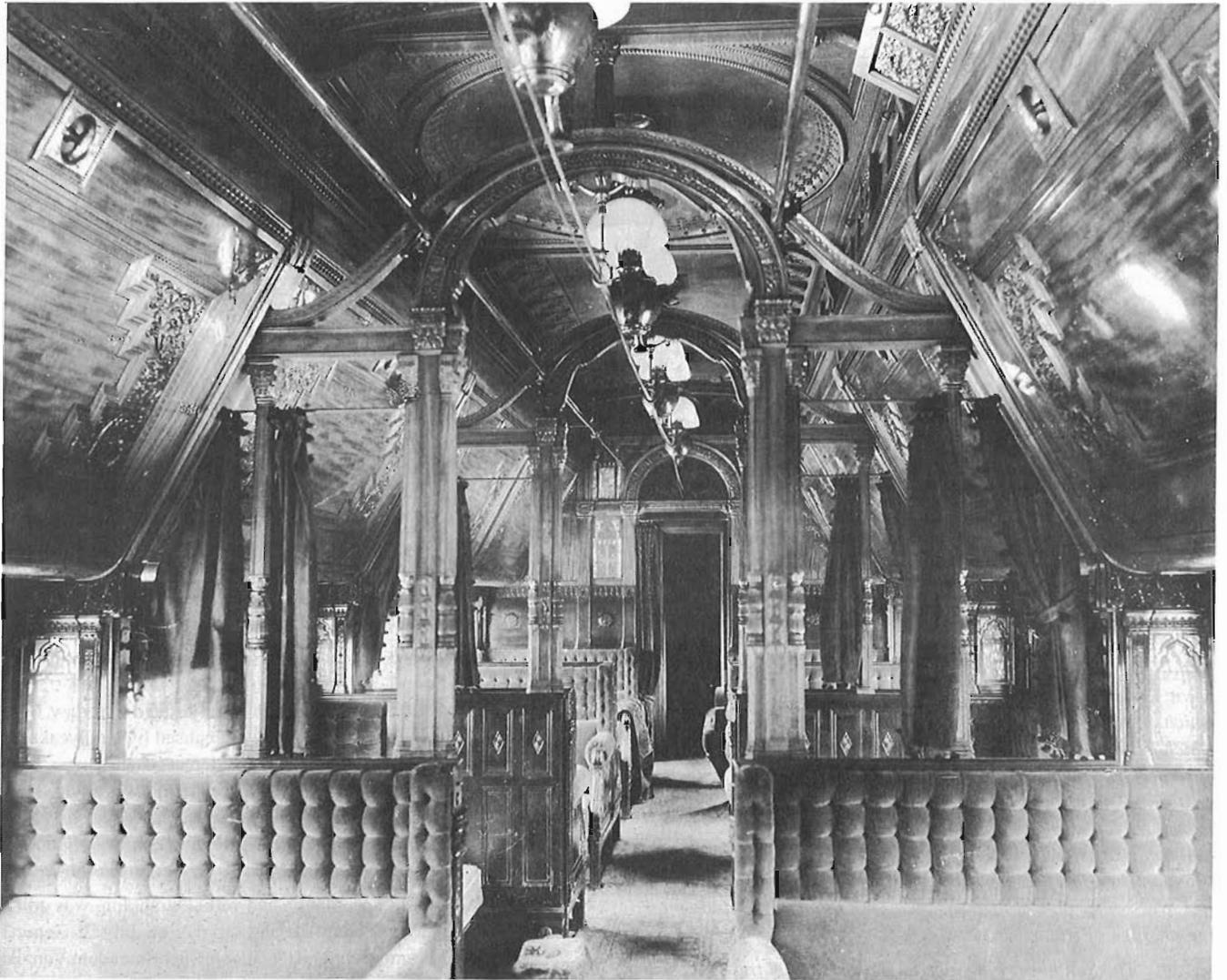
*"At 5:15 o'clock Monday morning she was sound asleep in her berth in the sleeping car. A severe jolting, bumping sensation was felt, and many of the passengers were doubled up in their berths. All knew at once that an accident had occurred, but as their car did not upset or fall they did not imagine how terrible it had been. The conductor at once came in and told them to keep their seats, that there was no further danger. When they went out a few minutes later they saw how terrible had been the disaster and how narrow had been the escape of the passengers in the parlor [sic] car. About fifty feet of the centre of the trestle was down and through this had fallen the engine, postal, baggage, and second-class and first-class cars, and all were badly smashed and broken. The parlor car itself was partly over the end of the trestle, and had only been saved from falling to the bottom by the fact that the first-class car stood almost on end, with the sleeper resting against it. The engine, which had broken loose from the cars, was fully two hundred feet from the remainder of the train and lay bottom up almost buried in the mud. The wheels were off and it presented a completely demolished appearance. The postal, baggage and second-class cars were all telescoped and complete wrecks. Indeed of the second-class car there was hardly a thing left. The first-class car was partly telescoped, and was in but little better condition than the others. The sleeper was the only car of the whole train that appeared worth trying to save. The forward trucks were broken and the end against the first-class car was somewhat broken in, but not badly, the vestibule arrangement having saved it from total destruction. The bridge was as bad a wreck as the cars. Great timbers had been broken off like pipe stems and the immense heavy rails were bent almost double. At once Conductor Dales and Mr. Rutherford started for Moosehead and word was also sent to Greenville and in a remarkably short time help was at hand. Mr. Rutherford is an athlete and he ran back over the track the five miles to Moosehead without letting up. When he reached the station he could only pant out "The train is wrecked; send a doctor", when he fell fainting on the platform. While help was coming the male passengers did their best to get out the killed and wounded. The female passengers remained in the sleeper and assisted in dressing the wounds of those that needed help. Some of the sights were terrible. Men were brought in with their heads crushed, their limbs torn off and their bodies so scalded that their flesh fell off wherever it was touched. Some of the workers fainted at the sights but speedily recovered and returned again to help in the work. The medical men and others who arrived improvised a hospital under the trees and did all in their power to make the injured comfortable. As soon as possible the passengers were taken back to Moosehead Inn, where they were fed at the expense of the Canadian Pacific. When the time to transfer came the trainmen had got out all the baggage and it was found that very little of it had been injured. There was a good deal of excitement*

*for a time over the belief that an unknown passenger, a lady, was under the wreck and strenuous efforts were made to find her. After a time it was discovered that all the passengers were safe. When the transfer was completed the bodies of Messrs. Starkie and Hoyt were put on board. The former was brought to this city [Saint John] and the latter sent to Fort Fairfield. The bodies of Engineer Leavitt and Station Agent Foss were sent to Megantic".*

The story told by another passenger, Mr. Leslie, was substantially the same as that given by Mrs. Barbeau. Both said that the CPR officials did all in their power to make the passengers comfortable. Both spoke in praise of the work done by Mr. McDonald, private secretary of Mr. Van Horne.

Almost as soon as the news of the wreck reached the outside world speculation began as to what had been the cause. At first there were many theories but, as more information became available, two major possibilities emerged. Some people thought that the trestle was rotten and had collapsed under the weight of the train, while others thought that the train had been deliberately wrecked. The newspapers were quick to adopt positions on this question. A good example of this is afforded by three Saint John papers, the "Globe", the "Telegraph" and the "Sun". In its issue of July 3, 1894 the "Globe" ran a large headline reading "**TRAIN WRECKING!**" in large type followed by "**It is Alleged that Obstructions were Placed on the Track**". In contrast to this the "Sun" at first tried to convince its readers that the accident was caused by the bridge timbers being defective, although they later modified this stance to a "let's wait and see what the evidence shows" approach. This provoked an editorial duel among the various papers which carried on for several days. On July 4 the "Sun" said, in part "*There is perhaps too much tendency on the part of the public to reduce the number of accidents and increase the account of crimes. If fire occurs concerning the origin of which there is no clue, it is too frequently put down as the work of an incendiary. This explanation is usually not needed, as only slight carelessness is needed to account for the burning. The incendiary and train wrecking theories are simple and easy to form. They screen from blame officers and employees who cannot well afford to be accused of negligence. But the public generally has no reason for accepting the theory of deliberate murder in preference to a theory of want of care and lack of judgement on the part of the officers of a railway. In the case of the Moosehead accident it is not pleasant to accept the hypothesis of train wrecking. It is not much more agreeable to believe that the Canadian Pacific company, which is known to be careful and thorough, should have run its trains over a dangerous bridge. The safest way is to wait for the evidence. Meanwhile it may be observed that sometimes works give way even on so well managed a road as the Canadian Pacific, and that there are now in Dorchester penitentiary no less than nine men accused of obstructing trains or cars.*"

The "Telegraph", in its issue of July 6, ran a lengthy editorial entitled "**THE SUN AND THE RAILWAY ACCIDENT**". Some salient points of this editorial are as follows: "*Our esteemed contemporary, The Sun, has been at great pains to show that the recent fatal railway accident at Moosehead Lake was not caused by some miscreant who placed an obstruction on the track, but was due to the neglect of the officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who permitted the trestles on their line to become so rotten that one of them fell under the weight of the train.*" ..... "*It appears to us*



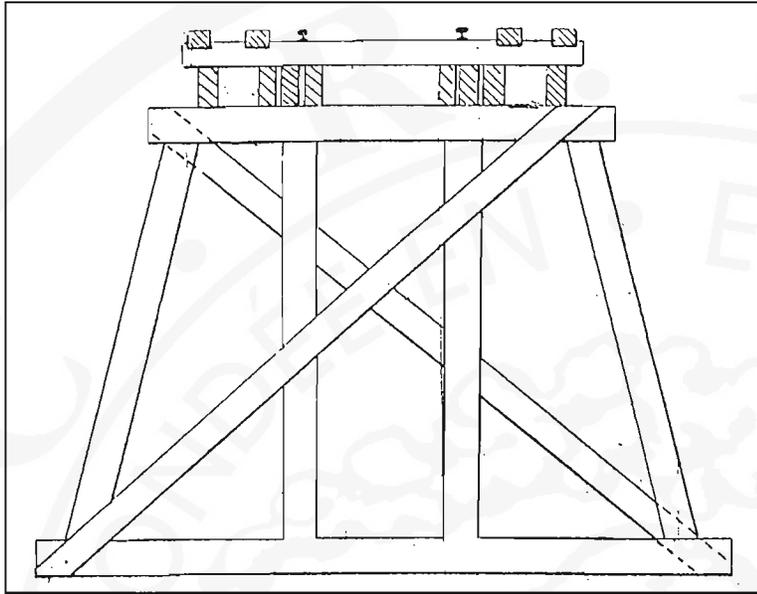
*In 1894, sleeping car service on the "Short Line" was provided by four cars which had been built by Barney & Smith for the CPR in 1890. They were named KATAHDIN, MEGANTIC, SHERBROOKE, MOOSEHEAD. This is a view of the beautiful, ornate interior of one of these cars. Since the sleeper was relatively undamaged, it was used as an emergency first-aid area in the critical few hours after the wreck. These beautiful surroundings witnessed some heart-rending scenes at that time. As a point of interest, one of these cars, the SHERBROOKE, has survived and, as the business car BRITISH COLUMBIA, is preserved in Vancouver. However, none of the 1890 interior remains.*

*Canadian Pacific photo. Courtesy of Leach Collection.*

*that The Sun, in its great zeal to injure the Canadian Pacific Railway and avenge the wrongs of Mr. James Berry, because Mr. Timmerman did not receive him on his bended knees, has rather overshot the mark and shown its animus a little too clearly". .....*  
*"The C.P.R. officials, however careless they might be of the lives of the public, would hardly approve of any carelessness that would place their own in danger. It can be no harm to mention, in this connexion [sic], that Sir William C. Van Horne, president of the C.P.R. railway, has a residence at St. Andrews which can only be reached by passing over the trestle where the accident occurred, that he traverses this particular piece of railway more frequently than any other portion of the line of the C.P.R., and that his own and only son was on board the train to which the accident*

*occurred. The reader can judge from these facts how far Sir William C. Van Horne would be likely to sanction or permit any neglect of that particular piece of road which would be liable to put his own life and that of his family in danger".*

*"It is also very proper to mention in this connection that the officials of the C.P.R. who were more immediately charged with the duty of seeing that the road was safe were the persons who would be most likely to suffer if its dangerous condition led to an accident. As a matter of fact, two of the men who were instantly killed by the recent accident were in the service of the railway company, and the only two of the injured whose wounds are likely to prove fatal were servants of the railway company. Every motive of self-interest and self-protection must therefore have operated in*



CROSS SECTION OF TRESTLE Daily Telegraph, July 6, 1894.

the minds of the men connected with the railway to keep it in perfect order, for this line was not a section of a poor branch road which could hardly afford to keep its tracks in repair, but a part of the great Canadian Pacific on the main line of the great highway which extends from ocean to ocean, the property of a corporation which has abundant means to keep its roadbed and bridges in the most perfect condition. Moreover, the officials of the C.P.R. were well aware that an accident due to a weak or imperfect bridge would be far more costly to their company than any repairs, however extensive, which might be necessary to make the road safe, and therefore there is every reason to believe that this trestle, like every other part of the road, was kept in proper condition for the passage of trains in safety."

"The Sun is very anxious to show that this trestle was so rotten that it fell at once beneath the weight of the engine, indeed the theory is put forward that the trestle fell before the train reached it, and that the action of the engineer in reversing his engine was due to him having noticed that the trestle had fallen. The absurdity of such a theory as the latter hardly requires any demonstration, and the suggestion that the trestle was so rotten that it collapsed beneath the weight of the engine, is almost equally untenable. The particular trestle in question was only erected about five years ago, and we know that good timber does not rot in five years in this climate when freely exposed to the air. The trestle on the Intercolonial Railway near Drury's Cove, which was only recently replaced by an embankment, stood for 35 years before the government, which the Sun supports so strenuously, thought proper to replace it. If the Drury Cove trestle, 35 years after it was built, was still fit to carry trains, why should the Moosehead trestle, which was only five years old, have become so rotten as to be dangerous to human life? The probabilities are all in favour of this trestle being in practically as sound condition as it was when it was built and passed the inspection of the government engineer. Moreover, not more than a fortnight before the accident, it had been inspected by the state officials of Maine, and no defect had been found in it."

In another part of the same issue, the "Telegraph" printed a drawing of a cross section of the trestle, together with a description which is most informative as to the type of trestle work then used by the CPR: "It is a very strong structure, a type of thousands upon this continent which carry trains in safety every day and which have stood the test of experience. It was built mainly of Georgia pine and, as it was only five years old, the idea of it being weakened at all by decay is absurd. Mr. Timmerman said that the material of the old trestle had been used in making the repairs, and where they were cut into with a saw they were hard and sound and strong. It will be observed from the drawing that it rests upon a sill upwards of 30 feet in length, that the posts are four in number, and are made of heavy timber, that these posts are braced by powerful timbers passing diagonally in the form of an X, and that the stringers that connect the several parts of the trestle are six in number and are very strong. The width of the platform upon which the rails rest is 14 feet, and outside the rail there is a guard on each side. The trestles are 15 feet apart from centre to centre, so that it will be seen in point of strength they were fully equal to the work for which they were intended, and that the theory of a collapse due to weakness is utterly unfounded."

On July 10, Division 440 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, situated at Henderson Maine, wrote a letter to Superintendent H.P. Timmerman. In it they stated that they were of the firm belief that the wreck was not caused by any weakness of the bridge. It was stated that any defect would have been reported at once by train crews, and no such report was made. They also said "The idea of our dead brother pulling a heavy passenger train loaded with human lives on to a bridge he considered unsafe, at the regular rate of speed, is preposterous. It is absolutely false."

While all this speculation and verbal wrangling was going on, the CPR had been busy. During the day on July 2, General Superintendent Timmerman and Divisional Superintendent Vanzile had arrived on the scene, and soon a large crew of men was busy clearing the wreckage and rebuilding the trestle. On July 3 there was heavy rain much of the day, which greatly hindered the work. Nevertheless progress was made and by July 5 the repairs were completed and trains were passing as freely as they had been before the accident occurred. Meanwhile, on July 3, an investigation led the company to believe that there had been sabotage. Accordingly, on the same day, the CPR offered a reward of \$4000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the "inhuman perpetrators". It should be noted that this was a huge sum, equal to more than \$100,000 today.

Since the wreck had occurred in Maine, a full investigation was launched by the Railroad Commissioners of the State of Maine. The investigation was held on July 11 and 12, 1894, and certain basic facts were recorded. Although fireman McDonald was improving, and would eventually recover, he was unable to help much with the testimony. In the shock and confusion, he could not even remember whether he had jumped or fallen. He had been standing on the apron between locomotive and tender, due to the lack of room in the cab, and had been found unconscious on the ground about forty feet ahead from where he had presumably left the locomotive. The others in the cab, who might have been able

to clarify the situation, were, unfortunately, all dead. With respect to the bridge, the evidence was much clearer. The timber trestle, from the embankment to the stone pier of the girder bridge, was 244 feet, consisting of sixteen spans, each of about fifteen feet. The height of the trestle ranged from 10 to 25 feet, and the bents that were thrown down were from ten to seventeen feet in height.

During the enquiry Mr. Boulyier, Section Foreman, testified *"I examined the rail under the first-class car. I found one fish plate there. It was down on the ground. I couldn't tell which fish plate it was, but I know it was a fish plate. It wasn't bent - taken off, same as you would take it off with an axe. I couldn't find the bolts. I looked for them. The bolts were all out. I couldn't find any. There was nothing on the opposite rail. No fish plate on it."* James Assnow, a witness who went down under the car with Mr. Boulyier, testified: *"Both joints were taken apart and I couldn't see anything broken. Boulyier and I went around and found a fish plate right under the track. There didn't appear to be anything with it at all - I took notice of the holes."* On being questioned if any other joints were disconnected, he said: *"No sir. The rails were bent but the fish plates were all on safe."* The Commission reported that the evidence clearly showed that the rails of the track, on the first span of the trestle, had been separated by the taking off of the fish plates; that the ends of one or both of the rails extending on to the bridge and had been pried up, and a new cedar tie placed underneath the rail so as to hold it in that position; that several other new cedar ties were also placed on the rails as an obstruction. Near the point where marks showed that the locomotive left the bridge, a portion of a new cedar tie was found on the bridge which bore marks of having been cut and broken by the flange of a wheel.

On August 7, the Commissioners issued their report with these conclusions:

1. That the accident was not caused by any inherent defect, want of repair, or structural weakness in the trestle bridge; but that said bridge, on the day of the accident, was of adequate strength to carry all the engines and trains which were in use on that division of the railroad.
2. That on the day prior to the date of the accident, the roadbed and track was in good condition and safe for the passage of trains thereon.
3. That the rolling stock of the train was suitable, in good condition and in no manner defective.
4. That the cause of the accident was, that some person or persons unknown, during the preceding night, had withdrawn the bolts and taken off the fish plates used to connect the same or two opposite joints of the rails, that extended from the bank, about three feet onto the bridge; that the ends of one or both of the connecting rails on the bridge were raised up, carried to one side and a cedar tie placed underneath same, and that other new cedar ties were used in the same manner to complete the obstruction.
5. That no blame for the accident attaches to the railroad corporation or any of its officers or employees.

D.N. Mortland,  
A.W. Wildes,  
Benj. F. Chadbourne,

Railroad Commissioners of Maine.  
August 7, 1894.

With the release of the report, most people, even the editor of the Saint John "Sun", accepted the fact that it was indeed sabotage that caused the wreck. Yet the big question remained; who did it and what was the motive? Let us consider the facts and see if they help to determine what really DID happen in the early morning hours of July 2, 1894. Considering all the evidence presented, it is likely that the verdict of the Railroad Commissioners was correct in that there was no negligence on the part of the railroad and that the wreck was caused by a wilful act on the part of a person or persons unknown. Having determined this, however, the Commissioners were not concerned with finding who these "person or persons" were. Most of the evidence, and in fact the debate in the newspapers, was concerned with whether the wreck was caused by sabotage or by structural failure. For some reason, very little discussion was concerned with who were the culprits.

Following the assumption that it was sabotage, several factors come to mind. The evidence showed that the wreck was caused by the unbolting of the fish plates, raising one or more rails, and placing a tie underneath, as well as placing other ties on top. This was not something that could be done by anyone happening by. It required knowledge of railway operations as well as special tools such as a track wrench, spike puller and perhaps a track jack or crowbar. The time and location appeared to have been well thought out. The perpetrators would have to know something of the schedules to make sure that there were no freight trains on the line that would reach the obstruction before the passenger train. The location, too could not have been better chosen; in a secluded area, at the bottom of a downgrade just after a curve, and at the beginning of a wooden trestle that would almost certainly collapse if a train derailed at that spot. Furthermore the work must have been done in the dark, since trains had passed by the evening before, and the wreck occurred little more than an hour after sunrise. Bringing heavy tools to a remote location, miles from the nearest settlement, carrying out major track dismantling, removing the tools and escaping, all in the dark with the means of transportation available in 1894, was not the work of "a tramp", nor was it a random act of vandalism; it was well planned by someone who had a knowledge of railways and had access to the necessary tools. The saboteurs likely lived or worked in the area, since strangers would have been noticed in this sparsely populated region. How they reached the scene is unknown but it is reasonable to suppose that they came in a boat along the West Outlet. This would avoid having to walk along the track carrying heavy tools, and would also make escape easier. In short the whole affair looks like an "inside job"; that is done by someone who worked for the railway.

If this was the case, what was the motive? Here there is no clear evidence and we can only speculate. One definite possibility, and the one considered by this author to be the most likely, is that engineer Leavitt had personal enemies that were out to "get" him. More than one report said that this theory was quite widespread in the locality, even though he was popular with most people in the area. It was said that there had been earlier attempts to wreck trains driven by engineer Leavitt, and although seemingly dismissed as idle gossip at the time, there may have been some truth in these statements. What seems incomprehensible at the present time is that these reports and rumours do not seem to have been followed up in the subsequent investigation, nor was any reason put forward publically as to why Leavitt would have had enemies.

There are, of course, numerous other possible motives. It could have been that one of the station agents riding the locomotive was the intended victim of some personal grudge; it may well be that they made a practice of riding the engine to and from duty and this practice was known, and the attack planned accordingly. Another distinct possibility is that someone had a grudge against the CPR and took the opportunity to take revenge when he knew that Van Horne's son was on board. The affair may have had to do with the Pullman strike, but it is more likely that the attack was timed to coincide with the strike in order to divert suspicion. What is almost certain is that it was not done by one person; the heavy work involved would have required at least two people who knew the details of what they were doing. Perhaps the true answer was the proverbial "None of the Above". In any case, despite the very large reward offered by the CPR, there is no record that the crime was ever solved.

Despite the reports that it was "a complete wreck" locomotive No. 567 survived. After lying for a time in its ignominious resting place, it was hoisted out of the mud and taken to Montreal where it was completely repaired. For several years thereafter it continued to haul the passenger trains on the same runs it had done before the wreck. Later it was superseded in main line service by newer, larger locomotives and early in the twentieth century was assigned to lines in southern Ontario. In August 1907, as part of a general renumbering, it was numbered 367, and was classified D2b, and in November 1912 it was renumbered again to 7271. The "7" in front of the number was intended to be a temporary expedient to avoid duplication during the renumbering of 1912, after which the engine should have become 271. However, in this case, it remained 7271 until the end of its career. Still assigned to southern Ontario, but now downgraded to branch lines, it continued in service fourteen more years. Finally, in September 1926, old 7271, nee 567, came to the end of track, being retired and scrapped by CP more than thirty years after its adventure in the wilds of northern Maine.

The wreck of Train No. 9 was the topic of conversation for some time, but gradually faded away. Slowly things changed as the world moved into the twentieth century. In 1919, a quarter century after the wreck, occurred a far greater accident on the "Short Line", the famous collision at Onawa, Maine. Today, old timers recalling the history of the line talk about the Onawa wreck, but the earlier one near Moosehead seems to be forgotten. No one immortalized it in a song, as was done with other, less tragic, wrecks, yet the courage shown by engineer Leavitt in staying at his post when he might have jumped and saved himself, was just as great as that of Casey Jones or other famous railroad heroes. The wreck of CPR No. 9 had the stuff of which legends are made, but the legend seems to have disappeared.



*The wreck area as it is today. Sperry Rail Service car No. 119 is seen testing the rails on the bridge across the East Outlet of Moosehead Lake on July 26, 1985. This bridge, and the surrounding terrain, is quite similar to that over the West Outlet, less than five miles away. The trestle work on the approach to the bridge was long ago replaced by steel spans.*

*Photo by Fred Angus.*

The "Short Line" has been an important link between central and eastern Canada for 104 years, but its days may be numbered. Traffic is down, and now CP wants to abandon it. If that unfortunate event does come to pass, the roadbed will likely be reclaimed by the wilderness, and the West Outlet of Moosehead Lake will be alone, with the water, the trees, the rocks, the birds - - and the ghosts of those who died at that spot in the early hours of that day almost a century ago; July 2, 1894.

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# Working on the Railway

By Douglas N.W. Smith

Within living memory, the railways were the largest employers of labour in the Canadian economy. In 1929, five per cent of the Canadian labour force worked in the industry. Practically everyone either had a railroader in the family or was related to one. Railway employment peaked at 192,000 in 1952. Mechanization, the replacement of steam with diesel locomotives, and changes in the traffic base have eroded the number of railway employees. Today, the workforce is a quarter of that of employed in 1952.

Many of our readers have indicated they would be interested in articles dealing with the experiences of those who worked for the railway. With this issue of "Canadian Rail", we are pleased to launch a series of articles based upon the recollections of those who worked for the railways during their golden age before the steam locomotive was retired.

Two sources form the basis for this series. When Canadian National commissioned Colonel G.R. Stevens to write a history of the constituents of its system in the 1950's, part of the research work included an extensive series of interviews with retired employees. The recollections of many of these individuals pre-dated this century. The other source has been the "Canadian National Magazine". During the many years of its existence, this corporate magazine published for the information of employees contained accounts of the experiences of retirees.

## "I.L.B." SIGNS OFF!

The subject of this first article is Ira L. Boomer. Mr Boomer's career spanned the period 1891 to 1954.

In railway slang, a boomer is a railway man who moved from one railway job to another, staying for but a short time on each job or railroad. The heyday of the boomers was in the period before the turn of the century when these footloose men wandered over the continent following the sun. During his long period of employment, Mr Boomer lived up to his name and emulated the earlier knights of the road as he worked for five different railways and served in posts from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

Few jobs on a railroad carry greater responsibility than that of the train dispatcher. Quick thinking, quick acting and absolute accuracy are his stock in trade. As a general directs his army so the dispatcher keeps his trains on the move.

To do it he has a host of modern conveniences not the least of which is a network of telephones. It wasn't always so and one man who knows it perhaps more than any other is I.L. Boomer, Superintendent of Transportation, B.C. District, who retired from CN in 1940 after 46 years' service.

Sometimes known by the telegraphic symbols "ILB" or "The Chief", reminiscent of the days when he was chief dispatcher, Ira Boomer career was typical of a generation of railroadmen who existed prior to the days of Centralized Traffic Control and radio communications with train crews.

As a youth growing up in the Maritimes, Boomer was fascinated by railways. He hung around stations, and learned telegraphy on Saturdays and after school. As a schoolboy he knew each engine by its whistle or the sound of its bells. In an era when

caboose were assigned to specific conductors, he knew each caboose by number and who the conductor would be in it. Along with other boys, he hung around the yards while train crews were switching and learned all the signals. His father wanted him to be a lawyer and was angry when Boomer told him he was going into the railroad. At the age of 15 years and 9 months he passed the test as telegrapher.

In March 1891, at the age of 16, young Ira Boomer went to work for the Intercolonial Railway at Lower Stewiacke, N.S. as a telegraph operator. At this time, the local MPs controlled the granting of jobs along the government-owned ICR. To enter the service he had to secure a recommendation from the family pastor, another from the local Member of Parliament and, finally, swear before a Justice of the Peace that he would not divulge the contents of any telegrams handled by him. He received \$20.00 a month, out of which he paid 10 cents a day for bed and 11 cents for board.

In his first year with the ICR he even operated a yard engine. When the crew failed to show up and there was urgent switching to be done, the young operator closed his telegraph key and climbed aboard the yard goat. At other times he assisted the brakemen by throwing switches, cutting off cars and riding them into sidings.

Dispatchers are sometimes riled at the name "train detainers" jocularly applied to them by their brethren in train service. "ILB" determined they'd never hang that on him. When he moved to a larger sphere at the ICR headquarters in Moncton, he spent much of his spare time in the back shops and out in the freight yard.

They used to wonder why the young fellow hung around watching cars being sorted, distributed to team tracks, freight sheds and industrial sidings. Shop foremen couldn't figure his interest in a broken piston rod or a loose driving tire.

It was simple enough. He was getting his "outside" training so he could be a better dispatcher. He wanted to know how to figure the time on train delays due to engine failure, know how long it took to perform the manifold yard operations.

Ira Boomer was a competent dispatcher for the reason he not only knew his own work but understood the problems that went with the jobs of his co-workers. More than this, he made a point of knowing by their first name the men he worked with.

Boomer remained with the ICR until 1901, advancing to agent and chief dispatcher. When the standard rules came in, Boomer was a train dispatcher at Truro. When the conductor read the rules to the engineer the engineer replied "Send for another engineer. I'm quitting. We'll all be killed." Actually, standard rules made for greater safety.

When the steel boom was on at Sydney, N.S. in 1901, the service over the single track ICR line between Truro and Sydney became demoralized. At the urgent request of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company to have the congestion cleared, Boomer was sent to Sydney. He opened an office at Sydney, hired two dispatchers and proceeded to clean up the jam. At twenty four years of age, he resigned to take a job as trainmaster for the Sydney and Louisburg Railway on Cape Breton. The S&L hauled coal from many mines to the steel mills in Sydney. He resigned from that job in 1903.

Between 1904 and 1908, Boomer worked as a trainmaster for the Canadian Northern Quebec Railway which operated from Montreal to Riviere a Pierre, with branches from Montfort Junction to Huberdeau, and from Joliette to Hawkesbury. He was on a runaway train in 1904 while making a round trip between Arundel and St Jerome. Returning from Arundel to St. Jerome, he fell asleep in the caboose. Boomer awoke to find the caboose and two cars running loose down a 2.5 per cent grade eight miles long. Jumping into the snow, he was knocked unconscious. An engine sent down the line to find the missing cars picked him up.

The two runaway box cars jumped the track at a switch. The caboose, however, continued down the track, slowed to a stop on a upgrade, and then ran back down the track plowing into the two derailed boxcars. The train's French-Canadian brakeman was found in a snowbank muttering, "Take me home, take me home . . . I no more railway."

In 1905 Trainmaster Boomer was riding a 62-car freight train when it stopped at Joliette for a meal break. The conductor and brakemen got drinking and refused to go further. Boomer had to take charge and get the train into Montreal. Another time at Joliette, Boomer was riding a snow plow extra. Two passenger trains were waiting for the line to be cleared to go to Montreal. The fireman said, "Stop the train. I'm getting off." The engineer asked, "What will we do?" To keep traffic moving, Boomer took the throttle and the engineer was put to shovelling coal.

In 1908, Boomer asked for a transfer to the western region. The Canadian Northern appointed him Chief Dispatcher at two

trouble spots - Port Arthur and Rainy River. A boom in prairie settlement was producing unprecedented grain crops in the regions served by the Canadian Northern. To reach markets in eastern Canada and Europe, all the grain had to be carried over the Canadian Northern's single track line between Winnipeg and Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay), Ontario.

The Chief knuckled down to his work, went through the familiar stages of getting to know the men in train and engine service, reduced train tonnage and started more trains moving faster. In those days of small cars and small power he used 40 crews east and west of Rainy River and moved a thousand grain cars in 24 hours regularly.

When he was chief dispatcher at Rainy River, D. Coombes, Chief of Transportation, arrived in his private car and sent for Boomer. He asked how Boomer had been able to move 1000 cars of grain each 24 hours over the division and how he had trains making the run from Port Arthur to Atikokan in only 9 hours and 15 minutes. Boomer explained that he had cut the grain tonnage by 40 tons, making 360 tons instead of 400 per train, and issued a time card for the eastbound direction every eight hours. He held meetings with dispatchers to instruct them on what was required of them and held meetings with train and engine crews and went into the whole question of grain movement with them. In that way he achieved cooperation and success.

Nowadays the chief dispatcher has a car clerk, stenographer, operator and a systematic operation behind him. At Rainy River "ILB" compiled his own forms and reports, allocated power and crews, distributed cars for local loading and transmitted his own messages because the dispatchers were too busy with train orders. It was not unusual for a dispatcher to tap out more than 175 train orders in his 8-hour trick.

Night work was more a rule than an exception when the harvest moved to market. Four and five derailments at a time were not unusual and they took place frequently. In some places there was nothing to rerail the equipment except a lidgerwood or cables. A 50-ton crane was the common property of perhaps three divisions.

But "ILB" stuck it out night and day when necessary. His knowledge of outside work stood him in good stead and the crews that manned the work trains appreciated that every delay stopped the steady movement of trains Boomer was striving to achieve.

Promotion was inevitable. In quick succession he became trainmaster at Port Arthur, Neepawa and Rainy River, chairman of the efficiency committee, rule examiner and instructor, inspector of transportation, assistant superintendent. When he was 34 he was made superintendent first at Edmonton, then Calgary and Brandon.

The track on the Goose Lake Line running west from Saskatoon to Calgary was always gumbo as there was very little ballast. One time a visiting railway man said to Boomer "Your track is going down in the mud." Boomer replied "No, mud is coming up over the track."

When the line from Rocky Mountain House to the Brazeau coal fields high in the Rocky Mountains was being built, crews on the freight trains bringing in supplies would sometimes stop the train to have a game of poker and the train would be held up until the game was finished.

In 1915 Ira Boomer was superintendent at Calgary. War was on. He found himself short of material. Rails and spikes were ripped from passing tracks to keep the main line going. Power was such poor shape that on one occasion a mixed train was 57 hours making 150 miles. In that time it used six different engines.

In 1916, 20 bridges between Drumheller and Calgary went out in a cyclonic storm. "ILB" commandeered hand cars, push cars and motor cars to get his passengers around the trouble and in to Calgary. It's all changed today but that is what went into the making of a railwayman in the era when "ILB" flourished.

In 1929 he settled back to inside work first as assistant to the General Superintendent of Transportation at Winnipeg for four years, then, when the depression abolished that job, he was sent to Vancouver as Superintendent of Transportation.

In Vancouver, he held weekly two-hour classes. Each course continued several months for stenographers, clerks, and other office staff. In his talks he explained signals (red, white, green flags, lanterns, torpedoes, fuses) and their use. He also explained operating rules from start to finish. About 25 to 30 people attended these classes and the pupils were grateful for a better understanding of the work they were doing.

Only once did he flash back to the hectic scenes of his heyday on the Winnipeg-Port Arthur line. That was in the spring of 1935.

Following exceptionally heavy snow from the coast right up the Fraser Valley practically every form of transport except steamships stopped. Fog grounded planes, feet of wet snow kept cars and buses off the highways. Vancouverites walked to work or didn't get there at all.

Slide after slide blocked the railways. Telegraph and telephone lines went down like cotton thread under the wet accumulation of a two-day storm. The CNR gratefully accepted the proffered help of amateur radio operators to keep in touch with the forces up the line.

Fortunately Canadian National was able to keep the line open to Rosedale, east of Chilliwack. Work and relief trains were despatched from Vancouver. For a week, the railway was the only link with the Valley.

The situation was made to order for ILB. He bedded down in his office on continuous duty for a week handling all train orders and movements himself. Finally the transcontinental line was opened. Trains ran up the CN line from Vancouver to Hope, used CP's Kettle Valley Railway bridge to cross over the Fraser River,

ran on CP to Basque, and then back to CN rails to Kamloops where all was clear to the east.

Passenger and freight trains were piled up waiting to get through. ILB's train sheet that night went right back to the days of Rainy River. Traffic was heavy next day. On the third day matters had normalized and ILB disappeared for 24 hours to get his first sleep in a bed in 10 days.

When he retired from CN in 1940, there were letters and telegrams from Victoria to the Maritimes. At a gathering in the office of W.T. Moodie, General Superintendent, the employees presented him with a well stocked purse and sent a silver vase with flowers to Mrs. Boomer. That weekend they gave him a banquet and presented him with a framed testimonial, a beautifully worded address inscribed by Car Inspector John Jackson.

It was a big night. Harry Howard, Chairman of the local of the Order of Railway Telegraphers at Kamloops, handled the gavel. Everyone was there, from office boys to veterans. It was a good send-off and ILB enjoyed it as much as anyone. His final words were "Good luck and God Bless you."

While his time with CN was over, Boomer continued to work for the next fourteen years. After a short time with the Manitoba Sugar Beet Company and with the Cordite Explosive plant at Transcona where he was in charge of transportation, Boomer resigned and went to the Northern Alberta Railway. From there he went to the PGE, from which he retired in July 1954 at the age of 79. At that time he was believed to be the oldest railway employee in active service in Canada.

Boomer served as a dispatcher on the NAR during the period when the NAR was struggling to handle the massive shipments of military goods and construction equipment for the Alaska Highway. It must have reminded Boomer of his younger days on the ICR and Canadian Northern. One NAR conductor later said of Boomer, "He was a great dispatcher. he always knew where everyone was on the line and where they were going. He could keep it all in his head."<sup>1</sup>

Boomer's son followed in his father's footsteps. He learned telegraphy and served 25 years with Canadian National where he became chief train dispatcher at Edson.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Much of the material for this article was taken from the August 1940 issue of Canadian National Magazine. It was supplemented by notes taken during an interview with Mr. Boomer in Vancouver on October 1, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Schneider, Ena: Ribbons of Steel: The Story of the Northern Alberta Railways. Detseligh Enterprises Limited, Calgary, Alberta, 1989.

# Roundhouses

By Douglas N.W. Smith

For many individuals, the steam locomotive epitomizes the railway. The wail of the whistle, the chuffing of the locomotive as it accelerated from the station, and the acrid scent of the smoke combined to make it the machine with the most human attributes produced by the industrial revolution.

The care and feeding of these locomotives was carried out in roundhouse complexes spaced at 125 mile intervals across the country. At one time there were hundreds of these facilities which ranged from single stall on small branch lines to forty or more stalls ringing the turntable at major centres. At these points, the locomotives had their ashes removed, were turned, lubricated, coaled and watered. The diesel locomotive rendered them redundant.

By 1990, there remained less than 100 roundhouses across the country. Very few of the structures remained intact from the steam era. Most have seen sections pulled down. A large number have been sold and are fulfilling other roles. For example, the former Canadian Northern roundhouse at Hanna, Alberta now houses a cattle auctioning business while the former National Transcontinental roundhouse at Cochrane, Ontario is part of a wood mill.

In 1990 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated the CP Rail John Street roundhouse in Toronto as having national historic and architectural significance. The Board deferred making decisions on several other cases. It chose to initiate a special study of the remaining roundhouses in the country. The purpose of this study was to provide an inventory and a detailed assessment of these facilities. With this factual base, it would be able to make informed decisions as to which of the remaining roundhouses should be designated.

The preparation of this report was undertaken by David Smyth, a historian with the National Historic Sites Directorate of Environment Canada. The result of his work was a 579 page study of the remaining roundhouses in Canada. Based upon this report, the HSMB in 1992 awarded heritage designations to the following roundhouses: CNR at Joffre, Quebec, CPR at Victoria, British Columbia, and Algoma Central at Sault Ste Marie, Ontario.

"Canadian Rail" has been given permission to reprint parts of this report. In upcoming issues, we will be featuring the history and plans for many of the remaining roundhouses across the country. As our stock of views of roundhouses is very limited, we are asking our members to send in black and white photos of any roundhouse during either the steam or diesel eras.

To launch this new series, we have chosen to reprint a paper authored by C. Kyle, General Master Mechanic, Eastern Lines of the CPR. The paper, which was presented to a meeting of the Canadian Railway Club, was printed in the November 1909 issue of "The Railway and Maine World". His paper deals with the design and staffing of the locomotive terminals.

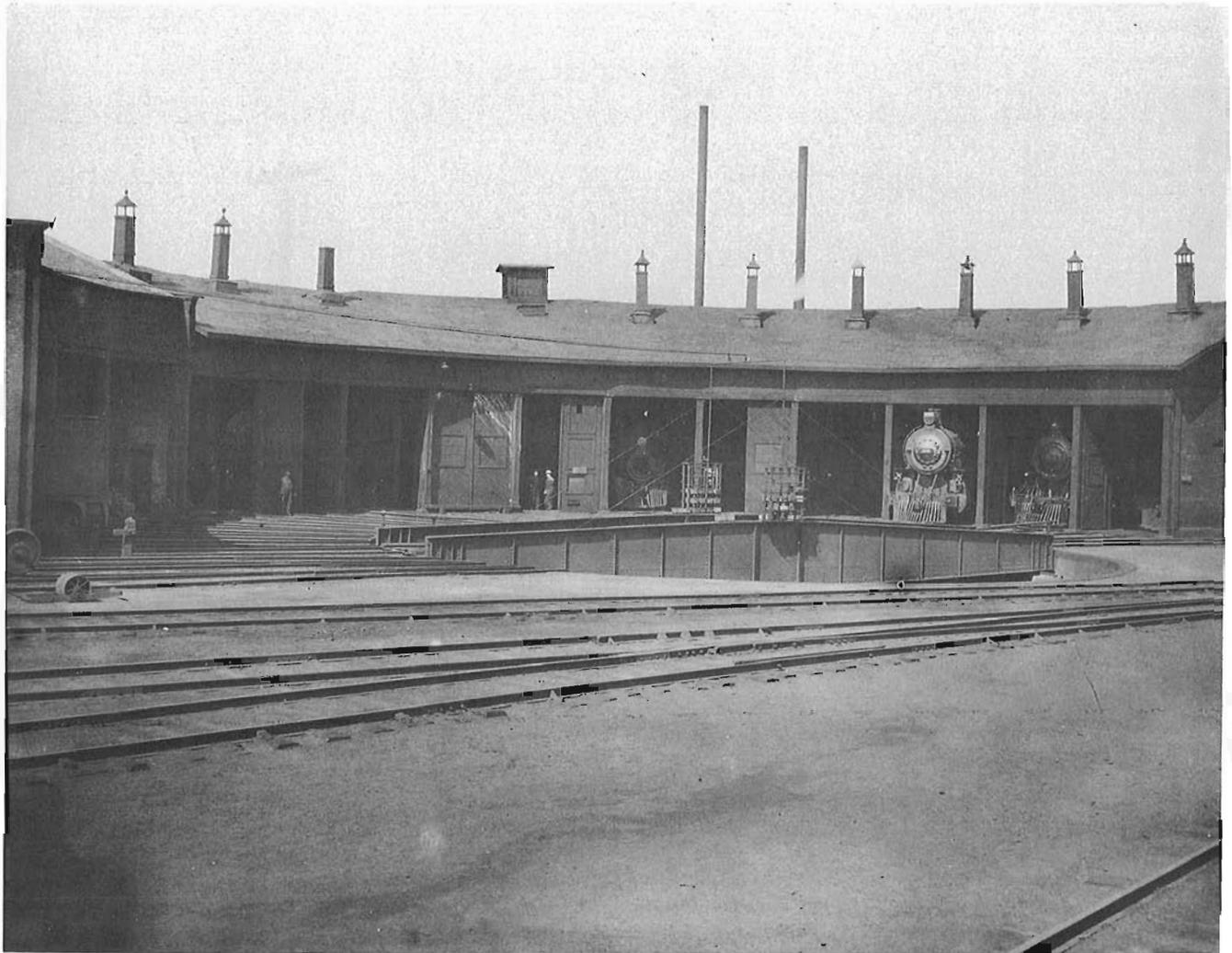
## Locomotive Dispatching and Terminal Facilities

By C. Kyle, General Master Mechanic, Eastern Lines C.P.R.

In preparing this paper I have, as far as possible, aimed to keep clear of the technical and theoretical side, and have rather inclined to the practical or everyday side of the question, having in mind an after discussion somewhat on the lines of the old time bunk-room chats. To my mind there is no department connected with railway operation that so much depends upon as that charged with the dispatching of locomotives. The roundhouse is the most important of all the departments, for no matter what figuring and calculating is done elsewhere or what business may be secured, if, from various causes, the roundhouse fails in prompt and reliable dispatching thus causing detentions, etc., the business will eventually fall off. The dispatching of locomotives embraces many features that may not be known to those not directly connected with this branch of railway operation. The successful and economical dispatching of locomotives depends, in a large measure, on good government, and organization which will bring about team work of the whole staff, and only those absolutely necessary to handle the business carried on should be considered as members of this team; any surplus help will only tend to diminish interest and lead to sloppiness.

In the best organized shops a general tendency will be noticeable towards tidiness both around the premises and with the equipment; the practice of making temporary repairs merely to tide a case over at these points will rarely, if ever, be resorted to. These particular shops appear to be able to handle the business without the necessity for doing work in such a manner as to invite failures; at all times the idea prevails that the efficiency of the roads depends upon the condition of the power, which, if first-class, will greatly aid in train operation, and all the statistics being prepared on a basis of tons handled seems to appeal to all concerned; the question of aggressive departmental controversies has no place here, but where a general betterment can be effected, there is no hesitation, but rather a desire to assist, both by example and practice, the other departments, so that the general result on the particular district with which the shop is identified may be a cause for special mention; in this way the credit is shared by all.

In former days it was enough to turn a locomotive out for a trip with a supply of stores, fuel, etc., that to-day will take care of a machine of double the capacity; then the question of costs for repairs, fuel, lubrication, etc., was not gone into as thoroughly as at present, and it was considered the duty of an up-to-date shop to turn out a fine looking machine without regard to cost. A change in the state of affairs has been brought about by the handling of

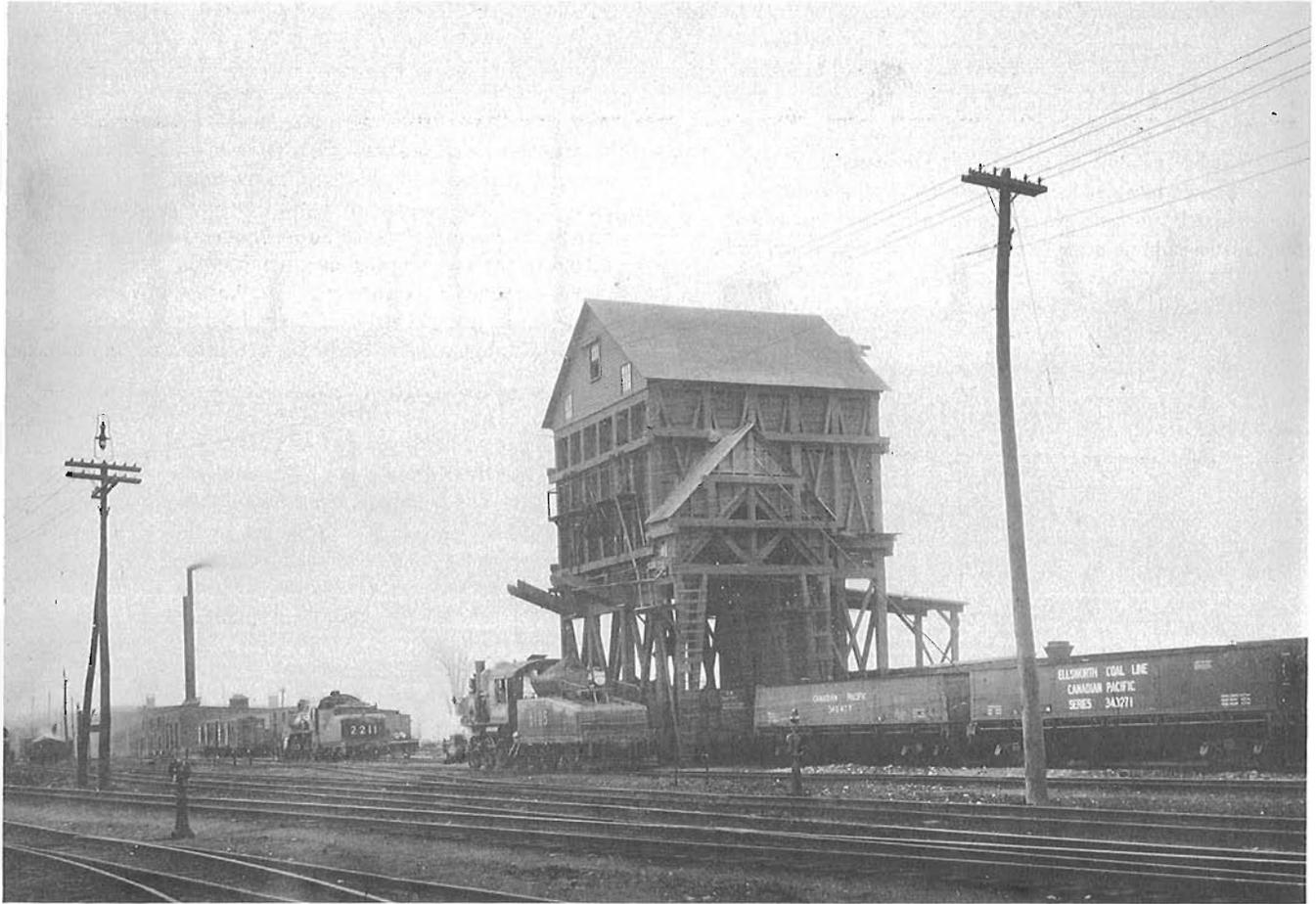


*The Canadian Pacific Railway engine house at Farnham, Quebec in June, 1914.  
Canadian Pacific photo No. A-1228.*

competitive business, making it imperative that the freight offered at present shall be handled with such dispatch as will ensure its delivery as contracted for, and the demands made on the machine, both in the matter of greatly-increased tonnage hauled and in the decrease in time allowed for so doing should be taken into consideration. To-day careful record is kept of shop expenses, cost of locomotive repairs, fuel consumed, lubrication used, etc. This, along with the possibilities of engine failures and detentions, makes locomotive dispatching somewhat of a difficult problem. It may, therefore, not be considered out of place to look into a few points that may be considered as essential in modern locomotive dispatching; among these the question of terminal facilities that will permit of expeditious handling of locomotives, is I think, one of the most important, and generally speaking, does not receive the consideration it should, as with the close of navigation the railways are called upon to handle important business promptly in cold and stormy weather, and there should be no question about providing sufficient in-coming and out-going tracks equipped with coal and

sand hoppers, ash-pits with proper ash-handling devices, and water cranes of such capacity as will care for the business without detention to locomotives to and from the shop. The turn-table should be looked upon as the key to the situation, and should be of such construction as will enable it to hold up against the weight of the heaviest locomotive in service; it should be preferably power driven. There should be one person specially appointed to take care of its inspection and oiling, and it should be his duty to know beyond doubt, that it is always in satisfactory condition.

The shop should be roomy, well ventilated, and heated, and special attention given to proper drainage from both the pits and floor, thus making it possible for the men to get about without the inconvenience of wet feet, etc., which affects the efficiency of the average man. There should be provision made for a suitable office for foreman, and an engineer's registering room; there should also be a well ventilated rest house for engine crews, equipped with sleeping and dining room accommodation, which will permit of the men getting a warm, substantial meal.



*The Canadian Pacific Railway locomotive coaling plant at Sortin Yard, Montreal Que., December, 1914.  
Canadian Pacific photo No. A-1281.*

At the principal shops that are responsible for the upkeep of locomotives, there should be provided tracks of sufficient capacity to take care of locomotives out of service on account of waiting repairs, traffic conditions, etc., and also wheel tracks sufficient to take care of new and old wheels kept in stock. There should be both driving and truck wheel pits, and all pits should be provided outside with jacking planks or timbers. There should be appliances for loading and unloading wheels, suitable lorry tracks for trucking heavy materials, up-to-date boiler tester and hot water washing out plant, with pits specially allotted and constructed for this purpose, special care being given to bad water districts. There should be sufficient modern machinery to take care of the proper maintenance of tire work, driving boxes and wedges, pistons, valves, and motion and rod work, also a proper blacksmith and boilermakers' equipment; all obsolete tools originally used for repairs to the smaller power should either be disposed of or scrapped.

The roundhouse staff should be looked upon as the bone and sinew of the concern; each one should be imbued with a feeling of loyalty to his foreman, and have such a sense of the chain of responsibility, from the call boy up that he will realize it is only by his individual efforts that the best results can be obtained. The

foreman who gives thought and study to his business, and is thorough in system, straightforward, honest, and true in his dealings with his staff and other departments, excels; the most careful foreman is one who, while exercising close supervision, is possessed of tact and diplomacy, as no matter what the conditions are or how much expense has been gone into for equipment, etc., if the staff is not properly managed the result will be disappointing.

The importance of knowing costs promptly is an absolute necessity. In successful locomotive dispatching this does not necessarily mean elaborate statements of figures, etc., but rather implies a systematic method of expending money, watching and knowing costs on lines that are applicable to any other business. To quote from H.H. Vaughan's presidential address at the recent Master Mechanics' convention: "In short, that without in any way reducing the interest we have in locomotive engineering, we take up in a far more business-like and serious way the financial problems connected with the operation of the loco. department, the form of organization that will give the best results, and the commercial aspect of work of the motive power official in conducting his department as though he were manager of a large business enterprise."

A foreman who can in a quiet way make it known to his staff just what a job is worth, and if necessary be prepared to demonstrate that he has gone into the question sufficiently to know his statements are correct, will enjoy the confidence and loyal support of all.

Investigations should be made into cases of damage and the cause ascertained if at all possible, so that all questions relating thereto may be answered promptly and recommendations outlined that will assist in reducing possible future cases to a minimum. It should be the ambition of those handling correspondence to feel that when a file of papers connected with such an investigation leaves their office, the investigation is complete as far as they are concerned.

The chargeman or leading hand should so figure on his work that only at a time when power can be best spared should heavy repairs be undertaken, at which time it is preferable to see that all that is possible is done, and done in such a manner that there shall be no necessity to hold the locomotive out of service at the first turn around point, to go over what had not been properly done in the first instance. The chargehand should be in the relation of a doctor with the locomotives as patients; he should know the particular ailment or tender spot of each locomotive and by encouraging engine crews to explain defects and talk over conditions, be in a position to decide just how long it would be wise to keep an engine in service without attention; this will greatly assist in the economical handling of repairs. He should make it apparent to his foreman that there need be no anxiety as to his ability to handle his position, or of the question as to whether he can carry the responsibility of work done under his supervision, by cultivating friendly relations with both loco crews and shop staff; he will soon find them becoming so interested that they will of their own accord feel like sharing the responsibilities, thereby lightening the daily load.

The chargehand should consult with his foreman regularly as to his doings and how he figures to handle his work; he should feel it is his privilege to make recommendations that will, in his opinion, result in economy or a betterment of shop conditions. He should be prepared to give an intelligent and honest expression of opinion as to the cause of any failure, having in mind that it is his business to know, and if it is a case of either faulty workmanship or material the facts should be given without hesitation, making it clear that he is in all respects worthy of the position he has been selected to fill.

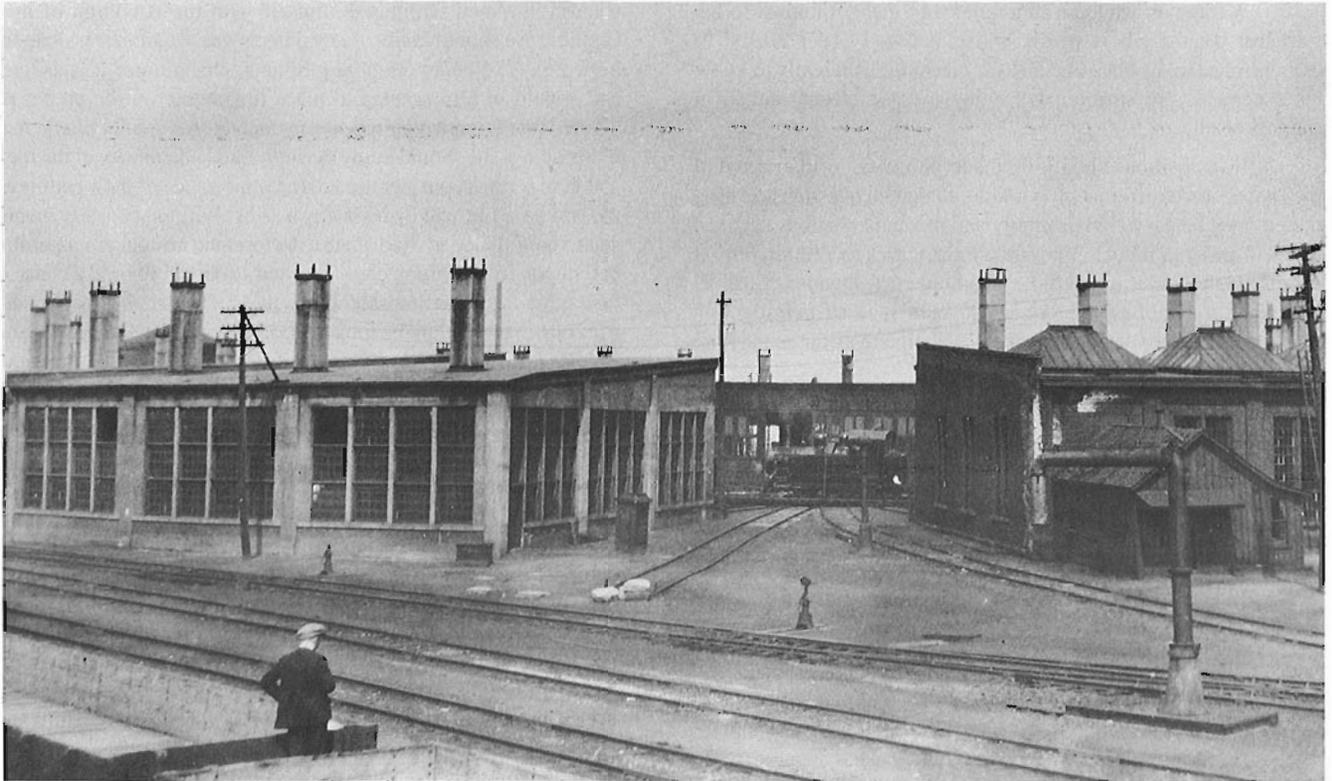
The machinist, boilermaker, blacksmith, and carpenter should be closely in touch with the chargeman or leading hand and should lose no opportunity of bringing to his notice conditions or defects that may have been observed which, in their opinion, might lead to failures. Since from this class of men intelligence and skill are looked for, each one should, when given a job, use thought as to how the work is to be performed with the best possible dispatch, always having in mind the fact that when vacancies occur for higher positions, selection is invariably made from among those who have been energetic, thoughtful and loyal in the general performance of their duty.

The engine hostler is a very important person in the roundhouse staff; he should be the diplomat of the concern, and being in daily contact with the locomotives and crews, must by

meeting the men familiarize himself with the condition of their engines. He should know of any defects that would necessitate the blowing off of boiler, emptying of tank, changing of wheels, etc., and should in turn arrange to place the engine on the proper pit allotted for the work required, and incidentally advise the chargeman of his doings; he should know the individual peculiarity of the men, and give serious consideration to the importance of their getting all the rest possible, and by his many acts of common courtesy inspire such a confidence as would cause the foreman no concern regarding detentions from waiting engineers and firemen. Should a cause of discipline be under consideration, the hostler should be of such standing that he might be looked upon as a referee and be prepared to give a straightforward opinion if questioned by the foreman.

The apprentice of to-day may be looked upon as the mechanic of the future, and while it is true the different companies have taken a greater interest in the training of the boys, and as far as they can have made it possible for the boy to enjoy all the privileges necessary to qualify as a successful journeyman, it must also be borne in mind that time has brought about change in equipment, more efficient machines, systems and methods of handling repairs so that the responsibility for the training of the boys from the shop standpoint has increased in proportion, and it is the duty of all fair-minded men to keep this before them, and so by their example make it apparent to the lad that his selection of the trade is a wise one. The cultivation of studious habits and perseverance, and generally of manly deportment, should be encouraged from the start; there should be a feeling grow up between man and boy that their interests are mutual. By exercising kindness and patience the man will soon see the fruits of his labour in the training of the boy, who will seek his advice and confide his little difficulties and secrets to him; this will be the time to discourage any inclination to coarseness or unmanly behaviour and to impress on the boy to at all times endeavour to keep the dignity of the trade uppermost in his mind, so that when the time comes for the boy to start out for himself, he will be a mechanic reflecting credit on the shop that turned him out. A story occurs to me at this moment of a man who secured a position in an up-to-date shop, who on starting was given a piece of work that required accurate filing; the foreman noticed in passing by the new man that he was handling the file like the bow of a violin. On calling the man's attention to this, and intimating that work of that kind could not be permitted the man replied: "If I only had the file I served my time with, I could show you how to do a good job." The point I wish to bring out is that in the training of our boys we should endeavour to teach them the use of any file; or, in fact, of any tool or machine so thoroughly as will ensure getting everything possible out of it.

To the enginemen belong the task of conducting their respective duties in such a manner that by their individual and collective efforts, the district with which they are identified generally, and themselves individually, shall be prominent in favorable mention when comparisons are being made. The changes that have recently been made, and those that are constantly taking place in locomotive design, call for not a little thought and study on the part of enginemen. The engineer of to-day should closely watch the new devices introduced, and only be satisfied after he has become familiar with the workings of the same. He should avail himself of every opportunity of being present when



*The Canadian Pacific Railway engine house at West Toronto, Ontario, about 1915.*

*Canadian Pacific photo No. A-3517.*

any discussion or demonstration is being made pertaining to his business, and should aim at becoming an authority on some particular feature of his business. This, along with a keen sense of economy, the exercising of care and intelligence when reporting repairs required, having in mind what it costs to perform work that might be done more economically, at a time for instance when the boiler is being washed and the like, and the exercise of thought and judgment in other ways, will result in considerable saving. The ideal engineer will be careful to see that no entry of repairs required is recorded over his signature that there is any doubt about; there are always ways and means for the proper method of locating defects, and until such defects are known the report should be withheld. When on the line there should be a desire to gain a reputation for good judgment in train handling in order that the superintendent and train dispatcher may be justified in making the statement that they have men on their districts who can do, and are doing, good work, for experience has shown that superintendents and those in charge are liberal to a fault in sounding the praises of enginemen rendering good service.

The economical use of fuel has always been, and I presume always will be, a subject of interest. There can be no question as to what can be accomplished when all concerned are fully alive to this question, and while the engine crew can, with careful practice, take advantage of each and every move made by each other in respect to this item or the most efficient working of the machine, I would beg leave to quote the following extract, bearing on this subject, from the report of the committee dealing with this at the

Master Mechanics' Convention of June, 1909: Efficient handling of this involves the work of both the engineer and fireman and to our minds constitutes one of the most, if not the most important element in fuel economy. The question of running an engine in order to get most economic results involves the work of both engineer and fireman, and is so important from that point of view, that we shall introduce this portion of the subject by making the following statement: An engine may be built of the very best material, and of the most approved design, mechanically perfect, with all the modern conveniences to assist in its perfect manipulation, and you place that engine in the hands of an incompetent engineman, and you have almost nullified the combined expert mechanical skill necessary, to turn out the finished product; we think you will all agree it is most important that the finished machine should have skillful operation."

While the above is true, there is little accomplished unless those who have to do with the handling of orders, station work and the like, understand that fuel consumed when delays are taking place is wasteful, and that the responsibility rests on someone; this, along with fuel unnecessarily burned at terminals when the locomotive is in the hands of shop staff, tends to lessen the interest of enginemen, since they are responsible in all such cases for excessive fuel consumption, over which they have practically no control. No case of this kind should be allowed to pass unnoticed, for when enginemen are thus assured that interest is being taken elsewhere than in the engine cab, it will become an incentive for them to be on the alert and prompt in the discharge of their



*The Canadian Pacific Railway engine house at Swift Current, Saskatchewan, about 1915.  
Canadian Pacific photo No. A-3303.*

respective duties, and thus create the desire to establish a record for their district that will outclass all others on their system.

The fireman of to-day may be looked upon as the engineer of the future. He should have in mind his ideal of what constitutes a successful engineer. He is, of course reminded by the more extensive examinations he is called upon to write up, of the increasing importance of giving attention to his business, and to what will be expected of him as advancement takes place. By close attention he will hear the name of some particular person in his line being continually mentioned by the engineers as one who can be depended upon under all conditions to do a good job; requests from engineers on most important runs will be made to foremen for this class of man. A man of this kind becomes known, his opinion is valuable, and is sought by those in charge and also by his associates in cases of dispute; in cases of discussion and arguments pertaining to subjects for advancement in his line of business his remarks are listened to with interest, and by his example he discourages thoughtless expressions which are disloyal, and neither good for the employee nor the company. It should then be worth his while to locate this type of fireman, get in touch with him, and gain all the good points possible, always realizing he has to handle one of the greatest items of cost in the business of transportation. I will here again, with your permission, refer to the statement made by R. Quayle, at the recent Master Mechanics' convention, in which he says: "We will suppose the fuel is all right, the specifications are all right, the purchasing agent is all right, and the delivery on

the ground is all right. I made this statement to 22 locomotive firemen within the last two weeks, that I would select 100 locomotive firemen on the C. & N. W., and I would guarantee that if I had every other man on the railway equally as good firemen as the 100 I could select, that I could save easily \$500,000 a year in fuel."

The importance, therefore, of familiarizing himself with just what can be got from one scoopful of coal properly applied is something for serious consideration, and will eventually result in the fireman's ability, rather than his seniority, being the cause for his being selected for important runs or promotion. In going into the fuel question, I find I have gone a little outside of the terminal switch, but the importance attached to this particular item, and what it is possible to accomplish by constantly keeping before all concerned what this account means to a company, is the only excuse I have to offer.

I would also beg leave to touch on the importance for the necessity of friendly co-operation between the two departments responsible for the handling of terminal traffic. I feel satisfied that a hearty co-operation of the trainmaster and the locomotive foreman, at the terminal with which they are together identified, would make a freight blockage next to impossible, and this combination along with proper equipment, efficient help, and intelligent supervision, are, in my opinion, what may be considered as the essential factors required for successful locomotive dispatching.

# The Fiftieth Anniversary of Central Station

Compiled by Fred F. Angus

Fifty years ago, on July 14, 1943, in the midst of World War II, Canadian National Railways' new Central Station in Montreal was officially opened by the Hon. Mr. Michaud, Minister of Transport. This completed a project which had begun fourteen years before, in 1929, but which had been interrupted by the Great Depression of the 1930's.

The July, 1943 issue of the magazine Canadian Transportation ran a lengthy article on this great project. We are pleased to reprint major portions of this article, together with a selection of photographs depicting Central Station over the years.

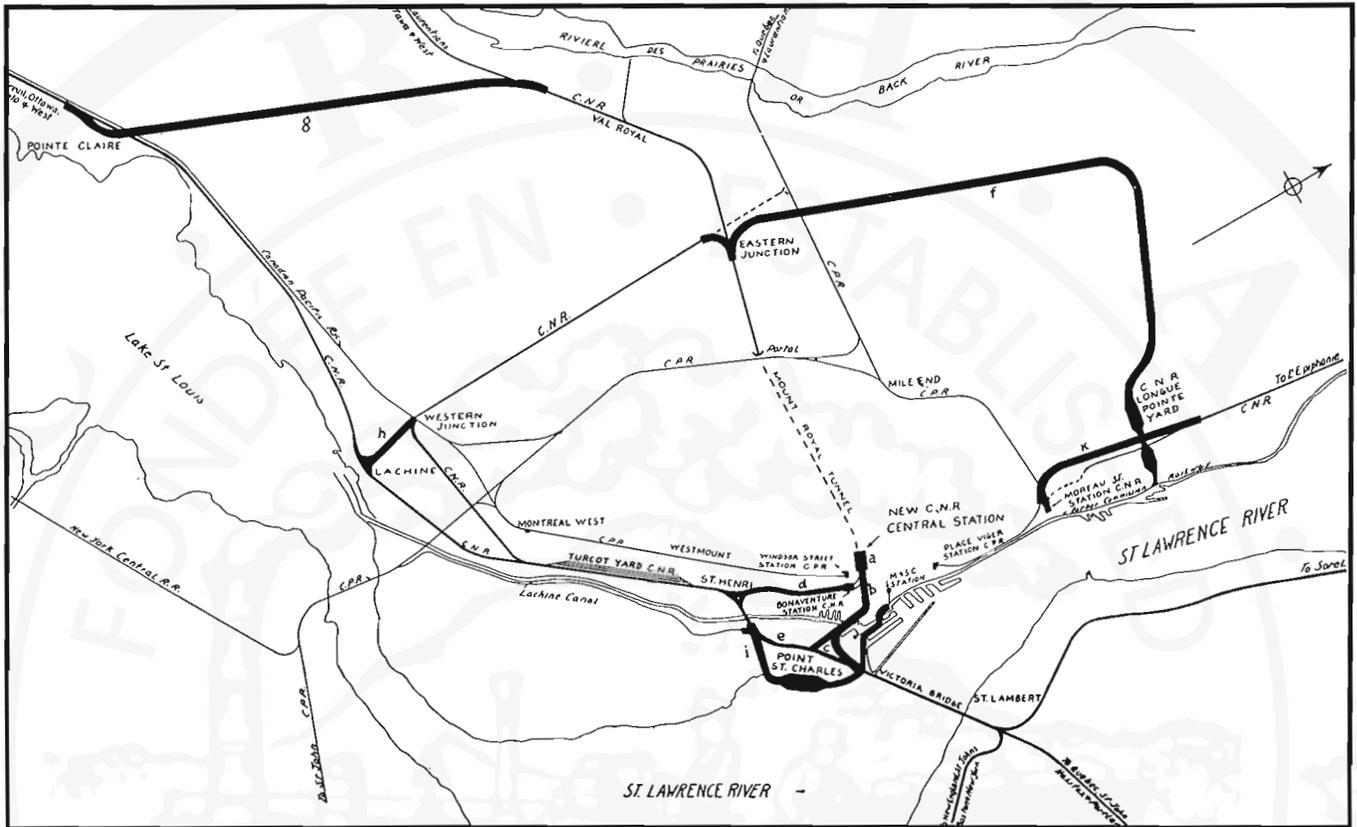
Since 1929, when the Canadian National Railways scheme of terminal development in Montreal was embarked upon, references to it in these columns have been frequent and at times lengthy. Many readers will recall that when the work was first undertaken, it was pursued aggressively; materials were plentiful, business was good, the need for the improvements contemplated was very evident, and there was every reason to strive for completion of the improvement works as rapidly as possible. But readers will recall also, no doubt, that at the end of 1929 there was a great security market crash, economic conditions became steadily worse from month to month, credit was contracted to an almost unbelievable degree, and the incentive to rapid completion of improvement works steadily became less. The business of the railways shrank to a very large extent, and both gross and net earnings were reduced to levels far below those of 1928 and 1929. It was little wonder, then, that the Government and the Canadian National Railways executives found themselves in agreement that the terminal development work should be suspended. The undertaking, therefore, was discontinued, and progress for the seven years preceding 1939 was of very small proportions, no work being done which did not have to be done. However, a great deal of progress was made before work was shut down. Much grade separation was carried out by subway and bridge construction; the viaduct to carry elevated tracks between the site of the proposed new terminal station at Lagachetiere and Dorchester Streets, and the city end of the Victoria Bridge over the St. Lawrence River, was partially completed. Also, a large excavation for the proposed new terminal station was made, about one million cubic yards of material having been removed.

**Scheme Modified in 1939:-** However, when work on the terminal improvement project was resumed in 1939, it was on a considerably modified scale. The various projects provided for by the 1929 programme have been proceeded with only in part, and while the opening of the new station marks the successful termination of a large improvement undertaking of great value to the city and the railway alike, it is a fact that many of the projects included within the 1929 programme remain to be gone ahead with at some future time. Readers who are not familiar with details of the original scheme, and with the modified scheme of 1939 on which the work has been proceeding, will do well to study the two accompanying sketch maps, one of which provides information as to the projects embraced within the 1929 programme, and the other of which depicts the modified scheme on which work has been proceeding since resumption in 1939.

**The Original Scheme:-** It is impossible, in the space available, to describe in detail all the projects contemplated in the original C.N.R. Montreal terminal improvement programme, but sufficient information can be presented to enable the reader to discern the difference between the original and modified undertakings. The accompanying sketch map 1 refers to the original scheme. The location of the new central passenger terminal, at the portal of the tunnel under Mount Royal, is indicated by the letter "a", while the elevated track structure running from the terminal to the city end of the Victoria Bridge is indicated by the letter "b". The central passenger station was planned to accommodate 95% of all C.N.R. trains entering or leaving Montreal, and ultimately the full 100%. It was planned to have the station facilities almost entirely below ground, thus leaving a large proportion of the surface area available for long term leases for those wishing to build hotels, theatres, stores or office buildings. A feature of the original plan was the construction of a double tube vehicular subway under McGill College Avenue, extending from south of Cathcart Street to a short distance north of St. Catherine Street.

The elevated track structure extending from the south end of the proposed new passenger terminal to Victoria Bridge was necessary to permit passenger trains running over Victoria Bridge to reach the proposed new terminal. This part of the undertaking has been carried out as originally proposed. The viaduct portion of the elevated track structure has been constructed of reinforced concrete, with steel spans over the numerous streets crossed, and this construction was largely completed before the suspension of work. The provision of this elevated structure removes from the ground level route heretofore used a large percentage of the C.N.R. passenger traffic entering and leaving Montreal. At the time the original plans were drawn up, it was recognized that the removal of passenger traffic from the Bonaventure Station area would permit the development of this area for freight purposes, and allow for great improvements to the freight service at Bonaventure.

Another feature of the original scheme, shown by letter "g" on sketch map 1, was a line proposed to be built from Pointe Claire to Val Royal, to bring passenger trains from the west into the proposed new terminal via the tunnel route. This portion of the scheme is not being proceeded with, and passenger trains from Toronto and other western points, which have been using the old Bonaventure Station, will leave the main line at St. Henry and, running via Point St. Charles, will enter the new central terminal over the elevated track structure.



Sketch Map 1. The various sections of the CNR Montreal Terminal Development scheme as originally planned in 1929.

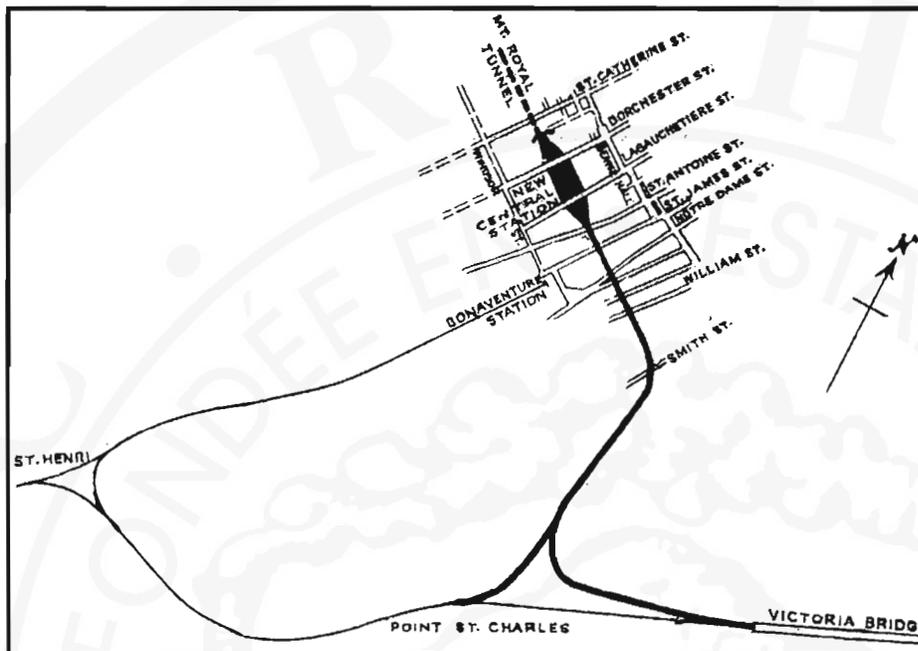
Another improvement contemplated by the original scheme was the building of a line, about ten miles long, running from Longue Pointe to Eastern Junction, this being indicated by the letter "f" on sketch map 1. However the construction of this line is not included in the modified scheme. Yet another undertaking, originally contemplated but not gone ahead with, would have been the construction of an engine house and other terminal facilities near Mount Royal for the accommodation of locomotives and cars, now taken care of at Turcot, which would have been diverted to the new central passenger terminal by the tunnel under Mount Royal and the connection between Val Royal and Point Claire.

The original scheme also contemplated a new passenger yard at Point St. Charles; this has been constructed as part of the modified plan. However a new interchange freight yard at Point St. Charles, to be a joint undertaking with the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Harbour Commission, was not proceeded with. The final proposal was to provide sufficient office space at the new terminal to permit the concentration there of the C.N.R. clerical staff which at the time was housed in 17 different buildings in Montreal. While this plan has been modified, the new passenger terminal does provide a large amount of office space.

**The Modified Scheme:-** To the end of 1938, the total expenditure on the entire project was \$16,651,345.62, and a Parliamentary return, dealing with proposed activity in 1939, said: "Work looking to the completion of the terminal on a modified

plan has been undertaken. The work which is contemplated in the calendar year 1939 consists of the construction of certain sub-track space at the station site, portions of the viaduct, elevated railway and grade separations between the station area at Dorchester Street and Victoria Bridge, and works in Point St. Charles. For this purpose, an amount of \$2,320,000 has been included in the Canadian National Railways budget for 1939." The intention, it was said, was to provide for the completion of the central passenger terminal by stages. Generally, the essential features of the original plans for the terminal were retained, and the station which has resulted would do credit to any railway. The name "Bonaventure", associated since 1847 with the railway terminal in Montreal, is to be transferred to the new station, and, after the use of the old station is terminated, at a future date, it will be known as the C.N.R. Bonaventure Station. [Editor's Note: This was never done. However, in later years, a development known as Place Bonaventure was built adjacent to the station, so the historic old name has been preserved]. The new terminal is a six-level layout; above the track level are those of the concourse floor and the two office floors, while below the track level is that of the express, baggage and mail facilities, and, below that again, the level at which the various services are arranged, for the distribution of power, heat and water, and for drainage.

Soon after the announcement was made of the modified scheme, activities were proceeded with, and early in 1939 tenders were asked for the construction of a subway to carry the C.N.R.



Sketch Map 2. General layout of CNRMontreal Terminal scheme as modified in 1939.

tracks over Bridge Street; also for the construction of the Ottawa Street subway, and a retaining wall between Ottawa Street and Smith Street, both works being located in the elevated track structure between the new station and Victoria Bridge. These works were gone ahead with, and numerous other contracts were awarded, principally in connection with the new central terminal, covering such items as grading, the building of bridges, the construction of approaches and, of course, of the terminal building itself.

**Grade Separation:-** It might be well to point out here that the whole scheme of terminal development in Montreal is primarily one of separation of railway and street grades. Plans for such grade separation in the city date back a great many years; even as far back as 1886 elimination of level crossings in Montreal had been discussed with the Grand Trunk Railway Company management, by the Montreal Board of Trade, and there is reason to believe that the Canadian Northern Railway, when it entered Montreal, had in view an eventual coordination of its terminal facilities with those of the Grand Trunk. The tunnel which the Canadian Northern bored through the mountain reaches the city at a level which is different by only inches from that of Victoria Bridge. If this was a coincidence, it was a happy one because, years later, it became a factor in the selection of the tunnel terminal site as the logical location of the new central passenger station.

It was not until 1922, when amalgamation brought the Canadian National Railways into being, that the problem of grade separation in Montreal could be studied as a single subject correlated with the possibilities of integrating the various lines and termini of the company in the city. Studies were begun almost immediately and continued over the years. In June, 1929, Parliament passed an act authorizing the construction, and providing the money. Work was started immediately on several pieces of grade

separation and, later in the year, on the excavation for the station site. Then, with economic depression steadily making itself more evident throughout the world, work on the whole project was suspended in 1931, and very little was done during the following seven years.

Altogether apart from the completion of the splendid new passenger terminal which the C.N.R. management will throw open to public use in July, a great deal of terminal work of outstanding value has been completed. This despite the fact that the work was scarcely under way when Canada and the entire world were plunged into one of the greatest periods of financial stringency and economic deterioration ever recorded. Fifteen level crossings have been abolished, several new streets have been created, and the way has been paved for the development of at least two wide arterial thoroughfares by the completion of the central terminal.

All rail entrances to the new passenger station are free of street level crossings from Victoria Bridge and Point St. Charles, covering rail traffic from south, east and west, and north from Mount Royal. Carrying the railway across Notre Dame Street in St. Henry Ward has been a great time-saver because, with the tremendous increase in wartime freight traffic necessitating numerous train movements at this point, a crossing at grade would mean many delays to vehicular and pedestrian traffic during business hours. In a similar manner, subways at Charlevoix and Hibernia Streets, in what is generally termed the Point St. Charles district, and the enlargement of the subway at D'Argenson Street, approaching busy Verdun, have further improved the speed and mobility of traffic in areas essential to Montreal's industrial development.

Other important grade crossings, which have been in effect long enough to be accepted as normal to Montreal traffic, are the overhead bridges carrying Mountain and Guy Street traffic across the tracks leading to old Bonaventure Station. These bridges, built by the C.N.R., are taken as quite matter of fact, as the traffic volume now flows easily from the higher uptown level to the business and industrial levels below. Prior to the building of the bridges, crossing the railway tracks at street level was slow because of the numerous train movements in and out of the station. [Editor's Note: These bridges were demolished in the late 1980's after the track from St. Henry to the old Bonaventure site was abandoned].

**The New Central Station:-** While, as indicated in the foregoing, the name "Bonaventure" will ultimately be transferred from the old to the new station, it is the desire of the C.N.R. management that the latter be referred to, for the time being, as simply "The New C.N.R. Central Station", to avoid confusion. The old Bonaventure station, which occupies a site used as a railway terminal since 1847, will be named the "St. James Street Station";

it is remaining in use because of the difficulty in securing, under present conditions, sufficient electric locomotives to handle all traffic into and out of the new station.

The new station is of the part-through, as opposed to the stub-end, type; that is to say some of the main line tracks are continuous through the station area, with the additional station tracks arranged as sidings, as compared to the stub-end arrangement, wherein the main line tracks terminate at the station, with no provision for through movement. The approach from the north is from the tunnel under Mount Royal, while that from the south is from the elevated track structure extending from Victoria Bridge.

The station building is of structural steel frame, fire proofed with concrete, with the wide span, 106 feet, over the concourse, steel rigid frame. The exterior walls, 13 inches thick, are brick, with 4 inch terra cotta lining, with exterior trim of Montreal limestone. The large exterior concourse windows are of bronze, while the windows of the upper floors are of wood, double glazed.

**The Concourse:-** The concourse floors are of terrazzo of various colours and patterns. The concourse walls are lined to a height of 9 feet with terrazzo, finished with a plaster band at the top and covered with Dutch metal leaf. The rigid frame piers are covered throughout their entire 27 feet of height with terrazzo. All woodwork in the concourse, including the doors, is of straight grained white oak. The entire concourse ceiling is suspended and finished with acoustic tile.

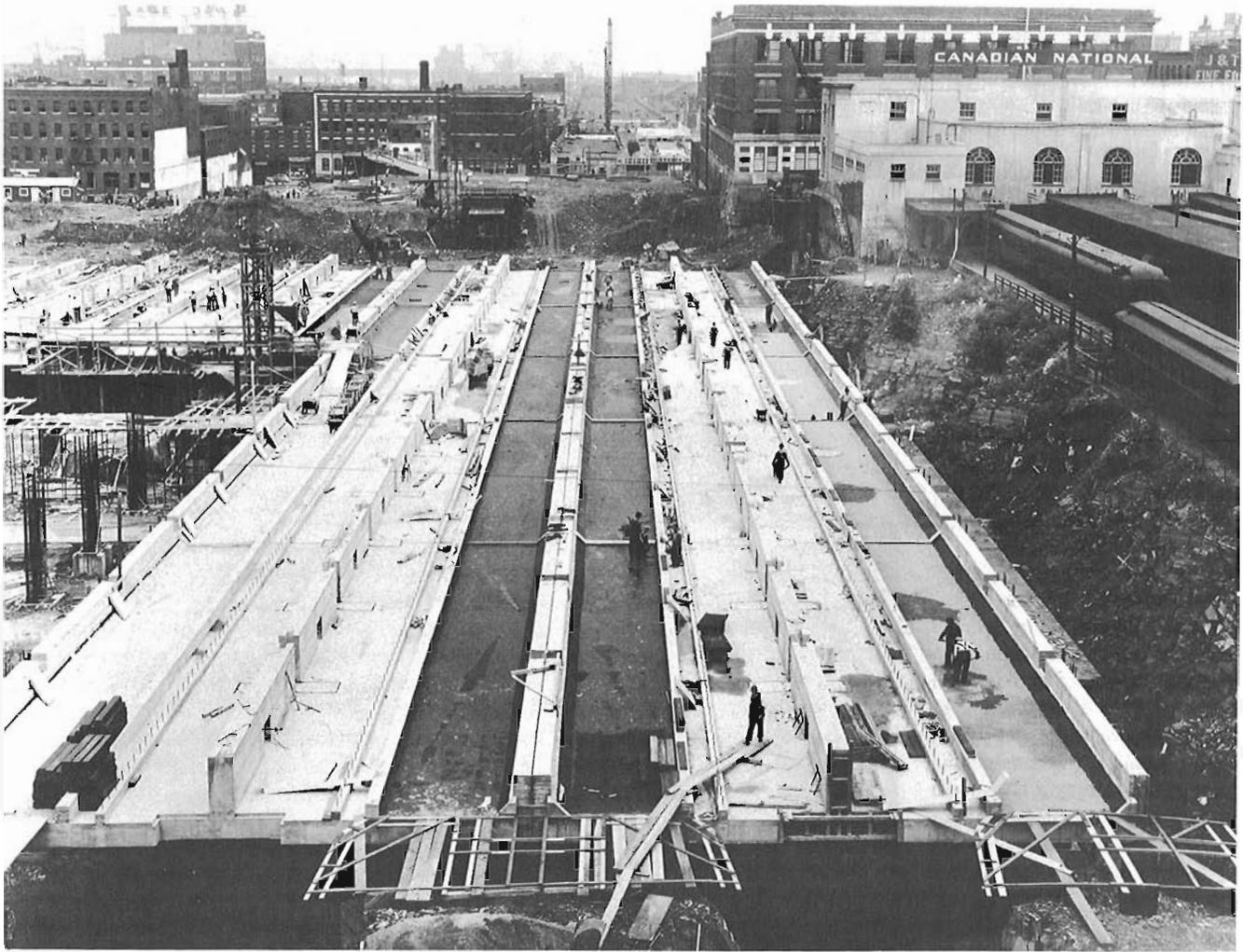
The concourse of the new station has been designed so that everything will be made as easy as possible for passengers and for their friends who come to greet them or to see them off. As far as is possible, all the facilities which the public uses are laid out so that they may be found at a glance and quickly reached. In accordance with the modern concept of direct expression, we find here no proper architecture of the "museum or monumental" type; instead, on entering, the first glimpse is of a great sweep of acoustic tile ceiling 33 feet above the floor. Two clocks, suspended from the



*The start of the excavation for Central Station as photographed in 1929. The view is taken looking east, with Lagauchetiere Street on the right. Notice that some of the old houses on Belmont Street (extreme left) were still standing.*

*Canadian National photo No. 34075.*

ceiling, take nothing away from the simplicity. The concourse is peaked to the centre and follows the constructional form of what are technically known as rigid frames, the great supporting members tying floor, wall and ceiling over the 104 foot width. The eye follows the line of piers to either east or west end, where huge plain glass windows let in a flood of daylight. Flanking these windows are two projecting corners, supported at the outer corner on circular columns. These corners form great 25 foot reveals to the window, and are tied together with a 7 foot frieze under the window. The corners and the frieze are faced with low relief murals, adding greatly to the richness of the room. This is the coordinated work of sculptors, artists and architects.



*Constructing the platforms. August 4, 1939. View looking south. Note the old Canadian Northern tunnel terminal on the right. Canadian National photo No. 42726-2.*

Along the centre of the length of the floor, at 50 foot intervals, are the parapets enclosing the stairs and escalators leading to the train platforms. There are seven of these stairways, and grouped with four of them are escalators or moving stairways. A fifth escalator is placed on the side of the concourse. War conditions have delayed the installation of these escalators, and the result is that they will not be in operation until after the opening. They are reversible in operation, and can be made to move upwards or downwards in accordance with the flow of traffic. The general impression of the vast concourse is spacious without being wasteful of space, attractive without being ornate. The concourse is scientifically ventilated, so that it will be pleasantly cool in summer and agreeably warm in winter. A modern public-address system has been installed in the concourse, and in all public rooms, and over it, without shouting, announcements of interest to the public will be made.

**Other Public Rooms:-** The general waiting room, located at the east end of the concourse, is a wide, airy, well-lit room,

which is open to the concourse. This is one of the most practical features of the station plan, since passengers can be seated out of the way and yet within sight of the life and movement in the concourse. It has a low, sound-resistant ceiling which deadens extraneous noises and permits of conversation in a normal tone of voice. The women's waiting and retiring rooms are stationed immediately north of the general waiting room. The waiting room is panelled in oak and furnished with benches, tables and chairs, for the convenience of the passengers. Features of the women's quarters are, a "quiet room" for women who must rest, and a nursery en suite with the medical department, where a trained nurse is in attendance. The toilets and bath rooms are attractively decorated in shell pink and black vitrolite.

The main restaurant has been laid out in conformity with popular trends for rapid service; the main service is of the low horseshoe counter type, with four separate bays. feature of this counter which will appeal to the women is the provision of a shelf under the counter where they can place their handbags. There are

also a number of individual tables and these, together with the counter, provide accommodations for about 100 people at a sitting. Immediately north of the restaurant there are three private dining rooms, each 33 feet long by 22 feet wide, supplied from a service kitchen.

#### **Entrances and Exits:-**

The station is well provided with entrances and exits. For taxicabs and cars there is one main entrance and one main exit. Taxis and private cars carrying outgoing passengers to the station reach the concourse by driving down the ramp of Cathcart Street, almost due south of McGill College Avenue. This three lane ramp descends to the plaza in front of the station. [Editor's Note:- Since other buildings have been constructed, this ramp is no longer an entrance to the station. The south entrance is now used for both arriving and departing passengers]. Incoming passengers, who intend to proceed by taxi or car, will leave the station by the main exit in the centre of the south side of the concourse. Taxis draw up to the station door, facing west, and, on leaving, move west and south along the station roadway to Lagachetiere Street. For pedestrians, there are many other ways into and out of the station.

**Platform and Sub-track Levels:-** The platforms are reached by the passengers from the seven stairs in the centre of the concourse floor; they serve fourteen passenger train tracks. These are high platforms, flush with the level of the passenger car vestibules, so that no climbing up or down of passenger car steps is necessary. In addition to the fourteen regular passenger train tracks there are three others. One of them is reserved for express, mail etc., the remaining two are auxiliary tracks which can be used for storage of cars handling express etc., to road trucks, parking or other purposes - special trains for example. The total of fourteen passenger tracks provides the largest trackage operating into any station in the city of Montreal. The comparative figures are 11 at Windsor Street Station and 11 at old Bonaventure. In passenger car capacity, the comparison is 150 cars for the new terminal as against 81 for old Bonaventure, not taking into account accommodation for 36 cars for tunnel suburban service and also for 33 cars on express, mail and auxiliary tracks.

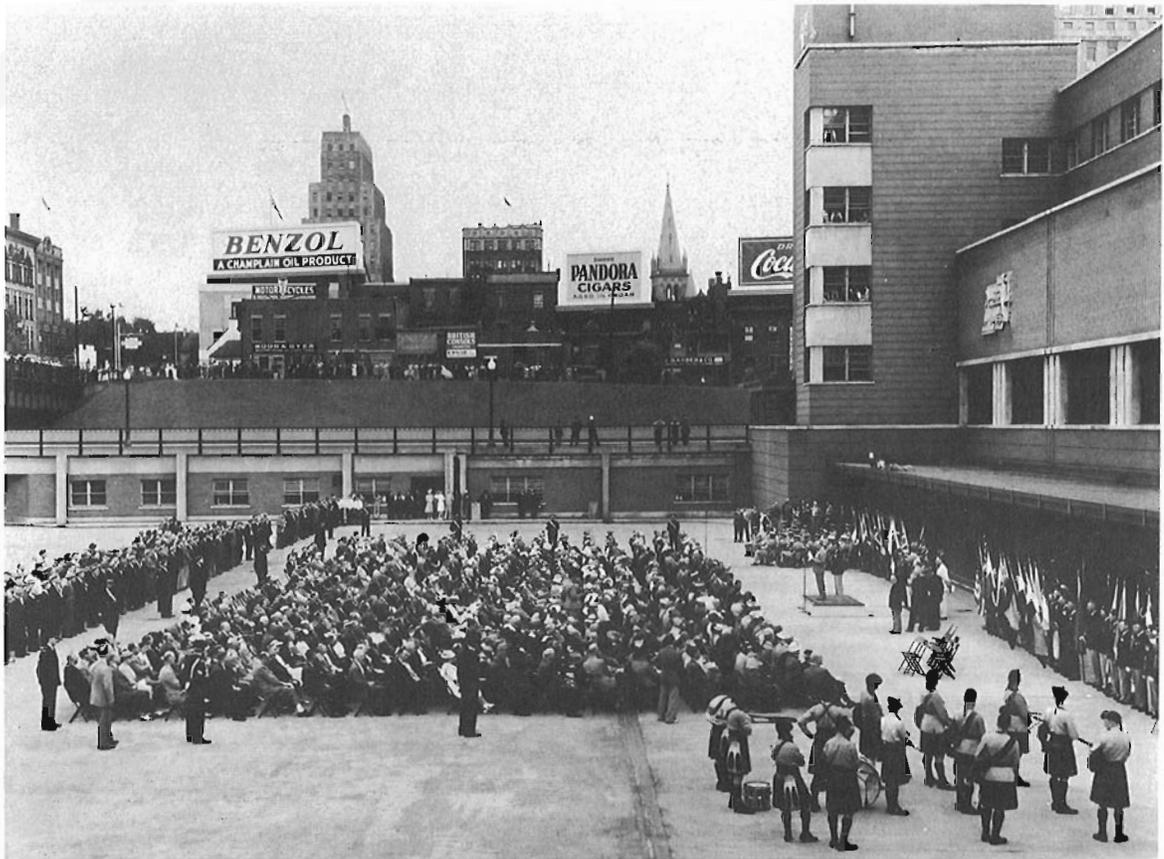
Below the track and platform level is the sub-track level, which is on the same elevation as St. Antoine Street. On this level is situated, "behind the scenes", the operating staff of the station.



*The interior of Central station, looking east, as it appeared when new.  
Canadian National photo No. 49674.*

From the standpoint of train operation, it competes with the signal tower and the dispatcher's office for the title of the heart of the terminal. The area is a virtual maze of rooms, offices and other facilities, only a few of which require description here. It contains the transformer room from which flows the current operating trains and lighting systems. There are two entrances to the sub-track level; one is by roadway from St. Antoine Street, the other is off Lagachetiere Street just west of the old tunnel station. From these roadways the sub-track area is entered through doors which operate automatically when cars pass over a magnetic control located about thirty feet from the entrances inside and outside of the building. The baggage room, where trucks and other inward and outward bound heavy baggage is handled, is situated in the north west section of the area. Off the baggage room, the offices of the Canadian and United States customs services are located. In addition to these large facilities, the basement also contains numbers of rooms and offices for the transaction of purely interdepartmental railway business; garage facilities for from 50 to 100 express trucks; and sleeping and dining car facilities.

**Heating and Lighting:-** The main concourse and the sub-track area are heated by forced steam-heated filtered hot air systems, while the offices and other areas are heated by direct steam radiation. All office areas are equipped with fluorescent lighting, providing illumination intensity of approximately 35 foot candles. The main lobby and waiting rooms, and east and west passageways, as well as the stairs and escalators from the street



*Some historic views of Central Station.*

*ABOVE: The ceremony marking the official opening, July 14, 1943.  
Canadian National photo No. 43559.*

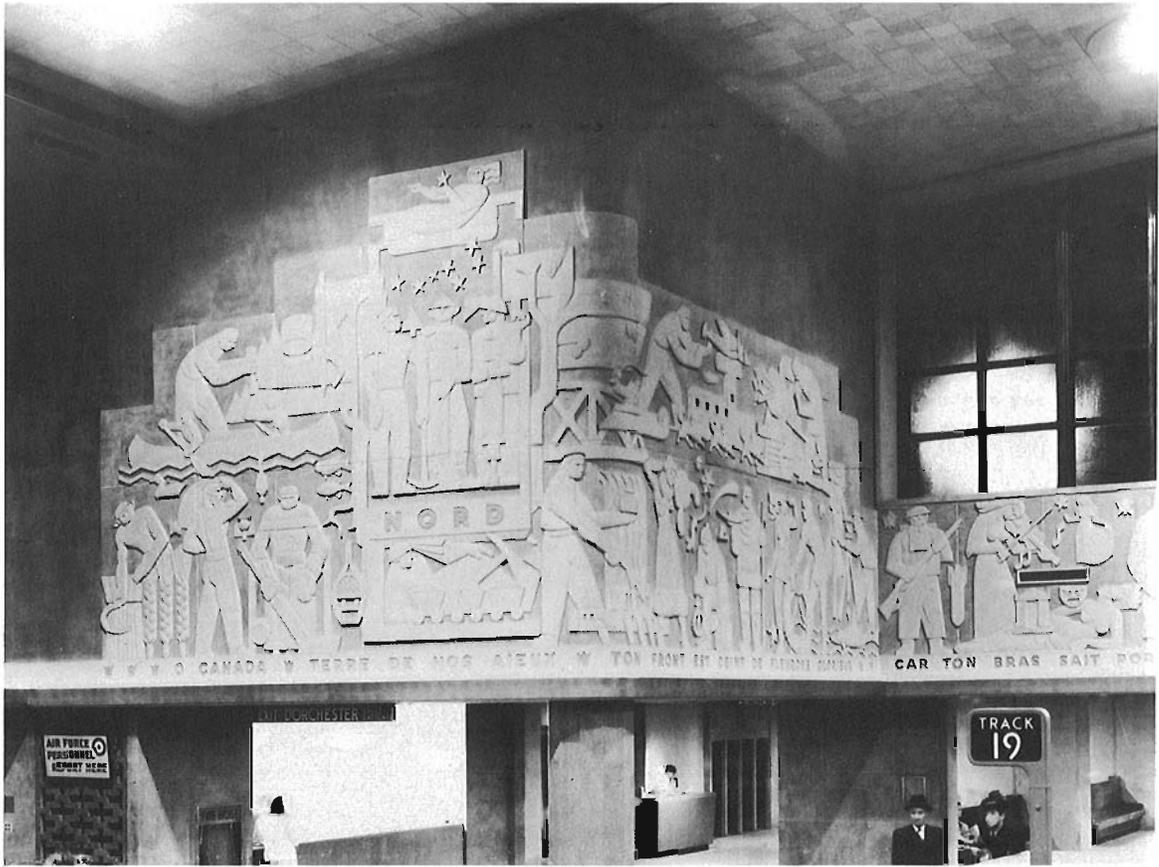
*RIGHT: A huge birthday cake in the concourse marked the 25th anniversary of Central Station, July 1968.  
Canadian National photo No. 68301-5.*

*OPPOSITE, TOP: A view of Central station as seen from the Sun Life building in 1949. The street car passing on Dorchester Street is No. 1959 which is now at the Canadian Railway Museum.  
Canadian National photo No. X-31079.*

*OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: An aerial view of the Central Station complex taken in the spring of 1955. The Super Continental, on one of its earliest runs, is just departing on its long run to Vancouver.  
Canadian National photo No. X-40906.*







*Two views, taken in 1943, of the beautiful murals in the concourse of Central Station. Above is the north corner, and opposite is the south. Note the words of "O Canada" in both official languages. In more recent times the reliefs have been painted in a monotone which makes them less visible. It is hoped that one day they will be restored to their original paint scheme so their beauty will once again be appreciated.*

*Canadian National photos 43577 and 43565.*

level to the concourse, and from the concourse to the train platforms, are lighted by means of flush mounted lens lights. The roadways in the sub-track area are provided with non-glare, evenly distributed light through the use of prismatic refractor lights. Miscellaneous areas, including the toilets, are lighted by enclosing opal glassware fixtures.

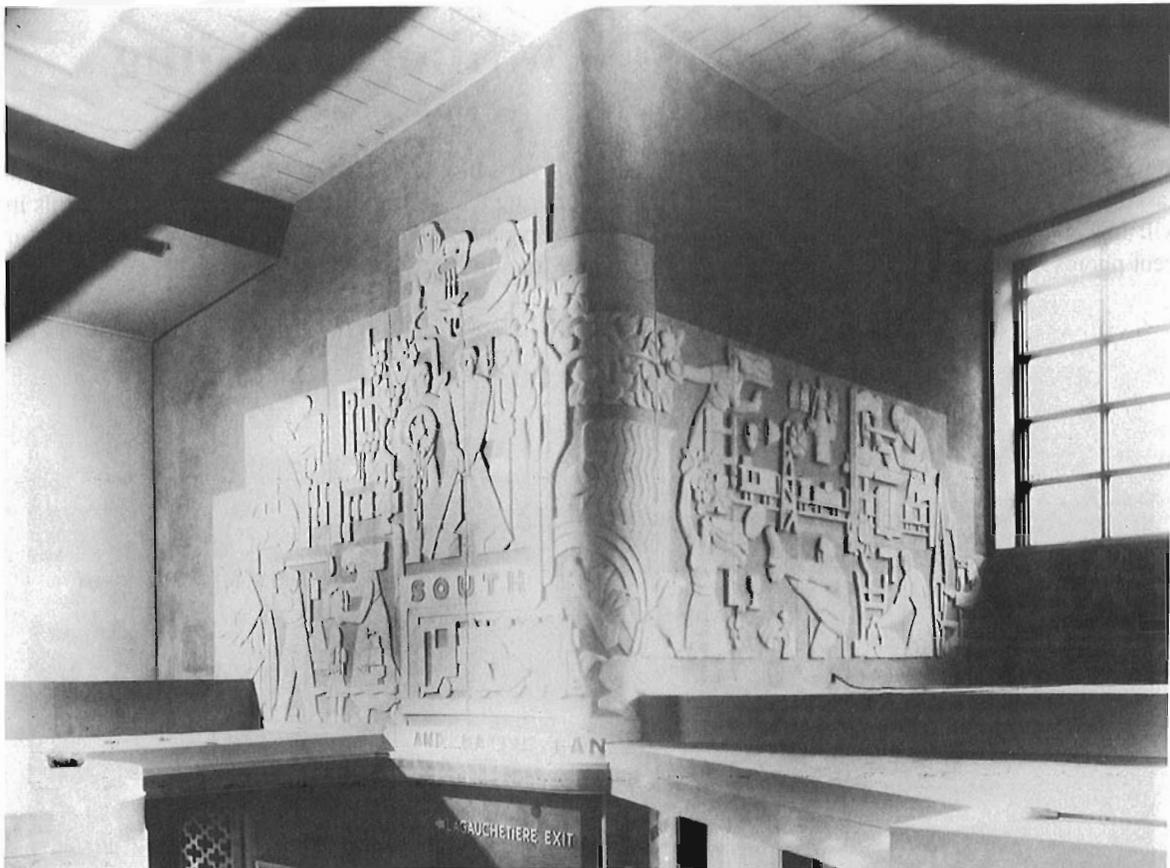
**Provision for Overhead Buildings:-** In the station area all new construction has been so designed and executed that areas not occupied by streets are available for the construction of buildings overlying railway station tracks and facilities. In order to ensure that no vibration from trains or from street traffic will be transmitted into any future overhead buildings, provisions have been made so that each of the structures will rest directly on solid rock and will be completely insulated and isolated from structures carrying railway trains and street traffic.

The concourse of the new station is located over the top of the structure carrying railway tracks, but the columns supporting the concourse are carried down through the track structure to solid rock, and these columns are completely insulated from the track structure. Similarly, the waiting rooms, lavatories and various

other facilities are in a piece of isolated structure located between the underlying track structure and an overlying street deck.

**The Concourse Murals:-** Captain Charles F. Comfort, R.C.A., of Toronto, now on active service overseas as an Official War Artist, created the murals in the concourse. Bearing in mind the medium through which his vision was to be presented, the setting and the necessarily large scale of dimensions, he worked in ample, summary forms; but while his figures are formalized and symbolic, they are vigorous and human. They are stripped to broad essentials, yet detail is used where it will be most effective in the design, to accent theme or point up character - here a star, there a maple leaf, somewhere else a note of music - and some of them in the great sweep of the impressive panorama, having a charming tincture of humour, as the gopher in the shade of the gigantic grain elevator and the slingshot rampant beside the boy and his dog in the family group.

The artist has not given us an historical pageant; this has been done often enough; he shows, instead, the drama of the Present, of Canadian life now. In his own words, "The work is an effort to formalize the contemporary life of Canadians, their



industry, their recreation, their culture, their hopes and aspirations, and to some extent to suggest their environment." This has been done by dividing the Dominion according to the cardinal points of the compass and presenting one at each corner of the concourse. Friezes, not localized but embodying, in general terms, culture, on the one hand, and social institutions, on the other, run along the east and west walls. The points North and East are named in French, Nord and Est, and South and West are in English. Along the base of the design, lines from "O Canada" appear in French and English.

#### End of 1943 Article

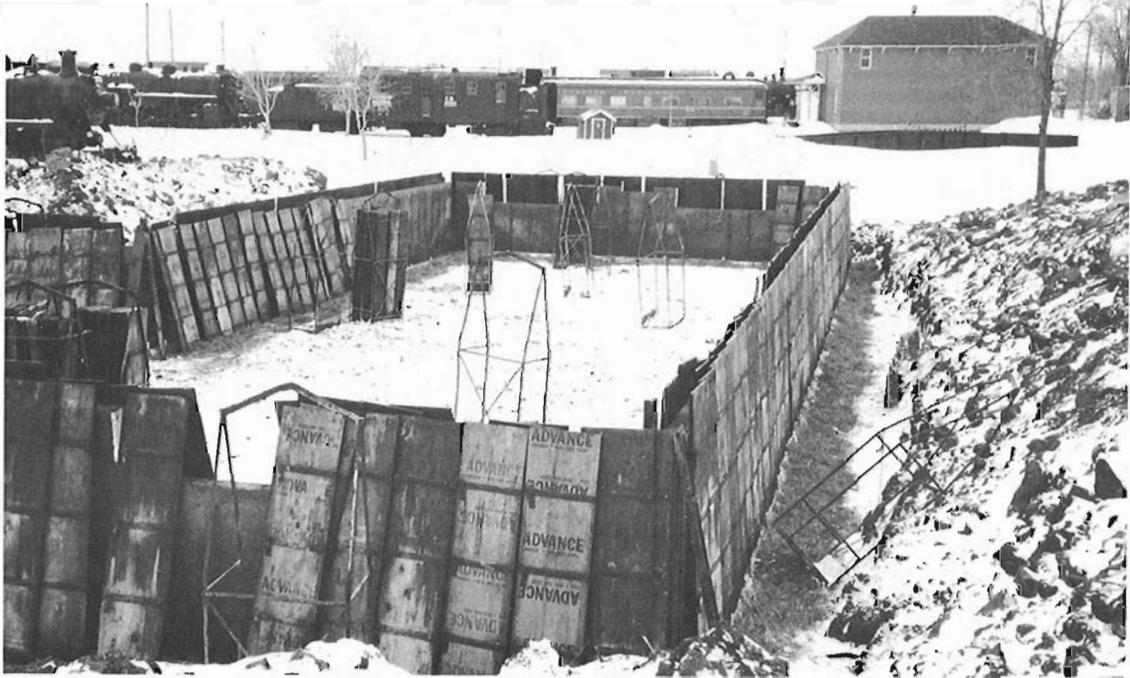
Central Station has continued to serve Montreal ever since 1943. The intention that other buildings would be built around the station has been fulfilled, and today the exterior of the station is scarcely visible from the street. The construction of the Queen Elizabeth hotel in the late 1950's, and of Place Ville Marie in the early 1960's greatly changed the area and brought the original dreams of Canadian National to fruition. Gone was the huge hole to the north of the station, replaced by this major development. Then in the mid-1960's the new Canadian National headquarters building was opened, so making a reality of the plan to have all the general offices of the railway in the Central Station area. Also in the 1960's, the area of the concourse was greatly increased by the

relocating of the ticket offices and other rooms more to the sides. With the formation of VIA Rail, Central station took over more and more of the intercity passenger traffic, and today all long distance passenger train arriving at and departing from Montreal use Central. The name "Bonaventure" was not transferred to the new station; perhaps that is just as well, since the new name is well suited to the new building. In any case the "Bonaventure" name is perpetuated in the adjacent development immediately to the south of the station. Today the tracks are entirely covered from the tunnel in the north to St. Antoine Street in the south, much as the original designers had planned.

The architecture of Central station was indeed well chosen; it still looks fresh and modern, not at all "dated", even after fifty years. Through good times and bad, Central Station has been there to serve the people of Montreal and, in fact, all the people of Canada, not to mention innumerable visitors from other countries. Despite various cutbacks in passenger service, the station still sees large numbers of passengers. Today there are plans for new high speed trains in the Quebec City - Windsor corridor. These would undoubtedly use Central station in the years ahead. One sincerely hopes, that half a century hence, our successors will still be able to ride high speed passenger trains into and out of Central Station as they celebrate its centennial.

## The Museum's New Shop Building

After many years of waiting, the shop building at the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson / St. Constant has been built! These photos, taken by A.S. Walbridge, show the progress of the work during the spring of 1993. More details about this important project will appear in a subsequent issue of Canadian Rail, but in the meantime we would like to share with all CRHA members these recent photos of the first major construction project at the Museum for a very long time.

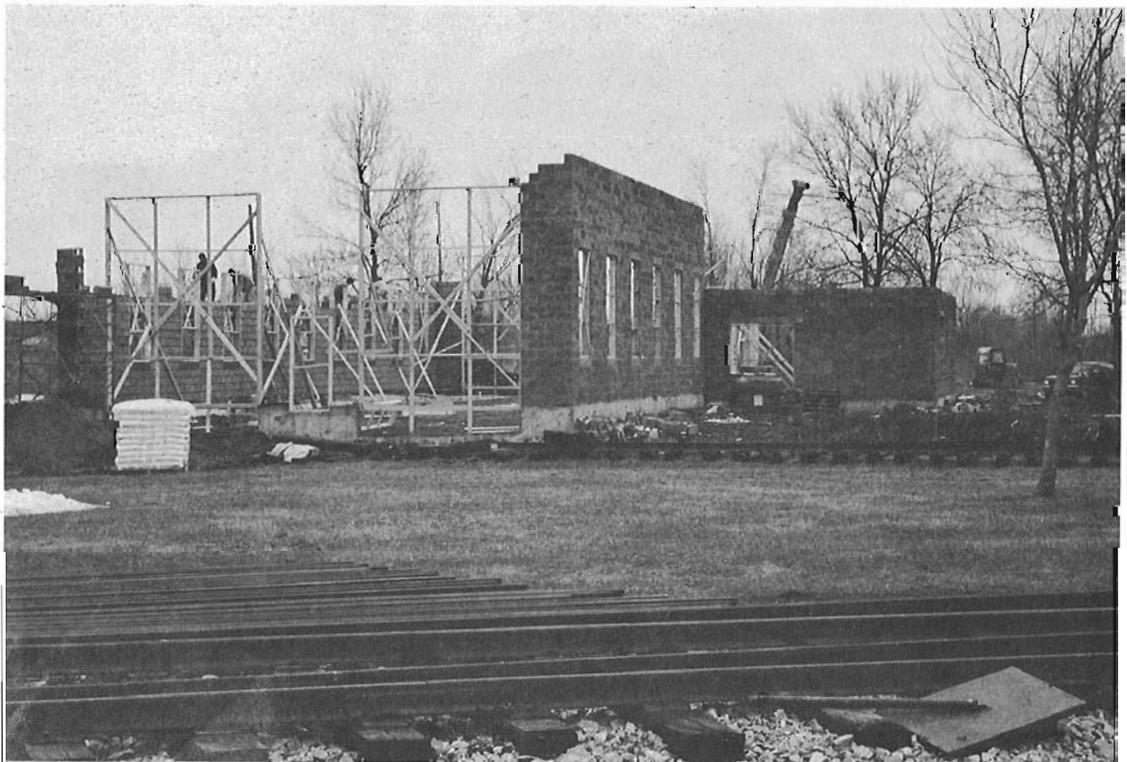


*ABOVE: March 6, 1993. The foundations of the new building are in place.*

*OPPOSITE, TOP: March 13, 1993. The day of the great Blizzard of '93! A somewhat desolate scene, but the foundations are above ground and ready for the construction of the walls.*

*OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: April 13, 1993. What a difference a month makes! Spring is here and the walls are almost completed.*

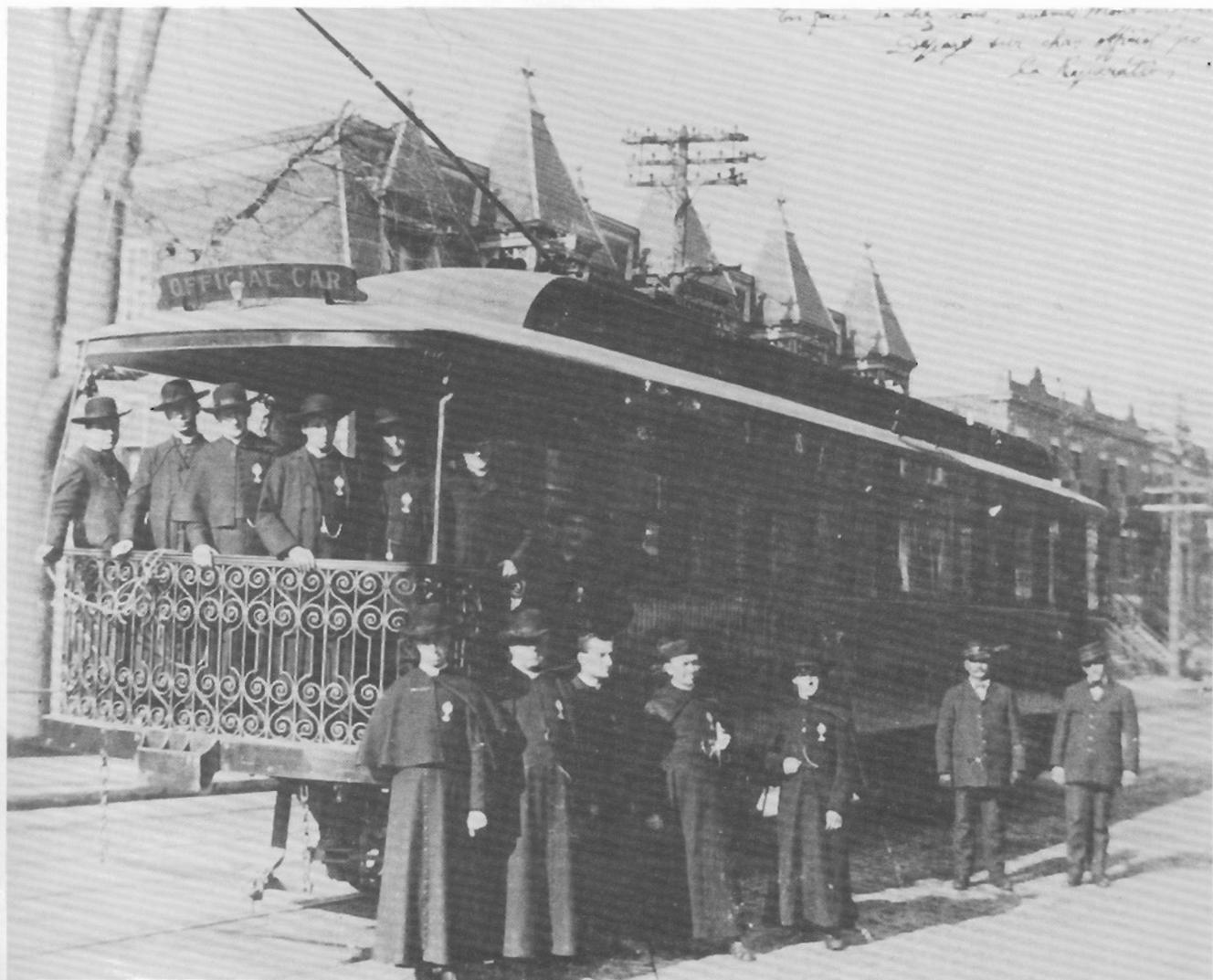
*PAGE 146, TOP: The front view of the completed building, ready for the tracks to be laid.*





*ABOVE: The most recent addition to the preserved equipment at the Canadian Railway Museum is RS18 No. 3684, a gift to the Association from CN North America. This unit has not had any major alterations since it was built in 1957 - 58 and, as such, is an important addition to our collection. This photo was taken by Walter Bedbrook on May 30, 1993, soon after the unit arrived at the Museum.*

## More Photos Relating to Previous Articles



*ABOVE: On page 53 of the March-April 1993 issue of Canadian Rail, in the article on the Montreal Park and Island Railway, we stated that only two partial views were known to exist of the Montreal Tramways Company's official car, originally MP&I car 1024. Our member Jacques Loiselle has brought our attention to this extremely rare photo showing a three-quarter rear view of the entire car. It was taken in 1910 (the year that 1024 was rebuilt as the official car) on Mount Royal Avenue. The occasion was a charter trip by Les Religieux du Tres Saint Sacrement to La Chapelle de la Reparation, situated off the Bout de L'Isle line at the eastern end of the Island of Montreal. The original photo is in the archives of the Order and is printed with their permission, for which we express great appreciation.*

*Les Archives des Religieux du Tres Saint Sacrement.*

*BACK COVER: On page 81 of the May-June issue of Canadian Rail, in the article on the CPR 10-wheelers, mention was made of five similar locomotives built for the Algoma Central. This photo is of one of these locomotives, ACR 104, built in 1912. The photo was taken at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario in June, 1947.*

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