

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1979

*10/01/1979 Ottawa Citizen Renfrew Ski train*

Apathy may stall Snow Train

The Ottawa-Barry's Bay Snow Train's first run Jan. 19, may be its last if ticket sales do not improve dramatically by train time.

Dick Howey, co-ordinator of the special train program, said Tuesday advance ticket sales have been disappointing and may cause cancellation of any more trips this season. The train will roll the weekend of Jan. 19, Howey said, "but after that, I make no promises."

To make the exercise economically feasible the first run must be sold out, said Howey. He would not say how many of the 1,000 tickets had been sold but said the revenue would not begin to cover the costs of running the train more than one weekend. It costs \$12,000 to operate the train per weekend, he said.

*15/01/1979 Ottawa Citizen Lachute Hull*

Car dragged nine metres by train

A Pointe-Gatineau man and his car went for an unexpected train ride Saturday morning.

Gilbert Gervais, 19, of La Verendrye Blvd., was stopped at a crossing on Montclair Boulevard in Hull waiting for a train to pass when his car was struck from behind by another vehicle.

The impact of the collision shoved Gervais' car against the side of the moving passenger train, where it snagged and was dragged broadside for about 9 metres.

Hull police said the train's engineer, apparently unaware of what had happened, continued on his way without stopping.

Gervais was taken to hospital and released a short time later.

"He's in bed suffering from severe shock," his brother Roger said Saturday afternoon.

"The car is a total write-off and Gilbert can't remember what happened. It really shook him up."

A police spokesman said the driver of the other vehicle, Jacques Blais of 12 Allard St., Hull, was not injured in the incident.

No charges have been laid but the police investigation continues.

*16/01/1979 Ottawa Citizen Alexandria Moose Creek*

Two men in van killed in collision with train

MOOSE CREEK (Staff) Two men were killed Monday afternoon when their van crashed with a freight train on Highway 138 about three kilometres south of here.

Wilbur Argyle, 54, of Morrisburg, the driver, and his passenger Dennis Mortimer, 29, of Calgary died instantly in the crash.

The accident occurred at 12.25 p.m. and the van was thrown some 25 metres into a sideroad ditch by the impact. The van was demolished.

The train, a CNR freight, was eastbound for Montreal and was not seriously damaged.

Investigating Ontario Provincial Police officer Charlie McDonald of Long Sault detachment said the van was heading south along Highway 138.

The red railway warning flashers were activated, he reported. The investigation is continuing and no decision has yet been made whether to hold a coroner's inquest.

*18/01/1979 Ottawa Journal Lachute Gatineau*

Train crash victim dies

The victim of a Tuesday morning car-train collision in Gatineau died in Ottawa General Hospital yesterday at 2:30 a.m. Gatineau police say there will be no inquest into the death of 17-year-old Alain Joly of 82 Charlevoix St., Hull. The collision occurred at a railroad crossing at Maloney Boulevard and Payment Road about 8 a.m. as the computer programming student was on his way to pick up a friend before class.

*22/01/1979 Ottawa Citizen Renfrew Ski train*

Few on Snow train

'End of the line?'

The Ottawa-Barry's Bay snow train has probably come to the end of the line ... at least for this winter.

The excursions have been derailed by lack of interest, organizer Don Bradley said today.

Only 150 fun-seekers showed up on the weekend for the up to 900 seats offered on three runs to Barry's Bay.

Had the first weekend been successful, several other train trips would have been run through to the end of February, Bradley said.

Organizers might be prepared to proceed with other weekends if financing can be found, he added.

Bradley and co-organizer Dick Howey operated the snowtrain with a \$10,000 National Capital Commission grant that didn't quite cover the \$12,000 it cost to rent the train for one weekend. The train included a diesel engine, four passenger cars and a baggage car.

Organizers had hoped to recoup a large part of expenses through ticket sales, charging at \$18 return for adults and \$12 return for children.

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*27/01/1979 Ottawa Citizen Chalk River Pembroke*

Grader operator killed

A 64-year-old Pembroke man was killed Friday when a freight train slammed into the road grader he was driving at a level crossing in the centre of town.

Eli Corrivreau of 931 Pembroke St.W was crushed in the cab of his vehicle shortly after 9 a.m. when a westbound Canadian Pacific Railway train, hauling 90 boxcars, struck the southbound grader at McKay Street, police said.

The grader was about halfway through the intersection when the locomotive, moving at about 50 kilometres per hour, caught the rear end of the machine.

Ed Lehman, Pembroke city works superintendent, said the impact of the collision lifted the grader about 3 metres off the ground and sent it spinning through the air.

No one else was injured.

Corrivreau had worked for the city for 21 years and was planning to retire when he turned 65 in September. He had been operating road graders for the last 10 years, Lehman said.

CPR officials were unavailable for comment.

*19/02/1979 Ottawa Citizen Smiths Falls Forfar*

Fire ousts family of five

WESTPORT (Staff) - A flash fire at noon Saturday (17/02) destroyed a house in the village of Forfar, leaving a family of five homeless. Merton Carbino, his wife and their three children were not at home in the former railway station when the blaze broke out. Firemen say the blaze started in the chimney. Albert Shire, chief of the volunteer fire department, said by the time his detachment made the 15-minute trip the flames were out of control. Shire reported neighbors sounded the alarm shortly before 12 p.m. Carbino, a track inspector with Canadian National Railways, was renting the house. Damage has been estimated at \$20,000.

Train crushes car

A Via Rail train travelling west of Ottawa from Montreal struck an abandoned car Sunday at Cumberland, delaying it for more than six hours. OPP said the car had been abandoned on the tracks at Concession Nine after it had been reported stolen by the owner in Sarsfield. There were no injuries on the train, which was delayed until 7:35 a.m. while repairs were made to the railway bed.

Ottawa Citizen same date.

Train demolishes stolen car left abandoned on crossing

An Ottawa-bound VIA passenger train was delayed more than six hours early Sunday after it slammed into a stolen car abandoned on the tracks at Regional Road 31 near Carlsbad Springs.

None of the estimated 100 passengers aboard the train were injured. CN officials speculated the thieves of the late-model Gremlin either walked away from the car after it stalled on the track, or deliberately parked it there.

The accident, involving train number 139 from Montreal, occurred just after 1 a.m.

Rockland OPP reported the car had been stolen only hours earlier from Marilyn Laplante of RR1, Sarsfield. The car, struck at the left front fender, was reduced to a twisted mass of steel and upholstery, with the steering wheel virtually driven into the right-hand corner of the rear seat. It was dragged nearly a kilometre down the track before the train was able to stop.

The train, which received slight front-end damage, was due at Ottawa station at 1:20 a.m. but didn't arrive until 7:35 a.m. Passengers whiled away the time by sleeping, playing cards or drinking coffee.

J. P. Paquette, 22, of Aylmer, sitting in the second passenger car behind the engine, said he heard a loud "thump" and realized the train was dragging whatever it had struck.

"I felt quite a few bumps it was as if the whole car was jumping up and down a bit."

Police are continuing their search for the driver.

28/02/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Beachburg**Fitzroy Harbor*

Box car jumps rail

FITZROY (Staff) Canadian National Rail crews worked for four hours Tuesday night to clear the main western line to Ottawa after a box car jumped its rails at 9 p.m.

No one was injured and damage was minimal as a result of the derailment, which occurred about one kilometre south of here, said a West Carleton Provincial Police officer.

28/04/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Maniwaki*

Wakefield train back on track

The steam train to Wakefield one of the capital's most popular summer tourist attractions is back on the rails after seemingly being relegated to the round house last fall.

Although it looked like the train had made its final run last September, talks between the Museum of Science and Technology and the railways resulted in an agreement under the which the train will run to Wakefield on Wednesdays and Sundays as usual.

According to a museum spokesman, the railways, with control over a locomotive licence, were reluctant to prolong the life of the train because the number of people familiar with steam engines are few and far between.

"Careful negotiations" ironed out the problem, he said.

An announcement will be made soon regarding train schedules and ticket prices, he said.

Turbo trains pulled off rails in wake of mysterious blaze. (with pictures)

MORRISBURG Via Rail pulled its Turbo super trains out of service today and the federal government announced a full-scale investigation into the cause of a fire that badly damaged a Turbo near here Tuesday.

The fire in the lead engine of the Via Rail Turbo passenger train forced evacuation of 210 passengers on a desolate stretch of track.

No one was seriously hurt in the fire which occurred on a run from Montreal to Toronto.

The two-hour blaze, which sent clouds of smoke billowing into the early evening sky, reduced a power dome car and a coach to molten plastic. Two other coaches on the nine-unit Turbo, which has a capacity for 392 passengers, sustained serious heat, smoke and water damage in the 5:15 p.m. blaze.

Via Rail, the Crown corporation which operates the country's passenger rail services, said it has taken its other two Turbo super trains out of service pending its own investigation.

The federal government decided to conduct its investigation following a meeting today of the Canadian Transport Commission's railway transport committee.

The committee invoked a section of the Railway Act which empowers the commission to appoint investigators to look into all matters concerning the cause, circumstances and prevention of accidents.

The Turbos were replaced on the Montreal-Toronto run with slower, conventional equipment. Via Rail operates two Turbos daily in each direction. The

replacement trains will take about 30 minutes longer to make the run.

The only known injuries following Tuesday's fire were sprained ankles suffered by passengers on the soft railway roadbed during a 1.5-kilometre trek from the scene to the nearest crossing, about six kilometres west of Morrisburg.

Volunteer firefighters from Iroquois, Morrisburg and Williamsburg were forced to drive their trucks down the track, taking 30 minutes to reach the scene.

Firemen sprayed foam and water on the burning Turbo units for 90 minutes before the fire was brought under control about 7:20 p.m.

A Canadian National regional superintendent who had been a passenger on the Turbo said the equipment should not have burned because built-in fire extinguishing systems are designed to activate automatically when engine heat exceeds a certain-level.

However, Daniel Rosseel, Via's Quebec region spokesman, said from Montreal that the Turbo does not have an automatic fire extinguishing system, but is equipped with emergency indicator lights on a control panel in the engineer's compartment.

Passengers from the Turbo train which burned near here Tuesday finally arrived in Toronto at 11:30 p.m., about 3 1/2 hours late.

After a 2 1/2-hour wait beside the tracks, the stranded passengers were picked up by the regularly-scheduled Rapido from Montreal. At Brockville a number of passengers were transferred to the Exec from Ottawa, also on a regular run.

About 25 metres of track and several ties will be replaced today as a result of the fire, said Raymond Menard, a CN foreman based in Iroquois. Although the job will take up to four hours, service won't be disrupted because traffic will be switched to the parallel track, he said.

Menard said that about eight ties were damaged by fire. While the rail appeared undamaged, it may have been weakened by the fire and will be replaced as a precaution.

Daniel Rosseel, Via Rail's Quebec region spokesman, said work crews took five hours to make the damaged train mobile so it could be hauled to Montreal.

Another Turbo train left Montreal as scheduled today, while in Toronto a Rapido was being used as a replacement for the regularly-scheduled Turbo run to Montreal.

A Via Rail spokesman said he was not sure if it would be feasible to repair the Turbo a sleek single body structure and return it to service. There are still two other Turbo units in service. All the Turbo units are 12 years old.

In Toronto, Maurice Simms, Via's Ontario region spokesman, said that while the Turbo has had a checkered history of malfunctions, the one aspect officials were, and still are, not worried about is safety.

"No, we are not concerned with the safety aspect of the Turbo," said Simms. "We are not unduly alarmed."

In 1973, a CN Turbo caught fire just west of Montreal while on a demonstration run for officials of Amtrak, the U.S. passenger rail company. Amtrak was still sufficiently impressed with the train to buy it.

Upset passengers trek out safely.

Passengers from Via Rail's Toronto-bound Turbo that burst into flames Tuesday near Morrisburg claim the train's crew was under-equipped and slow in reacting to the blaze.

Terry Taylor of London, who was travelling home from Moncton and was in the lead car when the fire started, said there was smoke coming from the engine area but no one believed there was a fire.

"They could have probably put it out, but the train people had to go five cars back to get a fire extinguisher," said Taylor. Via officials said Tuesday each unit is equipped with a fire extinguisher.

Taylor was one of 210 passengers who rolled into Toronto's Union Station late Tuesday aboard the Rapido, a Via train that picked them up about three kilometres from the fire site.

Helen Daroch of Toronto, who was returning home with her sister Doris Birch, said passengers "were told there should have been some device to put out the flames in the engine panel but all they had was little fire extinguishers."

Birch said: "We got away quickly when we heard the train was mostly plastic."

Mary McIntyre of Toronto said she was dumped out in the middle of nowhere, forced to walk three kilometres on track rails and then stood for three hours waiting for another train.

"Not once did anyone say they were sorry," she said. "They were rude, and you can bet I'm going to write them a pretty nasty letter."

Clara West of Burlington said passengers were plagued by mosquitoes after being ordered from the train.

She fell while walking to the nearby village of Iroquois and received treatment for a badly sprained leg.

Judi Jewinski, of Waterloo, said she took the Turbo by accident and joked to a friend that she hoped she'd make it, referring to the problems that had plagued the train in the past.

She said a conductor came through their coach telling passengers they would have to leave the train for a few minutes because of technical difficulties.

"When I got out, the front was in flames," she said.

When the passengers finally arrived in Toronto, a shaky and tearful Mary Harrietha, of Halifax, hugged and kissed her two children Danny, 22, and Laura, 20, whom she hadn't seen in a year.

"I was scared stiff," she said. "There was a huge explosion and I didn't know what to do. I was afraid my kids would think I was dead."

Passengers from flaming train trek down tracks

Engine in flames within 15 minutes

Peter Buckley of Montreal, a passenger on Via Rail's Turbo train, said there was no indication of fire when the train came to a stop in the wooded area near Iroquois Tuesday.

He said about five minutes later crew members rushed through advising passengers to leave the train.

"Stepping out on to the track we could see flames and heavy black smoke coming out through the exhaust on the top of the train."

Within 15 minutes the engine was engulfed in flames, he said. "There was a lot of damage," said OPP Constable Lee McCaslin. "The engine is all burned up, the next car is demolished and the third is badly smoked. There was a lot of fibreglass. It just melted down."

The front car was so badly damaged the body sagged on to the rails, he said.

Iroquois, Morrisburg and Williamsburg volunteer fire departments fought the blaze for about three hours before it was extinguished at 7:20 p.m.

The accident tied up the westbound line for about four hours. The train with its burned-out engine and coaches was towed back Montreal.

Via owns three of the nine-car, self-propelled turbo-trains, inherited from CN when it took over all inter-city passenger train service last year from CN and CP Rail.

The fire is not the first on a turbo, designed by United Technologies of Hartford, Conn., and built by its Canadian subsidiary. Pratt and Whitney Co. Ltd., in Montreal.

In 1973, a CN Turbo caught fire just west of Montreal while on a demonstration run for officials of Amtrak after the train sideswiped a freight car.

Via Rail spokesman Brian Heath said it was too early to say whether Via would reassess the use of turbos.

The train, powered by gas-turbine engines, was supposed to enter service in 1967, but did not appear until December, 1968, because of construction delays.

A month later service was suspended because of winter operating problems and did not resume until May, 1970. It was suspended again in February, 1971, because of more mechanical problems. Service resumed again in June, 1973.

01/06/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Via must either scrap two Turbos or buy mothballed unit from U.S.

Via Rail is considering scrapping its last two high-speed Turbo trains after one went up in flames Tuesday, officials say.

Its other alternative would be to buy one or more similar turbine-powered trains from the U.S. government's Amtrak passenger rail service.

Amtrak has already mothballed its three Turbos of the same type, opting for French-made trains that are easier to maintain.

Via Rail officials say no decision is likely on future use of Turbo trains until after a minute examination of the wreckage of the train that caught fire Tuesday on a run from Montreal to Toronto.

The Turbos have been withdrawn from service indefinitely pending an investigation of the fire.

It was the third Turbo to catch fire, not counting one that burned near Montreal in 1973 after it side-swiped a freight train while on a test run.

A CN Turbo was destroyed by fire in 1975 and one of the Amtrak Turbos was also damaged by fire about two years ago, although Amtrak says this was not the reason the controversial trains were withdrawn from service.

The Via Rail Turbo's lead engine that burst into flames near Morrisburg will be examined in Montreal by investigators of Via Rail and the Canadian Transport Commission.

Via Rail officials say they hope the investigation will show whether there is a hidden defect in the engine that caused the fire.

Via Rail spokesman Brian Heath said it would be unfair to lump the 1973 fire with the others, because it occurred after a crash. "Even a Rolls Royce can catch fire if you drive it into a truck."

Until now, Via Rail has operated two Turbo trains on the Montreal-Toronto run, with the third held in reserve. Via Rail president Frank Roberts says three Turbos are needed to maintain the service.

Amtrak says it would be happy to sell one or more of its mothballed Turbos to Via Rail. It bought one of them from CN several years ago for about \$2 million.

Amtrak spokesman Jim Bryant said the three Turbos were taken out of service because of mechanical problems. He said Canadian operators have been more successful in overcoming the problems. Even so, it is necessary to take the entire train out of service every time a fault develops in one car, he said.

Heath said the Canadian Turbos have had a 98 per cent reliability record in recent months.

05/06/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Turbo train still in Morrisburg

MORRISBURG Via Rail's burned out Turbo train was still in Morrisburg today undergoing a preliminary on-site investigation. Plans to take the train to Montreal for investigation and repairs on Friday were changed when officials of a number of the parties involved decided to make a preliminary check at the site of the accident.

Investigators check Turbo train wreckage

MORRISBURG (Staff) Via Rail's burned-out Turbo train is still in Morrisburg today undergoing a preliminary on-site investigation.

Plans to take the train to Montreal for investigation and repairs on Friday were changed when officials of a number of the parties involved decided to make a preliminary check at the site of the accident.

The front three units of a nine-unit Turbo, bound for Toronto, caught fire a few miles west of here last Tuesday night.

Via Rail sent two gondola cars, a flatbed car and a crane down from Montreal Thursday but they are still here and will probably take the damaged units back to Montreal sometime this week.

Investigators from Via Rail, CN, Pratt and Whitney and the Canadian Transportation Commission are in Morrisburg for the preliminary inspection.

06/06/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Morrisburg*

Turbo train taken away

The wrecked lead engine of the highspeed Turbo train that caught fire a week ago near Morrisburg was to be taken to Montreal today.

The engine was lifted by crane onto a CN flatbed car Tuesday in preparation for the move to the Taschereau yards, where it will undergo further investigation to determine what caused it to burst into flames. The fire forced the evacuation of 210 passengers.

The remaining eight units on the super-train are expected to be towed to the Turbo service bay at Montreal's Central Station today for extensive safety checks.

Via Rail officials said the delay in moving the disabled train from the site of the fire resulted from a desire to carry out a "full on-site investigation."

Meanwhile, Via Rail, the Crown corporation that operates passenger train service, has suspended its Montreal-Toronto Turbo run indefinitely, pending the outcome of the investigation, and safety checks.

In addition to the Turbo damaged by the fire, Via Rail owns two other sleek Turbo trains, each made up of two engines and seven passenger cars. The fire investigation is being carried out by experts from the Canadian Transportation Commission, Via Rail and Canadian National.

12/06/1979 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Carleton Place*

*Carleton Place*

Town off the track

CARLETON PLACE (Special) Steam Train 1201, which in the past had included Carleton Place on its summer excursions on occasion, will not be making the trip to the town this year unless an arrangement can be made with the National Capital Commission.

A CP Rail spokesman said that the Wakefield run could be possible because the NCC have at their own expense installed facilities for servicing the train, whereas no such services prevail on the Carleton Place route.

When the train visited Carleton Place in the past, hundreds of local poured into the station area and the town made many special events available to offer entertainment to the travellers.

19/06/1979 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Kingston (CN)*

*Morrisburg*

Turbo fire result of break in pipe

TORONTO (CP) A broken pipe allowing fuel to spray over a hot engine was the cause of a fire that destroyed three cars' of a Turbo train last month, Frank Roberts, president of VIA Rail Canada Inc., said Monday.

VIA's two other Turbo trains, pulled off the tracks for safety checks following the fire, will remain out of service until an investigation by the Canadian Transport Commission is completed.

"We know what caused the fire but we don't know why the pipe broke or why the fire extinguishing system did not put it out," said Roberts.

03/07/1979 *Ottawa Journal*

*Kingston (CN)*

Fuel line break caused train fire

Via Rail investigators know what caused the fire that wrecked one of their Turbo-trains in Morrisburg on May 29, but they still don't know why.

Emery LeBlanc, public relations director for Via Rail In Montreal, said the initial report on the fire shows that a break in a fuel line brought fuel into the engine where it was ignited.

But they don't know yet why the line broke.

More than 200 passengers were forced to flee the train when fire broke out in the engine a few miles west of Morrisburg. No one was injured but the front three units of the nine-unit train were gutted by the fire.

LeBlanc said no decision will be made on whether to restore the Turbo service until the full investigation is completed.

03/07/1979 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Beachburg*

*Greenbank Road*

Two Ottawa residents escaped serious injury Saturday morning when their car smashed into a passing CN passenger train on Greenbank Road.

Nepean police said James Mellane, 25, of 2695 Hickson Cres., hit the battery box of the sleeping compartment and this stopped the car from going under the train.

"Hitting where he did probably saved his life," said a Nepean police officer, who refused to release the name of the 18-year-old female passenger with Mellane.

Mellane was treated and released in hospital.

31/07/1979 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Kingston (CN)*

Turbos back on the tracks

Two of Via Rail's turbo trains will be returned to service today, following a two-month investigation into a fire which damaged the company's third locomotive.

Via spokesman Brian Heath said the train involved in the May 29 accident near Iroquois, will not return to service.

Via Rail made the announcement after the Canadian Transport Commission said it was satisfied with safety modifications submitted.

Heath said the trains have been fitted with a new type of fuel line. Changes to the automatic fire alarm and extinguishing systems were also planned.

Investigators found the fire aboard the third locomotive started when a stainless steel pipe corroded by the sulphur content of the fuel broke, spraying fuel over the hot turbine engine, he said.

The fire started in the front power car and spread to the next two cars. The 200 passengers and crew members were evacuated safely.

The two trains that will be returned to service were scheduled on two after noon round-trip runs between Montreal and Toronto.

20/08/1979 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Chalk River*

Hundreds turn out to wave

Ottawa Valley bids farewell as Chief's train heads west

SUDBURY John Diefenbaker travelled through the Ottawa Valley on Sunday for the last time, saluted by farmers and townspeople to whom he was a legend.

The seven-car train carrying the body of Canada's 13th prime minister to its last resting place in Saskatoon left Ottawa at 5:20 p.m. 18 minutes late and rattled up the valley while thousands of farmers and others from valley towns waved along the route.

Children cheered from their backyards and families gathered at their fences as the special Diefenbaker train sped through the half light.

Somewhere between Arnprior and Renfrew a farmer stood in his tractor and lifted his straw hat in a final salute as the train roared by.

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20/09/1979 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Belleville*

*Wemyss*

Loss hit \$1 million in train, truck crash

WEMYSS Canadian Pacific Railway work crews are slowly picking up the pieces of a \$1 million train-truck collision here that sent burning wreckage over an area the size of a football field Wednesday night.

Miraculously, no one was seriously injured when an eastbound Canadian Pacific freight train carrying new automobiles slammed into a northbound tractor-trailer laden with pulp logs at a level crossing about 100 kilometres west of Ottawa.

The train's two engineers and the driver of the truck were able to walk away from the 7:45 p.m. accident even though the force of the impact severed the truck in two and piled freight cars one on top of the other.

Train engineer Jim Colborne of Toronto was taken to Memorial Hospital in Perth with a partially-severed ear.

Another engineer, Bruce Butterworth of Peterborough suffered a broken leg. The driver of the truck, Roger Lalonde, 26, of Cornwall managed to walk away with nothing more than a bad scare.

Investigators are still trying to piece together the circumstances surrounding the derailment. There were no warning indicators marking the crossing along the dirt road.

More than 75 CPR workmen and 42 firemen from surrounding towns rushed to the scene to find the lead engine of the train in flames and dozens of smaller fires breaking out as fuel in the automobiles ignited.

Smoke billowed hundreds of feet in the air with explosions erupting from ruptured gas tanks every few minutes.

The area was soaked in diesel fuel and sparks from the engine's electrical system kept igniting the fuel. The fires burned until 5 a.m.

Twisted wreckage of train strewn for 360 metres (with picture)

WEMYSS (Staff) Perth resident Murray Blair, who arrived at the scene of a train-truck crash here minutes it happened Wednesday evening, said the cab of the trailer was sitting undamaged just across the tracks when he got there.

"The train had hit the tractor-trailer just where the cab joins the rear section that's probably what saved the driver's life," Blair said today. "The driver told me he had driven that road every day for a month on trips to Cornwall.

"He said he slowed down and put it into low gear and just as he got the cab up on the tracks he saw the train's light," said Blair. "He put his foot to the mat but he knew he wasn't going to make it, but the action of his wheels when the train hit probably saved him from being dragged back into it."

Blair and his friend George Perkins, who heard the train whistle at his home two kilometres away before the crash, found Butterworth still in the engine, his ankle broken by a log from the tractor trailer that had smashed through the window.

Coburn was sitting in a nearby ditch with blood from his torn ear dripping down his face, said Blair.

The train's 24 cars were strung along a 360-metre stretch of track. Some were piled 15 metres high. One of the engines turned completely around on impact.

Most of the cars were carrying new GM cars destined for St. Therese, Que.

Four cars normally used to transport gasoline, wax, and asbestos were empty. The train was also carrying a few carloads of auto parts.

The tractor trailer was left lying in a deep ravine at the side of the track.

Two auxiliary trains from Toronto and Montreal arrived here at about 1.5 a.m. to begin hauling the twisted wreckage off the track.

More than 150 metres of ruined track must be replaced.

Freight trains leaving Montreal and Toronto were delayed Wednesday and are now being rerouted on Canadian National Railway lines. Passenger service was not affected.

CPR officials expect the cleanup operation and repair work for the tracks to take about another day. The track is expected to be cleared by 4 a.m. Friday

Cost in millions as train rams tractor-trailer

Clean-up of derailed train equipment, destroyed Corvettes and other cars continued today following a multimillion-dollar train wreck Wednesday at a level crossing 10 km southwest of Perth.

A 98-car CP Kail freight train collided with a tractor-trailer loaded with logs about 7:30 p. m., in Dewitt Corners, setting off explosions and fires and ripping up 150 metres of mainline track.

CP officials and police said it was a miracle no one was killed. Two men, engineer Jim Coburn of Toronto and trainman Bruce Bultcrworth of Peterborough, suffered minor injuries in the crash.

The truck driver, Roger Lalonde of Long Sault, escaped unscathed.

About 70 GM cars, container shipments and other freight were damaged or destroyed in the wreck, which derailed three diesel engines and 22 cars and scattered parts of Lalonde's demolished log trailer as far as 100 metres from the crossing. CN [sic] officials plan to have their Montreal-Toronto main line reopened by 4 a. m. Friday, but in the meantime traffic is being rerouted to CN's line or to CP's northern line through North Bay. No passenger traffic is affected.

Engineer Coburn was treated for a partially severed left ear and head cuts while Butterworth suffered a fractured left ankle.

Both were later released from hospital.

Lalonde told police he had slowed down before arriving at the Churchill Road crossing, but didn't see the train and continued over the tracks.

When he did see the train, he accelerated but the first of the three diesel engines struck just behind the cab.

CP officials said the crossing is marked by white, reflective crossing sign, but not by signal lights. The Perth OPP detachment is still investigating the incident.

The force of the impact split apart the three diesels with one landing in a swampy area about 100 metres from the track.

A second diesel, entangled in the wreckage, burst into flames and set off a chain reaction of exploding automobile gasoline tanks.

The train, enroute to Ottawa [sic] from Toronto, was carrying no explosives or corrosive materials, although it was carrying tanker cars which one official said were not "in danger of exploding."

The contents of the tankers was not disclosed.

Officials at the scene estimated damage in the millions of dollars, but CP spokesmen today said damage figures will not be available for at least two weeks.

One of the first persons on the scene was photographer Ted Dyke of nearby Stanleyville.

"It was total chaos when I arrived," he said. "I had never seen anything like it before in my life.

"The wreckage was piled, I would estimate, at least 30 feet high.

His wait for firemen 'seemed like eternity'

By Dave McKay Journal Reporter "Everything was scattered all over the place and there was no sign of life when I arrived at the scene," said Murray Blair, of Perth.

Blair was one of the first persons to come upon Wednesday evening's massive train derailment just southwest of Perth.

Two men were injured when the CP Rail train smashed into the side of a tractor-trailer truck at a level crossing. Damage was estimated in the millions of dollars. "There was nobody around. . .just piles of wrecked cars and logs scattered all over the place," said the Perth Courier newspaperman who discovered the wreckage while taking his dog to the veterinarian.

"I've never stumbled on any thing like this before in my life. It was a real eerie feeling seeing all that metal scattered for hundreds of yards and not seeing anybody else around but me and my friend George Perkins.

"The first thing George and I did was check inside of the cab of the tractor trailer which had been separated from the trailer. When we found no one we ran along the tracks looking for anyone else who might be injured.

"We didn't know at the time the driver (Roger Lalonde) had gone to a nearby farmhouse to get help.

"Then from the other side of the derailed flat cars we heard someone pleading for help. We ran over and found one of the trainmen sitting on an embankment by the wreckage with blood oozing out the side of his head.

"The fellow (Jim Coburn) asked me if his brain was sticking out because all he could feel was the blood dripping down (he side of his face. I didn't tell him how bad it was but his ear seemed to be hanging by a thin piece of skin.

"He told us he would be all right and asked us to go and check on a co-worker (Bruce Butterworth).

"We spotted him within a few minutes in one of the derailed diesels but we couldn't get to him because of all the debris.

"The man (Butterworth) was worried about the explosions but we told him he was safe until firemen arrived, he said he was feeling weak because of a log that had smashed through the cab window and hit his leg."

Blair said it seemed like an eternity before firemen arrived and began rescue operations.

Another witness. Ted Dyke, of nearby Stanleyville arrived at the scene shortly after Blair.

"All those Corvettes burning ... I couldn't believe my eyes. All those other cars that looked liked someone had taken a giant can opener to them . . . man was it a mess. You feel so helpless when you look at a disaster scene like this," said Dyke.

Dyke, a photographer, started taking pictures of what he described as an "ugly scene."

"There were at least two dozen cars on fire with twice that many wrecked. Debris was piled at least 30 feet high and I had to stand on top of some of it to take my pictures.

"The fire was punctuated with explosions from the gasoline tanks on the cars. I spotted one of the diesels at the bottom of the pile," continued Dyke.'

"When I left cars were still burning and exploding while firemen were attempting to put out the flames by pouring water and foam on them.

"I guess it will be a couple of weeks before the mess is cleaned up."

21/09/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Belleville**Wemyss*

It didn't matter that the Cadillac Seville was worth \$14,000 it was dragged to a nearby field along with other hunks of metal which were once luxurious automobiles.

Corvettes, Trans Ams, Oldsmobiles, and Cadillacs, part of a shipment of 108 new cars en route to General Motor's plant in Ste. Therese, Que., were all subjected to the same treatment during the clean-up operation after Wednesday night's train wreck near Perth.

They were dragged off the main line into nearby fields to make way for repair crews and new rails.

More than 100 men had been called in from Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa to help with the massive cleanup. Equipped with two heavy-duty cranes, two diesel bulldozers, a front-end loader and steel cables, the men cleared away 24 railway cars, most of them loaded with the new automobiles, from a 160- metre stretch of track 13 kilometres west of Perth.

The line was cleared by midnight about four hours ahead of schedule.

The automobiles, all full and midsize models worth between \$8,000 and \$14,000, were part of the cargo of a 98-car Canadian Pacific freight train which rammed into a tractor-trailer laden with logs.

By mid-afternoon, the crews had cleared away three railway cars of GM parts and empty container cars used to carry wax, gasoline and asbestos. But they were only beginning to work on the removal of the automobiles.

The two 225-tonnes cranes brought in from Montreal and Toronto were needed to move the three-tier railway cars which were strewn about on their side following the impact. An empty three-tier car weighs approximately 22.5 tonnes with its cargo adding another 22.5.

The cranes lifted the wrenched railway cars free from the rails which were bent into pretzel-like scraps of metal by the impact of the derailment. The bulldozers then used steel cables to drag the mangled heaps away from the site.

As the railway cars were dragged to the side, safety chains which secured the automobiles onto the cars began to snap, letting the cargo topple to the ground.

Windshields popped, gas tanks were ruptured and cars flattened as once luxurious models of North American status were reduced to indistinguishable scraps of metal.

A spokesman for CP Rail said the company would try to salvage what it could but clearing the track was the main priority.

The charred remains of a diesel engine, bearing the familiar CP Rail logo, was one of the first pieces of equipment to be cleared from the rest of the rubble.

Once a mighty driving power, it was reduced to a mere scrap of metal, waiting for its final ride to the scrap yard.

21/09/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Belleville**Wemyss*

Train wreck damage set at \$3-\$5 million

Insurance adjusters at the scene of Wednesday's derailment of p 98-car CP Rail freight train say damage estimates range from \$3 million to \$5 million.

Three diesel engines and 22 cars carrying about 70 new GM automobiles were destroyed after leaving the track about 7:30 p. m in Dewitt Corners, 10 kilometres southwest of Perth, following a collision with a tractor-trailer truck loaded with logs at a level crossing.

CP Rail officials and police said it was a miracle no one was killed, although engineer Jim Coburn of Toronto and trainman Bruce Butterworth of Peterborough remain in hospital and are reported in stable condition.

Coburn received emergency surgery to repair an almost severed left ear while Butterworth suffered a fractured left ankle.

Truck driver Roger Lalonde of Long Sault escaped uninjured.

Impact of the collision split the tractor from the trailer while the train continued for about 1K0 metres before derailing and bursting into flames.

Burning deisel fuel spread to the tanks of the automobiles, setting off a chain of explosions.

It took firefighters more than 10 hours to extinguish the blaze.

CP Rail officials say it will be at least another week before all the debris is cleared from the area.

Lucky trucker tells of escape

It was getting dark and Roger Lalonde had to get the heavy load of pulp wood just cut near Sharbot Lake to a Cornwall paper mill.

He decided to take the back roads to avoid the highway traffic.

The short cut brought the 23-year-old Long Sault man to a level railway crossing at Dewitt Corners, about 13 kilometres west of Perth and within metres of death.

At 7:35 p.m. Wednesday, a 98-car CPR freight train slammed into Lalonde's tractor trailer at 80 kilometres per hour.

In a few horrifying minutes the train's three diesel engines lunged burning into the ditch and 24 railway cars, many of them tri-level automobile carriers, piled into each other in a mass of flames, explosions and twisted metal.

Amid the carnage, Lalonde emerged from the cab of his truck totally unscathed.

"I guess I'm pretty lucky to be here," he said Thursday, back with his family at his Long Sault home. "It all happened so fast, I didn't know what hit me. When I started to cross the tracks there was just no train there. Then I saw the light coming up fast.

"Witnesses say Lalonde survived only because the lead engine severed his vehicle dead on the connection between the cab and the flatbed trailer.

Two CPR engineers were injured when the diesel derailed and plunged into marshy ground beside the track. But there were no serious injuries.

Lalonde, still shaken by the experience, said Thursday he had used the gravel road frequently since he began the run from the Sharbot Lake logging operation to Domtar Ltd. in Cornwall last month.

While there are no railway lights at the crossing, he never thought it particularly dangerous.

"I was only going about one mile an hour across the tracks. I just didn't see the train until it was right on me," he said. They definitely need warnings there."

Lalonde, who bought his International tractor and flatbed trailer just a month and a half ago for the family business, doesn't know what the future holds.

"I guess I just have to sit and wait for the insurance people."

The Perth OPP detachment is still investigating the accident.

Meanwhile CPR officials are tallying the damages which may reach \$2 million.

General Motors of Canada Ltd., which had 108 brand new automobiles and three box cars of components on the train, has sent its own investigators to survey the ruins.

The GM cars - all full and midsize models - were all from the Windsor, Ont., plant en route to GM's plant in Ste. Therese, Que., where more cars would be added to the train for distribution to points east, said GM spokesman Nick Hall.

Hall said the company can't even estimate the damages yet until the mess has been cleared away, but he wasn't optimistic.

"Usually in cases like this, very few of the cars ever make it to the streets. Even if they appear undamaged, they have to be impounded and checked over very carefully," he said. "Most of them will be insurance writeoffs and used for parts or repaired and turned over to GM's employee training centres."

While a shipment of GM cars was damaged in a train derailment near Thunder Bay last July, Wednesday's mishap appeared to be one of the most serious for the company, said Hall.

Spokesmen for both GM and CPR said the companies have extensive insurance coverage.

24/09/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria**Alexandria*

Alexandria man killed, hit by train

An Alexandria man died Saturday when he lost a race with a freight train at a level crossing at which warning lights and bells were working.

Police say Gary Major, 29, of 271 Main St., was killed instantly when struck by a train about 70 metres from his home shortly before 9 p.m. Saturday.

Major was going home after visiting a friend when he was seen running towards the tracks. Alexandria police said it looked as if he was trying to beat the train rather than wait for it to pass.

The accident delayed the train, eastbound for Montreal, for more than an hour although the tracks were cleared within 15 minutes. Police said lights and bells were on when the accident occurred.

24/09/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Alexandria**Alexandria*

Decapitation of man one of 3 area deaths

The Saturday night death of a 29-year old man decapitated by a Canadian National Railways freight train in Alexandria is one of three fatalities discovered on the weekend by Ottawa area police.

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Alexandria municipal police said Garry Major was hit by a Montreal-bound CNR train at a level railroad crossing at 8:50 p.m.

The train was going about about 100 kilometres an hour.

The conductor of the train, whose name was withheld, told police Major tried to race across the tracks before the train reached the intersection with Main Street. Major fell partly beneath the wheels and was killed.

Signal lights and a bell where Main Street crosses the railway tracks in this community of 3,600 were operating, Constable Robert Latreille said.

"He just ran across the path of the train, thinking he could make it," Latreille said.

Major had apparently spent the evening butchering hogs for a farmer outside of Alexandria, according to a local store owner, and was returning to his parents' home where he lived. He was not married and was unemployed at the time of the accident.

Latreille said trains normally pass through his community at 100 kmh and added that the intersection was the scene of a fatality in 1973. An area man whose truck stalled was killed.

11/10/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Belleville**Perth*

Despite efforts by history buffs, the old CP Rail train station in Perth fell to the wreckers this week. The station (picture above) built before the turn of the century will be replaced by a new building. CP Rail said it would be too costly to heat and maintain the old structure. The town's architectural heritage group and council had considered purchasing the old station to use as a museum but the cost of buying and moving it was prohibitive, and council lacked the authority to stall the demolition.

11/10/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Belleville**Perth*

Station untracked Despite efforts by history buffs, the old CP Rail train station in Perth fell to the wreckers this week. The station, (above) built before the turn of the century, will be replaced by a new building. CP rail said it was too costly to heat and maintain the old structure. The town's architectural heritage group and council had considered purchasing the old station to use as a museum but the cost of buying and moving it was prohibitive, and council lacked the authority to stall the demolition.

16/10/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Lachute**Gatineau*

Train-car crash hurts Hull man

A Hull man is in critical condition in Ottawa General Hospital after the car he was driving was hit broadside by a Canadian Pacific Railways passenger train in Gatineau early today.

A Gatineau police spokesman said the man's name is being withheld until his family has been notified.

Police said the man drove his late model car into the path of the Montreal-bound train after turning left from Maloney Boulevard onto Montee Paiment.

"It appears he tried to beat the train across the tracks," a police spokesman said.

Damage to the train was minor and it continued on its way following the investigation.

Cornwall wins Rapido service.

CORNWALL (Staff) Persistent requests by local officials to have the Montreal-Toronto Rapido train stop here have paid off.

VIA Rail has announced that starting next week the express passenger service will make a regular stop here.

"I am very pleased that our request has finally been granted," said Mayor Gerald Parisien.

The Rapido bound for Toronto will make its first stop here Sunday, while on Monday the first Montreal-bound train will do so.

From then on, say VIA officials, the Rapido will make one 9 a.m. stop here en route to Toronto and one at 9:30 p.m. bound for Montreal.

But there won't be any stop on Sundays to Montreal.

Railway officials also stressed that advance ticket reservation is required.

30/10/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Other*

Discovery train opens in Ottawa

The leading man was falling apart, stage hands were frantically repairing props and technicians were busy fixing the lights.

But no one was nervous about the Ottawa debut of the Discovery Train, least of all the actors, whose cool exteriors betrayed a singular lifelessness.

The show begins a six day run at the Museum of Science and Technology today after having played to more than 1.2 million people in 62 out-of-town openings.

It is the last run of the 1979 season.

When the Discovery Train, twenty 65-ton boxcars of Canadiana, rolled into Ottawa this past weekend, the work was only beginning for the 72 crew members who help mount each production.

While not exactly prima donnas, the actors in this epic, the prehistory and history of Canada, are sensitive, particularly to the jolting and bumping that comes with riding the rails.

By the time he arrived here, the star of the show, Sir John A. Macdonald, was practically in pieces, having suffered minor internal damage. Technicians removed his chest and tightened his valves. Any prime minister, but particularly one who runs on compressed air, can use some fine-tuning once in a while.

Changing bulbs

Workmen were also busy adjusting and cleaning the other animated mannequins, changing the light bulbs that burn up to 12 hours a day during exhibitions, servicing the slide projectors used for the multi-media displays, hooking up electricity, levelling the cars to provide safe and easy passage between cars, and cleaning the plexiglass barriers.

The operation is smooth now but it wasn't that way during the first run of the show in 1978.

"We learned a lot from last year about the durability of the exhibits," Doug Kolmer, acting chief of tour operations for the Discovery Train, said Monday. "Now we can take it out on tour without major emergencies."

A few times the train has jumped the tracks or been given a bad jolt from a sudden slamming of the brakes, as when a rock-slide materialized before the train in British Columbia, Kolmer said.

The technical crew of 22 audio-visual technicians, mechanics, carpenters, cleaners and electricians has learned how to prevent and cope with these things, he said.

38 guides

The train also employs 38 guides, who monitor the public and the moving sidewalks in each car and who provide help in the event power fails or some other emergency arises. About a dozen other people work in security and administration.

Exhibits cover everything from the Arctic to the Alberta Badlands, ancient Algonquin Indian customs to Trudeau mania and, of course, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Between 55 and 60 per cent of the artifacts are on loan from museums outside Ottawa, Kolmer said.

The Discovery Train was originally conceived of as a five-year, \$22-million project. So far about \$12 million has been spent, with funds coming from federal and provincial governments and private industry, Norman Man-chevsky, Discovery Train project manager, said Monday.

Despite the new federal government's desire for austerity, the train will probably visit 54 communities next year, Francine Blanchette, spokesman for Secretary of State David MacDonald, said Monday.

As we all know, the show must roll on.

05/11/1979 *Ottawa Journal**Other*

Discovery Train put into cold storage

Following a six-month cross-Canada tour, the Discovery Train will be shunted onto sidings tomorrow for a complete refitting to make way for the 1980 run.

A six-day stint in Ottawa wrapped up this year's tour which took the heritage train to 42 communities between Port aux Basques, Nfld., and Victoria, B.C.

700,000 visitors

More than 700,000 persons toured the \$7.5-million train this year, about 30,000 of them in Ottawa. Yesterday, the last day the train was open to the public, thousands waited in 90-minute lineups to take the 35-minute trek through the train.

For the next six months, the red and beige roiling museum the largest of its kind in the world will be bedded down outside the Ottawa train station off Alta Vista Drive for refurbishing and repairs in preparation for next summer's travels.

History package

The 14 railway cars form a travel-ling extravaganza, offering visitors a half-hour immersion course in Canada's natural, economic and political history.

Moving sidewalks propel spectators through numerous phases of Canada's history, from the hardships of Inuit and Indian peoples to the arrival of the first settlers, both world wars, the Great Depression and up to modern times.

07/11/1979 *Ottawa Citizen**Winchester**Winchester*

Train rams stalled car, family of three injured

A young father failed in a desperate attempt to push a stalled car containing his wife and baby off railway tracks this morning as a freight train barrelled down on him near Winchester.

The 36-car CP freight train severed the vehicle, throwing Sherry Francis, 20, and her five-month-old son Shawn from the car. Bobby Francis, 21, was bowled over by the wreckage when the westbound train hit the car.

OPP Constable Brian Helmer said the crossing was equipped with warning lights and a bell, operating normally at the time, but Helmer suggested the couple might have been confused as to how long they had to cross the tracks.

Helmer said an east bound freight was also approaching the crossing, and the couple may have failed to see the westbound train which was closer until too late. Sherry Francis was in stable condition at Ottawa Civic Hospital where she was treated for head injuries.

Miraculously, the baby emerged with hardly a scratch, said Caroline Manley, nursing director at Winchester Memorial Hospital. The father was treated for minor injuries and released from the local hospital.

The car, with Sherry Francis at the wheel, was southbound at about 7.30 a.m. It stalled crossing CP's double freight line, Helmer said.

The train, heading to Smiths Falls from Montreal, was about 180 metres from the crossing when the car moved onto the tracks, said CP spokesman Gordon Spooner.

08/11/1979 Ottawa Citizen Other

30,000 visit Discovery Train

Almost 30,000 people visited the Discovery Train during its last stop of the year last week in Ottawa, a spokesman said Wednesday.

The museum on wheels attracted so many people last Sunday that at one point there was a two-hour wait, she said.

The fate of the two-year-old train, which the former Liberal government had slated for a five-year run, will be decided later this month when Treasury Board considers the budget for next year's planned 54-city schedule, a spokesman for Secretary of State David MacDonald said.

08/11/1979 Ottawa Journal Winchester Winchester

Family survives car-train crash

WINCHESTER (Staff) A 20-year-old- Winchester woman survived a .close brush with death yesterday rnoonIngV in a car-train collision in Winchester.

Sherrie Francis is in satisfactory condition today in Ottawa Civic Hospital with a fractured skull, after being dragged about six metres by the train.

The accident occurred at 7:30 a.m. when the car she was driving stalled on a CP Rail track in .Winchester.

Her husband Robert, 22, who was a passenger in the car, received minor cuts and bruises to his legs after he attempted to push the car off the tracks. He, along .with the couple's five-month-old baby, were treated in hospital and later released.

The baby had been dragged in the-car about about three metres by train, which neatly cut the vehicle in half.

"We still don't understand why the wife and child didn't get out of the car," a Winchester OPP official said.

"The front end was completely taken off," the OPP official noted. "It was as though someone, had taken a torch and cut it."

"They're very lucky to be alive," commented Delma Francis,, Bob's mother.

"Sherrie was driving Bob to work when it happened. .

"The car stalled on the tracks after a train passed and when:Bob got out to push it off .the tracks he didn't see a second train coming on the other track.

"He yelled at Sherrie to get out-of the car, but there wasn't time," she added.'

13/11/1979 Ottawa Citizen Lachute

Railway crossing warnings worked

An investigation by the Gatineau police has revealed that the warning lights and signal bells at the Montee Paiement railway crossing were working at the time of a fatal car-train collision which took the life of a 17-year-old Hull youth.

Alain Joly, of 82 Charlevoix St., died in Ottawa General Hospital Oct. 16 after the car he was driving was hit broadside by a CP Rail passenger train.

Investigating Constable Paul La-violette said Monday the department's investigation found that Joly turned left from Maloney Boulevard onto Montee Paiement when the traffic light gave traffic on Maloney the right-of-way.

"It was just a case of negligence," said Lavolette. "He didn't wait for the light and didn't see the train."

The accident was the third at the crossing in three years. Previous accidents in December, 1977 and July 7 of this year involved cars running into the side of trains.

26/11/1979 Ottawa Citizen Alexandria Alexandria

Man lying on rail bed passed over by train

By Diana Batt Citizen staff writer An Alexandria man barely escaped death early Saturday when a CN freight train rumbled over him near Alexandria station.

Renald McGillis, 20, of St. Paul St., was lying face down between the tracks about 3:30 a.m. when the train, pulling away from a siding, ran over him.

He didn't get so much as a scratch.

"I guess I was lucky," McGillis said. "I don't really know what happened. I heard the roar of the train, but that's about all I remember."

Lancaster OPP said McGillis had run his car into a ditch shortly before. He wasn't injured in the accident.

They believe he tripped over the rail ties and fell as he was walking near the tracks.

Mark Merriman, the train's engineer, said he saw an object between the ties but was not concerned until he was almost on top of it.

"I was just coming out of the siding and noticed a brown shape in between the tracks," Merriman said. "I thought it was a piece of paper until we got close.

"When I noticed it was a person we immediately put the brakes on."

Five cars had rolled over the man by the time the train came to a halt. Merriman and two other CN crewmen went back and saw the man was alive.

They returned to the front of the train to radio for assistance and then went back to help McGillis.

When they got back to where he had been lying, he was gone.

McGillis was located by police sleeping nearby.

"He's lucky, he was lying so straight and flat on the tracks,"

Merriman said.- McGillis refused to discuss details of the incident

19/12/1979 Ottawa Journal Beachburg Riverside Drive

With photo showing CN 9446

CN locomotive off the track

A diesel CN freight train broke an axle crossing Riverside Drive late last night chewing up the track and halting traffic. The diesel jumped off the rail but remained upright. There were no injuries. The 49-car train, out of Winnipeg, carried lumber and automobiles and an assortment of other cargo. It was heading to CN's Walkley yard.

19/12/1979 Ottawa Citizen Beachburg Riverside Drive

CN track service restored

Normal service was restored today on the Canadian National track between Riverside Drive and McCarthy Road following the derailment of an engine of a 49-car freight train.

The train was only travelling at 16 kmh, and damage was restricted to the engine. A 30-metre stretch of track dislodged in the accident was put back into place by a CNR crew within a few hours.

The engine, one of two pulling the freight train, was to be taken to CN's Walkley yard later today to determine the cause of the derailment.

Passenger service wasn't disrupted, and freight service was only affected for a few hours on a spur line leading to the Walkley yard.

Arrived Christmas Day

First train in town 125 years ago

By Brenda Brown Citizen staff writer Christmas is normally a time to remember the humble birth of a child almost 2,000 years ago. But Dec. 25 is also another important anniversary for Ottawa's train buffs.

On Christmas Day, 1854, the whistle of a locomotive was heard for the first time in the little town we now know as Ottawa.

A work train, powered by the Bytown and Prescott Railway Company's locomotive No. 2, steamed into the McTaggart Street Station, just off Sussex Drive a block south of Botler Street.

The sound of its whistle, piercing the still night air, ushered in a new age of long-distance transport and linked Ottawa to some of the remotest parts of the province.

The train left Ottawa (then known as Bytown) four days later to make its regular stops in Gloucester, Osgoode, Kemptville, Oxford, Spencers and finally Prescott, where it linked up to the Ogdensburgh Railway.

This new route to the outside world enabled Ottawans to visit Boston and New York, the cultural and economic centres of the time.

The Canadian line changed its name in 1855 and eventually became part of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Now, a century and a quarter later, only traces of the original line remain, with its main Sussex Street station torn up, leaving only a line of eroding piers.

But the anniversary has not been forgotten by the members of the Bytown Railway Society, who have published a 23-page illustrated paperback booklet, written by one of its members, on the line's history.

The society is a non-profit organization, made up of 125 train buffs who get together monthly to indulge their passion for train technology, both past and present.

President Colin Churcher said he has been interested in trains since he was a small child and has been employed in connection with them in one form or another since 1963, when he was a fireman on a steam locomotive in Britain. He is now employed by Transport Canada.

Churcher is the driving force behind the society, which, among other things, provides maintenance crews for the steam locomotive which makes scenic runs through Quebec to Wakefield during the summer tourist months.

Its latest project is the restoration of a 41-foot-long executive private train car which was donated to the society.

"Every member has a different reason for being involved in the society," Churcher said. "Some are interested in foreign railway systems, others North American types. Still others are interested in the history of rail travel and its future. It is a wide-ranging group."

That is why it is difficult to arrange topics to be discussed at the regular meetings so they will be of interest to everyone, he said.

The society's booklet on the first train to Ottawa is available at Hobbyland, 93 O'Connor St., for \$3, or through the society at P.O. Box 141, Station A, Ottawa.