

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1917

01/01/1917 Eastern Ontario Review Lachute Calumet

A fine new wharf has recently been completed by the Canadian Pacific Railway at Calumet, replacing the old structure which was damaged by high water last year. Passengers for Hawkesbury, L'Original, Caledonia Springs etc., will appreciate this improvement.
Need to get date

04/01/1917 Kemptville Weekly Advance Winchester De Beaujeu

Montreal, December 28 - A mistaken assurance to Conductor Hinton, of the local Cornwall train that the Chicago-Montreal flyer, which collided with it, had passed St. Polycarpe Junction, where the smash occurred, is supposed to have been the cause of the accident last night which resulted in the loss of six lives. Conductor Hinton died this morning; but before he succumbed he is reported to have stated that he inquired if he could take his train on to the main line and was assured by somebody at St. Polycarpe that it was clear. He instructed his engineer to go ahead.

This morning the C.P.R. handed out the following corrected and final list of dead and injured in the wreck;
Killed

A J. Grant, Williamstown, Ont., W. Abrams, Williamstown, Ont. M. Demoulin, Williamstown, Ont.

Died On Train

W. Abrams, Williamstown, Ont M. Kennedy, Montreal.

Died in the Hospital, Montreal

Conductor Hinton, Cornwall, Ont

Injured

J. McCullough, Glenbrook, leg broken; D. G. StAmour, North Lancaster, bruised; M. Malloy, baggage-master, Smiths Falls, Ont, bruised; - Lavallee, express messenger, of Cornwall, shaken up.

Coroner McMahon this morning opened an inquest.

15/01/1917 Montreal Gazette Winchester De Beaujeu

NO ONE BLAMABLE FOR FATAL WRECK

Was Due to Misunderstanding of Words Over Railway Telephone

RIDER WAS ADDED BY JURY

Witnesses Corroborated the Agent's Claim That He Told Trainman Express Had Not Passed

No criminal responsibility in regard to the St. Polycarpe wreck on the evening of December 27th last was found by the coroner's jury on Saturday last. The Toronto-Montreal express crashed into a Cornwall local, and six persons were killed, or died shortly afterwards. The cause of the wreck was made quite clear at the inquest. It was a misunderstanding between sub-agent Arthur Lalonde at St. Polycarpe and Wm. J. Arnett, the brakeman on the Cornwall train, which left the Soulanges Junction station when it should not have done so, and got on the track between Soulanges and St Polycarpe and in the way of the fast express, which was one hour late. The local should have stopped at Soulanges Junction until the express had passed St. Polycarpe. The brakeman, as was his daily custom, picked up the telephone at Soulanges Junction and telephoned to St. Polycarpe, asking whether the express had passed. The evidence was quite clear that Lalonde had answered "No, sir." Coroner McMahon and the jury, in view of the evidence to that effect from a number of witnesses, accepted the view that Lalonde had answered in the negative. Arnett said that he understood the answer to be in the affirmative, and coroner and jury took the view that he had understood the message to be in the affirmative. At the same time, the jury brought in a rider to the effect that the C. P. R. should have had an agent at Soulanges Junction to control the local train.

WORDS WERE MISUNDERSTOOD.

The coroner, in summing up the situation at the close of the evidence, pointed out that Arnett each evening was accustomed to ask the same question: "Has the express passed?" and, getting the answer usually in the affirmative, was prepared mentally to receive a similar answer on that night consequently mistook the "No. sir" for "Yes, sir. The coroner pointed out that Lalonde in telling his story had said that he ran the words together, and that it was quite reasonable to suppose that the "nosir" had been taken for "yessir." Doubtless, said he, the railway company had already taken steps to provide against a repetition of such an accident, by insisting that answers should be longer than two or three words, and should be of such length as when repeated would leave of no doubt as to what was meant. The installation of the telephone despatching system, said he, had probably been made because it was felt to be proper and in the interest of the service, and the coroner spoke for some time on the advantages of telephone messages.

A. Clement, medical student of Laval, whose home is at St. Polycarpe, and who was in the station office at St. Polycarpe when Brakeman Arnett telephoned, was positive that Lalonde's answer had been in the negative. He was sure that it was a member of the Cornwall train crew that was calling. Clement also remembered that Lalonde, in hanging up the receiver, remarked that it was curious that the brakeman had hung up so abruptly, not asking him how many minutes the express was late. Lalonde, who was a life-long friend of the witness, had told him that he was to tell the brakeman that the express was 50 minutes late, but that Lalonde had no chance, to do so, the brakeman ringing off so quickly. He said that Lalonde was not a drinking man, and that, as far as he knew, Arnett also was not given to self-indulgence. He had seen Arnett come in later with the dead and wounded on what was left of the Cornwall train.

PRIEST HEARD ANSWER.

Rev. Father Achille Theberge, parish priest of St. Telesphore for the past eighteen years, was also in the office when the telephone messages were exchanged. He had been invited in, as the waiting room was cold, and was waiting for the Cornwall train, he having come into St. Polycarpe on another local. He heard the telephone ringing, did not know what was said at the other end, but heard Lalonde give an emphatic "No." He did not recall the word "sir" being used. This led the coroner and jury to the opinion that the two words were said without a break. The priest also heard Lalonde remark to Inspector Daoust, of the C. P. R. car Inspection department that it was curious that Arnett had not waited for him to say that the express was 50 minutes late. When the wrecked Cornwall train came in, and he went to the waiting room so as to be ready to give absolution to the dying, he heard Daoust remark: "Too bad; it is a misunderstanding. Lalonde said that the fast train had not passed." Several persons were around when Daoust made this remark.

Following the coroner's review of the circumstances, the jury brought in the verdict cited.

18/01/1917 The Equity, Shawville Waltham

The Board of Railway Commissioners have decided on a drastic move; they have used the wide powers with which they are vested and have caused the cancellation of hundreds of passenger trains all over the country. -- This move offers a probable explanation for the cancellation of the "mixed" train on the Pontiac line.

18/01/1917 Chesterville Record New York Central Berwick

Owing to the heavy snow storm on Saturday and Sunday the passenger trains on the O&NY were three hours late on Monday.

Trainload of McLaughlin Cars

A G.T.R. fast freight passed through here yesterday with banners streaming headed for the Maritime provinces. The train was made up at Oshawa and left there on January 21st. loaded with McLaughlin Motor Cars. As near as one could tell there must have been about 30 car loads in the train. Estimating the value, the train must have carried a freight load of motor cars worth more than \$100,000. This does not look as though war-time was affecting Canada's prosperity. The fact, also that the McLaughlin Motor Company found it necessary to ship their automobiles in train loads to the Maritimes is a tribute to the efficiency and popularity of "Canada's Standard Car", the McLaughlin Valve-in-Head.

02/02/1917 *Eastern Ontario Review* *Kingston (CN)* *Coteau*

Fatal Accident at Coteau

A fatal accident occurred at Coteau on Jan. 16, which resulted in the death of Alexander Lauzon. The young man was boarding the Toronto train and slipped under the platform and was dragged 175 feet. He had his scalp taken off, arm bruised and suffered other severe injuries from which he died that evening, never regaining consciousness. Deceased, who was 21 years of age, was a son of the late Alexander Lauzon of Coteau Junction, and a brother of Mrs. Edward Lavigne of Cornwall. The remains were taken to Williamstown and interred beside those of his father. A number of floral and spiritual bouquets were sent by sympathizing friends,

08/02/1917 *Chesterville Record* *New York Central* *Newington*

The O&NY express bound to Ottawa on Saturday Feb 3rd passed this station five hours late.

08/02/1917 *The Equity, Shawville* *Pontiac and Renfrew* *Bristol*

The ore at the Bristol Iron Mines is being hauled out to the railway line and shipped, after lying in heaps for over 30 years, and after a railway had been built for the purpose of transportation and then torn up and abandoned. Strange.

09/02/1917 *Glengarry News* *Alexandria* *Alexandria*

Grand Trunk Station Completed

The new Grand Trunk Station here has been completed and the local staff expect to enter into possession early next week. The travelling public will be well satisfied with this change, as the cramped accommodation of a passenger coach has afforded very little comfort, especially during the winter months.

09/02/1917 *Eastern Ontario Review* *Montreal and Ottawa* *Vankleek Hill*

Mr. Brett, traveling passenger agent of the CPR was here the past week looking into the recent warning given by the Review to travelers on the CPR to ask for the bus transfers IN EVERY CSASE as conductors have been instructed not to give bus transfers unless ask for buy the ticket holder.

Mr. Brett says no such orders were given.

The conductors say the orders were given and still stand.

Mr. Brett says that persons who do not use the bus are not entitled to the transfer.

If this be the case then the traveler who does not use the bus should buy his ticket for fifteen cents less.

The ticket includes the bus fare in every case. The traveller pays for it and it is his to do with as he pleases.

Ask for your transfer every time you travel over the CPR lines and SEE THAT YOU GET IT.

Every time you do not get it you make a present of FIFTEEN CENTS to the CPR.

This Corporation will make you NO presents - Do not look for any but demand that for which you have paid.

07/03/1917 *Athens Reporter* *Westport*

March came in with a foot of snow. The B&W worried along for a few miles, then stalled and the crews spent the night at Forthton.

09/03/1917 *Glengarry News* *Alexandria* *Alexandria*

Occupying New Station

Mr. G.W. Shepherd, G.T.R. Agent, and his staff of assistants on Friday last took possession of the new station and the change of quarters is much appreciated by the employees and public generally.

28/03/1917 *Ottawa Journal* *Kingston (CP)* *Folger*

Spreading of Rail Caused The Accident

Renfrew, March 28.- The K. & P. passenger train due here at 5 o'clock last night jumped the tracks near the Flower Station, owing, it is said, to spreading of rails. The engine and baggage car went over an embankment. Engineer James Collins was injured, but not seriously. No passengers were injured.

Washout Wrecks C.P.R. Train
Near Folger Station on Tuesday Afternoon While Enroute to Renfrew
Engineer James Collins
Of Kingston has his leg badly fractured.
Passenger Coach Remained Upright Till Passengers Were All Out, But Afterwards Fell Into the Opening.

James Collins, 94 Lower Bagot street, one of the best known railroad engineers of the city, is lying in the Hotel Dieu with his leg fractured in three places, and physicians are watching his progress closely to determine if it will be necessary to amputate his limb. He was injured in a wash-out near Folger Station, when the C.P.R. engine and baggage car went into a hold made by a wash-out, and the first coach is now almost on end.

The accident happened about 4 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon to the train which left Kingston for Renfrew about 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning. At a point between Folger and Lavant stations a creek that passes down over a hill and under the road bed had been so increased by the spring rains that it undermined the foundation of the road. The weight of the locomotive brought down the support left after the wash-out, and before either fireman or engineer could jump the engine was on its side in the hole.

The baggage and mail car followed the engine, but fortunately the coach remained upright until the passengers were able to get out. Shortly afterwards, however, it also fell over on its side with one end in the opening.

Engineer Collins was found, after two hours' work, under the engine with his leg badly broken. After being taken out he was carried to a train which meanwhile had been sent for from Sharbot Lake. The message to bring the train had been sent over the wire from Folger, which meant a walk of several miles.

The fireman of the wrecked train was not injured. His name is W.J. Slimmons, Montreal street. When the train was approaching the hole he jumped to the side of the engine, but instead of jumping clear he was thrown far out of danger and almost off the right of way.

The passengers with the injured engineer came as far as Sharbot Lake on the train which had been hastily summoned. The passengers were then taken over the C.P.R. to Smith's Falls and back to Renfrew to reach their destinations. The special train then rushed to Kingston, arriving here at 2 a.m. Wednesday. Dr. Baker, of Sharbot Lake, accompanied the train to the city, and Mr. Collins was removed to the Hotel Dieu.

It was learned on Wednesday that the wash-out, which had at first been only about ten feet deep and twenty feet long, had spread until it is now fifteen deep and thirty-five feet long. The railway officials hope to be able to pass trains over it safely by 7 o'clock this (Wednesday) evening but the rolling stock will not be rescued by that time or possibly for several days.

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Lieut.-Col. R.W. Smart and Major R.D. Ponton, headquarters staff here, were on the C.P.R. train which was wrecked between Lavant and Folger stations on Tuesday afternoon.

Train Ran Into Washout

Kingston, Mar. 28.- Jas. Collins, engineer, sustained a fractured leg in an accident about four o'clock Tuesday afternoon near Folger station. The train from Kingston for Renfrew ran into a washout. Between Folger and Lavant stations an overflowed creek had undermined the roadbed and the engine, baggage and mail car went into the hold. No passengers were hurt.

"Gold and dross"
In Toronto "Saturday Night"
Williamsburg, Mar. 1917.
"Editor, Gold and Dross:

"Could you give me any information regarding the Morrisburg & Ottawa Electric Railway? y I have a friend who subscribed \$300 for stock in this company six or seven years ago. He has not paid as yet any call for stock. He is a hotel keeper, and the engineers and other employees of the company ran a board bill of over \$70, and when this account was presented to the company they refused to pay on the ground that this man has not paid for stock, and allowed board bill to go on his stock without his consent. They have now issued a writ for the payment of the stock in full. His lawyer has advised him to settle. No work has been done on the road. What would you advise?
J. P. R.

This company was bent upon erecting an Electric Railway for a number of years, but financial difficulties cropped up with the result that, we understand, the franchise expired a short time ago. We communicated with the secretary and one of the members of the Ontario Railway board asking for authentic information, on this matter but as expected, they didn't know anything about it... even if your friend does pay off the rest of his subscription it looks as though he will lose his money, as well as the initial instalment and the hotel bill. The company's refusal to pay the hotel bill for the reason given in your letter appears to be decidedly irregular. And why a stockholder should hand out more money to a company that has passed out of existence is also puzzling to us. According to law the stockholder is liable in the case of a live company but as for a dead one, we cannot say. It looks like a matter for the courts to decide but unfortunately law and equity are sometimes as far apart as the poles.

James Collins Dies From His Injuries
C.P.R. Engineer Was in the Washout Accident at Folger Station

Many regrets were expressed when it became known that James Collins, one of the best known C.P.R. engineers, of this city, has passed away in the Hotel Dieu on Sunday afternoon after two weeks of patient suffering.

It will be remembered that he was fatally injured in the wreck caused by a washout at Folger Station a couple of weeks ago, from which he never recovered. The late Mr. Collins was one of the oldest and most reliable engineers, being on the road for the past thirty-five years, always giving the company satisfaction and never meeting with any serious accidents until one which caused his death. His place will be indeed hard to fill.

He is survived by his wife and two sons, Norton, of this city, and Joseph, of Toronto; also two brothers, Thomas, of Belleville, and Joseph of Shelbyville, Ind., and four sisters, Mrs. James Daley, of Ottawa; Mrs. Thomas Daley, of Cape Vincent; Miss Mary Collins, of Brockville, and Miss Sarah of Belleville.

On Tuesday March 27th a washout on the line between Folger and Lavant stations, Kingston sub-division, C.P.R., wrecked the express train on which Mr. Collins was engineer. He was found after two hours work, under the engine with his leg badly broken. After being taken out he was hurried to a special train which brought him to Kingston.

04/05/1917 *Morrisburg Leader**New York Central**Cornwall*

Privy Council judgment was given this week in the Municipal Corporation of Cornwall v the Ottawa and New York Railway, the Attorney-General of Ontario intervening. The question left open for appellants to raise was whether a railway bridge described as an international bridge between Canada and the United States is assessable by the municipality so far as it is situated within the Canadian boundary. Dismissing the appeal their lordships agreed with the view of Justice Anglin and Davies that the bridge is a structure on railway lands, and held that it does not make any difference for rating purposes by what title the lands are held so long as in actual use by the company assessed.

18/05/1917 *Morrisburg Leader**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

The G.T.R. crossing on the Gravel Road. Which for many years has been a menace to the travelling public, particularly between Williamsburg and Morrisburg, is now guarded by gates which have been erected by the G.T.R. and are operated by Messrs. Wm. Holmes and John McDonald. The gates are lowered as soon as an approaching train is in view and remain down until the train has crossed over the crossing, thereby eliminating all danger.

08/06/1917 *Morrisburg Leader**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Williamsburg Council

The reeve was authorized to attend the meeting of the Board of the Railway Commission at Ottawa on Tuesday, the 4th day of June re Railway Crossing at Morrisburg

08/06/1917 *Morrisburg Leader**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

R. Y. Commissioners Hear Local Delegates

A special meeting of the Board of Railway Commissioners was held at Ottawa on Tuesday, June 5th for the purpose of setting a just apportionment of the cost of construction and maintenance of the gates lately erected at the Gravel Road crossing. After hearing the delegates the board ruled as follows:

Construction -

Railway Fund 20 p.c.

Williamsburg 5 p.c

County 5 p.c

Morrisburg 5 p.c

Railway 65 p.c.

Maintenance -

Morrisburg 10 p.c

Williamsburg 10 p.c

County 10 p.c

Railway 70 p.c

Those who represented the municipalities were: -

Morrisburg - Reeve Merkel and Mr. Arthur Flynn.

Williamsburg - Mr. W B. Lawson, Chesterville and Reeve Casselman.

Matilda - Mr. I. Hilliard, M. P. P.

The county- Mr Davy, Iroquois.

22/06/1917 *Eganville Leader**Renfrew**Eganville*

The G. T. Railway Co. has begun the erection of a new station at Eganville - to replace the one destroyed by fire two years ago. Considerable of the needed material is now in the ground and carpenters have arrived to begin work. The station and freight shed will be a modern and somewhat pretentious character. The measurements are 108 by 33 ft. A separate residence for the agent will be erected at an estimated cost of \$4,000.

12/07/1917 *Chesterville Record**Winchester**Apple Hill*

The unusual occurrence of a birth on a passenger train happened yesterday morning on the early train to Montreal. At Apple Hill the train was stopped and the medical man of the place hunted up and brought to the train and taken to Montreal, where an ambulance met the mother and babe and took them to hospital.

Some months ago the review issued a warning to all who travel to and from Vankleek Hill over the lines of the CPR. We advised all to be sure to ask for the bus transfers from all conductors. We stated that the conductors have been instructed to issue transfers only to those who asked for them. It was not the case of getting a transfer if you were entitled to one. It was a case of not getting a transfer unless you asked for it. Very many people forget to ask for what they are properly entitled to, not really expecting that the company will see that they will get what they pay for. This is just what the CPR will not do. If they can get you to take the bus without giving you a transfer, which would entitle you to ride uptown, the company saves just fifteen cents. If they can save some dozens of transfers each day it means a small fortune at the end of the year. The review pointed out that the order has been issued to the conductors not to give the transfer unless the passenger made a special request for it. In plain language the action of the company in issuing such instructions was a straight attempt to retain the property of other people unless people asked to have that property handed over. The company has now gone one better it has instructed its agents at Montreal to issue no transfer on Vankleek Hill tickets after 4 p.m. This means that if you are in Montreal and wish to come to Vankleek Hill on one the night trains you will have to have your ticket and transfer purchased before 4 p.m. If you should neglect to do so the company will retain your fifteen cents. The CPR has been preparing for this sort of move for a long time. It was with this end in view that they changed the name of the station here from "Vankleek Hill" to "Vankleek". If the company sold you a ticket to Vankleek Hill the company would be obliged to deliver you to Vankleek Hill not in the country somewhere near the town. They now sell you a ticket to or from Vankleek. For the present the company will beat the public out of as many transfers as possible and later the bus service will be withdrawn and passengers will get to Vankleek Hill as best they can from Vankleek. In the meantime ask for your transfers and see that you get them. When in Montreal see that there is a transfer tax to the ticket you have, or arrange for your ticket to be bought before 4 p.m. Do not let the CPR beat you out of one single transfer until you are forced to do so. When the time comes you may be able to make some other arrangements.

26/07/1917 *Ottawa Citizen* *Morrisburg and Ottawa Electric*

The Morrisburg & Ottawa Electric Railway Company NOTICE is hereby given that a special general meeting of the share-holders of the Morrisburg & Ottawa Electric Railway Company will be held at 95 Laurier Ave. West, in the City of Ottawa, in the Province of Ontario, on Monday, the 30th day of July, 1917. at the hour of 2 o'clock in the afternoon for the following purposes. -

- (a) The election of a Board of Directors of the Company.
- (b) The consideration of the financial report of the Company.
- (c) The consideration of the course to be followed in regard to the undertaking of the company
- (d) Such further and other business as may be considered in the interests of the company

R.A. BISHOP

30/07/1917 *Ottawa Journal* *Ottawa Electric*

HAD TO WALK WITH THERMOMETER AT 96

With the mercury hovering around the 96 mark, hundred of residents of the Capital were compelled to either walk or lay off for the day when an Ottawa Electric ear was derailed on the curve at the Holland avenue turn at noon today, putting the Britannia and Somerset, street line out of commission. The derailment occurred at 12.20 an hour at which many of the residents around Holland avenue, in Hintonburg, and along the line had arrived at their homes for lunch and the only service available on either of the two lines until 1.30 was a "Jigger", which could not begin to accommodate the crowds. Consequently, many walked, while others decided, in view of the heat, to call it a day, and took the afternoon off. While the cause of derailment is not stated, it is thought that the intense heat had the effect of pulling the rails, which have not yet been fastened permanently, out of position. The back wheel of the car slid from the track in such a manner that it was impossible to quickly remedy the trouble. Aside from a slight shaking-up, none of the occupants of the car were injured..

13/08/1917 *Ottawa Journal* *Ottawa Electric* *Holland*

TIE-UP ON BRITANNIA LINE KEEPS CROWD WAITING

The Ottawa Electric Railway Company was the subject of remarks more forceful than polite for over an hour on Sunday afternoon, when traffic on the Britannia line was completely tied up as the result of the derailment of a car on the temporary line at the Holland avenue turn. From 5.22 until 6.25 o'clock, those along the line who wished to return to the city, and those in the city who wished to visit points along the line, wilted. As was the case when a car was derailed at the same point about a week ago, the rear truck went off the track.

20/08/1917 *Ottawa Citizen* *Montreal and Ottawa* *Rigaud Dragon*

Heroism of Ottawa Trainmen Averts Greater Disaster to the Country-side at Rigaud

--- Many stories of heroism have been told, and many stories of daring will never be told. Perhaps the most impressive piece of daring was accomplished by the train crew of No. 18 C.P.R. Sault train. This train is due at Rigaud at 9.11 a.m. The first explosion took place at 8.55 a.m. and shortly afterwards the Sault train arrived at Dragon. By this time, flames were sweeping the plant, and the dense, heavy fumes almost hid the place from view. On the track nearby were four cars of T. N. T. or trinitrate of toluol, the highest explosive with the exception of picric acid that is known. Engineer W. Griffith. 71 Bayswater, Ottawa; Conductor Harry Dunham. 100 Preston St.. Ottawa, and Brakesman W. B. Blake, 268 Booth Street, and M. Chapman. 171 Rochester St.. Ottawa, were the train crew. Took a Long Chance.

Immediately following the first explosion, the second occurred. Engineer Griffith was notified that these four cars were on the track Without a thought of personal safety, but realizing only that should these cars explode, the results would be frightful, Engineer Griffith took the chance. The engine was uncoupled from the Sault train, and run up to the cars of T.N.T. The cars were coupled on. and engineer Griffith began a real race with death. Spectators who witnessed the deed of daring state that at times it was impossible to see the engine or the cars of deadly explosive as they were enveloped in the sheets of flame and clouds of smoke.

Journey Made In Safety.

The perilous journey was finished in safety however, and the lives of innumerable workers and residents, not only of Dragon but of Rigaud and surrounding places, were saved through the pluck of an Ottawa engineer and his assistants. The report of this heroic deed has aroused the greatest enthusiasm and admiration in Rigaud and Dragon, and many of the officials of the Curtis and Harvey Company expressed their admiration of the train crew in no uncertain manner

Railwaymen are heroes.

Shortly before 10 o'clock was performed the bravest deed of the disaster, with engineer "Billy" Griffith and fireman C. Broom, both of Ottawa as the heroes. Arriving in Rigaud about 9.11 o'clock, the "Soo" train, of which they were in charge, was held up owing to the explosions. After some wait, the suggestion was made by R. J. Smith, of the office staff of the Curtis-Harvey company, that an effort be made to remove from the siding four cars loaded with the high explosive which is designated by those familiar with it as "T.N.T."

The trainmen agreed, and they made a trip which has few parallels in the history of railroading. Making the run to Dragon, they took the siding, opened the throttle, and plunged into the midst of burning buildings filled with one of the most deadly instruments of the war. Through smoke and flames they proceeded until the cars were reached, made the coupling, and then hurriedly returned, removing what would, had it been touched by the flames, have provided a more terrific explosion even than the many which did occur.

The conductor in charge of the crew was Harry Dunham and the brakeman were W. S. Black and M Chapman, all of Ottawa

20/08/1917 *Montreal Gazette**Montreal and Ottawa**Rigaud Dragon*

A PLUCKY C.P.R. ENGINEER.

One of the Incident connected with the explosions was the part taken in it by a C.P.R engineer. Many explosions had taken place throughout the morning, and there was no certainty that there would not be others. Yet he ran down his engine to the siding and went into the works along the rails to take six cars loaded with explosive which were there.. He drew them out into safety. Many people commented yesterday on that as being a very plucky action. The fireman also deserves great credit.

24/08/1917 *Eastern Ontario Review**Montreal and Ottawa**Rigaud Dragon*

Dragon Blown to Pieces.

When the news of the terrible, explosion reached Ottawa, a large number of residents secured tickets for Rigaud, intending to go down to the scene of the accident by the train which left Central Station at 4 o'clock. The sightseers were doomed to disappointment, however, because orders had been issued to run the train right through Rigaud and Dragon without a stop. Many persons were turned back at the depot and told that the train would not stop at the scene of the explosion.

"As soon as we thought the last explosion had died away, we took a chance and headed our engine right into where the four cars were lying on the tracks. The fire was raging fiercely at the time and the heat was overcoming and intense, but we had everything in readiness [sic] and we lost very little time hooking up the cars and backing them out to safety.

In the foregoing words conductor Harry Durham [sic], 100 Preston street of the Soo train crew related the story of his escape with four other members of the crew pulling out four cars of "T.N.T." from a dangerous siding in the midst of sparks and surrounded by the flames of the Rigaud explosion on Saturday morning. Conductor Dunham speaks in the highest terms of the coolness displayed by his fellow members of the crew.

"It was just about 10:30." he continued, "when we learned that there were four cars lying on the siding we did not lose any time but cleared our engine and headed on to where the cars were stationed. Blake and Chapman fastened the cars and we backed right out. It was all over inside a few minutes."

11/09/1917 *Ottawa Journal**Alexandria**Vars*

The Tragedy at Vars

The frightful accident at Vars last night by which five occupants of an automobile lost their lives directs attention to two things:

(1) The inefficient protection that is afforded the public at many railway crossings in Canada.

(2) The carelessness displayed by many drivers of motor cars and other vehicles in approaching these level crossings.

The increasing popularity of the automobile and the certainty that before long the gasoline car will largely displace the farmer's buggy and democrat makes it necessary that the danger of the level crossing should be systematically dealt with and modified. It is an economic possibility to provide all crossings with overhead bridges or even to have them guarded with gates; although there are numerous crossings - especially in villages such as Vars - where this protection should be forced on the railway companies. But on Canada's highways sufficient warning of a crossing is rarely given to a vehicle driver as he approaches it. The only sign is on the narrow railway right of way, and oftentimes an auto will actually reach the track before the driver knows of its existence.

In the United States it is the practice to erect prominent warnings 50 or 100 yards on each side of a track, and these warnings are of uniform character. It is time the Dominion Railway Commission or Provincial Legislatures insisted upon the same protection in Canada, placing the responsibility for the erection of these signs either on the railway company or the municipality.

Of course no level crossing without gates is fool proof or safe against absolute recklessness and carelessness. The tragedy at Vars should impress upon drivers, particularly of fast moving motor cars, the necessity of adhering to the strict rule of slowing down almost to a stop at all railway level crossings. "Stop, look and listen," the warning posted on United States roads, should be an automatic principle adopted almost literally by drivers in Canada.

The driver of an automobile ought never to allow familiarity to lessen his constant alertness - he owes this to himself, to his passengers, and to other users of the highways.

Freight Cars Also Obstructed View of Crossing and Engine Crashed Into Motor Car With Terrible Results

Four instantly killed, one dies in Ottawa

Instantly Killed

Rev. Dr. John M. Maverty, Ottawa, 75 years

Mrs. John Orr, 42 years Carlsbad Springs

Miss Florence Orr, 13 years, Carlsbad Springs

Mrs. J.O. Hodgson, 40 years Carlsbad Springs

Died in Ottawa Hospital

Mr. John Orr, 45 years, Carlsbad Springs.

Scene of Fatality

Vars crossing where auto containing five persons was struck by Montreal-Ottawa express about 10.45 last night

The fusion of headlight beams on the Vars crossing last night was largely responsible for the death of Dr. John Maverty, Ottawa West Methodist Church and four of his friends. Beams of light from the automobile were projected on the crossing and these rays were joined by beams from the search light of the express. The result was that the crossing was brilliantly illuminated but the train's approach was not noticed. Freight cars on a siding also obstructed the view of the approaching train from the auto.

The Montreal-Ottawa express is due at Vars at 10.40, and was on time last night. It crashed into the Dodge automobile, instantly killing Dr. Maverty, Mrs. John Orr, Mrs. Hodgson and Miss Florence Orr. Mr. John Orr died after being taken to St. Luke's hospital. Rev. Dr. Rose, of St. Paul's Methodist Church, and Dr. G.O. Barclay, Rochester street, broke the sad news of the fatality to the survivors of the late Dr. Maverty last night.

Going at Moderate Speed

Leaving the Vars Methodist Church, where he had spoken at an anniversary service, Dr. Maverty accompanied Mr. John Orr and his family and Mrs. J.O. Hodgson in the car ride to Carlsbad Springs, the home of Mr. Orr. According to eyewitnesses, the car was driven along the main thoroughfare at the village at a moderate rate, and the crossing of the G.T.R. railway tracks was attempted at the same speed.

None of the occupants of the automobile were aware of the close proximity of the fast train, and when the car had straddled the tracks the terrible fatality took place. Travelling at a high speed the train tore the auto to pieces and hurled the bodies to one side.

Remains on Pilot

Mrs. Orr's remains became entangled in the engine pilot and remained there until the express had been stopped. Dr. Maverty's injuries were not apparent on a superficial examination, and the great shock may have hastened his death, he being at the advanced age of 75. Mrs. Florence Orr's body was badly mangled and Mrs. Hodgson's head was cut. Mr. Orr was mortally wounded, his injuries being many. His death took place a few minutes after being admitted to St. Luke's hospital.

According to an eye witness it was a physical impossibility to see the train approaching Vars crossing owing to the fact that the view of the tracks was obstructed by the presence of freight cars on the side of the crossing. At this point the track is straight, but once the automobile was in the path of the rapidly moving - -

"Time of My Departure at Hand," Said Dr. Maverty

Concluding words of Ottawa Minister Who Half an Hour Later Met Tragic Death at Vars Railway Crossing.

Special to the Journal

Vars Sept 11. "I am now ready to be offered up, the time of my departure is at hand." This was the concluding sentence of the address delivered by the late Rev. Dr. John E. Maverty, at Vars last night. Within a half hour after he had uttered those words, he was lying in cold death at the Vars G.T.R. station.

Choosing for his text: "Where there is a will there is a way," he spoke for three quarters of an hour very enthusiastically and impressively. Dr. Maverty was well known at Vars, and his coming was awaited by many from the district. He emphasized very strongly the evils man encounters in his walk through life. He deplored the use of tobacco and then he referred to the many main things for which man was placed on this earth.

Non-railway items omitted.

Engineer Says Whistle Was Sounded

Railway Officials Wonder Why the Occupants of Car Didn't Hear Train

The Grand Trunk railway crossing at Vars, the scene of the tragedy which cost five lives last night, is known to officials of the company as a dangerous one, the line of vision of anyone approaching the tracks from the main road being obstructed by several buildings. There is no protection such as would be afforded by gates or an alarm gong.

At the same time, the G.T.R. officials do not consider that they can be held blamable for the regrettable fatality which included among its victims, Rev. J.E. Maverty. To this Journal, this morning, they stated that the engineer had done all in his power to avert the wrecking of the automobile which was taking Dr. Maverty and his companions from the church anniversary service at Vars to Carlsbad Springs.

Engineer makes a Statement

While the report of Engineer F. Ferguson was not made public, The Journal learned that in part he stated that the lights of the automobile were not seen by him until the engine was practically upon the crossing. Then he threw the emergency brake "into the big hole" - completely on - only to hear the crash of the train into the automobile with a terrible impact.

According to the engineer, the railway right-of-way, which is about a hundred feet in width, was illuminated as bright as day by the big electric headlight which he stated was operating perfectly. Its glare, he considered, could have been seen by any one approaching the crossing even while the train was a long distance off. Sounded Whistle

Engineer Ferguson reported that he sounded his whistle a mile from Vars, at the sign post, and on approaching all of the crossings between that limit and the scene of the tragedy. He cited the names of several passengers on the train who are prepared to corroborate him in this respect.

The engineer has the reputation with his company of being one of their most efficient and careful engineers. He has been connected with the motive power department of the G.T.R. for about forty years.

Those in the automobile did not have a clear vision of the railway crossing. At the same time, railway officials remarked it strange that the occupants of the car neither heard the fast-approaching train nor saw the light shed on the right-of-way by the powerful electric headlight.

Inquest on Friday

The Railway Commissioners have not yet received the report of the railway on the fatality, and will not act in the manner until the ten days allowed for this side of the case is received. However, arrangements have been made for the inquest which will be held in Vars at 1 p.m. on Friday next. Whether the installation of gates or a bell at the crossing will be ordered remains to be seen.

Some years ago, a number of residents of Vars petitioned for the installation of a bell at the crossing, but this was met by a counter petition by other citizens, who objected and claimed that there was no need of such action, saying that the crossing was not a dangerous one

Accidental Death Vars Jury Verdict

Vars Sept 15. The death of Rev. Dr. John K. Mavety and four friends, at the Main street crossing, on Monday night, was accidental, according to the verdict of the coroner's jury returned early this evening. The jury found that the crossing was a dangerous one and recommended that it be protected.

The jury's findings rested upon the evidence of Engineer Fred Ferguson and Fireman Charles Gorr, both of Ottawa. They swore that the engine whistle had been sounded before the crossing was reached and that the bell had been ringing. Four other witnesses said no warning was heard of the approaching train, but would not swear that the usual signals were not given.

In concluding that the death of the five persons on the crossing was due to an accident, the jury appended a rider pointing out that the crossing is dangerous "for the reason that the east view is obstructed by box cars usually or often placed on siding close up to the crossing, and we further recommend that this crossing be protected."

The verdict, which exonerates G.T.R. employees from blame, will be applicable in the inquiry into the death of Mr. and Mrs Orr, Miss. Florence Orr, and Mrs. J.O. Hodgson, although inquests into their deaths will not be held. The inquest was presided over by Coroner J.P. Boyle, Casselman, and was delayed in commencing. The verdict was returned a few minutes before seven o'clock.

Going 45 Miles an Hour.

In his evidence Engineer Ferguson stated that there were three crossings at Vars within a distance of one mile. On the night of the fatality his train was two minutes late. He sounded the whistle at each crossing and when nearing the third highway saw a horse gallop across the tracks. The train was travelling 45 miles an hour. Immediately after the horse had cleared the tracks he noticed a flash of light and thinking that an automobile was approaching the crossing applied the brakes. The distance was too short and the crash occurred. Mrs. Orr's body was thrown up on the pilot and the other four were tossed to one side of the track. The car was hurled against a fence. He is familiar with the Ottawa-Montreal route, having had 25 years' experience on the road.

Charles Gorr, 34 Lewis street, Ottawa, fireman, swore that the bell and whistle on the locomotive had been sounded as was the practice. He declared that the sounds might have been drowned when passing the box cars, on the siding, within twelve feet from the crossing.

Conductor A.J. Leamy, 123 Hinton ave., told of taking charge of the bodies after the fatality, and arranging for medical attention for Mr. Orr on the arrival of the train in Ottawa.

Rev. R.E. Backus, Methodist minister here, told the reason for the presence of Dr. Mavety and his party at Vars. They had attended an anniversary service at his church. None of the victims were familiar with the crossing where they met their death.

He Heard Whistle

Hearing a whistle sounding when he was several hundred feet from the tracks, William Rees, who was driving home from the meeting, paid no attention to the warning and continued across the rails. It developed that Mr. Orr was a short distance behind the witness and not hearing the train attempted to cross. The witness said it was impossible to see the tracks on account of the box cars on the siding. He did not see the beam of light from the engine's headlight. Miss Edna Nelson, who was in the buggy with him, corroborated his evidence.

Walter Hall, who preceded Rees, did not hear the train, or see it until he was on the tracks. The headlight shone full in his face. Station Agent J. Armstrong said he heard the warning blast from the engines [sic]. The box cars had been placed on the siding about twelve feet from the path for pedestrians. They prevented a full view of the track from the crossing.

Walking within 60 feet of the car containing Dr. Mavety and his party, Mr. William H. Harrison, Carlsbad Springs, said the auto was not going more than 10 miles an hour. He was unaware of the presence of the express train. He claimed that the open box cars drowned the sound from the approaching train. If the box cars had been out of the way the train could have been seen by the motorists and himself.

Erwin Hilliard, K.C., M.P.P., Morrisburg, represented the estate of the late Dr. Mavety: J. Maxwell, Casselman, the Crown; and J.P. Pratt, Montreal, the G.T.R.

Ten Miles an Hour at Vars till Probe is Over

Sir Henry Drayton, chairman of the Board of railway Commissioners has instituted an inquiry into the railway crossing tragedy at vars last week in which Rev. Dr. Mavety and four others travelling in an automobile, lost their lives.

Until a decision has been arrived at regarding the cause of the accident the trains crossing the highway at Vars will only travel at a speed of ten miles an hour.

The large crowd of 5,000 persons at Delta Fair had an unexpected on its closing day. An aeroplane from Camp Mohawk became lost in the fog and got off course, then being almost out of gas, had to find a place to land. The pilot circled the fairground twice and then made a safe landing near the station. After obtaining a supply of fuel, he attempted to rise from the rough ground and crashed into the wire fence, breaking off the propeller. The pilot was not injured, but the aircraft had to be loaded on a large truck and taken back to base.

Letters to the Editor

The Vars Crossing

Sir, I notice in your paper of Sept. 18th a statement by Sir Henry Drayton, chairman of the Railway Commission, re Vars tragedy. I do not agree with his views. It is one thing for a man of his high standing to sit in an office chair, and make the statement, which he did about something with which he is not familiar, and it is quite another thing to be on the spot and see several persons on different occasions being nearly hurled into eternity on the same crossing.

Now, Mr. Editor, this is a dangerous crossing and on different, occasions people have been nearly caught: and only a few years ago when I was a member of our Township Council, I brought the matter up and had a resolution drawn up and forwarded to the Grand Trunk Railway Company, stating such to be the case, and asking them, to erect a bell or provide some protection for the travelling public, but our request was ignored, as they considered there was not sufficient traffic to warrant protection at this point.

The fact that such a prominent man as Rec. Dr. Mavety being a victim in this tragedy, has brought this matter of railway crossings more before the public, and it is quite time something was being done, as in the case of the Vars tragedy, no blame whatever could be placed on the motor driver, as it was impossible for him to see the headlight, no matter how powerful it might be owing to the obstructions, which the railway company had placed within twelve feet of the public highway.

In conclusion, Mr. Editor, I would say, to those familiar with the situation the blame for the Vars tragedy rests entirely with the Grand Trunk Railway.

Subscriber

Vars, Ont

Sept 24, 1917

L'Orignal. At last a carload of coal has arrived at the Canadian Northern Railway Station. It is now being distributed to residents of the town,

Blames Spreading Rails for Wreck on the G.T.R.

Spreading rails, it is said, was the cause of the wreck on the G.T.R. line between here and Renfrew recently, when seven freight cars were derailed a short distance past South March station. The derailment occurred about three o'clock in the morning. No one was hurt, although several lengths of track were torn up and service on line was tied up for several hours. According to C.W. Asmuseen, of Asmuseen's Chemical Laboratory, who arrived at the scene of the wreck before the track was cleared and took a few snapshots, the spikes holding the rails to the ties were loose on that portion of track. It was owing to this condition, he believes, that the rails spread.

07/12/1917 Eastern Ontario Review Montreal and Ottawa McAlpine

L'Original. A large quantity of hay is being shipped from McAlpine station on the C.P.R. The hay is from the centre of the township of Caledonia. Owing to the impossibility of getting cars on the C.N.R., very little shipping is done from the station here.

07/12/1917 Kingston Daily British Whi Kingston (CP) Clarendon

News From Eastern Ontario

Big Fire At Clarendon. [sic]

The Station Burned to the Ground on Sunday Afternoon.

Clarendon, Dec. 3.- An exciting time occurred at Clarendon when the station and residence in connection were burned to the ground, on Sunday afternoon, the fire starting about four o'clock. It is supposed the fire started from a defective chimney in the rear of the house and had made such headway before being discovered that it was impossible to check the flames. The contents of the freight sheds were saved and also the greater part of the office equipment, but the year's supply of coal and wood was burned. The agent suffered quite a loss, as a lot of household effects were burned, and there being no insurance. The store being so close, was also on fire and much damage was done, and only the heroic efforts of those gathered saved the building from being destroyed. Mr. Buffam's hotel, on the other side, was on fire several times but the flames were extinguished.

The C.P.R. office work is being carried on in the hotel for the present time.

21/12/1917 Kingston Daily British Whi Kingston (CP) Clarendon

From The Countryside Clarendon

Dec. 17.- The bridge gang, with Mr. Nesbit in charge, have the new box car station about completed and the agent is real proud of her new home.