

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1860

13/01/1860 *Perth Courier*

Brockville and Ottawa

RAILROAD TRAFFIC

Any man who would have predicted half a dozen years ago the amount of traffic that is done at the Perth depot, would have run a fair chance of being regarded as a fit subject for the Lunatic Asylum; but facts are stubborn things, and the vast resources of this section of the country are just beginning to be understood and appreciated. The depot grounds are fast filling up with vast piles of lumber, to be moved off in the spring, and should the sleighing hold good the ground will not be large enough to contain what is estimated to arrive – say some three or four million of feet. We observed at the depot the other day a large quantity of pressed hay, which had been brought up from Montreal and Three Rivers. Bringing hay from Montreal to Perth is rather a novel item of traffic, but it just shows the effects produced by railroads on trade and commerce, and in regulating supply and demand. Large quantities of oats are also arriving daily from Lower Canada, where they are very cheap in comparison to the high prices asked by farmers here. Hay being a somewhat short crop in this section of the country, has caused a run upon oats as a substitute, and kept up the price much above the real market value : but as supplies in any quantity can now be got from the East, there need be no apprehension of a scarcity. The traffic on the road, we understand, is steadily increasing, as the trade of the country finds its way to this channel – showing a sound and healthy state of trade, which is not at likely to have any falling off, but rather a steady increase. The cash receipts for freight and passengers at the Perth depot for the next twelvemonths, it is safely estimated, will be over thirty thousand dollars – a pretty good business, by the way. Were the road but opened to Arnprior, it would be the best paying railroad in Canada. Perth is now, and we believe it will continue to be, the best paying station on the line.

01/02/1860 *The Union, Ottawa*

Ottawa and Arnprior

For the past year and a half we have constantly agitated for action in relation to this road. On many occasions we have been subjected to abuse for our advocacy in this matter. The startling effects upon the trade of this city, through the opening of the Brockville Road, are now developing themselves and the warnings offered the public are now appreciated. The wretched mismanagement of our local affairs has thrown back our trade seriously. The outlay on the Public Buildings alone protects our city from ruin. Our merchants and our railway managers could speak feelingly, we believe, of the falling off in business. We hope some energy will now be exhibited to push this road through. The work may be commenced in three months if ordinary exertion is made.

09/02/1860 *Brockville Recorder*

Brockville and Ottawa

In relation to Messrs. Taggart and Foster's contract for the erection of Railroad buildings at the river terminus and respecting which considerable discussion has taken place, we publish a letter from Mr. Foster which we find in last week's Monitor. Unless the new contract is bungled as others have been, there will be a decided gain to the town by a new arrangement. By the old contract the buildings would cost at least \$4000 over the sum retained by the town. The new contract will ensure their erection for the amount retained by the town, beside giving increased accommodation for engines and workshops.

Sir - In looking over your issue of the 28th inst. I noticed an article headed "Mysterious Business" in which you accuse Mr. Dana of wanting to pay Taggart and Foster \$2,700 for what they had contracted to do for \$400. As I believe it is generally held that the interests of the town have been advocated by Mr. Dana in Railway matters, I ask of you an insert of the facts connected with this matter so that the public may judge as to the truth of your assertions. A tender from Taggart and Foster for the construction of the Station Buildings at Brockville was accepted by the Railway Company. As it was not known at the time where the buildings would be located, and consequently what amount of work there would be to get a foundation, the tenders were only taken in bulk sum for the work above rail level, and any work below rail level we were to do at a schedule of prices attached to the tender. Our offer for the Engine House above the rail was \$15,000; we were afterwards asked to give a bulk sum at which we would do the work four feet below the rail, assuming that the foundation would be in earth. This we did and the sum of \$4,975 was made. At the time the offer was made the Town Council were refusing to pay any estimates of the Railway Company and the work was not proceeded with in September 1858. However, the arrangement was made under which the Town retained sufficient funds to complete the buildings according to our tender and it was agreed that they be located south of Water Street. We were then (illegible) to proceed with the work. But Mr. Dixon, instead of placing the Engine House on an earth foundation decided to place it partly on Block House Island and partly in the river. This involved the necessity of revising our tender as the position of that building would be different from what was anticipated. We finally agreed to build it as located by Mr. Dixon for \$400 over and above our original price provided that a certain amount of rock that we were to excavate if the island filled up the part of the wall that was in the river--

29/02/1860 *The Union, Ottawa*

Ottawa and Prescott

Report on Ottawa and Prescott annual report.

09/05/1860 *The Union, Ottawa*

Ottawa and Prescott

Sussex Street

About four o'clock, on Monday morning, the Railroad Depot Buildings of the O. & P. R.R. Co., were discovered to be on fire by the Watchman in charge. Before adequate assistance could be obtained, the buildings and four cars, loaded with freight, were consumed. The loss is about \$15,000, of which \$5,000 will fall upon the R.R. Co., the remainder being stock of our City Merchants. C?? Patterson is now engaged in an investigation as to the origin of the fire, and we ?? insinuating incendiarism pending the investigation.

11/05/1860 *York Herald*

Ottawa and Prescott

Ottawa, Broad Street

Ottawa Railway Station Destroyed.

Yesterday morning about 4 o'clock, another fire occurred in Ottawa, by which the Railway Station, together with five cars of merchandize, were totally destroyed. The station was of small size and not worth much, but the contents are said to have been valuable. Mr. Hargreaves, of Hamilton, we regret to learn, has lost a large quantity of hams: and Mr. W.M. Mathieson, a barister of this city, who, intending to commence practice in Ottawa, had sent his law books forward, is also a sufferer. The fire is thought to have been the work of an incendiary. Two men employed in the erection of the new Parliament buildings have struck for higher wages, and, as the contractors resist their demands, have, it is said, threatened to burn the city. To one of their number the destruction of the depot is attributed.

12/05/1860 *The Tribune, Ottawa*

Ottawa and Prescott

Sussex Street

At an early hour on Monday morning the inhabitants of this city were roused from their slumbers by a cry of fire. A glance in the New Edinburgh direction discovered to us that the fire was in or about the premises of the Ottawa & Prescott Railroad Company. Proceeding to the spot we found the station buildings enveloped in flames. It was evident that any attempt to save the buildings would prove fruitless. The flames soon communicated to the cars of a freight train which was in close proximity to the station, and despite the efforts of the citizens to save them, four out of the fourteen were burnt before the train could be removed. The Station House and cars were filled with valuable merchandise, and the loss incurred in consequence is very serious. It is estimated at about \$15,000. This loss is distributed among several parties to whom the merchandise belonged. The O. & P.R.R. Co. lose about \$5,000. There was no insurance on any of the property consumed.

Here is a Brockville Recorder article on the opening that was reprinted in the Perth Courier of May 25, 1860 and establishes the opening of the tunnel for revenue traffic as being on Wednesday, May 16, 1860.

A NEW ERA.

On Thursday last, some little excitement was created in Brockville. On the previous day, the first lumber-laden cars were conducted safely through the tunnel, and left with their loads on the railroad wharf ready for shipment. This announcement may appear but a simple matter, and yet it conveys to the world a most important fact — the completion of a railroad connection between the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence. The eleven cars which passed through the tunnel on the day mentioned, are the pioneers of a trade which must eventually increase to an almost unlimited extent.

That this idea was entertained by the populace was plainly discernible on the smiling countenances of every visitor to the wharf, and this feeling, we believe, was shared in by the Brockville Artillery Company; because on Thursday their field piece was drawn from its quiet resting place to the market square in honor of the event, where it was made to open its mouth in condemnation of the old block-house which has so long crowned the pinnacle of the island in front of the town, which is now being levelled to afford wharf accommodation to scores of vessels which must ultimately arrive here to be freighted with sawn lumber from the Upper Ottawa regions. The block-house, however, was not to be easily demolished, and after firing seven shots, and sending seven balls through the massy timbers of the "ancient fortress" without doing a great deal of damage, the Artillery desisted from their ball practice, and left the block-house to be "brought low" by some speedier mode than could reasonably anticipated through the instrumentality of a nine pound ball. The firing and the crowd, however, served to turn the occasion into a sort of "little jubilee" in honor of the opening of the tunnel for lumber traffic.

On Monday evening, a little after ten o'clock, the whole heavens became illuminated, as if a city had been fired. Great consternation prevailed, and a vast running to and fro occurred, till the people had satisfied themselves as to the cause. The old Block-house was enveloped in flames, and its stout timbers which had withstood the shock of our artillery speedily fell before the devouring element. Of course, the cause of the fire is a mystery - a great mystery. There is one fact connected with it, however the island is to be levelled, and the leveling process could not be completed so long as the old Block-house reared its head on high. Less danger was to be apprehended from burning than blowing up; consequently a calm night occurred and the old Block-house was burned down.-Recorder

26/05/1860

*The Tribune, Ottawa**Ottawa and Prescott**Sussex Street*

The inquest into the late fire at the Railway Depot concluded its investigation on Saturday last, seven of the jurors returning a verdict of incendiarism, we presume, in the total absence of all proof as to the cause or origin of the fire. Our contemporary, the Citizen gives the following version of the affair, requesting us to make a note of it a la Captain Cuttle:

Incendiarism: The jury empanelled to inquire into the origin of the recent fire at the Railway Depot have come to the conclusion that the said fire was the work of an incendiary. Will the Tribune make a note of this?

Complying with all due courtesy with our contemporary's request, the only note-worthy point in this announcement is the significant suppression of the fact that five of the jurors refused, in the absence of all proof of the facts, to return a verdict not in accord with the evidence before them. It would have been more ingenuous on the part of the Citizen to have declared at once the true state of the case, as better suited to the interests of the city, even if he had committed himself to a foregone conclusion as to the cause of the fire, which it is evident he arrived at by the same delightful process of induction as the seven intelligent jurors. If it would not be too much troublesome a task our contemporary had better give the evidence on which those lights of the age founded their decision, especially as the incendiary is represented by that convenient person, Mr. Nobody.

The principal witness on the occasion was the watchman at the depot. His evidence amounted to the fact that the fire originated in the store immediately adjoining the ticket office, in which he kept watch, and had a drunken friend reposing at the time. In the said store there were some fifteen barrels of big wines leaking, and at least one barrel of camphene or burning fluid; and in making his usual rounds, the watchman had been in the store with a lantern some short time previous to the fire being discovered. It is hardly necessary to go into his statement further than to notice the fact that some five or six minutes previous to the outbreak of the fire three men came on to and passed along the platform on which the stores and offices were situated, and passed the watchmen, walking at a rapid pace. He states he followed them for some seventy yards, and on his return saw smoke issue from inside the store, his friend the drunken man being profoundly asleep all the time. A smart explosion followed and he endeavoured to save the books of the establishment, in which he was successful. As regards the three men, he says he heard their steps from the moment they put foot on the platform, a distance of fully two hundred feet where he sat at the door of the Office, and it is hardly likely they could be setting fire to the store within thirty feet of him, without hearing or being aware of their proximity.

We are perfectly alive to the loss sustained by the Railway and the public on this occasion, and sincerely sympathize with both; but it is a false poeity to jeopardize the good name of a community for the purpose of screening the mismanagement, carelessness, or misfortune of individuals, such conduct being alike injurious to private as well as public interests, affecting the credit of our business men and bringing the character of the city into contempt.

The public have no reason to be satisfied with the result of the inquest or the consequences likely to flow there from; and we trust the President of the Railway, as well as the Mayor of the city, will take such steps as will throw more light on this mysterious occurrence, in which the hand of an incendiary cannot be traced. The evidence given before the coroner furnishes groundwork for a searching investigation by parties unprejudiced by local feelings; and it is as necessary for the fair fame of the city, the character of the Railway management, and the prospects of our businessmen, that such inquiry should be neither delayed or obstructed. The city authorities should take immediate steps in the matter, as the affair is now in as unsatisfactory state as before the investigation. We repeat again that there is so far not a shadow of evidence to warrant the conclusions arrived at. Of this the Citizen may make as many notes as he pleases. At the same time we would recommend the perusal of the moral law bearing about false witness, to his consideration.

08/06/1860 *Perth Courier**Brockville and Ottawa*

THE RAILROAD AND THE LUMBER TRAFFIC.

Having occasion to visit Brockville the other day, the writer took a walk over the wharfage and station grounds of the B.&O. Railway in front of the Town. The work is progressing favorably, the tunnel is opened through, and the wharfage will very soon be completed. But looking at the extent of the wharfage accommodation in connection with the vast amount of sawed lumber that is destined to pass over the road, and which will require to be stored at Brockville, there is evidently nothing like wharfage accommodation enough. There should have been at least ten acres of storage room.— The present wharfage cannot contain one-tenth of the lumber stored at the Perth Depot, and this will be nothing in comparison to what will come down from the Ottawa when the road reaches Arnprior or Roddy's Bay. The lumber traffic has evidently been sadly miscalculated, and the impression appears to be gaining ground that the building of the tunnel was a grand mistake, as had the western route been taken, any amount of station ground could have been got. However, when the present wharfage is all completed, there will be more room and better accommodation than at present.

The work is being pushed on beyond Almonte, and every effort will be made to reach Sand Point this Fall. The business of the road is good, and we understand is paying well.

14/06/1860 *Brockville Recorder**Brockville and Ottawa*

Editorial - Debentures and Interest Money.

MAN KILLED ON THE RAILROAD

We learn from the Gleaner that a man named Luke Haly was killed on the B&O Railroad a short distance above Smith's Falls, one day last week. He was returning home from the village along the track, when a gravel train came up behind him. When first seen he was walking on the side of the track, out of danger, but as the train got within a few rods of him, he stepped on the middle of the track immediately before the locomotive. The whistle was sounded, the brakes put on, and the engine reversed, and the engineer ran out on the platform and shouted to the man, but all of no use – he was run down and horribly mutilated. – Haly was very deaf, which accounts for his not hearing the train and he had been repeatedly warned to stay off the track. No blame whatever attaches to anyone connected with the train.

04/09/1860 *Montreal Gazette* *Brockville and Ottawa* *Brockville*

Arrival of the Royal party at Brockville. (excerpt)

The Mayor and Corporation, the Warden and County Council, as also other functionaries, Fire Companies, with their engines and about 10,000 people, had consequently been waiting, and most with exemplary patience.

In front of the station, a platform covered with tapestry carpet, had been built and roofed in with cambric, in alternate stripes of pink and blue. The sides of the pavillion thus formed were ornamented with rosettes and crimson and white lace curtains. There were six triumphal arches, chiefly green spruce trees, in various parts of the town. It was fortunate that preparations had been mad for an illumination, for it was dark when the train arrived. Lanterns and locomotive lights were placed all around the tent and the firemen set fire to their torches, of which there were at least 300. The merchants lit up their windows and the night was almost converted into day.

26/09/1860 *The Union, Ottawa* *Union Forwarding* *Chats Falls*

We are sorry to learn that the Freight House, part of the Wharf and a few rods of the Railway, at Union village at the head of Chats Portage, were burned on Saturday the 21st inst. The fire is supposed to have originated from a spark from the funnel of the steamer Oregon as it was first discovered in the roof of the Freight house. The loss to the company will not exceed £250, as the Depot was empty; but we are sorry to say four or five horses belonging to poor people in the village, were destroyed.

01/12/1860 *The Tribune, Ottawa* *Ottawa and Prescott* *Kemptville*

As the accommodation train from Prescott was passing near Kemptville, on Thursday, a poor woman, named Allan, in attempting to pass the track, slipped and fell, and before the train could be stopped it passed over her body, completely severing it in two. A coroner's inquest will be held and full inquiry instituted.