

Just as the role played by the trans-continental railways in welding our nation together is a significant part of our Canadian heritage, no story of Peterborough would be complete without a record of the contribution of the railroads to the growth and development of Central Ontario.

In England, the early 19th century saw the steam locomotive replace the horse on industrial railways. This evolved into railroads for public transportation. By 1830, this new mode of transport was gaining acceptance in America, and Canada's first (steam) railway went into operation in the same decade. Upper Canada remained untouched by the railroad until 1853 when the first line—the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Union Railroad—commenced service between Toronto and Machell's Corners (now Aurora). In the same year, the Grand Trunk Railway started to build its line between Montreal and Toronto (now the CNR main line) while the Great Western Railway was opening up connecting links throughout south-western Ontario, including eventual access to the United States at Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Windsor.

The territory north of Lake Ontario had been largely by-passed but the need for improved transportation had not gone unnoticed. Here was a region, rich in natural resources, with a population rapidly increasing as people moved in to open up the area; and railways could transport goods and people more economically and speedily than the early roads and waterways. To the towns on Lake Ontario, this was a particular opportunity, for they saw themselves as gateways for the hinterland to the north and the markets to the south and the east. Thus, there was immediate interest, both by the lakeshore towns, and the communities to the north, to promote the building of rail lines for their mutual advantage. Just over a century ago Peterborough became a participant in the first railway to be opened in Central Ontario (and the second to give service in Upper Canada).

The pattern of these early lines, many of which remain today as part of either of the Canadian National Railways or the Canadian Pacific Railway, followed one of two courses. If one looks at the railway network of Central Ontario, it will be seen that the earliest routes stretched north as "development roads" from the centres of Whitby, Port Hope, Cobourg, Trenton and Belleville, into the heart of the area; and then subsequent lines crossed the region from west to east to provide "bridge" routes from Lake Huron to the Saint Lawrence, or from Toronto to the Ottawa Valley. It was only a matter of a few years before Peterborough—as a key community in Central Ontario—found itself at the crossroads of several of these routes, with its industry and commerce expanding by virtue of the rail access which it enjoyed.

That Peterborough had a "tangled web" of railroad lines will be evident from the narrative that follows. In the first 40 years—up to 1885—the various lines were continuously struggling to survive and expand at the expense of their rivals. The approach chosen is to follow the story of the individual companies, in succession, for short spans of time—in this way preserving some continuity in their history as well as recording the chronological development of the railway network in Peterborough.

PETERBOROUGH'S FIRST RAILWAY:

The Cobourg & Peterborough, 1834–1866

The initiative in railway construction was taken by Cobourg, due in no small measure to the promotional efforts of two of its residents—William Weller, who owned the Royal Mail Coach Lines, and D'Arcy Boulton, one of the leading citizens. One of the two earliest railway charters in Canada—for the COBOURG RAIL ROAD COMPANY—came into existence on March 6, 1834, with authority to construct a "double or single iron or wooden Rail Road" north to Rice Lake. The province of Upper Canada subscribed one quarter of the total capitalization, or £10,000, to the project; other investors were hard to find and the charter lay dormant until revived in 1846 as the COBOURG AND RICE LAKE PLANK ROAD AND FERRY COMPANY. This 11-mile enterprise was built by Samuel Gore but the plank roadbed was vulnerable to frost, and after the second winter, was abandoned.

This was an omen of the misfortune that was to dog Cobourg's efforts in railway building—but at this point the future looked bright with an expanding economy, and a new form of locomotion to serve it. On November 11, 1852 the COBOURG AND PETERBOROUGH RAILWAY COMPANY was incorporated to build between the two towns.

In laying out the route, both economics and politics took dominant roles—to an extent that sound engineering principles suffered. Port Hope had already chartered a line to pass around the west end of Rice Lake. It would be charitable to think that the selection of an alternative route by Cobourg was made in the spirit of co-operation, but it is more likely that rivalry led Cobourg to choose to cross Rice Lake. Here was the most direct route, which should have resulted in the lowest cost and the earliest completion date; moreover, the roadbed or the original plank road could be followed before turning north to Harwood, where Tic(k) Island provided an anchor point for a trestle across the widest part of the lake to Hiawatha (Picnic Point), and thence to Peterborough.

To build a 30-mile railway in two years, over uncharted terrain, was a challenge; but with the added problem of bridging almost three miles of water, it was a formidable task. The lake conditions were underestimated; for the original plan of a causeway was a bridge which was (at that time) probably the longest on the continent, and one of the longest in the world. From each shore the structure was a pile bridge, changing to truss spans for the approach to the main navigation channel. Here a 120-foot long

swing bridge was constructed high enough that small craft could pass without it being opened—a requirement which resulted in steep inclines on either side. This left much to be desired from both the engineering and operating viewpoints. Apart from the difficulties, the lake bottom was black mud; the water depth varied from 14 to 36 feet, and during the year the level changed by 6½ feet.

There was no lack of backing by the Cobourg citizens who initially subscribed £125,000; Samuel Zimmerman was chosen as the contractor, and the first sod turned on February 9, 1853 at the corner of University Avenue and Railroad (Spring) Street. Cobourg subscribed £125,000 of common stock within a few months. Hand construction prevailed, with labourers hired at a dollar a day, many of them being recent German immigrants. The line north to Rice Lake followed the course of the Cobourg brook northeasterly from the town. The damp terrain contributed to an outbreak of cholera and fever among the construction crews in 1854, resulting in many deaths. Nevertheless, these first 15 miles were open for traffic on May 19. An excursion on May 24th marked the first haulage of passengers. The Peterborough Fire Brigade joined their associates at Cobourg, travelling by boat to and from Harwood. Ironically, the editor of the PETERBOROUGH REVIEW commented *One of the proudest days that the sister towns of Cobourg and Peterborough have ever seen . . . will be long remembered with pleasurable feelings by the people of these embryo cities.*

Work on the Rice Lake bridge commenced in 1853 and was largely completed that year. Prudently the contractors waited to see how it withstood the test of winter ice; and some of their worst fears were realized. Accordingly, the next year efforts were made both to repair damage and strengthen the structure; and by November 15, 1854 the bridge was completed, and trains operated from Cobourg to Indian Village (Hiawatha) where Fisher's Stage provided a connection to Peterborough.

On December 8 the first (construction) train reached Ashburnham, where extensive terminal facilities were set up in the area south from Elizabeth (Hunter) Street to Robinson Street. Peterborough was exuberant, and the REVIEW commented that *thanks to the energy and public spirit of Cobourg, we shall no longer be compelled to spend a whole day in travelling 27 miles.*

December 29 marked the opening of the line in which Peterborough invited the leading Cobourg citizens to be guests. These dignitaries seized the opportunity to make it a public occasion, and re-issued the invitation to all citizens, with the result that some 1,000 people made the free trip—except for one young gentleman who distrusted “the cars” and preferred to travel the 35 miles on foot to arrive on time!

Leaving Cobourg at 10.30 a.m. the 12-car train, hauled by two powerful locomotives, proceeded northward at the “terrific speed” of 15 mph. and arrived in Ashburnham at 12.15. Mayor James Stevenson delivered an address of welcome and then the chief citizens of both towns, some 200 in all,

dined at the town hall. Again, notes of ironic prophecy prevailed. It was remarked that almost one quarter of all the government loans to encourage railway construction had been made to the two communities of Cobourg and Port Hope, who had together spent some \$2 million; but it was indeed fortunate for both that the Port Hope Railway was not planned to go through Peterborough! Zimmerman, the contractor, expanded upon the financial difficulties of the line, and exhorted Peterborough now to play its part in assisting a venture which had been solely financed by Cobourg. William Weller remarked, "Cobourg is not at all selfish and is quite willing that Peterborough should go snacks in the expenses as well as in the profits, so that the partnership will not be like the handle of a jug—all on one side!"

Since the festivities lasted until two o'clock on the following morning, a return trip was not scheduled until 2 p.m. when brethren of the two communities parted on what was probably the happiest note that was to exist between them during the railroad's existence.

The hard facts of continued operation had to be faced. On January 1, 1855 an ice jam pushed the bridge towards the east; the truss span adjacent to Tic(k) Island slid four feet up on its abutment, while the pile bridge to the south opened a gap of seven feet, with splintered 12- by 18-foot stringers, and rails bent double, testifying to the forces of nature. The original plan for a causeway was revived, and working from both shores, the pile bridges were partially filled as solid embankments, while two artificial islands were created as "anchor points" closer to the main channel. By April 2, 1855 the line was again open to Peterborough. New locomotives and rolling stock were purchased, traffic began to open up and it appeared the railway's initial difficulties were at an end.

Contractor Zimmerman still had possession of the railroad. In 1854, he refused to turn it over to the owners, claiming that it was still unfinished; and actually nothing could have been closer to the truth! In reality, Zimmerman was anxious to obtain every cent possible on the project which he had undertaken to complete in three years. In the fall of 1855, after much heated discussion, he turned the half-finished line over to the directors. While they had obtained control, they also had to spend money rectifying hasty and incompetent construction in order to bring the railroad up to some reasonable standard. D'Arcy Boulton, previously Managing Director, now became lessee and a new era appeared to be dawning. The railroad had experienced a good summer—July of 1855 had seen the passage of 1,918 passengers, 5,396 tons of freight and 136½ cords of wood. Moreover, the bridge survived the 1855-56 winter, without the Company missing a single trip, but Mr. Boulton cautioned that more money had to be spent. They had only three locomotives, and "this fearful, dreadful bridge" to cross, but an estimated £20,000, if divided between Peterborough and Otonabee, would see an end to most of the troubles.

the PETERBOROUGH AND CHEMONG LAKE RAILWAY, to be operated as an

However, a counter proposition was offered to the Cobourg investors—

extension north from Ashburnham along the Otonabee River. In return for "advancing" this project, Peterborough expected that the c&p would then lease the railroad—but nevertheless considered it their contribution to the assistance of Cobourg!

That Peterborough benefited from the railway is undeniable. In the years 1855 and onwards, Peterborough's exports exceeded her imports by at least \$500,000 a year, and even this with the railroad not fully operational the year round. Lumber, flour, wheat, wool, potash and lath were shipped south in ever increasing quantities, without one cent being invested in the Cobourg project.

The bridge was again damaged during the winter of 1856–57, and in the latter year bankruptcy was forced upon the road by high operating costs principally as a result of the bridge. The bond-holders foreclosed, but in 1858 they were successful in having an Enabling Act passed which permitted them to take control following the expiry of the Boulton lease in July, 1859. But their problems were gaining the upper hand. In the winter of 1859–60 the bridge was again damaged, and a final attempt was made to rehabilitate it by leasing the line to Covert and Fowler in January, 1860, with the stipulation that a causeway be built from shore to shore. When the Prince of Wales visited the area in the autumn of 1860, he was not permitted to cross Rice Lake on the trestle, because of its unsafe nature, and Cobourg was humiliated by the failure of its railroad. This year marked the last that the railroad had full operation of the entire line, because the winter of 1860–61 again damaged the bridge so severely that there is no record of its being reopened. The following winter, parts of the bridge floated away down Rice Lake—rumour has it that its departure was hastened by agents of the rival railway from Port Hope who had been hired to sabotage it.

The northern portion of the line, cut off from its originating terminus, was closed about 1861 and connections to Cobourg were provided by steamer down the Otonabee to connect with the railway at Harwood.

The railway did not give up. The second Enabling Act of June 9, 1862 provided money that saved Cobourg from complete bankruptcy; and in 1863 a further effort was made to revive the line which met with defeat when the bridge was seen to be too expensive. Nevertheless, the southern part of the line was active; on May 28, 1865 service to Peterborough was reopened with regular service by Calcutt's boat line; and in the same year, authority was received to sell the line and amalgamate it with the Marmora Iron Mines. J. H. Dumble, the new Managing Director, sought to rehabilitate the operation by purchasing the mines, filling in the balance of the Rice Lake bridge, and building a new railway from the north end of Rice Lake to Blairton where the mines were located. In the matter of the bridge, he was forced to admit defeat; but a new era was opening up for the c&p.

While the problems with the Rice Lake trestle were perhaps the major factor in the railway's economic and operating instability in these early years, other forces were at work; and since these were to prove of greater benefit to Peterborough, it is fitting that we should glance back at them.

RAILS TO NASSAU: The Peterborough & Chemong Lake 1852-1866
The original promoters of the COBOURG AND PETERBOROUGH saw merit in extending northwards to tap the waterways above Peterborough. The charter provided for a line to Chemong Lake, but the authority expired in 1854 because of non-usage. On May 30, 1855 the proposal was revised with the incorporation of the Peterborough and Chemong Lake Railway, to build either a rail or a plank road into the area for timber traffic from the many sawmills. While the incorporators were from Cobourg, promises of assistance to the new Company had been forthcoming from Peterborough; nevertheless, the line remained a direct subsidiary of the C&P and another liability to the Cobourg residents.

On July 6, 1859 the line was open to Perry's Mills (Nassau), to make contact with one of the principal industries in the area. The route continued up the east side of the Otonabee River from the Ashburnham station, presumably with intentions of crossing the river at Nassau for Chemong Lake. But the poor finances of the parent road, to say nothing of the purses of the folk of Cobourg, gave little opportunity to proceed with it. Despite some erroneous references to the fact that the line was open to Chemong Lake in 1861 (more likely a distortion of the fact that it was open to Nassau!), it was stalemated until the PORT HOPE, LINDSAY & BEAVERTON RAILWAY showed interest in using or acquiring the line to further its northward expansion. The P&CL, backed by the Cobourg interests, quite naturally opposed the suggestion; but by 1865 the PHL&B is reported to have gained stock control. The charter expired in 1865 or 1866, and the race for possession was on.

The PHL&B tried to connect with the line by crossing the river at Dickson's Dam; when this was unsuccessful, the courts were asked to decide. By an act of 1866 the companies were directed to use the line jointly and the line could be sold at public auction.

In the re-organization of 1866 the C&P re-asserted its ownership and revived the charter to give a new lease on life.

RAILS FROM PORT HOPE:

The Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton, 1846-1868

If Cobourg was eager to enter the railway field, certainly Port Hope was enthusiastic; and while initially out-distanced by the energies of its rival seven miles to the east, the latter community perhaps had the opportunity to enter the game with a little more caution. Not that they had wanted to be first; when the COBOURG AND RICE LAKE PLANK ROAD AND FERRY COMPANY was incorporated in 1846, the citizens of Port Hope countered by chartering the PETERBOROUGH AND PORT HOPE RAILWAY on December 26 of that year. Rather because Rice Lake did not stand in their direct path of communication, they chose a route through Bewdley which (while faced with severe grades up the escarpment) did not have to make the passage over open water.

Had the project gone ahead, in the estimated construction time of two

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years, this would have been the first railway in Upper Canada. But the citizens of Port Hope chose to wait; there were other developments going on around them which bore watching. Certainly the Plank Road was not going to be a competitor. The placing of contracts for the Montreal-Toronto section of the Grand Trunk Railway, in 1853, signalled the revival of the charter and on December 18, 1854 it was reincorporated as the PORT HOPE, LINDSAY AND BEAVERTON RAILWAY COMPANY. Cobourg had chosen Peterborough; Port Hope felt that its fortunes could be better served by Lindsay, over a route that climbed northwards to pass through Millbrook and Omemee. Beyond lay Beaverton, on the waterway of Lake Simcoe; Orillia, with intersecting north-south land routes; and finally Georgian Bay—to say nothing of the rich natural resources to be tapped en route. As for Peterborough—it could easily be brought into the fold when it saw the advantages of the new line, without being on its main route; it could well form the basis of expansion to the north east.

Early capitalization was so successful that immediate extension of the line to at least Orillia looked feasible. But with the experiences of their neighbour being so much in the public eye, Port Hope proceeded cautiously; the contract for the Port Hope-Lindsay section was placed with Tate and Fowler, two local contractors. The section was built steadily with steel reaching Reabro in December, 1856 and just outside Lindsay in August, 1857 (where trains unloaded freight at Cunningham's Corners). A station was constructed near the foot of St. Paul Street, on the east side of the Scugog, and the first train, hauled by the engine "*Lindsay*", arrived in its namesake town on October 16. Official opening for traffic is reported as December 30, 1857, although newspaper advertisements indicate that regular service was available from December 15, with one trip each direction daily except Sunday. Up to this point, the citizens of Peterborough had remained somewhat aloof from the project, and well they might—the COBOURG AND PETERBOROUGH was serving them reasonably well with no investment on their part. But every month brought more uncertainties into the picture, and the Port Hope promoters quickly moved to bring Peterborough into their fold, on terms they would establish. In March 1857, the PHL&B was leased to the contractors with the agreement that they would construct a branch into Peterborough. Started as the PETERBOROUGH BRANCH RAILWAY, but referred to in the promotions as the "PETERBOROUGH AND PORT HOPE RAILWAY", the 13-mile connection was commenced in the fall, and on May 12, 1858 the first train operated from Millbrook to Peterborough. The latter community had seen the handwriting on the wall, and when John Fowler (one of the lessees) contributed £10,000 to the project, and Port Hope likewise, Peterborough backed the new connection with £30,000 obtained from the Municipal Loan Fund.

Following the example of their Cobourg brethren, the citizens of Port Hope celebrated the formal opening with a special train on May 20. Officials of the Town Council, the Harbour Commissioners and the Railway Board

left Port Hope at 7.30 a.m., reaching Millbrook in a little less than one hour, where they waited to rendezvous with the Mayor and Town Council of Peterborough. The whole group then made a triumphant entry into the town, followed by luncheon, toasts and general wellwishing on the success of this mutual venture. Accompanied by the Peterborough Rifle Company and the Brass Band, the Port Hope visitors departed at 4.00 p.m., arriving at Port Hope two and a half hours later.

On May 24, a free excursion train ran from Port Hope to Peterborough with two engines and 30 cars carrying some 3,000 passengers. This event was reciprocated on May 31 by a similar excursion for Peterburians; 15 cars left at 9 a.m., to be joined at Millbrook by a section from Lindsay junction, so that the train totalled 33 cars on arrival in Port Hope. The Peterborough officials were feted at a luncheon before returning at 5.00 p.m. The words of the reporter of this occasion show how enraptured Peterborough was with the new project, having turned its back on Cobourg:

... be established how powerful are the prejudices of the people towards a land route with easy grades and well-appointed rolling stock. It was hypocrisy in us to deny that we make a comparison . . . with the Cobourg road, and it were also hypocrisy if we refuse to acknowledge the great disparity between the two roads, but not withstanding . . . depreciating a fallen friend, we must declare that the Port Hope road stands alone in the demand upon the confidence of the people of Peterborough. For both Port Hope and Peterborough, it was a happy union. The traffic that had been built up by the C&P was now moved on the new branch, just a little more than three years since those happy celebrations with Cobourg. Not only did Peterborough have a financial stake in the railway business, but the new line had every prospect of being reliable, whereas the C&P was becoming less so. Nor was their trust misplaced; the line continued to work on a most satisfactory operating ratio, and for many years to come, returned a handsome dividend to its owners.

On Monday, June 7, 1858 the "PORT HOPE AND PETERBOROUGH RAILWAY" was officially opened for regular traffic with one train in each direction daily. That Peterborough was rapidly establishing itself as an important centre can be seen from the timetables less than three months later, when there was only one train in each direction daily to Lindsay, but two to and from Peterborough. By the time the winter season drew around, the promoters lost no time in advertising the new line as

the reliable route to Peterborough

rubbing more salt in the wounds of the ailing Cobourg line.

The Company entrenched themselves in the very heart of Peterborough, securing a large tract of land bounded by Charlotte, Bethune, Sherbrooke and Aylmer Streets. A new station was erected, and extensive yard facilities installed to handle the anticipated business. Peterborough's traffic secured,

6 the next move was to thwart any expansion by the P&CL-C&P interests, while establishing a foothold for future expansion to either Bobcaygeon or Bancroft. These two objectives could be realized by continuing north to Lakefield, and the PHL&B made overtures to use or purchase PC&L's short line to Perry's Mills. When opposition mounted, the Port Hope Company went quietly to work to gain stock control; and when the charter expired in 1865-66, the road built a spur up the west side of the Otonabee with the intention of crossing the river at Dickson's dam to connect. When this was blocked, Parliament was asked to render a decision, which (in 1866) found in favour of the PHL&B by stipulating either Company could use the line; and that the road could be sold at public auction. The PHL&B bided its time; but the C&P had no intention of releasing its hold on the line. It revived the P&CL charter by purchasing the line in December 1866; so the Port Hope Company acted to use that portion of the trackage that it needed. On June 1, 1868, work commenced on the new extension by crossing the river at Auburn, thence over the P&CL roadbed to Nassau. The line was opened throughout to Lakefield on December 29.

A SYSTEM TAKES SHAPE: The Midland Railway 1869-1881

With their financial expectations amply fulfilled in the early years, and with a branch to the north-east secured, the PHL&B directors did not lose sight of their original aim—to reach Georgian Bay. Authority was received to extend first to Lake Simcoe, and subsequently to their goal; and in recognition the name of the company was changed to THE MIDLAND RAILWAY OF CANADA—and it was affectionately known as the “*Midland*” for many years to come. Beaverton was reached in 1871, Orillia in 1873, Waubauskene in 1878 and Midland in 1879.

During these years extension beyond Lakefield was not forgotten. The original shareholders, Henry Covert and the Boulton Bros. (of Cobourg!) had turned over the reins to Adolph Hugel of Pittsburgh. On March 2, 1872, Boulton and Hugel received a charter for the OMEMEE, BOBCAYGEON, AND NORTH PETERBOROUGH JUNCTION RAILWAY COMPANY to build northward by alternative routes to connect with other railroads. By 1874 the name of the Company was abbreviated to the MIDLAND EXTENSION RAILWAY; but financing was not forthcoming and the promoters curtailed their enthusiasm for an extension to Bobcaygeon only—and even this was not to be. These years were not without troubles. The market for Canadian lumber was curtailed sharply during the years 1872-1874; and it was only through Hugel's energies that the Midland survived. With economies in operation (which continued to return a respectable profit to the shareholders), his personal guarantees to raise money to continue the capital improvements, and maintenance of the existing line, he was able to hold the railroad together. In June, 1874 he adopted what is now the standard gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in, to promote interchange traffic with other roads. But by 1878 his resources, both physical and financial, were at an end, and in August

he was succeeded by George A. Cox, seven times Mayor of Peterborough, who had been a director of the Company for the previous three years.

It was in this period that the present (C.N.R.) station was erected. The original PHL&B station had burned down in 1877, but by August of that year the ruins were being cleared away and plans for a new structure drawn up. Headquarters of the MIDLAND were to be in Peterborough, so ample accommodation for offices was provided in the building, which was opened on November 22, 1878. Cox briskly went to work to consolidate the MIDLAND as a small system by a series of mergers which he astutely engineered—preparing the way for the company's eventual absorption by another railroad. The MIDLAND was surrounded by connecting railways—competitive to a degree, and useful to an extent. These were absorbed in 1881 as follows:

THE TORONTO & NIPISSING RAILWAY with a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge was opened from Toronto to Coboconk (86 miles) in 1871 through 1878, with a branch to Jackson's Point (27 miles) opened in 1877. This route gave access to Toronto from the crossing with the MIDLAND at Lorneville.

THE WHITBY, PORT PERRY & LINDSAY, which was opened from Whitby to Lindsay (46 miles) in 1871 and 1876, with direct access to a Lake Ontario port.

THE VICTORIA RAILWAY with 55 miles north from Lindsay to Haliburton, was opened in 1878.

THE MEDONTE TRAMWAY, was a short lumbering branch from Medonte (between Waubashene and Orillia) to Knights Mills.

THE TORONTO & OTTAWA RAILWAY—A charter was acquired which was useful for building system extensions.

The sixth road to come under Cox's control was actually the first to be acquired—Peterborough's pride, the GRAND JUNCTION RAILWAY—and we digress to review its history.

BELLEVILLE JOINS THE NETWORK: The Grand Junction 1852–1881
Many years previously the nucleus of yet another railroad had been born. With perhaps more salesmanship than foresight, one William Jackson, M.P., had indicated the advantages of a "loop line" extending from the eastern end of Lake Ontario, arching through the central counties and returning back to the lake at Toronto. On November 10, 1852 the citizens of Peterborough, Belleville and Cobourg had together incorporated the GRAND JUNCTION RAILROAD COMPANY to build such a line—even before the ill-fated Cobourg and Peterborough had commenced construction. Initially, financing was difficult; but there was promise from the GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY that their plans included just such a line from Belleville to Toronto, and the promoters rested. For those who survived it was a long wait, for it was not until May 12, 1870 that the charter was revived and the name changed to the GRAND JUNCTION RAILWAY COMPANY, under the sponsorship of the GRAND TRUNK. The proposal took a slightly different form; the "loop line" concept was abandoned, and the railway was now to extend

from Belleville to Peterborough, with the authority to extend to Georgian Bay, in competition with the Midland. All of the counties, townships and communities affected were involved in the financing, particularly with the promise to reach Lake Huron and (yet another) branch from Peterborough to Bobcaygeon. Even some Cobourg promoters came forward, probably with hopes of a better return than on their previous endeavours.

The investors were canny; while money was subscribed, there was perhaps more to be realized in promises if the railroad came up to expectations. Belleville and Peterborough promised to find \$235,000 if the line continued beyond Peterborough; and in the Peterborough by-law of April, 1873, which conferred a grant of \$75,000 on the railway, it was stipulated that one third of this would be paid when the grading was completed, and the remainder when the line was open for traffic. These grants were conditional upon the railway crossing the Trent River at Hastings, and continuing through the county by way of Allendale and Keene.

Everyone was becoming more cautious; and realizing the foolishness of competing with the Midland, the project was defined as being from Belleville to Lindsay only, with a branch to Bobcaygeon. The progress was slow; while 33 miles had been graded between Belleville and Campbellford by January 1, 1875, only 25 miles of rails had been laid—and even these were second-hand and useless. A fresh appeal for funds in the following year succeeded, and on January 1, 1880 the first train reached the outskirts of Peterborough (at Downer's Corners), temporarily blocked from access to the town centre.

This problem was soon resolved by the lease of the entire road bed of the old Cobourg and Peterborough from Rice Lake to Ashburnham. Not that it was useful in its entirety—no attempt was ever made to resurrect the portion to the south—but it did provide access to Ashburnham. On October 17 the first GRAND JUNCTION RAILWAY train arrived in the old Ashburnham Station—but still across the river from Peterborough.

In the same year the GRAND JUNCTION expanded its system by acquiring a 21-mile branch from Madoc Junction to the mines at Eldorado, chartered as the BELLEVILLE & NORTH HASTINGS RAILWAY and opened on January 1, 1880.

The Midland Railway was quick to see both the threat and the advantages, of the GJR's entry into Peterborough. With typical astuteness, Cox moved to force their hand by taking possession of the disputed section of line north of Elizabeth (Hunter) Street. Ostensibly this belonged to the PETERBOROUGH & CHEMONG LAKE because it was a part of their original line to Nassau; moreover, the P&CL charter, revived in 1866 (and still backed by Cobourg) had led them to utilize a portion of it to reach their new "Black Bridge" spanning the Otonabee above the Goose Pond, heading for Chemong.

The dispute was prolonged just long enough until the GJR passed under Cox's control in the middle of 1881—and integration of his new acquisition became desirable. On June 21 the first GJR train operated from Ashburnham,

over the bridge, and then backed down a new connection (onto the Lakefield branch just north of Parkhill Road) to reach the Bethune Street station.

When the bridge was closed in 1882, GJR trains apparently operated north (on the east shore) on the original P&CL roadbed—for the first time in 15 years—to connect with the Lakefield branch at Auburn, and thence across the river and into Peterborough—until Cox had time to complete plans for a new entry into the city from the south.

THE MIDLAND CONSOLIDATES: Midland Railway 1881–1884

In the mergers of 1880–1881, Cox had expanded a 140-mile trunk line into a 452-mile system, probing Central Ontario in all directions from Midland to Belleville. In addition to the main route between these two points—from north-west to south-east—he had a “loop line” (from Belleville) via Lindsay to Toronto; and several distinct north-south branches either tapping the hinterland or connecting to Lake Ontario. Only the C&P remained outside the fold, and this was of little concern.

With the TORONTO & NIPISSING converted to standard gauge, the MIDLAND operated the first train “direct” to Toronto from Peterborough—via Millbrook, Omemee, Lindsay, Lorneville and Blackwater—on December 15, 1881. The MIDLAND could extend only in one other direction—east—and Cox’s efforts here were partially realized. But it is necessary to go back a few years, to 1870. Peterborough was not content with its connection to Port Hope and Cobourg, nor even the planned route to Belleville—it saw itself as part of a trans-provincial route lying between the lines along the shore of Lake Ontario (on the south) and the transcontinental routes (far to the north). The possibility looked promising with the chartering of the ONTARIO & QUEBEC RAILWAY in 1871 to build from Toronto to Ottawa, and the HURON & QUEBEC, in 1874, to extend from Goderich to connect with the former at Peterborough.

The GRAND TRUNK, and the MIDLAND, were both interested in these proposals. Traffic in Western Ontario was largely secure on the lines of the GTR; the Midland needed an extension to the east; and competing interests had their eyes on the eastern charter. In 1877, by a cunning manoeuvre, the HURON & QUEBEC was reincorporated as the TORONTO & OTTAWA RAILWAY—relinquishing its interest in the west and setting up a parallel route to compete with the ONTARIO & QUEBEC. Peterborough eagerly contributed to surveys for this new undertaking.

In the mergers of 1881, Cox (encouraged by the GTR) took over the TORONTO & OTTAWA; and its eventual role was to permit the construction of four short sections which effectively exploited and integrated the MIDLAND system.

In the east, a step at extension was made by building from Bridgewater (Madoc) to Actinolite; in the west a “short cut” was constructed between Manilla and Wick Junction (Blackwater) to provide a more direct route

to Toronto, by-passing Lorneville. The other two sections adjoined Peterborough.

At the south end of the town a new line was constructed across the Otonabee to meet the Millbrook branch a few blocks south of the Bethune Street station. The present steel bridge was constructed in 1887-1888 (using the first application of power riveting in Canada) and opened on July 4, 1888; no longer did Belleville travellers have to approach the city in circuitous fashion.

Traffic to Toronto was equally important—Lorneville had been bypassed, and only the detour to Millbrook remained. After surveying from March, 1881, construction commenced in 1882 on the "Missing Link," branching off the Lakefield line at Brock Street and out through Jackson Park to meet the "old road" of 1857 at Omemee (West). Notable engineering feats were the trestles to bridge gullies at Doube's (1500 ft. long, 70 ft. high) and at Tully's (700 ft. long, 40 ft. high); the former remains, although the latter has been replaced by an embankment. In the swamp west of Peterborough, the "sink hole" had a prodigious appetite—trees, logs, stones and gravel disappeared the morning after they were dumped in. Even after the rails were laid, a train of cars left out on the new roadbed during construction vanished overnight and was never recovered!

Bridges and trestles were completed by June 1, 1883; and the first train passed over the new line on November 23rd—five days after the adoption of standard time in Canada. On January 1, 1884 the road was opened for revenue service. This date also marked the end of the MIDLAND as a company. It had always maintained friendly associations with the GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY, principally because they inter-connected but did not compete. In fact, there is no doubt that Cox was working more and more as an intermediary of the GTR in his short term of office, to allow the MIDLAND to swallow up its competition and then, in turn, pass under control of the GRAND TRUNK as the "silent partner". This took place on September 22, 1883 and on New Year's Day the GTR took over the system, which still retained its separate identity—as the "Midland Division"—for some years to come.

His task accomplished, Cox retired from the railway field—to go on to greater things. After significant contributions to Peterborough's development, he moved to Toronto in 1896 where he became a senator, the President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, and director of more than 20 other financial institutions, before his death in 1914.

COBOURG FORSAKES PETERBOROUGH:

The Cobourg & Peterborough 1866-1916

It will be remembered that, in 1865, the ailing COBOURG & PETERBOROUGH had received authority to amalgamate with the Marmora Mining Company, and generally to re-organize its affairs. Accordingly, on August 15, 1866 the COBOURG PETERBOROUGH & MARMORA RAILWAY & MINING COMPANY WAS

incorporated. To the citizens of Cobourg, who had already invested more than \$1,000,000 in the almost derelict original road, this looked like a godsend with prospect of new revenue.

The new company first took steps to revive the PETERBOROUGH & CHEMONG LAKE Charter, and purchased the "new" line in December, 1866. To further its construction, financing was proposed in 1867 to re-open the abandoned Rice Lake trestle and the Hiawatha-Ashburnham section. This plan waxed and waned several times in the next 15 years, without any visible progress. Debentures were issued in 1869, and by 1871 the road was confident the bridge would be re-opened by 1874; so much so that authority for extensions to Fenelon Falls and Parry Sound were secured in 1871-72. More debentures were issued in 1874-75, and a subsidy obtained in 1875-76. But in 1877 the debenture owners foreclosed and the company was re-organized again—the only apparent result being the institution of regular through service to Peterborough by boat from Harwood in 1878.

Finally an opportunity came in 1880 to lease the Rice Lake-Ashburnham section (but not the bridge) to the GRAND JUNCTION RAILWAY seeking an entrance into Peterborough. There was little hesitation on the part of Cobourg—and while the GJR only used the route from Downer's Corners northwards, and left the balance to rot, it effectively severed Cobourg's connections with Peterborough by rail.

However, this was but a lesser part of the new company's activities. The new alliance to the east led them to build an 8½-mile railway from the village of Trent River northeasterly to the Marmora Iron Mines at Blairton, on Crowe Lake, during the summer of 1867. The first shipments of ore were brought out that autumn, being trans-shipped by barge between Trent River and Harwood, thence on the rehabilitated southern portion of the old railway to Cobourg.

The company had sought other diversification—in addition to mineral prospecting, it owned a lumber mill on the north shore of Rice Lake and built spurs to two sawmills near Baltimore. Traffic improved, but not enough to satisfy the shareholders. American capitalists from Pittsburgh (interested in the mines) played a hand in the refinancing of 1874-75 but their hopes were short lived. The last heavy mine shipments were in 1878; thereafter, new deposits of ore were not located, and no traffic moved over the Blairton branch in 1879 to 1881. In 1882 the stockpile was moved out, with the steamer "*Isaac Butts*" making its last revenue trip from Trent River to Harwood on July 22. In 1883 the branch was closed from the CPR crossing to Trent River.

The CP&MR&M had not been earning sufficient revenue to pay its bondholders, let alone invest in new equipment or carry out necessary maintenance. It sought its third (and last) lease on life in 1885 with a reorganization which formally dropped its former interests in the section from Rice Lake to Peterborough (closed since the bridge had gone, and the line leased), and in the route to Chemong (abandoned). The bondholders

2 stepped in to recoup what they could—a paltry \$30,200 for the entire assets, realized by sale at auction to T. P. Pearse, acting for the GRAND TRUNK.

In June, 1887 a new entity, the COBOURG, BLAIRTON & MARMORA RAILWAY & MINING COMPANY, took over the property but was not reactivated. Part of the Blairton branch (closed four years previously) was removed in that year; but Cobourg still had faith in its railway, to the extent of receiving authority to issue new debentures in 1889.

It profited them little; by 1890 the road appeared as GRAND TRUNK controlled, and disappeared into that system in the 1893 amalgamation. The remainder of the Blairton branch was lifted; and the Cobourg-Harwood section was used for the storage of old box cars. Five miles of these furnished a convenient home for hundreds of vagrants, whose living habits annoyed the residents of the area immensely. Hence it was with a sense of relief that they saw the line closed (variously reported as 1895 or 1898), but the Cobourg citizens had not lost hope. Could the GRAND TRUNK not consider operating it for the convenience of hunters, fishermen and picnickers? Representing over a million dollars investment, could not its remnants be preserved as a museum piece?

Perhaps—in sympathy—the GTR let the 15 miles of rail sit and rot. Even this stimulated discussion—in 1907—of rebuilding the Rice Lake bridge and again reaching Peterborough. But World War I ended their ambitions on a patriotic note when the rails were lifted and in 1916 sent overseas to be used in army service. Somewhere in France these remnants of Cobourg's dream may still lie, writing finis to over 60 years of ill-fated service.

ACROSS THE OTONABEE TO CHEMONG:

The Peterborough & Chemong Lake 1866–1902

The P&CL charter had been revived by the re-organized CP&MR&M and the “old” line (re)-purchased by the “new” company in December, 1866.

Progress in the original direction—north to Nassau—was effectively blocked by the action of the MIDLAND with their branch to Lakefield. While the P&CL was authorized to operate over the line, it is doubtful whether they could have done so since the MIDLAND had usurped the right of way with its new trackage.

Still retaining the roadbed south of Auburn through Ashburnham, the P&CL struck off for Chemong in a new direction—by spanning the Otonabee (north of the Goose Pond) by the “Black Bridge”, constructed in 1867–1871. This structure ran north-westerly from the river's east bank and crossed over the MIDLAND's line to Lakefield (on the Peterborough shore) seeking the most favourable grade up the hills bordering the town before heading for Chemong.

It was a good start; and the parent CP&MR&M company's plans to revive the connection to Cobourg boded well. In 1875 \$150,000 was estimated to complete the rough graded line, but no financing was forthcoming; in June 1879 it was recorded that \$18,740 had been spent on construction, but the road had never operated.

When the GRAND JUNCTION acquired the northern portion of the CP&MR&M line to enter Ashburnham in 1880, the P&CL came briefly into the limelight. Cox of the MIDLAND took possession of the 1859 roadbed north of Elizabeth Street in September, 1880. The P&CL disputed this based on its own rights as did the GJR as lessees of the C&P line, and Cobourg had to back both protests! Legal or not, Cox's move was successful in holding off the GJR till he acquired it the following year—and then the GJR (under Cox's control) exercised their prerogative (by Lease) to operate over the "Black Bridge" to reach the Peterborough side. Ironically, another company was the first (and only one) to cross the Otonabee on the Chemong Lake project!

On October 12, 1882 the bridge was closed—probably by action of the P&CL who had lost heart. Cox was unconcerned, and apparently moved the GJR trains northward over the 1859 roadbed to Auburn to connect with the Lakefield line, until such time as the new Locks Bridge (in the south end) was opened.

The P&CL had failed again—after use and abuse by others—but it was yet to reach Chemong, having the distinction of being the last to open service.

After being disowned by Cobourg (in the C&P reorganization of 1885 the line was considered "closed"!) the P&CL suddenly burst to life by a new charter—but the same name—of March 23, 1888 whose sponsor was none other than Joseph Hickson, the able and adroit executive officer who had engineered the growth of the GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY for 15 years. The charter stipulated that the GTR was to have full running rights over the railroad (through the connection north of Parkhill Road joining the Lakefield branch) and the line was completed within a year.

In June 17, 1889 the line to Chemong was announced open—by the GTR—some 35 years after it was first conceived. But its original purpose was vanishing—much of the lumber had been moved out. Nevertheless there was passenger (excursion) traffic to Chemong which warranted opening it each May, but by 1896 even this did not support its keep. On June 20th it was announced that a horse livery had taken over passenger service; and while freight trains may have operated spasmodically, the upper 5¼ miles of track were abandoned in 1899, with the remaining three disappearing in 1902.

The GRAND TRUNK had absorbed the road in its amalgamation of short lines in 1893, and this was one of its earliest "prunings" of unprofitable branches.

THE LAST CONTENDER: The Canadian Pacific—1884

The history of the rivalry between the ONTARIO & QUEBEC and the TORONTO & OTTAWA has been recounted. While the T&O had to all intents, the head-start in the race, it was the ONTARIO & QUEBEC who won out when George Cox curtailed his ambitions (probably at the suggestion of the GRAND TRUNK).

The O&Q finally found a supporter in the CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY, in

1883 and construction speedily advanced. Because of the prior claims of the T&O, the route was forced to "wander" slightly in its passage east; but during 1882-83 the steel bridge was put across the Otonabee and the first train reached Norwood on November 28 of the latter year.

The first train over the route from Toronto to Ottawa operated in May 8, 1884, and the line was opened to passenger traffic on June 28.

Quietly, the seventh and last railway had entered Peterborough—but it was the first to be built as a "through" road. While providing the most direct route to Toronto, it also was the sole main line of the CPR between Montreal and Toronto until the Lakeshore route was opened, as an alternate, exactly 30 years later.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: The Railways 1900-1967

The last 60 years has seen many changes in Peterborough's railways. Although not characterized by the fever of construction and expansion of the 19th century, the transformation has been tailored to the hard economics of competition from new forms of transport—bus, private automobile, truck, aeroplane and pipe-line—while modernizing and providing new services through technological change.

Of the railway "ring" around Peterborough, the C&P line (to the south) and the P&CL line (to the north-west) had vanished by the turn of the century except for a small remnant in Ashburnham. The GRAND TRUNK controlled the rails to Belleville, Millbrook (and Port Hope), Lindsay and Lakefield, while the CANADIAN PACIFIC ran east and west through the city.

When the CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS took over the GRAND TRUNK system in 1923, unprofitable services eventually disappeared. First to go was the centre section of the original PHL&B "main line" from Millbrook to Omemee west, abandoned on January 6, 1928.

Almost 25 years passed before the next retrenchment. On May 31, 1951 CNR trains from Toronto via Lindsay ceased between Peterborough and Port Hope with the abandonment of the southern section of the PHL&B "main line" between Millbrook and Port Hope. Peterborough had lost its connection to the latter town, although its original "Peterborough Branch Railway" still remained—as a spur—to Millbrook. Lakefield had full passenger service until 1931, when mixed trains were substituted; and then this passenger accommodation disappeared on April 29, 1950 relegating the branch to freight service "as required" out of Peterborough.

On the CN's Toronto-Peterborough-Belleville service, passenger services became more and more vulnerable. Trains operating to Peterborough only (since 1951) made their last run on October 25, 1958 and on the evening of January 30, 1962 the last train operated through to Belleville, returning on the next morning (to Toronto) to end all passenger service on the MIDLAND after 105 years.

While the routes to Belleville and Lindsay still remain for daily freight service, the Millbrook branch closed operations after April 30, 1964. Rails

were lifted for 10 miles, terminating 2½ miles south of Peterborough (at the city limits, across Highway 7) in order to retain an industrial siding for future expansion.

The CANADIAN PACIFIC has seen little change in trackage, but much in services.

Originally the local service to and from Toronto operated from Tweed, through Peterborough, to Toronto in the morning, returning at night—in addition to a day train and an overnight train (in each direction) between Toronto and Montreal. By 1912 there were six trains each way through the city from Montreal, Ottawa, Havelock and Tweed. The opening of the “shore line” in 1914 diverted some of the Montreal traffic. However, by 1919 services which had previously terminated at Lindsay, now left the city for Port McNicholl. Service with 12 passenger trains a day lasted until the Burketon–Lindsay and Lindsay–Port McNicholl branches disappeared in the thirties and traffic was reduced to one train to Bobcaygeon, two “locals” to Toronto, and one each to Ottawa and Montreal.

Weekday service was increased and modernized by the introduction of the stainless steel Rail Diesel Cars named “*Dayliners*”, commencing September 27, 1954. From March 4, 1957 they took over the previous local trains 601–602 (except on weekends); and on April 24, 1960 a new afternoon round trip was added.

The day before, however, the Montreal day trains (35 and 36) had disappeared; while the “mixed” to Bobcaygeon had dropped its passenger coach after the trip of October 26, 1957.

In 1964 the CPR, with little warning, moved to abandon all “*Dayliner*” service to Peterborough, concurrent with similar moves across Canada. Public protest was successful in gaining a reprieve; but the railway has indicated that the trains are losing money and the company plans to retire from the passenger business.

But October 31, 1965 brought changes as a result of the discontinuance of the “pool train” agreement with the CNR on Montreal–Toronto traffic. “*Dayliner*” service is now provided between Toronto and Ottawa; the only loss has been the overnight train to Ottawa, which ceased on October 30th.

THE END OF STEAM

Within six years of the introduction in 1954 of diesel locomotives to Peterborough the steam locomotive was eliminated from the scene.

By May 1954, the CPR Toronto–Montreal trains were regularly handled by diesels; and on August 8 two road diesels appeared on a test freight run from Toronto on the CNR. August 11 saw the trial run of a new passenger vehicle—the Rail Diesel Car or RDC—on the Canadian Pacific.

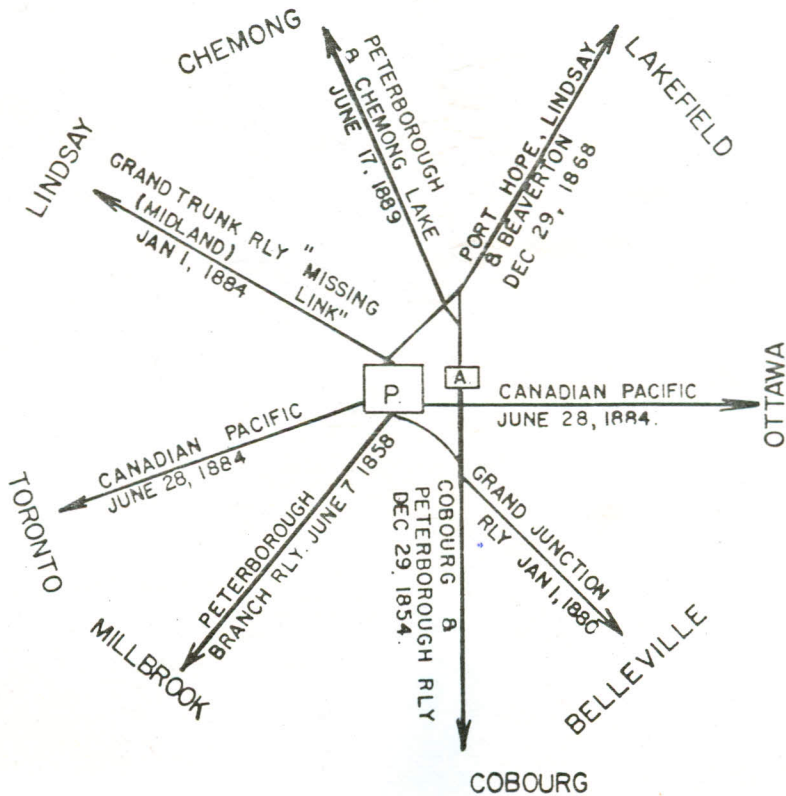
Thereafter events moved slowly towards the inevitable; but even on many all-diesel services, steam locos occasionally appeared when motive power was short or diesel failures occurred.

The CNR first used diesel on its Toronto–Peterborough freight in 1955,

but it was not until 1958-59 that the new power began to take over. On April 20, 1959 the last steam run was made through Peterborough on a freight to Belleville.

On the other hand, the CPR introduced diesel "by degrees". Certain assignments were changed basically to diesel operation, yet with steam still playing a role for several months. Thus while the Toronto-Peterborough local trains were changed to RDC cars (on weekdays), on March 4, 1957, the last steam-hauled service was on December 5 and 7, 1959. Similarly, steam lingered on in freight services which had had diesels for over a year—and the last steam engine to operate in regular service in the city was on the Bobcaygeon run of March 7, 1960.

Since then a steam locomotive CNR6167 (a "northern" or 4-8-4) retained for special excursions—has visited the city thrice—on July 9, 1961; June 20, 1964 and June 27, 1964. It should not be long before its successor and running mate, #6218, pays its first visit to Peterborough.



The Peterborough railway network showing company names and dates when regular services