

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1981

*22/01/1981 Ottawa Citizen*

*Alexandria*

*Moose Creek*

Sun, snow blinds driver

An Ottawa woman was killed and her husband critically injured when their car smashed into a passenger train at a level crossing near Moose Creek, about 60 kilometres east of Ottawa.

Evelyn Sproule, 55, of Foley Avenue, died instantly in the accident when her husband Thomas, 58, was apparently blinded by the sun and failed to see the approaching VIA Rail Rapido train as it sped through the crossing on Hwy. 138, about four kilometres south of Moose Creek.

The signal lights were working at the time of the 11:25 a.m. accident. The crossing doesn't have a barrier gate.

Thomas Sproule is in a coma at the Ottawa General Hospital and is listed in critical condition.

Relatives said the Sproules were heading to Cornwall to visit the Mrs. Sproule's brother.

The collision derailed the first coach of the Ottawa-Montreal Rapido, but none of the 34 passengers was injured. The passengers were later bused to Montreal.

Four other trains were rerouted onto Canadian Pacific tracks during the six hours it took to repair the damage to the train.

Stanley Sproule, of Vankleek Hill, said his brother, a steam engineer with the city of Ottawa, and his sister-in-law had moved to Ottawa from Cornwall about 15 years ago.

He said his brother's condition "is touch and go."

Police said because of the sun and snowbanks, the driver hadn't seen the train until too late.

This was the third fatality during the last two years at the railway crossing located about 30 kilometers north of Cornwall.

The car, dragged several meters along the track bed, was demolished.

*24/01/1981 Ottawa Citizen*

*Alexandria*

*Moose Creek*

Car-train crash sparks inquest

An inquest will be held into Wednesday's train-car collision in Roxboro Township which killed an Ottawa woman and critically injured her husband.

The inquest will not likely be held before June, said Dr. James Lewin of Cornwall. It will likely be held in Cornwall.

Evelyn Sproule, 55, of Foley Avenue, died in the accident. Her husband, Thomas Sproule, 58, remained in critical condition at Ottawa General Hospital Friday.

*03/03/1981 Ottawa Citizen*

*Beachburg*

*Riverside Drive*

Train underpass ready by '82

Commuters using Riverside Drive can look forward to a clear drive downtown - free of train crossing interruptions.

Regional council recently agreed to pay one-third of the cost to build a \$5-million underpass for cars at the Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Railway tracks on Riverside Drive near Walkley Road.

Construction began last fall and the project is expected to be completed in the summer of 1982.

A regional transportation spokesman, Bill Beveridge, said the underpass is being built to improve safety conditions on the road. It will also speed up service to the downtown core.

About 300,000 cars a day travel across the railway crossing section of the road, which is blocked off to traffic at least 20 times a day because of train crossings. While construction crews are building the new underpass, the CN-CP line has been diverted south of the Riverside Drive crossing. New tracks for the detour were laid last year.

Riverside Drive is also the main downtown route for residents in Windsor Park, Hunt Club Chase and other Western Community neighborhoods.

Five firefighters die in train-van crash

IROQUOIS This St. Lawrence Seaway village of 1,200 is in mourning today as the shock of the deaths of five volunteer firemen, killed Thursday " by a speeding freight train, spread.

"They were the cream of the crop of the Village of Iroquois," Reeve Frank Rooney said of the men, who died on the way to a fire at the home of a daughter of one of the victims.

Police say driver Philip Thompson, the only fireman to survive, stopped the red emergency van at a two-track level crossing on a sideroad outside the village, at which barriers were down and warning lights flashing.

Thompson pulled the van around the barrier after an eastbound train passed, and it was hit broadside by a westbound freight travelling at about 90 kilometres an hour 100 kmh is the speed limit, say railway officials.

Dead are:

John Mason, 42, father of three.

Allen Holmes, 35, father of two.

Randy Thompson, 32, father of two.

Dennis Fisher, 34, father of two.

Joe Billings, 33, married with no children.

The Chevy van wrapped around the diesel engine and was carried 300 metres down the track. Police say Philip Thompson, 28 no relation to Randy Thompson was thrown from the vehicle by the impact. He was in stable condition today in Ottawa Civic Hospital with multiple fractures and internal injuries.

Police are still investigating the tragedy. Coroner Graham Houze has not yet decided whether to call an inquest into the deaths.

Canadian National spokesman Brian Moreau said today the westbound train was on a run from Morrisburg to Brockville and does not pass through that area every day as did the eastbound freight the train the firefighters were able to avoid.

The train was picking up freight and hauling it back to Brockville. It was carrying four cars loaded with freight and seven empty cars.

The east-bound freight makes a daily run through the area from Sudbury to Montreal It was pulling 105 cars.

Moreau said CN officials will interview all employees involved and report to the Canadian Transport Commission within the next two days.

Crash 'like it was in the movies'

IROQUOIS A witness to a spectacular van-train crash which killed five volunteer firemen described the scene as "just like in the movies."

Kevin Whitteker, 18, had stopped his car at a level crossing near here because the barriers were down and lights were flashing. When an east-bound train passed, he saw the Iroquois volunteer fire brigade's rescue van pull into the path of a westbound train.

"It was just like in the movies," Whitteker said. "There was no noise. The van was hit and dragged away."

Whitteker walked to the demolished van and helped driver Philip Thompson, the sole survivor, who was lying beside the track.

Other firemen who had been in a pumper truck behind the van also hurried to the front of the train.

Dalbert Valiquette, who has lived near the crossing for 17 years, said it was only the second time he had seen trains heading in different directions go by at the same time.

The volunteers had returned to the station at this village 90 km southwest of Ottawa, near Highway 401, at about 6:15 p.m. after extinguishing a chimney fire.

They were quickly dispatched to another fire at the home of victim John Mason's daughter Cindy in Matilda Township.

Firemen from nearby Williamsburg responded to the fire call after the crash.

Train engineers Vern Easton and Cecil Code escaped injury. Traffic on the main Canadian National line between Toronto and Montreal was interrupted for four hours.

Iroquois Reeve Frank Rooney said after an emergency council meeting that plans are being made for a civic funeral for the fallen members of the village's 22-man volunteer fire brigade.

"It's the worst thing that has ever happened here," Rooney said. "They were family men with young children."

"We've lost 25 per cent of our fire department. Sometimes the Lord sees things a certain way."

Fire chief Mac Anderson expressed shock, saying it was the first time in his 25 years with the de partment that men had been lost in the line of duty.

Most of the residents of Iroquois knew the victims; many were related to one or more of them.

Glenn Swerdfeger, who owns a dairy farm nearby, was bitter about the tragedy which killed firemen Mason, 42, Allen Holmes, 35, Randy Thompson, 32, Dennis Fisher, 34, and Joe Billings, 33.

"They were good friends. Three of them (Holmes, Thompson and Fisher) went to my church."

The three had helped fight a blaze last October that destroyed Swerdfeger's barn, milking parlor and hay elevator, and they helped douse the fire that smoldered in his cattle feed for five days.

"The firemen returned several times and risked their lives to save the feed."

Don Thompson was stunned by the death of his son, Randy, who he said was with the brigade for 10 years without incident.

Hard-nosed members of Morrisburg OPP, who investigated the accident, were also moved.

"It's a real tragedy," said Constable Frank Albert, who played hockey and curled with the victims.

"It will hit a lot of people hard. In a small community, everybody knows everybody else."

The men were the type that nobody could fault, the constable said.

"They always co-operated with us."

The victims held jobs in local industries. All were church-going, sportsminded men active in the community in several ways. Holmes, a textile factory worker, also taught Sunday school.

One fireman who was at the scene said Iroquois will be a "sorrowful town for a long, long while."

"You know, I'm a pretty big boy, but I cried. And then I thought it could have been me."

Driver of fire truck in fatal crash charged

The driver of a fire emergency van that collided with a train, resulting in the death of five Iroquois firefighters, has been charged with criminal negligence causing death.

Philip Thompson, 28, the sole survivor of the March 19 crash, was charged Tuesday after an investigation into the accident, which occurred when the van rounded a rail-crossing barrier and was shattered by a westbound work train.

Another train had gone by seconds earlier at the crossing about 90 kilometres south of Ottawa.

The six men were rushing to a chimney fire at the home of one of the firemen's daughters.

Thompson was released from the Ottawa Civic hospital last week where he had been treated for head injuries and multiple fractures.

Don Johnson, Crown attorney for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, said he laid the charge after reviewing the results of an investigation by Ontario Provincial Police in Morrisburg.

Although the maximum penalty is life imprisonment, Johnson said the usual sentence is imprisonment for anywhere between 18 months and two years less a day.

The charge eliminates the need for a coroner's inquest into the accident

Thompson, who is not in police custody, is to appear in provincial court in Cornwall for a preliminary bearing April

Fireman appears in court over Iroquois fatalities

MORRISBURG (Staff) Hobbling into provincial court on on crutches, Iroquois firefighter Philip Thompson elected Tuesday to be tried in a higher court on charges of criminal negligence causing the death of five other firemen.

He did not enter a plea.

Thompson, 28, was the only survivor among six occupants of a fire emergency van which collided with a freight train near Iroquois March 19. The accident occurred at a level crossing while the van was en route to a minor house fire.

Crown Attorney Don Johnson asked for an adjournment to April 28 to allow police to finish their investigation of the accident.

Thompson was released after a relative, Carl Swerdfeger, signed a \$5,000 recognizance which will be forfeited if Thompson fails to reappear.

Thompson spent several days in Ottawa Civic Hospital for treatment of a variety of injuries. He's wearing a cast on his right foot because of torn ligaments and chipped bones.

22/05/1981 Ottawa Citizen

Cornwall

Williamstown

Man hurt in crash

An 18-year-old Williamstown man remains in fair condition at Cornwall's Hotel Dieu Hospital after his motorcycle was hit by a CP Rail train Wednesday.

Lancaster OPP said Marvin Munro was struck by the northbound train at a crossing on County Road 17 about 4:30 p.m.

Police said the crossing's warning lights were operating at the time. There are no gates at the crossing.

Police are continuing their investigation.

Williamstown is about 90 kilometres southeast of Ottawa.

12/06/1981 Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Moose Creek

Coroner's jury wants barrier

CORNWALL A barrier should be installed at a railway crossing on Hwy. 138 where an Ottawa couple was killed in a car-train crash last January, a coroner's jury recommended Thursday.

Moreover, the five-member jury urged that the speed limit be reduced and passing disallowed at the approaches to the railway crossing, just south of Moose Creek.

The jury made the recommendations after ruling that the deaths of Thomas and Evelyn Sproule of 1086 Foley Ave. were accidental.

Coroner Dr. James Lewin said he will forward the recommendations to Ontario's chief coroner, Dr. H.B. Cotnam.

Thomas, 57, the driver of the car, died seven days after the accident from injuries sustained in the crash. His wife died instantly.

The accident, the second double-fatality at the crossing in less than two years, occurred about 11.25 a.m. when the Sproule car smacked into the side of the eastbound VIA passenger train.

"Apparently in both cases the drivers of the vehicles didn't see the trains," Crown attorney Don Johnston told the inquest.

OPP Constable Charles McDonald said the two accidents were almost identical. In the first accident, on Jan. 15, 1979, two Alberta residents died when their van hit the side of an eastbound freight train.

The inquest was told the Sproules were not speeding, but the brake lights of their car didn't go on until they were "right on top" of the train.

Duane Fusee, of Moose Creek, testified that the Sproule car passed his fuel truck a short distance before the railway crossing.

He saw the train coming, but thought the Sproules did not because "they didn't slow down ... I was watching for his brake lights. About one second before impact, he (Sproule) braked."

VIA Rail Engineer Hartland Mulcahy, of Orleans, said he gave the proper warning on the whistle as the train approached the crossing, and rang the locomotive's warning bell.

17/06/1981 Ottawa Citizen

Kingston (CN)

Iroquois

Firefighter charged in deaths

MORRISBURG (Staff) Iroquois volunteer firefighter Philip Thompson has been ordered to stand trial on a charge of criminal negligence in connection with the March 19 death of five firefighters.

Thompson, 28, was charged after the small van he was driving to the scene of a fire in Matilda Township collided with a Canadian National Railways work train at the Brinston Road railway crossing.

The trial order was issued after a preliminary hearing here Tuesday. No date for the trial has been set and Thompson is free on his own recognizance.

Thompson, the only survivor of the crash, was hospitalized for four days.

Two witnesses testified at the hearing Tuesday and a statement Thompson gave to police March 25 was also entered as evidence.

Ontario Supreme Court Judge H. E. Hunter imposed a ban on publication of evidence.

Iroquois is 10 kilometres west of Morrisburg, on the St. Lawrence River.

Hospital escaper hit by train

Another hundred metres and Arthur Brannen would have been home to his parents.

Early Saturday morning, the 20-year-old fled from the Royal Ottawa Hospital and was only a stone's-throw from his Colman Street home when a southbound train hit him from behind as he crossed the tressel [sic] over Walkley Road near Riverside Drive.

Brannen survived being hurled into the steel wall along the sides of the rail overpass and is in satisfactory condition today with severe head and chest injuries.

But the incident has heightened fears among area parents who say dozens of children use the dangerous tressel as a shortcut to neighborhood schools.

A wire fence which separates the tressel and tracks from the playground of Fielding Drive Public School and pupils as young as eight years old has a two-metre gap in it and a well-beaten path leads directly on to the overpass.

Via Rail officials said up to a dozen freight trains and six passenger trains, including the one bound for Toronto which hit Brannen, go over the tressel each day. Although there is room at the edge of the tressel for someone to leap to safety, the overpass lies between two sharp curves which obscure oncoming trains.

Charlie Byrne, whose Hartman Crescent home overlooks the tressel, said it was inevitable someone would get hit on it.

"That hole in the fence along the park has been there a long time. You're not going to stop everyone from going on the tracks, but at least a fence helps keep the little kids out," he said.

Byrne said the only time the trains sound their whistles coming through the neighborhood is when someone is walking across the 100-metre-long tressel.

He was at the breakfast table about 9:30 Saturday when he heard the familiar whistle.

Seconds later, Brannen was struck.

CN official John Pasteris said the railway has repaired the fence along the tracks "many times," but vandals simply keep ripping it open again.

"We've had CN police go to the schools and talk to the kids about the dangers of the overpass, and we've gone to parents' meetings with the same message," Pasteris said.

He said CN police "frequently" patrol the area and if a child is caught on the tracks, "we go to talk to the parents."

"I don't know what else we can do. It boils down to parents taking some responsibility and keeping their kids off the tracks."

Fielding Drive school principal Murray Sands said the tressel "has always been a concern" and that students have been repeatedly warned to stay off the tracks.

CN police approached him six months ago complaining that students were throwing rocks at passing trains, he said.

The part of the fence which forms the right outfield for a baseball diamond in Arnott Park, adjacent to the Fielding school, has been repaired a number of times by CN, he added.

Sands said pupils from the Rideauview Gardens development use the hazardous tressel as a shortcut to the public school, the only English-language elementary school in the area.

"But there are also a lot going to Brookfield and Holy Cross who go along the overpass," he said.

"It's a real danger to everyone."

Riverside Ward Alderman Jim Durrell said he is "almost certain" the city will approve stoplights at a cross-walk several hundred metres west of the tressel.

"Whether that will encourage kids not to use the rail overpass, I just don't, know."

In addition to the crosswalk to the west of the overpass, there is also a pedestrian tunnel under Walkley about 300 metres to the east of the tressel.

The overpass, just east of Riverside Drive, was built in the early 1970s after several collisions between trains and cars at the former level crossing.

LRCs - Light, Rapid and Safe

MONTREAL (UPC) Via Rail's Light, Rapid, Comfortable trains (LRCs) passed high speed performance tests this week showing comfort and stability at speeds of nearly 200 kilometres an hour.

The LRCs manufacturer, Bombardier Inc., said the purpose of the tests was to evaluate the train's performance at the highest speed possible. To ensure the train's lightness, a single locomotive pulling five cars was used.

The LRCs were tested on eight trips within two days along a 35-kilometre CN-owned track between Cornwall and Brockville.

The successful tests pave the way for Bombardier to complete delivery of 21 locomotives and 50 cars ordered by Via for the end of this year. Via officials expressed satisfaction with the test results and said the LRCs would be put into operation as originally scheduled.

Via planned to bring the LRCs into service this fall along the Montreal-Toronto route. Operations should be expanded by next year to other centres along the Windsor-Quebec City corridor.

A company-owned mini railway's last hurrah

Kilmar. There's no smoke-belching stack or eerie stream whistle. There are no lounge cars with pannelled walls and silver dining service

The doomed Dominion Timber and Minerals Railway is just not the stuff train buffs normally wax nostalgic about.

But the 20-kilometre (12 1/2 mile) railway, which crossed the Laurentians to link a magnesite mining company's two plants 90 km (55 miles) east of Ottawa still tugs at local heartstrings.

Until late last week, a 30-year-old, rusty-orange diesel locomotive hauled just-as-faded hopper cars of mineral over a tortuous route.

Its last trip ended in an era that started in 1916.

Canadian Refractories Ltd., with the only underground mine still operating in the Ottawa area, has decided that its unusual company-owned railway is no longer economical

Soon the hauling of semi-processed magnesite from the mine here to the shipping depot down the mountain at Marelán, Que., will be contracted to truckers.

Maintaining the railway costs about \$250,000 a year, and it keeps climbing, says Canadian Refractories personnel manager John White.

The engineer, brakeman and four-man maintenance crew will be relocated within the company, which converts magnesite, a white crystal valued for its resistance to heat, into kiln liners.

The company, a subsidiary of the Dallas-based Dresser Industries, has a 600-member staff at its plants here and at nearby Marelán, including 35 miners who work 300 metres (1,000 feet) underground.

Canadian Refractories customers include steel copper, nickel, titanium, aluminum, cement and glass processors around the world.

The little railway's last hurrah came recently when about 800 company employees and friends climbed into gondola cars for a ride and some reminiscing about the early days.

White is hard-pressed to explain the heavy load of sentiment attached to the train.

"It's not romantic at all," White says, scanning the 65-ton engine's battered exterior.

"It's a strictly functional work train."

The diesel, made by General Electric, has been sold to a local company for yardwork, as a smaller, backup engine. Several freight cars will be scrapped.

To retired general manager Lloyd Thomas, who beginning in 1961 prepared several reports on the railway's viability, it hurts to know the rails are about to be torn up and melted down.

"It's one of the last industrial railroads to fall prey to modernization."

The Dominion Timber and Minerals line was a going concern when Thomas, now 67, arrived at Kilmar in 1937. Six years before, the narrow-gauge track and four 15-ton steam locomotives had been replaced by standard gauge and two 35-ton gasoline engines.

Mining of magnesite started here in 1914 when the First World War cut off supplies from Austria.

The Kilmar deposit was known as early as 1900 when a travelling minister took a sample to Ottawa for analysis. The minister had been curious about a local farmer's green watch fob.

It had been fashioned, he learned, from a piece of serpentine, a soft crystal that intermingles with magnesite.

At first, the raw material was carted out by horse and wagon, but the railway was soon installed over a series of cattle trails and logging roads.

In addition to being a constant hazard to roaming cattle, the early locomotives spewed out hot cinders that caused countless brush fires until they were held in check by wire traps fitted to the smoke stacks.

The Dominion Timber and Minerals line grew with the company. But in recent years, company production and operating costs have overtaken it.

The little railway will be missed.

Gertrude Brown lives with her husband, a retired company safety officer, in a flower bedecked mobile home here. As a child, she rode one of the first locomotives, and took the last ride behind the orange diesel.

There were times when the train was the only lifeline to the outside world, she recalls.

"one winter we were snowed under for three days. The only way to get home was to ride up on the engine."

To Brown and other residents, the train was much more than a company workhorse.

Pembroke group trying to rescue historic station

PEMBROKE When Zolo Demeter heard the city's 104-year-old train station was going to be torn down in July, he couldn't believe nobody cared.

"I was shocked that nobody had come forward to do some-; thing about it," said the Pembroke restaurateur Thursday.

"It's a beautiful building and ' part of the city's heritage."

Demeter's concern for the stone station, which was built in 1877, began by accident when he noticed Canadian Pacific's notice of demolition posted in the station.

He said - he was bringing a friend to catch the 1 a.m. train in June when he saw the notice which stated, unless there was opposition, the station was to be torn down July 1.

"The notice was posted inside the station where no one could see it unless they were picking someone up or sending them off," he said.

The station in Pembroke is only open from 1 1 p.m. to 5 a.m.

A few calls to a number of poeple [sic] around town revealed that others were also concerned but no one could afford to save the station.

CP offered the station to the city for \$1 last winter under the condition it be moved to a new location.

Demeter approached city council to hold an emergency meeting to obtain an extension so a solution could be found.

"We asked to extend the deadline to December 31, but they have given us only until September 15," said Demeter.

Alderman Stu Donaldson, chairman of the industrial planning, environmental and development committee, said community and service groups had expressed interest in saving the station but no one could afford to move it.

Estimates to tear down and rebuild the station range between \$200,000 and \$250,000.

"The city supports any effort to save the station but we don't have the funds to get involved in its move or management," said Donaldson.

Realizing the support existed but more time was needed to find a solution, Demeter formed the Ottawa Valley Public Action Committee.

Although in its early organizational stages, the committee has brought together 25 people who want the station to remain where it is on Nelson Street, converted to other uses.

Some of the ideas being talked about are establishing an arts and crafts display area or a farmer's market.

Demeter said he has approached many service clubs who have volunteered funds and manpower to help renovate the station.

Among the project's supporters is the Ottawa Valley Historical Society.

President Ruth Grant said the society has given its support to the project because it is concerned whenever a building with historical value may be torn down.

She renewed her call for the establishment of a local architectural conservation advisory committee, which would recommend to council what buildings should be designated as heritage properties under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Once the designation is approved and no one files objections, the owner of the property would not be allowed to tear it down or alter its appearance without council approval.

"We have been pressing for it for many years but council has not yet come through," she said.

Donaldson said the bylaw to establish the committee has been held up because city officials feel there should be 12 members sitting on the board.

"We hope to have it formed by the end of August," he said.

However, should an agreement not be worked out with CP and VIA Rail to keep the station on its present site, the preservation group has a few alternatives.

Sheila Larmer, architectural conservation officer for the Heritage Administration Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, said funds could be made available for both the move and restoration of the building.

She said her ministry could supply funds to pay for the stabilizing of the building in its new site.

Funds would be used to ensure the safety of the new location, exterior renovation and roof repairs.

Funds for the actual move could be obtained from Wintario. The committee would have to become incorporated as a non-profit organization to be eligible for grants.

Larmer warned, however, that her ministry would rather see the station remain where it is.

"We normally shy away from moving buildings," she said.

"We've had some success in preserving original sites in southern Ontario but not in the Ottawa Valley."

She also cautioned that even with grant from both ministries, more money would have be found to cover the cost of the move: "Funds will have to raised locally or through the committee."

CP and VIA. Rail officials were unavailable for comment Thursday.

CP insists it wants station moved or razed

PEMBROKE Efforts by a local group to save the city's 104-year-old train station may be in vain because of a Canadian Pacific policy.

A spokesman for CP Rail in Ottawa says the policy insists stations not used for railway business must be moved or torn down.

"The main reason is safety," said the spokesman, who asked not to be identified.

"We cannot allow the use of the building by other groups because of the possibility of derailment."

He said CP has eight freight trains using the line daily with VIA Rail using the line twice a day for its passenger service.

The spokesman said once the station is torn down in September, a new one will be built in its place.

He reiterated the railway's offer to sell the station to any group or individual for \$1 on condition they move the station.

However, the man heading the push to keep the station on its original site says the derailment excuse is "hogwash."

Restaurateur Zolo Demeter said Wednesday many homes are much closer to the track than the station is and CP does not take them into consideration.

"I think it's a very poor excuse to have the station torn down," said Demeter.

The company policy will not deter Demeter from pushing ahead with efforts to save the stone structure, built in 1877.

He said he plans to organize a rally in September involving students from local high schools and Algonquin College to show the railway there is interest in saving the structure from the wrecker's ball.

Through the newly formed Ottawa Valley Public Action Committee, Demeter will approach the students, as well as local, provincial and federal politicians, to attend the rally.

"I want to get everyone involved, especially the students because the young people have to realize we are talking about their heritage," he said.

The concern over the train station has been brewing since last winter when CP informed city council it would tear it down July 1 if it wasn't moved.

City hall officials have said efforts were made to find a body that would move the structure but there were no takers because of the expense involved.

Because it is a stone structure, which would need to be taken down and rebuilt, estimates put the cost as high as \$250,000. The city is not getting involved financially but is supporting the group's efforts.

The committee wants to convert the Nelson Street station into an arts and crafts market or a farmers' market.

If an agreement cannot be worked out with the railway, the group may be able to obtain funds for the move through the heritage administration branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation and Wintario.

However, Demeter is adamant about keeping the station on its original site.

"If we move it, it looses some of its orginality," he said.

Demeter is convinced that if there is enough support from people in Pembroke and area, officials at CP Rail will listen.

"If I get together with high-ranking officials they will probably change their minds," he said.

Number 170 is doomed as passenger train

Barring a last-minute stay of execution by Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin, No. 170, the Ottawa-Hull-Lachute-Montreal "milk run" will stop and start no more after Nov. 15. Citizen staff writer Stephen Bindman travelled on the doomed train recently and talked to the people who will be affected by the decision.

On a warm summer's evening, on a train bound for nowhere  
Kenny Rogers, The Gambler

Number 170 is a train bound for nowhere. Sentenced to die in three months' time, it meanders along its daily route with mundane regularity. A stop in Plaisance, one in Fasset and Calumet and even Staynerville. In all, 24 stops along the north shore of the Ottawa River, all at rundown weather-beaten shacks called stations, indistinguishable but for the names on the little marker signs.

It's a two-hour trip between Ottawa and Montreal turned into a four-hour lesson in Quebec geography.

But, barring a last-minute stay of execution, Number 170, the Ottawa-Hull-Lachute-Montreal "milk run", will stop and start no more.

On Nov. 15, along with 12 other "little used" VIA Rail passenger routes, it will fall under the axe of Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin.

Pepin says 170 is just not a big enough moneymaker.

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7:30 a.m. Ottawa Station: "Oh it makes quite a few stops," snickers the man behind the ticket booth as he takes \$12 for the one-way odyssey. "Quite a few."

He's got that same sort of sly look on his face as the tour guide who says, "you can't miss it. It's the first on the left."

Conductor J.P. Brazeau has just collected tickets from the 14 passengers who start out in Ottawa, when a milk truck pulls up beside Dayliner 9068.

So, this really is a milk run.

False alarm. It's only unloading into the station. There's no milk on this train . . . not even coffee or tea.

There's no dining car, no caboose, no engine. Just the one self-propelled car two or three on Friday and Sunday nights if it's busy.

"There are no frills on this run, that's for sure," engineman Horace St. Germain says. "They can't operate a train much cheaper than with just two staff."

The seats are uncomfortable and sickly green. The floors look as if they haven't been washed in a week and the lights flicker on and off.

About the only luxuries on number 170 are the bathrooms at each end.

Welcome to the train doomed to die.

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Transport Canada says death was inevitable a simple matter of dollars and cents.

Spokesmen say the route had a "revenue to cost ratio" of only .15, much below acceptable levels. That means for every dollar it costs to operate, the run only generates 15 cents in revenue.

"We had to find the money somewhere," Transport's Robert Tittley said. "On the basis of economics, its performance was below acceptable levels. We decided to eliminate those intercity services that put the heaviest economic drain on the passenger program, but where there are good alternate forms of ground transportation."

Five runs (three express, two local) between Ottawa and Montreal on the Ontario side of the border, some with dining cars and crews as large as 12, have been spared an early death because VIA says they are more profitable.

Surprisingly they are rated only nine points higher at .24

There's a run near Thunder Bay that only rates .04. It is considered an "isolated service" and will survive this round of cutbacks.

But "revenue to cost ratios" mean nothing to passenger Bruno Prudhomme. All he understands about the train, is l-i-f-e.

Like Pepin, he too will have to cut corners to find money for the trips he takes to the Montreal General Hospital for life-saving dialysis several times a month.

For coming on 10 years, the 61-year-old Fasset man has been depending on the VIA "milk run" to get into the big city.

He says it was hard enough when Rene Levesque wouldn't pay for his medical treatment in Ottawa, only 55 miles (88 kms) away. (Montreal is 77 miles (124 kms) away.)

It was even worse when they took away the train station from Fasset four years ago and made it a stop where you actually have to flag down the train.

It's not much fun for a man with a cane.

"This train is very important to me and to a lot of other people like me," he moans to conductor Brazeau. "Instead of sending all our money overseas, they should keep it here and give it to the trains."

There's a Voyageur Inc. bus that stops in Fasset on the way to Montreal, but it gets to Prudhomme's stop at about noon, the same time he's supposed to begin treatment in Montreal.

"If they don't change the bus schedule, and with no train, I don't know what I'll do."

To add to Prudhomme's woes, Voyageur Inc.'s 375 bus drivers have been on strike since June 19. Number 170 is his only way in.

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8:34 a.m. Plaisance, Que.: Six stops, 42 miles (67 kms), 21 adults, five children and two babies later, Number 170 grinds to a halt. It's time for an unscheduled pit stop.

Only four trains use the single track each day. Since 170 makes considerably more stops than the twice-a-day freight run, the latter gets priority on the track.

It's usually waiting at Plaisance. Today it's late, hence the unexpected bathroom break for St. Germain.

But that's the way of the train business these days, the wiry engineman says, passenger trains following on the coat tails of the freights.

The stop puts us 20 minutes behind schedule.

Yawn.

The natives, like 85-year-old Lillian Chenier, begin to get restless.

Chenier knows her trains. The Masson native has been taking them to Montreal to visit relatives since she was a child.

"I'm a farmer's daughter and proud to say it. The first time I went was when I was 10 years old," the cheerful geriatric says. "There were no buses then and Montreal wasn't like it is today."

"What will I do now? There's nothing like the train. It's heaven. Even if it went up in price we'd stay on."

"I guess we'll have to go by car. He's got the car," she says, pointing to her son across the aisle. "He'll drive us."

"Oh no I won't," retorts the son. "Not in my car we won't. It's too expensive. We'll spend our money elsewhere."

"The people on the routes they're improving are just like us. They're no different. How would they like it if we cut off their lines to improve ours?"

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VIA Rail statistics show that 33,000 people rode the North Shore Dayliner run last year that's an average of 47 passengers on each daily trip to and from Montreal. They estimate the 92 seats are only occupied 20 per cent of the time because so many of the easy riders get on and off at different points.

The surviving Ottawa-Montreal runs are occupied twice as much, VIA says.

The official statistics were taken when there was no bus strike. But they were still nowhere near our friendly engineman's unofficial tallies.

Although only 10 went all the way from Ottawa to Montreal on today's run, there were 80 people who got on later, or got off at one of the wayside shacks.

And, from what St. Germain's seen, that's a little less than average.

"We've been averaging about 75 passengers a day," he says.

"No it's about 80 to 100 every run," conductor J.P. pipes in. "Last night we handled 135 passengers. Before Lachute we even had 10 people standing up because there were no seats."

"I hope to hell they don't take it off. It's too good a run to be cut. People in those towns depend on us."

Besides, he adds, "If they cut back all these runs I'll be back worse than I was when I started eight years ago . . . back on the old man's farm."

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10:21 a.m. Lachute, Que: The sleeping, reading and chattering train comes alive again as 16 new passengers get on, and a few get off. Sometimes, the regulars say, up to 75 per cent of the passengers get on at Lachute for the 1¼ hour spin to Montreal. Some of them have started a petition in hopes that if the government won't save the whole route, they'll at least put on a commuter run.

One woman, a surgical collar around her neck, gets on, dragging a wire shopping cart behind her.

"I'm very dependent on the train, especially in the summer," she says, asking not to be identified. "My mother's been in the hospital in Montreal since June 4 and I've been using this train at least four times a week since, sometimes even seven."

"It's crowded everyday. Last Sunday there were people standing all the way."

She says the local bus service only drops her at a subway station in the north end of the city a good \$5 cab ride from the hospital.

"A lot of elderly people use the train to go to the doctor or just to see relatives or to shop. The only alternative is the bus and it's the pits. It is inconvenient to say the least."

But this is one commuter who isn't taking the cancellations sitting down.

She's already written letters to local newspapers and to Pepin in Ottawa.

"I usually vote Liberal, but if this goes through, I vote Liberal no more. I'd rather vote for someone's dog. Our MP is as useless as I don't know what."

"I sure hope Pepin finds Robert Gourd (MP for Argenteuil-Papineau) a good Senate seat, because he sure ain't going to get elected again."

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11:35 a.m. Montreal: More than four hours later, number 170 reaches Windsor Station, a little bit fuller and a little bit older.

Every gambler knows that the secret to surviving, is knowing what to throw away and knowing what to keep. ...

Engineer counts his days until retirement

In three years and six months Horace St. Germain gets his gold watch from Canadian Pacific Railways

. . . three years, six months and counting.

St. Germain has been driving trains for the railway for almost 37 years. He'd like to end it that way too, but he's doubtful he'll get his wish.

For the last year he's been piloting VIA's doomed passenger route number 170 to and from Montreal every second day, stopping 24 times along the way.

But the planned cutback of the Ottawa-Hull-Lachute-Montreal "milk run" has convinced the 56-year-old engine man it's back to the Smiths Falls freight yards to finish out a career.

"I'm sure that's where I'll end up," says St. Germain, a resident of Carleton Place. "They (VIA) didn't tell us anything. We heard through the radio and newspapers. It's a bum way to find out you may lose your job."

Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin says there will be few layoffs and \$30 million has been allocated to assist the estimated 1,600 employees affected by the elimination of the money-losing lines, through retraining and relocation. But St. Germain is skeptical.

"I don't know who the papers are talking about for relocating, but it's certainly not us. must be the office staff. We'll just keep getting bumped down the line."

"With no buses here (due to the Voyageur strike in Quebec), they should be adding a train rather than taking it off. I think there is a need for this train, but who am I to tell them what to leave and what to cut?"

"When the railways wanted to get rid of trains, they had to go through proper rules and channels. Now they just forget about them and do it their own way."

Pepin secured the changes through an order in council, bypassing the Canadian Transport Commission (CTC) and public consultation, claiming that process was too time consuming.

<i>10/08/1981</i>	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>	<i>Chalk River</i>	<i>Pembroke</i>
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Train kills youth walking on tracks

Two district residents were killed in weekend accidents, including an 18-year-old Pembroke youth who was struck from behind by a train Saturday at 6:30 p.m. Rick Duchene was walking with a friend on railway tracks near Moffit's Crossing when he was struck by the train. Apparently, Duchene and Tim Warner didn't hear the train coming

Darrell Duchene, 16-year-old brother of Rick, said, "Tim tried to pull my brother off of the tracks when he saw the train but was just too late."

<i>21/08/1981</i>	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>	<i>Alexandria</i>	<i>Ottawa New</i>
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Come see the LRC train. Take a preview tour of it at Ottawa Station, Saturday August 22nd and Sunday August 23rd, from 10:00 AM. to 6:00 P.M.

<i>21/08/1981</i>	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>	<i>Chalk River</i>	<i>Pembroke</i>
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Train station's future may be decided today

PEMBROKE The future of the city's 104-year-old train station may be decided today at a meeting with a local restaurateur and the vice-president of Canadian Pacific Rail.

Zolo Demeter is scheduled to meet with R.S. Allison in Montreal in what may mark the final countdown to the structure's demolition.

Demeter is the driving force behind the efforts to save the station.

He is responsible for obtaining an extension of the demolition deadline originally set by CP last winter. In June, CP officials agreed to extend the deadline from July 1 to Sept. 15.

Demeter has formed the Ottawa Valley Public Action Committee which has approached community groups in the city for their support.

He arranged a meeting last week with the area manager for CP to discuss alternatives to demolishing the station, which was built in 1877.

When this proved fruitless, he decided to go straight to the top and was granted a meeting with Allison earlier this week.

Armed with letters from service groups, the Pembroke Historical Society and arts groups, Demeter hopes to convince CP officials the station is worth saving.

"To destroy this building will be destroying a part of the city's heritage," he said.

A number of alternative -uses for the building have been put forth by the committee, including the establishment of an arts and crafts market or a farmers' market.

However, CP officials have insisted company policy states stations which are not used for railway business must be moved or torn down.

Safety and the possibility of derailment are the reasons given to Demeter by the railway.

A new building is scheduled to be constructed in the fall to replace the stone structure.

The railway has offered to sell the station to any group or individual for \$1 on condition they move it.

Although he is reluctant to consider moving the structure because it would lose some of its historical impact, Demeter admits a city contractor and architect are studying the cost or dismantling, moving and rebuilding the station near the marina.



LRC train impresses crowd

VIA Rail's newest attraction made its debut before a full house this weekend at the Ottawa Station, playing to generally good reviews.

The LRC train - short for light, rapid and comfortable - can maintain speeds of up to 200 kilometres an hour on existing track and was on display to the public for the first time this weekend.

More than 8,000 train buffs and other curious spectators turned out for a peck at what VIA bills as the "train of the future."

"It looks rather pleasant, like air transport brought down to earth," said Keith Grimwood, an Ottawa chemical engineer, as he inspected the interior of the passenger cab. "But I guess a ride would be the final answer."

VIA is expected to introduce regular LRC train service between Toronto and Montreal this fall. The made-in-Canada train is already in use in the U.S. by Amtrak on one of its intercity routes.

"I like the idea of serving you the meals right at your seats," said Gerry Gimmill. "It looks a lot better than some of the ones I've been on."

Jim Gauvreau, a self-confessed train buff, has been trying to take pictures of the LRC for a long time. Saturday he finally got his chance.

"It's been pretty hard to catch up to now. It's how soon they can get it running on the rails with passenger service and get rid of some of the older equipment."

For lanky Doug Mossop, it was the train's leg room that caught his eye.

"I'm impressed because it's designed like the interior of an aircraft," said the Canada Post employee. "The seats are a new design and feel more spacious for people like me. I'm surprised. I didn't think it would be so well designed for people."

"It seems very well air-conditioned, provided it's equally as well heated."

"Besides, I'm a bit of a nationalist. Anything that's new and good and Canadian I'm for."

But not everyone was impressed with the merchandise on display. Charles Lapkoff, a lab scientist, made the sightseeing tour with wife Ruth and children Dani and Ayli because "we saw the ad in the paper and thought we'd take the kids for a look."

"It looks pretty good if it works," said Lapkoff. "It must have cost a fortune to develop it. I wonder how many years it'll take to make it pay."

"It's a good concept, but when I get to Montreal going that fast I'll believe it. The train may be able to go 200 kmh, but I'd like to see it in use."

But, he conceded, "even though I have my doubts I'll probably try it when it comes out."

The Lapkoffs admit they are somewhat biased against new trains.

"I've been on the Turbo three times and twice it's broken down," said Lapkoff.

27/08/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Chalk River**Pembroke*

Pembroke station's doomsday is September 15

PEMBROKE Historical buffs have until Sept. 15 to take pictures of the city's 104-year-old train station, because it will no longer exist Sept. 16.

Efforts by a local group to obtain the station from Canadian Pacific to open an arts and craft fair or farmer's market have failed.

Although the group, the Ottawa Valley Public Action Committee, is now concentrating its efforts on moving the station from its Nelson Street site to the marina, CP Rail is standing firm on its decision to tear the stone structure down Sept. 15.

Even a meeting in Montreal last week between CP's Executive Vice-President R. S. Allison and Zolo Demeter, a local restaurateur and leader of the committee, failed to produce a change in the railway's verdict.

"It was like running into a brick wall," said Demeter.

"He took many notes but kept repeating the decision is company policy."

Safety is what the company policy is based on.

A company spokesman in Ottawa said the policy insists stations not used for railway business must be moved or torn down. He added the possibility of injury because of a derailment is what the company wants to avoid.

The company offered last January to sell the station for \$1 on condition it be moved. When no takers were found, CP informed the city it would be torn down July 1.

Demeter stepped in at the end of June and pushed for an extension of the deadline to Sept. 15.

Since then, he has formed the committee, made service clubs and Pembroke residents aware of the problem and obtained their support as well as meeting with the area manager for CP.

Now that it is apparent the railway will not change its stand, Demeter is concentrating his efforts on having the structure moved.

Demeter said a local contractor has offered to move the structure, stone by stone, for about \$10,000, while a local architect is working on a plan for the new foundation and shell.

Funds for this shell and the foundation would have to be raised locally or obtained through various government programs, including Wintario or through the heritage administration branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

Now the struggle has become a race against the clock.

"As long as the last stone is still standing, we will do everything we can to save it," said Demeter.

04/09/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Chalk River**Pembroke*

Battle to retain railway station reaches ministry

PEMBROKE A petition containing more than 1,000 names was to be delivered to Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin today, asking the ministry to step in to stop the demolition of the city's 104-year-old train station.

Zolo Demeter, a local restaurateur who has headed efforts to save the station, is in charge of the petitions and letters from local service and community groups and city council.

Demeter has organized the collection of petitions as a last-ditch effort to keep the stone structure intact.

"We are entering the 11th hour of the situation," he said. "If this doesn't work we are really in hot water."

Other efforts by a local group headed by Demeter to obtain the station from Canadian Pacific Rail - to open an arts and craft fair or farmer's market have failed.

Although the group, the Ottawa Valley Public Action Committee, shifted its efforts last week to moving the station from its Nelson Street location to the marina, CP is standing firm on its decision to tear down the stone structure Sept. 15.

Even a meeting in Montreal a few weeks ago between CP's executive vice-president R. S. Allison and Demeter, failed to produce a change in the railway's verdict.

Now the committee is simply concentrating on keeping the station from falling under the wrecker's ball.

The railway has repeated that company policy prohibits the station from being used for other purposes.

A company spokesman in Ottawa said the policy insists stations not used for railway business must be moved or torn down. He said the possibility of injury because of a derailment is what the company wants to avoid.

The company last January offered to sell the station to the city for \$1 on the condition it be moved. When no takers were found, CP informed the city the building would be torn down July 1.

Demeter stepped in at the end of June and pushed for an extension of the deadline to Sept. 15.

Since then he has formed the committee, made service clubs and Pembroke residents aware of the problem and obtained their support as well as meeting with the area manager for CP.

A spokesman for Pepin said Thursday he was not aware the petition was on its way to Ottawa but that the ministry would take it into consideration in trying to find a solution.

"We will make every effort to find an equitable solution to the problem," said the spokesman who asked not to be identified.

Hot box claimed in train derailment

By Dave Mullington and Michael Prentice Citizen staff writers

ARNPRIOR An overheated bearing, better known as a "hot box," caused a CP freight train to jump the rails and narrowly miss plowing into homes in the centre of Arnprior Sunday night, a spokesman for CP Rail said today.

Several box-cars stopped only 25 metres (75 feet) from the homes after the derailment that left 14 freight cars in a tangled heap.

The mangled cars contained no chemicals or explosives, and no one was hurt.

CP Rail spokesman Stephen Morris confirmed today the crash was caused by a hot box.

A hot box caused the 1979 derailment of a freight train in Mis-sissauga that led to the evacuation of 250,000 persons because of the danger of deadly chlorine gas.

The Arnprior train was carrying general merchandise such as canned goods and meat.

Since the Mississauga incident, a federal commission of inquiry has recommended improved safety measures to prevent hot-box derailments but the Canadian Transport Commission has not yet acted on the recommendations.

A hot box occurs when a wheel bearing overheats, causing the rail car axle to seize or burn off. The improved safety system would require hot-box detectors every 32 kilometres (20 miles) on track through urban areas.

There are no hot-box detectors on the section of track where Sunday's crash occurred, Morris said. He added that CP Rail is planning to put them in by next year.

Therese Giroux, a spokesman for the Canadian Transport Commission, said today the commission will decide very soon whether to make the detectors mandatory on all rail lines through urban areas.

Arnprior Police Chief Dave Thorn ordered barricades immediately after the accident, but no one in this town of 6,100 was evacuated.

Morris said damage was minimal to the cars. The rail line was reopened at 7.30 a.m. today.

The derailment occurred at the corner of Edward Street North and William Street West in a residential section about two blocks from the downtown business section.

Morris said the accident happened shortly after 9 p.m. as the Montreal-bound CP Rail train No. 482 was moving through the town "at under 30 miles per hour."

Arnprior Mayor Tom Sullivan said, "It's inevitable it's going to happen. Trains have been running up and down this line here for many, many years. We've all thought since the Mississauga episode we should have a disaster plan, but how do you plan for this kind of accident?"

He said the town had a disaster plan and "it looks to me as if our plans worked Sunday night."

The 14 derailed cars were part of a 115-car general commodity train travelling from western Canada, Morris said. He said the 14 cars were located near the front of the train and contained products such as soft drinks, steel, frozen fruit and vegetables, tins of meat, coal and sides of beef.

The train also included cars carrying listed dangerous products such as ink and cleaning solutions, but these cars were not affected by the accident.

"Almost half the town was out during the night to see it," said 80-year-old Genevieve Daze, who lives with her 83-year-old cousin May near the scene of the accident.

"There were greater vibrations than ever before," said Daze, who has lived in her Edward Street house for 65 years.

Thorn said he was told of the derailment shortly after 9 and went to the scene immediately. Barricades were set up to keep the public back, he said, but nobody was evacuated because by that time the danger seemed to have passed.

Arnprior derailment cleared enough to reopen traffic

By Jennifer Jackson Citizen staff writer

Trains are back on the track in Arnprior after a 14-car derailment Sunday. But workers are still struggling to clear up the mess.

"I believe it will take the rest of the week to clean up the box cars," Arnprior Mayor Tom Sullivan said Tuesday. "They're demolishing the cars and cutting them up for scrap."

The 115-car CP freight train was bound for Montreal from Western Canada when it jumped the rails and narrowly missed several homes in central Arnprior about 9 p.m.

There were no injuries and no dangerous goods were aboard.

Sullivan said one of the cars carried sides of beef that "looked pretty inviting" and frozen strawberries and raspberries, but the area was well patrolled and there was no looting.

An overheated bearing, called a "hot box," caused the derailment, CP Rail officials said Tuesday. A hot box occurs when a wheel bearing overheats, causing the rail car axle to seize or burn off.

A hot box caused the 1979 derailment of a freight train in Mississauga that led to the evacuation of 250,000 residents from the threat of deadly chlorine gas.

Since that accident, a federal commission of inquiry has recommended improved safety measures that would require hot-box detectors every 32 kilometres or 20 miles of track.

But there are no hot-box detectors on the section of track where Sunday's crash occurred.

Therese Giroux, a spokesman for the Canadian Transport Commission, said the commission will decide very soon whether to make the detectors mandatory on all rail lines through urban areas.

Psychiatric patient dies after hit by train

An Ottawa man who was a patient at the Brockville Psychiatric Hospital was struck and killed by a locomotive Thursday after he wandered from the hospital grounds.

The body of Walter Boz, 24, was discovered by the crew of another train as it approached the section of track where an earlier CN freight train had passed.

Ontario Provincial Police in Brockville said the engineer of the train that apparently struck Boz at 3:15 p.m. saw a man walking across the tracks, but thought he had crossed safely.

When the second train approached the same area about 4:30 p.m., the engineer saw a body on the tracks and alerted the Brockville station. Police were then called.

Because Boz was a volunteer patient at the hospital, he was given more freedom to leave the grounds. The tracks where the man was hit are about 1.1 kilometres north of the hospital.

104 years of service razed in two hours (with picture)

PEMBROKE (Staff) After 104 years of serving the needs of Pembroke and area residents, the city's train station was torn down in less than two hours Tuesday. Despite a two-month campaign by a local group to save the stone structure, a contractor demolished the building almost immediately after receiving the demolition permit from the city.

Owned by CP Rail, the building was torn down so a new, \$70,000 structure could be erected in its place.

Construction is expected to start this week and be completed in two months. A trailer will serve as temporary shelter until the new one is completed.

Zolo Demeter, a local restaurateur who headed the struggle to keep the station intact, called the event "Black Tuesday" for Pembroke residents.

"Pembroke residents never had a chance to fight the decision," said Demeter.

"CP knew all the rules and played their game well."

Describing the demolition as unfortunate, Mayor Angus Campbell said the move was inevitable and the city could not do anything to stop the railway from tearing it down.

As well as supporting the campaign to save the station, the city tried to withhold the demolition permit to give local committees a chance to make arrangements to have the station moved.

Campbell said the city granted the permit after contacting officials in Arnprior who have lost a costly three-year battle to save their train station.

He said Arnprior council decided Monday to drop its legal battle with CP because it had become "an exercise in futility."

"CP officials had made up their minds so it was only a matter of time," Campbell said.

"Zolo Demeter and his committee are to be commended."

Demeter helped form the Ottawa Valley Public Action Committee in June and managed to get CP to change the original deadline for demolition from July 1 to Sept. 15.

At first the committee wanted the structure to remain where it was, to be used as an arts and craft fair or farmer's market.

The group shifted its efforts last week to moving the station from its Nelson Street site to the marina, but CP stood firm on its decision to tear the stone structure down Tuesday.

Even a meeting in Montreal a few weeks ago between CP's Executive Vice-President R. S. Allison and Demeter failed to produce a change in the railway's verdict.

The company kept repeating that its policy prohibits the station from being used for other purposes. A company spokesman in Ottawa said the policy insists stations not used for railway business must be moved or torn down. He added the possibility of injury because of a derailment is what the company wants to avoid.

The company proposed last January to sell the station for \$1 on condition it be moved. When no takers were found, CP informed the city it would be torn down July 1.

A last-ditch attempt to save the structure was launched last week with the collection of more than 2,000 names on a petition sent to federal Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin.

However, even this action proved fruitless; ministry officials were unavailable Tuesday for comment.

So after many years of service since its birth in 1877, the Pembroke train station has become but another memory of the city's history.

The only remnants of the station are a few benches, the ticket window and a few other pieces of furniture that were salvaged and sent to the Champlain Trail Museum.

Operation Lifesaver Kicked off with a bang

On Tuesday morning, Transport Canada, in co-operation with the Canada Safety Council, the Canadian Transport Commission and the Railway Association of Canada, crashed a train into a car at a level crossing to show that level crossings are dangerous. There was more to it than that, of course. This is how it went.

At nine in the morning a small group of journalists boarded an OC Transpo bus at Parliament Hill to be taken to the Museum of Science and Technology. A man from Transport Canada stood up and announced that this exercise, the train crashing into the car, was called Operation Lifesaver. "We hope you have a safe trip to the museum," he said.

At the museum, press kits were handed out about the train crashing into the car. Operative Lifesaver would last five years. Several dozen officials wearing nametags were in the room with the museum's old trains. A piece of paper marked "attendance sheet" was on a small table. Five people had signed it.

A podium had been set up in front of CNR locomotive 6400, which had pulled King George VI around Canada in 1939. Roger Cyr, national director of Operation Lifesaver, introduced R.S. Allison, president of the Railway Association of Canada, who thanked ladies and gentlemen for coming here today. E.J. Benson, president of the CTC, said it gave him great pleasure to take part in the opening ceremonies. Jean-Luc Pepin, the minister of transport, explained why he took time off from his busy schedule.

The speeches were accompanied from time to time by tape-recorded train noises and, once, a ship's bell. A mock-up of a ship's bridge is in the same room.

The ceremonies finished at 10 and all the officials and journalists got on two OC Transpo buses. The buses took Albion Road to a level crossing on a dirt road near Rideau-Carleton Raceway.

Everybody got off the buses. There was a car on the level crossing. It was a 1981 Ford LTD., white in color, with two dummies inside, a male driver and a female passenger. Someone said it seemed silly to use a brand-new car, but someone else said the car had been crashed several times already.

A train idled near the 1981 Ford LTD. On the train's engine, the CP of CP Rail was covered over by a large Operation Lifesaver banner. The National Film Board was filming the crash and it was not CP Rail's intention to have its blame figure prominently. Originally it was planned to cover the CP insignia on all the train's cars, but this would interfere with air intake.

It was raining hard and nothing happened for half an hour. The Gloucester Fire Department arrived and asked if there was gasoline in the car. There was not.

A car drove up, bearing a sticker identifying its owner as a member of the Hazeldean Kiwanis Club. Someone asked him how he got through the roadblock. Near the tracks were several men in white hard hats. Later, a Gloucester Police car drove up at high speed and a man in a yellow hard hat got out. Also in attendance were representatives of Andy's Towing Service.

At 10:50, W.L. Higgitt, former commissioner of the RCMP and now president of the Canada Safety Council, climbed into the cab of the locomotive to make a speech. The first line of his speech, according to the text, was "Ad-lib re weather, journey, etc." No one heard what that ad-lib re weather was, because poor amplification made his remarks inaudible.

People moved back behind a rope. The train tooted its whistle and backed up until it was out of sight. An NFB man turned on a camera inside the 1981 Ford LTD. The warning lights at the level crossing went on. At 11:10, the train appeared, doing 25 miles per hour.

It crashed into the car. The car was badly damaged and pushed down the track. The people got back on the OC Transpo buses. They knew that this would have happened to their car if it got hit by a train.

Youth dies as car hits train

An Inkerman youth was killed early today and another injured when their Volkswagen Beetle slammed into a stationary freight train at a level crossing in Winchester.

Colin Mills, 17, of Inkerman was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident, which occurred at 4:25 a.m.

His passenger, 18-year-old Brian Young of Winchester, was taken to the Ottawa Civic Hospital with multiple injuries. No report on his condition was available. Winchester firemen worked for about 45 minutes before freeing Young from the tangled wreckage.

Fire Chief Dalton Kenney said the rescue might have taken longer without hydraulic metal cutting equipment bought by the force last summer.

The car slammed into the middle of a CP freight train that had made an emergency stop and was blocking the intersection.

A CP Rail spokesman said today flashing warning lights and ringing bells at the intersection were both functioning properly at the time of the crash.

He said the train had automatically stopped when an air line hose, which joins the cars, broke.

The four crew members had left the train to investigate the problem when they heard the crash.

OPP investigating officer Norm Sarault is puzzled by the accident.

"Both the lads were local and they knew that crossing really well."

Coroner Dr. Gabriel Slowey said this morning he hadn't yet decided whether to hold an inquest.

The two were students at North Dundas District High School outside Winchester and had worked part-time as cooks at the Country Kitchen restaurant in Winchester.

They finished work there about half an hour after midnight and didn't have to go to school today as classes were cancelled for a professional development day.

Staff at the restaurant were in shock this morning.

"We're just sick about it," said waitress June Armstrong. "Both of the boys were working last night."

The train, heading from Smiths Falls to Montreal, was held up for 90 minutes after the accident.

16/11/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Lachute*

Last call for VIA northshore to Hull, Gatineau, Templeton, Masson-Buckingham

There is a certain irony to the call as it echoes through the nearly deserted Ottawa station, slicing through the early morning fog.

When VIA Northshore Number 170 began its four hour trek to Montreal at 7.30 a.m. Saturday, it was the beginning of the end.

For most of this century, the little passenger train has been as familiar to residents of rural West Quebec as the smell of morning coffee.

The train is the victim of Transport Canada's decision to reduce 20 per cent of VIA Rail's services across Canada. It has been the major, and in some cases, the only, transportation for many West Quebecers.

Lucie Chevrier, whose lively eyes and quick smile belie her 80 years, has been boarding the Northshore at papineauville almost once a week for the past 63 years to visit her sister in Montreal.

Now, she doesn't know now if she will go to Montreal as often.

"I guess I'll have to take the bus but it doesn't leave until noon," she said Saturday. "I'm very upset with the Liberals. They don't understand how important the train is to us."

For Claire papineau the end of the train is a disappointment. Riding the train has been a "tradition" for the past 40 years."

Papineau, who lives in Laval, was returning from a trip to Papineauville to visit her sisters.

"The bus is about double the price", she lamented. "And it takes much longer than the train. I'm so disappointed."

For others discontinuing the Northshore means more than longer travelling time to visit relatives.

Giselle Burke of Montebello has been taking the train to Bordeaux, just outside Montreal, for the last 12 years to visit her doctor.

She's not looking forward to taking the bus.

"My appointment is at 11 Saturday morning, but the bus doesn't leave until noon. I'll have to change the appointment or go to Bordeaux Friday night

24/11/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Iroquois*

Court selects jury for train-firetruck crash trial

CORNWALL (Staff) A jury was selected here Monday for next week's trial of Iroquois resident Philip Thompson who has been charged in connection with the fatal firetruck-train collision last March 19.

Thompson, who was the driver of the emergency vehicle, has been charged with criminal negligence causing death.

The five other occupants of the van were killed. The accident occurred at the Brinston Road level crossing just east of Iroquois.

The volunteer firemen were responding to a chimney fire when the accident occurred.

01/12/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Iroquois*

Driver 'goaded' into crossing tracks, court told

CORNWALL The lone survivor of the Iroquois volunteer fire department van that crashed into a freight train March 19, claimed he was goaded into driving around a level crossing gate, county court was told Monday.

Volunteer fireman Philip Thompson, 28, was charged with criminal negligence causing death after the accident that killed five firefighters in the emergency van he was driving.

The volunteers were rushing to a chimney fire near Iroquois at the house of the daughter of one of the firemen when it collided with the westbound train.

John Mason, 42, Allen Holmes, 35, Randy Thompson, 32, Dennis Fisher, 34, and Joseph Billings, 33, died in the accident.

OPP Constable Roy Guse testified Monday that Thompson claimed the other firemen urged him to drive around the lowered crossing barrier after an eastbound freight train had passed.

Thompson's statement to police showed the firemen waited two to three minutes for the 105-car train to clear the two-track crossing on a side-road outside the village.

"The gates wouldn't go up after the (eastbound) train went by and everybody in the van wanted to get going. They said I should drive around the gate," according to Thompson's statement. "I got part of the way across the tracks when I heard someone yell and saw the train coming. That's the last thing I remember."

Willard Duncan, deputy chief of the volunteer fire department said Thompson was not trained to operate fire pumps and he didn't know if he had ever before driven the emergency van.

William Ewing, the driver of a pumper truck following the van, said he saw it hit by the train as he was about to drive the pumper truck around the barrier.

"I walked up the tracks behind the train and found Philip Thompson north of the tracks," Ewing said. "I saw he was alive and helped him a little bit."

"When I came across John Mason between the two tracks, there was no movement or pulse, so I figured he was dead. I went to the front of the van and heard a little noise from Dennis Fisher on the driver's side.

"There was nothing I could do for Allen Holmes, who was sitting in the passenger's seat."

The trial continues.

Fireman guilty of dangerous driving

CORNWALL An Iroquois fireman has been found guilty of dangerous driving as a result of the crash last March of a fire department van with a freight train which killed five of his colleagues.

Philip Thompson, originally charged with the more serious charge of criminal negligence causing death, stood expressionless as the jury foreman told county court Judge George Stiles Tuesday that the jury could only find the volunteer fireman guilty of dangerous driving.

The van was hit by a westbound train moments after Thompson drove around a lowered crossing barrier that he had stopped at to wait for an eastbound freight to pass.

Thompson, 28, still a member of the fire department, but only as a stand-by volunteer, will be sentenced next Tuesday.

The penalty could range from a suspended sentence to a maximum two years in jail. The more serious charge of criminal negligence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Thompson's lawyer, Douglas Grenkie, said he would wait until sentencing to decide whether he will appeal the conviction.

The 12-member jury deliberated for two hours, breaking once to ask Stiles to repeat the legal definitions of the charges. The dangerous driving offence is automatically considered by judge or jury in accidents where the accused is acquitted of a criminal negligence charge.

Stiles told the jury a criminal negligence conviction could only be arrived at if they believed without a reasonable doubt Thompson had shown reckless disregard for the safety of his fellow firemen.

The key to the legal definition of the dangerous driving charge, said Stiles, was determining if the accused had driven in a manner dangerous to others.

The volunteers were rushing to a chimney fire at the house of the daughter of fireman John Mason, near Iroquois, when the accident occurred. Killed were the 42-year-old Mason, Allen Holmes, 35, Randy Thompson, 32, Dennis Fisher, 34, and Joseph Billings, 33.

Thompson was injured in the accident and remained in hospital for several days.

In his charge to the jury following the two-day trial, Stiles told them the driver of a fire truck, regardless of the emergency at hand, is no less obliged than any other motorist to stop and wait at a railway crossing until all warning signals have ceased.

Failing that, the driver is inviting danger, Stiles said, and that could be regarded as wanton or reckless disregard for the safety of others.

In his summation to the jury, defence counsel Douglas Grenkie said Thompson had made an innocent mistake, adding the jurors should ask themselves: "What would any reasonable person do in a similar situation?"

Testimony from police and Thompson showed the accused had never been given the responsibility of driving to a fire since joining the volunteer department only two months before, Grenkie said.

"I was proceeding (to a fire)," Thompson said Tuesday morning when asked during cross-examination to explain why he crossed the lowered railway barrier.

"As a new member, I did not know what standard procedure was

Other evidence showed Thompson had been goaded to drive around the barrier by the other firemen, the defence lawyer said in the summation.

"Every second counts (in a fire)," said Grenkie. "Everyone was anxious to go.

"It's a volunteer fireman's duty to go to fires and get them under control as soon as possible."

But in his summation, Assistant Crown Attorney Alan Ain said evidence indicated Thompson chose to chance it, guessing the railway barrier was malfunctioning.

But Ain said there was really no reason for Thompson to think that the barrier was malfunctioning, even though he couldn't see a westbound train. The barrier was down for the eastbound, 105-car train, Ain said, so it obviously was working properly.

"Imagine being on a platform 50 feet above the tracks," Ain said to the jury. "You see a train go by and then a train coming from the other direction. Then you see the van moving (around the barrier.)

"The feeling you would get is a manifestation of criminal negligence the accused showed when he deliberately drove his van over the tracks and didn't make it."

Following the trial, Thompson said a terse "no comment" when approached by reporters.

Train hits Brockville man's car

A Brockville resident escaped with minor injuries Monday when his car was hit by a train at a railway crossing.

Brockville police said 66-year-old Arthur Hoffman was not seriously injured in the accident because the train was moving slowly and was able to stop soon after the collision.

Hoffman's car was demolished in the 1:05 p.m. accident.

Police said they believe the accident occurred because the driver of the car attempted to cross the tracks before the train passed.

There are arc railway signals at the tracks, which were found to be working at the time of the accident. There are no barriers.

Hoffman was taken to hospital by his wife, who arrived at the accident scene a few moments later.

Crash driver jailed

CORNWALL (Staff) An Iroquois volunteer fireman who drove an emergency truck through a level crossing into a freight train last March, killing five of his colleagues, was jailed today for five months.

Philip Thompson, 28, also had his driver's licence suspended for three years.

Last week a jury found Thompson guilty of a reduced charge of dangerous driving. He was originally charged with criminal negligence causing death.

"What you did was wrong and against the law, with tragic consequences," said county court Judge George Stiles.

Dangerous driving nets five months

CORNWALL The Iroquois volunteer fireman who drove a van which smashed into a freight train last March killing five of his colleagues has been sentenced to five months in prison and had his driver's licence suspended for three years.

Philip Thompson, 28, was sentenced by county court Judge George Stiles here Tuesday after a jury found him guilty last week on a reduced charge of dangerous driving.

Originally he was charged with a more serious charge of criminal negligence causing death.

"What you did was wrong and against the law with tragic consequences," said Judge Stiles.

"Although it is a horrible burden that you'll have to bear the rest of your life, I am obliged to sentence you to a period of imprisonment," he said.

Defence lawyer Doug Grenkie said he was surprised by the sentence but it will be a few days before he'll decide whether to launch an appeal.

The emergency fire department van that Thompson drove was hit by a westbound train moments after he drove around a lowered crossing barrier at which he had stopped to let a eastbound freight train pass.

The volunteer firemen were enroute to a chimney fire at the house of the daughter of fireman John Mason, near Iroquois.

The mishap occurred at the railway crossing along the Brinston Road and Thompson, the only one to survive was injured and remained in hospital for several days.

Killed were the 42-year-old Mason, Allen Holmes, 35, Randy Thompson, 32, Dennis Fisher, 34 and Joseph Billings, 33.

"It was a momentary lapse- of about six seconds," Grenkie told the judge prior to the sentencing.

"For this he'll have to pay personally for the rest of his life," he said adding that this is a severe punishment by itself.

Grenkie noted that the publicity generated by this incident will serve as a deterrent and a period of incarceration is not necessary.

He also called six character witnesses to the stand including Iroquois village reeve Frank Rooney and Thompson's physician Dr. Henry Prins.

Rooney said the village's 1,250 residents "feel Thompson has suffered greatly because of the incident and will continue to do so through the rest of his days."

Dr. Prins said Thompson has suffered a great deal emotionally and physically as a result of the accident.

In his pre-sentence address, Assistant Crown Attorney Alan Ain said that many people "do not seem to accept that a motor vehicle is a dangerous weapon."

Thompson, he said, "gambled with the lives of others with his dangerous driving."

Ain called on the judge for "a deterrence to the public who are inclined to act in a similar fashion."

He also brought Ontario Provincial Police Constable Roy Guse to the stand who testified that Thompson was convicted in 1975 on a charge of driving with more than 80 milligrams of alcohol in blood.

Guse, a 23-year OPP veteran, said Thompson was fined \$200 and was prohibited from driving for one year.

That charge was laid as a result of a one-car accident in which the passenger was killed.

Although Ain said the two incidents were not the same, they do reflect "the accused's apparent disregard for the danger of a motor vehicle."

18/12/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria*

Man dies in truck-train accident

An Ottawa man was killed early Thursday when his pickup truck collided with a train as he drove across a level crossing in Gloucester.

Police said Hubert Joannisse, 31, of Prince Albert Street died instantly in the 5 a.m. crash when his westbound truck struck a 60-car Canadian National freight train travelling at about 100 kilometres an hour.

Police say the train's whistle sounded before impact.

The accident is under investigation.

21/12/1981 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Iroquois*

Villagers still mourn firemen

ROQUOIS As hard as they try, the residents of this tiny St. Lawrence Seaway village cannot forget.

The colored lights are strung, Santa Claus is in his favorite perch at the local shopping centre and from all outward appearances it appears to be a normal Christmas here, 90 kilometres south of Ottawa.

In the tiny firehall, the Christmas tree stands decorated as the volunteer firemen prepare for the annual children's party.

But across from the tree, five empty coat hooks stare back. This Christmas no firefighters' gear is under numbers 6, 8, 12, 15 and 18.

A stone plaque outside the station explains.

"In memory of Randy Thompson, Allan Holmes, Joe Billings, Dennis Fisher and John Mason, departed from us in the line of duty March 19, 1981."

The five volunteer firefighters were killed that night en route to a chimney fire when their van was crushed by a train at a level crossing.

Now, nine months later, yet another member of the brigade is absent from the festivities.

The lone survivor and driver of the van, 28-year-old Philip Thompson, recently began serving a five-month prison sentence for dangerous driving.

That March night, Thompson had waited near the tracks while an eastbound train passed, and then decided to chance driving around the crossing barrier before it was lifted. The van was hit by a westbound train.

The jail sentence (Thompson also had his licence suspended for five years) came as a blow to the 1,200 townfolk, still numbed by the loss of five of their own.

It has many people remembering when they'd prefer to forget.

"It has added to our sorrow," says Reeve Frank Rooney. "The whole village is suffering, not just Phil. He's suffered enough."

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