

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1972

07/01/1972 *Ottawa Journal*

*Kingston (CN)*

*Long Sault*

CN freight train derailed, 22 cars blocking main line

A train derailment early today near Long Sault spilled 22 cars of an 84-car Canadian National freight train across both east and west CN mainlines between Toronto and Montreal.

The wreckage is expected to make the tracks impassable for at least 24 hours.

The accident took place about 1.30 a.m., 350 feet east of the abandoned Long Sault station and one-half mile north of the village itself. Long Sault is eight miles west of Cornwall. No one was injured.

Three tanker cars containing propane gas were among those derailed and at first it was believed their cargo was leaking. OPP Long Sault cordoned off the area but Earl Woito, a CN track supervisor, reported late this morning that there was "no leakage at all."

Cause of the accident is not known. Sources at the scene pointed out that the Long Sault station is not in operation so the accident could not have occurred while the train was being backed onto a spur line.

At the same time, the sources did not believe the train jumped the track of its own accord because the track is a straight-away.

A similar accident occurred at the same location last year, Mr. Woito said it was caused by a broken axle on one of the cars.

Two cranes were being used at the scene of today's derailment to lift the wrecked cars from the tracks. While that is being done, Montreal-Toronto traffic is being re-routed from Brockville to Dorval via Smiths Falls.

The Rapido between the two cities will be going the entire route on Canadian Pacific tracks.

A CN dispatcher in Belleville estimated that trains could be delayed as much as two hours by the re-routing.

Total damage to the derailed train could not be estimated this morning but Mr. Woito said a lot of empty cars were involved in the accident.

The train was en route from Toronto to Montreal.

09/02/1972 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Kingston (CN)*

*Morrisburg*

Triple blast turns railcars into missiles

Morrisburg. A vivid plume of flame rising from the mass of twisted railway cars and smouldering debris has so far thwarted attempts to clear the CNR's main line here.

A derailment of 36 cars occurred about 8.15 a.m. Friday, tearing up hundreds of feet of track and sending boxcars careening down embankments and into the bush.

Three major explosions in tanker cars carrying thousands of gallons of propane gas shook homes as far away as seven miles.

One resident likened the first explosion to an earth tremor.

One of the propane-laden cars weighing between 50 and 60 tons, flew about a quarter of a mile through the air after it exploded.

CNR officials speculated that burning gas escaping from the ruptured tank acted like a rocket.

Swathe in trees

The car lifted off the track and cut a neat swathe through the trees - some of which were about 12 inches in diameter at their base.

The trimmed trees indicate that it entered the bush at a height of about 12 feet before rising to about 30 feet above the ground.

The tanker crashed into a service line which joins the main tracks near the scene of the derailment, about a quarter of a mile away.

It then plunged through a wooded area for another 150 feet before coming to rest. Charred telephone poles located along its line of travel indicated the intense heat.

Pieces of splintered limbs from the trees it had struck littered the lines. Some had penetrated more than a foot into frozen ground beside the railway lines.

Tankers explode

A total of three tankers exploded within seconds of the derailment which occurred on a straight stretch of line about two miles east of here.

It was from one of these tankers - lying helter skelter among the other wrecked railway cars that a brilliant orange plume spurted all day Friday.

Fears that the remaining gas in the car might explode, coupled with the knowledge that a fourth propane-laden tanker was also damaged in the derailment, kept recovery crews at a distance.

One CNR spokesperson said crews would wait until the flame went out before attempting to clear the line. The derailment blocked both east and west lines.

Trains have been rerouted through Ottawa.

The spokesman said he expected the lines here to be blocked until Monday. Heavy cranes from both Montreal and Toronto were to arrive at the scene Friday afternoon to clear the twisted cars from both sides.

Area sealed off

Within minutes of the derailment police attempted to seal off the area.

Both police and the Morrisburg fire department learned of the explosions by their close proximity to the scene. The provincial police detachment was shaken by the blasts.

Firemen succeeded in reaching the remote scene, but could do little to contain the fire. The fierce heat drove them back as the propane shot flames 100 feet into the cold air.

An inspection of the scene about six hours later, when newsmen were allowed near the potentially dangerous area, revealed scorched fence posts and melted snow as far as 150 feet from the main line.

A total of about 20 cars caught fire and by early evening were still smouldering beside the hissing propane.

A decision had not been made concerning the remaining propane tanker car which had not ignited.

The eastbound freight train had been hauling 77 cars - 59 of which were loaded with general cargo.

While one ruptured tanker spewed grain onto the scorched tracks, another loaded with fruit and vegetables littered the area with hundreds of burned oranges.

Twisted metal, splintered framed and some of the car's wheels were scattered for about 100 feet along the lines.

Curious area residents travelled by snowmobile and on foot to view the scene. Police - fearful that another explosion might occur - cleared the area.

Neither the crew in the locomotive nor in the caboose was injured in the incident. The first car to derail was loaded with steel and was located ten cars behind the engine.

Chlorine gas

The rear portion of the train - including a tanker loaded with toxic chlorine gas - was eventually hauled from the rest of the wreckage by a locomotive sent in from nearby Brockville, one of CN's headquarters.

A police spokesman said an evacuation plan had been drawn up for the people of Morrisburg had the chlorine-laden tanker ruptured.

The only people close to the explosions and derailment were members of a bush party clearing surrounding bush area of dead elm trees.

They reportedly ducked flying chunks of steel as the first propane tanker exploded.

CN officials are continuing their investigation into the derailment as work crews clear the line.

Officials say damage is impossible to estimate, but will run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

TANKERS EXPLODE NEAR MORRISBURG , Flames shoot into the air from three propane tankers which exploded Friday morning following a Canadian National train derailment near Morrisburg. A total of 22 freight cars were destroyed in the fire which followed the derailment. CN officials estimate wreckage will not be cleared until Sunday night. The freight was eastbound for Montreal when the accident occurred. Fragments from the tankers were sent flying after the explosion, but workers near the train at the time of the accident escaped injury.

(Caption to aerial photo)

The village of Morrisburg, 12 miles southwest of Cornwall was shaken by a fiery explosion Friday morning when a Canadian Canadian National freight train was derailed two miles east of the town and three tank cars carrying propane blew up.

No one was injured but it was quite literally an earth-shaking earth-shaking experience for the village of only about 2,000.

Witnesses said that windows shook, doors of homes were blown open and icicles were, shaken loose from roof-tops. "We were standing here in the office when it happened," explained a mechanic at the Texaco station in Morrisburg. "Everything in the garage was rattling. We thought it was either a jet breaking the sound barrier or somebody dynamiting. The whole village shook."

Mrs. James McCrank, who lives just one mile from the site of the derailment, said the explosions shook her house. "I thought the roof was falling in."

The explosions were heard by a resident of Massena New York, 30 miles away.

About 2,200 feet of track was ripped up.

The 77-car freight train was eastbound for Montreal when the derailment occurred at 8.15 a.m. CN spokesman Walter Smith said that shortly after 36 cars left the track, one of four , propane tankers exploded. Seconds later, two more tankers blew up almost imultaneously, sending flames 100 feet into the air.

One tank car was blown a quarter of a mile into the bush, shearing off the tops of trees as it flew through the air.

Firemen from Morrisburg, Upper Canada Village and Winchester were unable to fight the blaze because of its intense heat. They had to stand back while flames destroyed 22 cars.

A provincial police spokesman said 12 men working a few hundred yards from the wreck had to crawl out of the area on their hands and knees because metal was flying in all directions.

"They were lucky,, he said. "They were so shook up after we took them to a service station that they could hardly talk."

The men were cutting down dead elms as part of a federal winter works project.

The wreckage blocked the CN's main line between Toronto and Montreal. Trains are being re-routed on CPR tracks, through Smiths Falls.

Mr. Smith estimated that it will be Sunday night at the earliest before the main line is cleared.

14/02/1972 *Ottawa Journal**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Track opens for westbound rail traffic

MONTREAL (CP) Rail traffic was resumed Sunday on the westbound track of Canadian National Railway's main Toronto-Montreal line following a freight train derailment at Mor- Morrisburg, Ont., Friday. It was not immediately known when the other track would be open. The section was closed Friday following the denaillmerft of 36 cars of the 98-car westbound train. A few minutes after the derailment several propane cars exploded, rocking the countryside countryside for miles around.

17/02/1972 *Ottawa Journal**Lachute**Lachute*

TRAIN DERAILMENT

LACHUTE .Que. (CP) Ten cars of a CP Rail freight train were wrecked in a derailment Wednesday on the Montreal-Ottawa line about 10 imjles west of here. No injuries were reported. The derailment damaged about 1,000 feet of track, a Lachute fireman said.

17/02/1972 *Ottawa Journal**Lachute*

Train Derailment

Lachute, Que., ten cars of a CP Rail freight train were wrecked in a derailment Wednesday on the Montreal - Ottawa line about ten miles west of here. No injuries were reported. The derailment damaged about 1,000 feet of track, a Lachute fireman said.

19/02/1972 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Track clear

MORRISBURG (CP) Regular freight and passenger service was restored Friday over a section of CNR track damaged a week ago by the derailment of 36 cars of a freight train.

Both east- and west-bound trains have been using the west-bound lane of the double track since Monday. Clearing and repairing the east-bound track had been delayed by a burning propane tank car which exploded after the derailment.

The derailment occurred near this village 20 miles southwest of Cornwall. Some debris remains at the scene, but the final clean-up is expected to be finished Monday.

19/02/1972 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Regular freight and passenger service was restored Friday over a section of CNR track damaged a week ago by the derailment of 36 cars of a freight train. Both east- and west-bound trains have been using the west-bound lane of the double track since Monday. Clearing and repairing the east-bound track had been delayed by a burning propane tank car which exploded after the derailment.

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Jury wants review after death crash on crossing

By Tom Van Dusen Citizen staff writer

A coroner's jury has recommended the review of speed limits for trains in built-up areas.

The recommendation came after an inquest Tuesday (22/2) into the death of Sylvia Jean Hood, 33, after a car-train accident last Jan. 21.

Mrs. Flood was northbound when her car collided with an east-bound passenger train at the Canadian National Railways crossing on Woodroffe Avenue.

Coroner Dr. Thomas Kendall suggested the recommendation while summing up evidence for the jurors. He cautioned them, however, not to expect quick action.

"I investigated 21 deaths at the railway crossing at Parkdale Avenue and Scott Street before they put signals up," he said.

He said the recommendation was worthwhile because "officials won't even consider a speed review unless the idea comes out of something like this."

Archie Greer, who was operating the train, said it was travelling at 50 m.p.h. at the time of the accident.

Mr. Greer said speed limits in different areas were outlined in engineers' time schedules prepared by CN.

"Engineers are governed by a stringent set of rules and there are only certain things they're able to do," said Dr. Kendall. "The train crew was operating within its guided limits at the time of the accident."

The jury attached no blame to the train crew in the accident.

Mr. Greer said he was about 400 feet from the crossing and Mrs. Flood was about 200 feet away when he first noticed her.

Warning whistle

He said he was in the middle of giving the warning whistle routine when approaching a crossing - when it occurred to him the Flood vehicle was getting a little too close.

"I still assumed she would stop," he said.

When the train was 50 feet away and the car kept moving forward, Mr. Greer gave a series of short whistle blasts hoping to jolt the driver's attention.

In the next instant, Mr. Greer applied the emergency brakes. Collision occurred almost simultaneously.

Mr. Greer and another crewman testified it took about a third of a mile for the train to stop.

Gaudy color

Three witnesses travelling behind Mrs. Flood the day of the accident testified that although the warning signals were working and they could see the train a considerable distance from the crossing, the victim never attempted to stop.

Bells on the train and the warning lightpost were operating and the lead diesel engine's headlight was on.

Dr. Kendall noted that the engine was painted a "rather gaudy color of orange with black-and-white stripes so that it should be seen by someone looking in the direction from which it was coming."

The coroner thought the victim might have been preoccupied or that something might have taken her attention away.

Police testimony revealed that the afternoon of the accident was sunny and Woodroffe Avenue was wet because of freshly laid salt, but not slippery.

The radio on-volume button in the Flood vehicle was up halfway and one of the front tires was almost bald.

Regional government has indicated it will begin construction of an underpass at the crossing in May of 1973.

28/02/1972 *Ottawa Citizen**Renfrew**Carp*

The driver of an oil truck was killed today when his vehicle smashed into the side of a moving train and burst into flames on highway 17 just east of Carp.

Three of five cars in the CNR freight train were derailed.

The driver was enveloped in flames and perished in the truck which burned for more than an hour.

The accident occurred at 10.15 a.m. Police and fireman found the remains of the driver's body after searching for an hour and a half.

Nothing remained of the truck except a small portion of yellow cab. Police said the vehicle belonged to the Shell Oil Company.

A charred licence plate was found in the wreckage. Police believe it is from the truck.

A witness told police it appeared the truck driver was going to attempt to cross the tracks before the train reached the crossing but changed his mind, slammed on the brakes, and skidded 200 feet in the side of the train.

The impact sent three cars sprawling into the snow in flames. The caboose remained on the tracks.

Police said an unidentified railwayman who was inside the caboose when it was hit walked away uninjured. No one on the train was hurt.

Power lines were knocked down and a set of signal lights were torn out of the ground.

Acrid grey smoke blanketed the accident scene as firemen tried to put out the flames in the train.

The truck was swept about 20 feet off the road and into a small creek. Parts of the creek were afire from oil dumped into the water.

Balance illegible.

There is a picture with the caption

Train burns in background while fire-gutted wreckage of oil tanker lies beside tracks at right.

29/02/1972 *Ottawa Citizen**Renfrew**Carp*

Highway 17 to reopen when wreckage cleared.

The Trans-Canada highway at Carp will reopen later today after crews finish clearing wreckage left Monday when a gasoline-loaded tanker truck rammed a train.

The 10.10 a.m. accident, which occurred at a level crossing on Highway 17 just east of the village, claimed the life of truck driver Camille Brideau.

The 32-year-old father of two lived at 50 Balsam St., Orleans.

He was employed by Shell Canada Limited, owner of the truck and trailer he was operating. The vehicle was carrying 8,000 gallons of motor gasoline when the accident occurred.

Canadian National Railways officials said the line and the highway should be open by late afternoon. The impact of the accident derailed three cars of the five-car freight train, which was travelling along the CNR branch line to Barry's Bay and Whitney.

Three rail cars afire

The collision set fire to the three cars as they were knocked from the tracks. The highway did reopen for a few hours during the night, but was closed again at 7 a.m. while mobile cranes removed the three empty cars.

Traffic had been rerouted along old Highway 17 after the accident.

One witness told police it first appeared Mr. Brideau was going to attempt to cross the tracks before the train reached the crossing.

But the trucker apparently changed his mind, slammed on the brakes and skidded 200 feet into the side of the moving train, said the witness.

Mr. Brideau was thrown from the wrecked vehicle, which burst into flames upon impact. No one else was injured.

Derailment causes city - CP Rail dispute

A train derailment which blocked the Hunt Club Road for three hours Sunday afternoon has touched off a dispute between CP Rail and the city of Ottawa. George Sayer, assistant superintendent for CP's Smiths Falls division, said the two diesel engines jumped the track because graders had covered the level crossing with gravel.

This morning, T. H. Dobbin, city engineer, said grading operations took place at 10.30 a.m. Saturday, and one train passed safely over the crossing a half an hour later.

Mr. Dobbin said the city accepts no liability for the accident and the railway would have to look for a cause other than the road graders.

No one was hurt in the derailment and both engines remained upright. They were pulling a freight train on the regular Ottawa-to-Smiths Falls run.

Hunt Club Road was blocked between Metcalfe and McCarthy Roads set up barricades and motorists, including those heading for Ottawa Airport, were rerouted.

An Air Canada official said he didn't believe anyone missed a flight because of the derailment.

Mr. Sayer said there was no problem with rail traffic since only one train uses the track each day.

CPR BLAMES CITY FOR DERAILMENT

Ottawa has been blamed for this train derailment at the Hunt Club Road crossing about noon Sunday. A CPR spokesman said a city grader didn't lift its blade while crossing the tracks and piled gravel and Ice between the rails. Two engines and one car of an Ottawa-to-Smiths Falls freight train went off the tracks. CPR workmen restored service on the line in about three hours. The CPR spokesman said the matter would be taken up with the city today.

Jury urges lights at crossings.

A coroner's jury has recommended that signal lights be located at all level crossings on main highways to warn motorists in advance of approaching trains.

The jury was sitting Wednesday at an inquest into the death of Joseph Brideau, whose fully loaded gasoline tanker collided with a CNR freight train on Feb. 28. Evidence had shown that the visibility is poor at the crossing on Highway 17 near Carp, and there are several distractions for drivers proceeding west on the highway.

These, along with the position of the crossing at the bottom of a hill, were listed as contributing factors to the accident which derailed three of the railway cars and closed the highway for more than 24 hours.

The engineer of the train, Irwin Currie, said the Shell Oil truck, loaded with 8,000 gallons of gasoline, hit the train after veering off the road and knocking over a signal post.

"All hell broke loose" he said. The truck exploded immediately, setting fire to the last three cars.

The jury also recommended that a remote warning light be placed 500 feet north of the Carp railway crossing.

## Collision at the Crossing

By Patricia Cote Citizen staff writer

CALUMET, Que. Kenneth Mc-Hardy heard the awful smash of metal into metal and rushed outside to see what had happened.

A five-ton fruit truck had crashed into the rear half of a CP Rail passenger dayliner bound for Montreal.

"Everything went up in the air like an explosion. It was about 10 or 15 feet high."

Mr. McHardy said it was the truck that caught fire. The dayliner was travelling at such a rapid speed that it didn't stop until half-a-mile down the track.

Mr. McHardy didn't realize until later that two people on the train were killed and 26 others injured as a result of the crash, which occurred about 9:15 a.m. on Highway 8 near this West Quebec town.

Mr. McHardy owns a service station about 40 yards from the railway crossing. He lives in a house beside the station. He was the first person to reach the scene of the accident.

Man screaming

"I ran to get my fire extinguisher it's one of those big ones because the truck was on fire. The flames were going up around the guy in the truck. The guy was screaming."

The "guy in the truck" was 24-year-old Reginald St.-Gelais of Gatineau, who was sitting in the passenger side of the truck. The driver of the truck, Michel Emery, 23, of Gatineau, was thrown clear upon impact. He had minor injuries.

"I put out the flames and then I ran back and called the police and the ambulance," Mr. McHardy recalled.

Mr. McHardy said that while he and Mr. Emery waited for the ambulance and police, a lumber truck pulled up to the scene. The unidentified driver got out and attached a chain to the crumpled cab which had been flattened against the fruit truck, pinning Mr. St.-Gelais inside. With the chain, he pulled the cab into some semblance of shape, enabling the rescuers to free the trapped man. However, Mr. St.-Ge-ais, who was acting as second driver for Mr. Emery, later was pronounced dead.

Mr. McHardy said he didn't know whether the lights and the bells at the crossing were working.

Passengers appear

But his wife said she was "pretty sure the bells were ringing. I didn't see the lights."

The McHardys' first sight of the train passengers were several people walking up the tracks through the wet, muddy fields, carrying suitcases.

Helen McHardys, the McHardys 19-year-old daughter, said many of the passengers came into the service station to use the telephone, as did Michel Emery, driver of the truck. "His nose was all bleeding and his sweater was splattered with blood," said Helen.

She said the passengers were "nervous but not hysterical." Some had minor cuts.

Although the train stops at Calumet, it normally accelerates quickly upon leaving the station, Helen said.

"The people on the train said it was going fast enough. They thought the truck's brakes must have failed," she said.

Splinters in glass

Michel Emery, the driver, has his own fruit and vegetable business in Gatineau. He was driving a truckload of fruit and vegetables from Montreal to Gatineau, a journey he makes two or three times a week.

Several hours after the accident, Michel was standing beside the train talking to reporters. The crash damaged the undercarriage of the train at the right side near the rear, shattered four windows, and left shards of wood embedded in the cracked glass.

Mr. McHardy said he thought there was a rack with crates of fruit on top of the truck, and that upon impact the crates went crashing through the train windows.

Mr. Emery told reporters that the lights and bells which mark the crossing were not operating when he approached, travelling at about 50 m.p.h.

If you are approaching the crossing coming from Montreal, there is a windbreak of trees 50 yards before the crossing. The windbreak makes it difficult to see an approaching train.

Mr. Emery said as soon as he was able to see the train he braked and tried to avoid hitting the train by going off the road on the left side, but he didn't get off in time.

Mr. Emery said he was thrown from the truck, got back on his feet and tried to help his partner, Mr. St.-Gelais.

Mrs. McHardy said a freight train had gone through earlier in the morning, and she heard the bells.

Reporters found Canadian Pacific workmen testing the warning signals at the crossing about four hours after the accident, and both the lights and the signals were functioning normally.

CALUMET, Que. CP Rail officials have denied a truck driver's claim that warning signals weren't working when his truck hit a train at a Highway 8 crossing near here Friday, killing three people.

Warning bells and lights were tested right after the crash and found to be functioning properly, said a CP spokesman in Montreal. "It (the crossing) was well-protected."

Michel Emery, 23, of Gatineau, whose fruit truck plowed into the Ottawa-Montreal dayliner about 9.15 a.m., told reporters later that neither lights nor bells were working.

Three persons were killed: Reginald St.-Gelais, 24, of 372 Cadieux St., Gatineau, Emery's passenger and relief driver; and train passengers Bernice Dougherty, 49, of Great Falls, Mont., and Mrs. Jeanne Marie Brunelle, 58, of 8 Verdon St., Ste.-Therese.

More than 20 of the dayliner's 50 passengers were injured, but police said none of the injuries was serious.

Among those suffering shock or minor and bruises and cuts were Eleanor Pelletier, 748 Borthwick Ave., Ottawa; Pauline Bourgeon, 248 Ethel St., Van-ier; and Phyllis, Rodney and Orin Stanley, all of 13 Wychwood Dr., Aylmer.

Sees wife die

Norbert J. Dougherty, husband of Bernice Dougherty, said he sat in the dayliner helplessly and watched his wife die.

"She was sitting on the side of the train where the train struck. Suddenly she was pitched into the aisle ... I thought she was just knocked out."

"I felt for her pulse and it wasn't there and then I knew she was gone," he said.

Mr. Dougherty and a daughter, Shawn, suffered only shock.

The collision demolished the cab of the truck, but the dayliner stayed on the tracks and came to a stop about half-a-mile from the crossing.

Help

Police said a police cruiser, an ambulance, and finally a tow truck ail became stuck in wet fields as they tried to reach the train.

The ambulances nine arrived to carry injured to hospitals in Lachute and Hawkesbury had to halt 1,000 feet from the train and police and volunteers carried the dead and hurt in stretchers across the soggy terrain.

The accident is being investigated by Quebec provincial police, a 10-man team from Canadian Pacific, and the Canadian Transport Commission.

Police said Coroner Jean Morin of Lachute plans to hold an inquest, but no date has been set.

Calumet is about 55 miles east of Ottawa.

Nobody screamed as truck loomed

MONTREAL (Staff-CP) "It was terrible," 78-year-old Lionel Chevrier recalled in a quiet but excited voice.

"There was broken glass all over the place. It showered all over my wife and me and a great big piece of glass just missed by head."

Mr. Chevrier, a retired farmer bound for Newfoundland to visit relatives when the dayliner was struck by a vegetable truck at a highway 8 level crossing Friday, said he watched the truck approaching the train.

The next thing he remembered clearly was a women lying in a pool of blood on the railcar floor beside him.

"She died right there on the floor," he said.

Mrs. Chevrier, 76, refusing a doctor's help as she was helped from a special train that brought survivors here, said:

Railmen praised

"We could see a big truck coming into the side of the car. But the funny thing was nobody screamed.

"A woman fell on the floor in the back of us and bled to death." Mrs. Chevrier told the doctor who asked if she felt alright:

"I've got a big crack on the head but that's okay. I feel more shocked than anything else."

Mrs. Aldege Dumoulin of Calumet, a 74-year-old grandmother, had just boarded the dayliner when the accident occurred.

"I tell you, we had two good drivers," she said.

The impact shook the train and she was surprised it didn't leave the tracks. (Engineer George Franklin of Ottawa and conductor Rene Labelle of Montreal were not injured.)

"We got some glass in our hair," she said. "We were shook up, but it didn't hurt us at all."

Mrs. Dumoulin and her daughter, Mrs. Allan Sanderson of Moncton and Mrs. Sanderson's 10-year-old son Bill, were sitting at the front of the dayliner. The truck hit towards the rear and on the opposite side.

"Nobody yelled, nobody screamed or cried or anything," she recalled. "We kept calm."

"We didn't see it coming. We didn't know what was happening until everything was all over."

**30/08/1972    Ottawa Citizen                    Lachute                    Calumet**

Lachute. A young garden product salesman still maintains he saw no warning lights before his truck crashed into the side of a Montreal-bound passenger train at Calumet on Aug. 11

Testifying at a Canadian Transport Commission inquiry here Tuesday, Michael Emery, 23, of Gatineau repeated the story he told immediately after the accident which claimed three lives and injured 26.

Mr. Emery didn't go as far as to say the flashing signals weren't working. He claimed he "didn't see them working." He stated positively the bells which normally ring as the lights flash weren't working before the collision occurred.

However, several witnesses called during the inquiry - which ended late yesterday afternoon - contradicted Mr. Emery's evidence.

Ken Hotchkiss, a Canadian International Paper Company purchasing agent, who travels Highway 8 over the level crossing every morning about the same time, said both lights and bells were working normally when he crossed as the CP Rail dayliner approached.

He said he glanced in his rear view mirror as he crossed and saw no sign of the Emery truck. Commission Counsel J.M. Fortier deduced the accident happened seconds after Mr. Hotchkiss left the scene.

Serge Roy, 16, a student living near the level crossing, said he was in his yard shortly after 9 a.m. and heard the bells on the signal posts ringing.

He added, because of his position, he couldn't see if the lights were flashing. He said he saw the Emery truck coming along highway 8, lost it from view behind some bushes, then saw it collide with the dayliner.

A passenger on the train, Laura Ratchky of Windsor, said she was looking out of the window near the Calumet crossing and saw the warning lights flashing.

Gilbert Blakeney, a CTC signalling engineer, said signals were functioning normally when tested shortly after the accident.

The inquiry, chaired by Louis Talbot, was also greatly concerned at the speed the dayliner was travelling as it came through the crossing.

E.J. Hase, director of operations for the CTC, said a statutory speed limit of 24 m.p.h. at all level crossings where an accident has occurred. He said the limit can only be lifted by the commission.

Although accidents had occurred at the Calumet crossing in the past, there was no speed limit at the time of the crash because previous statutory limits had been lifted. He added the 25 m.p.h. limit had been re-imposed since the Aug. 11 accident.

Veteran CPR engineer George Frankland of Ottawa said he put the throttle of his engine in the maximum position as he pulled out of Calumet station where he'd stopped to pick up two passengers.

Mr. Frankland emphasized when the throttle was placed in maximum the train didn't immediately reach top speed.

"The engine accelerates on its own and takes about a mile to reach its top speed of 90 m.p.h." he said. "We were doing about 45 m.p.h. When we went through the crossing, which is about half a mile from the station."

An unexpected discovery

A commotion stirred the Lachute Masonic Hall, where the inquiry was held, when, under cross-examination by the lawyer representing Mr. Emery, Mr Frankland revealed the train's speedometer wasn't working the day in question.

He said he wasn't aware of the problem until after he left the Ottawa Station, and insisted he was experienced enough to judge how fast he was going without the instrument.

(Mr. Hase testified that during tests made by the commission after the accident an engine identical to the one Mr. Frankland was operating was accelerated out of Calumet under the same circumstances and reached a speed of 44 m.p.h. at the crossing).

Mr. Frankland said the dayliner's speed is only restricted on curves - 60 m.p.h. - apart from crossings carrying statutory limits.

He said the train's headlamp was on as it approached the crossing and he gave the warning whistle and activated the bell as usual. He said it was a "fine, clear day."

The dayliner was on the crossing when Mr. Frankland first noticed the Emery truck.

He said his first impulse was to pull the emergency brake. Then he decided the best thing to do was get through the crossing and hopefully avoid the truck.

Mr. Emery said he didn't know the train was approaching until he saw it emerge from behind a line of trees when he was about 125 feet away. He said his radio was off and he couldn't remember whether his windows were raised or not.

He said he applied the brakes and swerved but was too close to avoid impact. He said he approached the crossing at a normal rate of speed.

Killed in the accident on the Ottawa-Montreal line were Bernice Doherty, 49, of Great Falls, Mont., Jeanne Marie Brunelle, of Ste. Therese, Que., both passengers in a CP Rail diesel car and Reginald St-Gelais, 24, of Gatineau, a passenger in the truck. None of the injured was seriously hurt.

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September 27 C.P.R. Line Being Lifted Between Douglas And Eganville

In one month's time the C.P.R. line between Eganville and Douglas will no longer exist and all that will be left will be a graded railway bed and memories in older minds of when the line was a busy one.

A Burlington firm, Penvidic Contracting Co., which builds and tears up railways, has been engaged in the ripping up of the Eganville-Douglas line for the past month.

The line is being lifted from the yard in Eganville for 9.7 miles to the switch in Douglas in the area of where the old station was located.

The line between Eganville and Douglas was closed about three years ago because it wasn't paying for itself. The company recorded thousands of dollars in losses.

(Monday 6/11/1972) Its that time again - Santa's in town.

He's rather on the lean side .. Not as roly poly as last year

At least that's the way adults saw it.

But the children didn't seem to care. For them it was his big red suit, his big white beard and his big belly laugh.

They were full of little whispers: "Ist santa".

Everything is big for a little child, especially Santa.

About 2,000 of them rode the special Saturday train from Vars to Ottawa. With Santa. Great big Santa.

They weren't the least bit concerned that modern-day Santas don't seem to have reindeer any more. There wasn't so much as a hoofprint as St. Nick drove by automobile from the train station to meet the 15-float Santa Claus Parade - his escort to freiman's Toyland.

More

Evidence indicated signals were working

The Canadian Transport Commission says evidence indicates a truck-train collision at a railway level crossing near Calumet, Que., Aug. 11 was not caused by failure of the automatic signal system.

Three people died and 22 were injured when a truck and a CP Rail dayliner coach collided at the crossing.

The commission said in a report released Monday that it has no authority to look at civil and criminal aspects of the case.

But evidence indicated the signal system was functioning properly and the train was also operating well except for the speed indicator. The truck had struck the train.

The transport commission report said that the only witness to say that the signals were not operating was the driver of the truck, Michel Emery, 23, of Gatineau. But other witnesses watching from nearby homes or driving over the crossing just before the accident saw the signal lights flashing and heard the bell ringing, the report said.

The signal system was later found to be in working order by commission inspectors, the commission said.

The train braking system was tested and found to be operating properly on the day the accident happened, the report said.

Passengers on the train also heard the train bell ringing, the commission said.