

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1984

*03/01/1984 Ottawa Citizen Lachute Papineauville*

Papineauville man killed

A 19-year-old Papineauville man was killed when the truck he was driving was hit by a train Saturday.

Robert Brazeau of Major Street in Papineauville died in the 5:30 p.m. collision near his home.

A Quebec Police Force spokes man in Hull said Monday the investigation is continuing and cause of the crash is unknown.

Papineauville is 50 kilometres east of Ottawa on the Ottawa River.

*16/01/1984 Ottawa Citizen Vankleek Vankleek Hill*

Youth injured in truck-train collision

A youth is in hospital with multiple fractures after the truck in which he was a passenger struck a Canadian National train at a crossing in Vankleek Hill Saturday.

Daniel Lavoie, 15, of Vankleek Hill was in a pickup truck that entered a rail crossing on Main Street East at 11 a.m.

CN spokesman Rene Chappaz said the truck entered the crossing at about 20 kilometres an hour and struck an eastbound locomotive pulling 14 freight rail cars and travelling at about 25 kmh.

Details of Lavoie's condition were unavailable. He is at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

Jermain Fauteux, 25, of Vankleek Hill, the driver of the truck, was treated for minor fractures and is in stable condition at Hawkesbury General Hospital.

*19/01/1984 Ottawa Citizen Maniwaki*

Steam train to Wakefield may be dropped by CPR

CP Rail wants to abandon its line from Hull to Maniwaki, a move that would end the popular steam engine rides to Wakefield.

Because the line has been a money-loser, CP spokesman Fred Draper said Wednesday the firm plans to ask the Canadian Transport Commission if it can drop the 120-kilometre stretch.

Freight train delivery to Maniwaki would also be eliminated.

A similar request was refused in 1981 when, after a series of public hearings, the commission ordered CP to keep the line open for a three-year period ending Jan. 22. By then, CP must report to the commission on the amount of traffic on the line and the efforts made to increase it.

Several groups, including Maniwaki, opposed the closure request in 1981 and promised Wednesday to fight CP's new bid.

The summer steam engine rides from the National Museum of Science and Technology to Wakefield might be replaced by trips to Arnprior if CP's request is approved, said John Corby, museum curator in charge of the program.

It's also possible an agreement will be worked out between the National Capital Commission, a partner in the Wakefield project, and CP Rail to keep the track open.

The twice-weekly trips, on a 40-year-old steam engine, have been 97-per-cent filled in recent years. They began in 1973 and attract about 7,000 people a year.

*01/02/1984 Vialogue Kingston (CN) Kingston*

Turtle duty. It seems that everyone working at the Kingston, Ontario station has been assigned to turtle duty. Turtle duty is the act of picking up the large reptile (usually by the tail) to remove it from its desired place of rest by the track, roadbed or platform. The turtles wander up from two swamps on either side of the station. Although turtle duty will never be written into their job descriptions, the Kingston VIA employees enjoy putting a good turtle back on (its own) track: VIALOGUE. November 1984.

*11/02/1984 Ottawa Citizen Maniwaki Gracefield*

Pupils spared as train hits Quebec bus

About 20 students escaped serious injury Friday when a Canadian Pacific train plowed into the front of their school bus in Gracefield, Que.

The bus driver, Donald Lemens, 44, of Lac Ste. Marie, was the only person seriously injured when the snow removal train smashed into the bus as it rolled across the tracks near Ecole Elementaire et Secondaire Sacre-Coeur in the town 70 kilometres north of Ottawa.

He is in serious condition in Ottawa General Hospital with head injuries.

Only two students required hospital treatment for minor bruises and cuts after the 3:15 p.m. accident.

One of the injured students, Guy Gagnon, 13, seated in the front on the side struck by the train, told The Citizen later that no one saw the train approaching because of the snow being whipped up in front of the train as it plowed the tracks.

Gagnon, who received a bump on the head, said while most of the students were screaming and crying, they all left the bus in an orderly fashion.

"It all happened so quickly. No one saw the train because of the powder snow flying in front of the train."

Gagnon said Lemens had stopped the bus at the crossing and checked both directions before starting across the track. Another bus had just crossed the tracks ahead of the Lac Ste. Marie bus owned and driven by Lemens.

"When he (Lemens) saw the train, he hit the brakes, but the bus slid forward on the ice. It wasn't his fault. He tried everything to stop the bus."

Gagnon said the bus was spun around by the train as the lead spreader, used to break ice on the tracks, plowed into the bus just at the front wheels. The rear of the bus then collided with the train's engine, which was behind the spreader and snowplow.

Const. Daniel Boucher, of the Maniwaki provincial police detachment, said the train conductor pulled the emergency brakes as soon as he saw the bus.

The train, which had been travelling about 55 kilometre per hour had slowed to about 32 kmh when it struck the bus.

Robert Parker, driving the bus directly behind Lemens, said he also had not seen the train until he heard the whistle. There is no warning signals at the crossing.

"All I saw was snow being blown around. I thought it was a snowplow on a nearby road. Parker, whose 15-year-old daughter was in Lemens's bus, said his heart jumped when he saw the train.

"If the bus had been struck in the middle, the bus would have been cut in half and there would have been a lot of dead children."

While the absence of signal warnings has never been an issue, parents and a school board trustee contacted Friday night, said it is now.

"We'll try to take steps to have a signal warning," said Glendon Sage, trustee for the Upper Gatineau School Board.

The CPR service train had left Hull at 11 a.m. Friday to clear the rarely used section of track for a freight train scheduled for a trip to Maniwaki next week.

The train line is only used about once a month.

Boucher said the investigation is continuing.

**Bus-train crash probed**

The Canadian Transport Commission is investigating the Feb. 10 collision between a school bus and a Canadian Pacific train in Gracefield.

Peter Schnobb, spokesman for the CTC, said an inquiry was ordered because numerous lives were endangered during the accident.

About 20 students escaped serious injury when a snow-removal train plowed into the front of the school bus as it pulled out of the entrance of Sacre-Coeur school, 70 kilometres north of Ottawa.

**Truck crash derails train**

A tractor-trailer with a load of logs crashed into a moving freight train at a Hwy. 17 crossing near Pembroke Friday, injuring the truck driver and derailing at least six cars.

Provincial police said the driver of the truck barely managed to jump clear as the truck barrelled into the Canadian Pacific freight about 5 p.m. at the Meath crossing, about 15 kilometres east Pembroke.

Police said Yvon Leger, 42, of Rawdon, Que., east of Montreal, is at the Ottawa Civic Hospital with head injuries.

Traffic on the busy highway, the main link to Ottawa 140 km east, had to be re-routed.

A Canadian Pacific spokesman said the line is used only for freight and no backlog is expected as a result of the accident.

**Car-train crash kills woman**

A woman passenger in a compact car was killed and the driver critically injured in a collision Thursday night with a Canadian Pacific freight train at a crossing on a Gatineau sideroad.

Gatineau police were withholding the names of the victim and injured man, a married couple from Gatineau, pending notification of relatives.

The accident occurred at 8:25 p.m. at the crossing on Chemin du Cheval Blanc in the Templeton sector of the east end of Gatineau.

**Nepean man walks from car-train crash**

A 25-year-old Nepean man escaped with minor bruises Friday evening after an hair-raising collision with a VIA passenger train at the Cambrian Road crossing in the Twin Elms area.

Nepean police said the LRC-train, carrying 134 passengers, struck the front of the eastbound car driven by Kevin Burnett, of Greenbank Road, at 5:40 p.m. after the car skidded to a stop on the CN crossing.

Staff Sgt. Wayne Stephenson said none of the train passengers were injured. Burnett was treated for minor bruises at Queensway-Carleton Hospital and released.

Stephenson said Burnett had braked to stop for the flashing warning signal at the crossing, but skidded on the wet pavement.

The car slid to a stop with its nose on the tracks as the four-car train slammed into it, knocking it off the tracks.

Stephenson said Burnett was able to get out of his car without assistance and was walking about when police arrived.

Burnett couldn't be reached later, but his mother said her son said his car stalled when he tried to back up off the tracks as the train bore down on him.

Stephenson said the train, which had about \$7,000 damage, was able to continue the trip to Toronto after a 40-minute delay.

He said Burnett's car was destroyed.

The accident is under investigation.

**Miracle saves motorist in Car-train collision**

John Picard's Easter miracle was a simple walk away from a car-train collision that left his vehicle a twisted mess Sunday.

Picard was returning home from dropping his mother off after a family dinner when his car was broadsided by a Montreal-bound passenger train at a rural crossing in Cumberland Township.

"The only thing I remember is that I was on the tracks and I saw this big thing coming at me," Picard said of the 5:20 p.m. accident.

"There was no engine noise, or whistle or anything."

The 39-year-old civilian employee of CFB Uplands suffered a broken hand, sore ribs and bruises and said Sunday night he had "a shiner and quite a headache."

"But I walked away from it.

"It was Easter Sunday and I can thank God, He saved my life."

Picard blacked out when his car was struck. The OPP officer investigating the accident said the car was flipped and dragged 36 metres down the tracks.

"There's not much left of the vehicle," said Rockland OPP Const. Mike Brehmer. "The driver's compartment is the only thing left intact."

Embrun Fire Chief Maurice Gregoire was called to the accident scene and said it was "a miracle" Picard lived.

"The licence plate was 100 feet away from the bumper."

Picard, who lives outside Casselman with his wife and sons aged eight and six, was taken to hospital in Ottawa, but released Sunday night.

The train had minor damage and CN Police and the OPP are investigating the accident.

The level crossing, on Dunning Road in Cumberland Township, is marked by a sign, but has no signal light.

**Man on rails hit by train**

An unidentified man is in critical condition in hospital after he apparently attempted to kill himself by sitting in the path of a train in Gatineau late Thursday.

Gatineau police said the victim was spotted sitting on the railroad tracks that run parallel to Ma-loney Boulevard West, near Montee Paiement, at 10:30 p.m. by the conductor of an eastbound freight.

Police said the conductor couldn't stop the train in time to avoid striking the victim, who made no effort to move even though the conductor blew the train's horn.

Gatineau police Const Michel Lafrance says it is believed the man was accompanied by a young German Shepherd dog.

The victim is now at the Ottawa General Hospital. He carried no identification, but is believed to be between 20 to 25 years old.

Driver blamed for Gracefield bus crash.

A Gracefield school-bus driver has been blamed for not having taken "necessary precautions" when his bus full of students was struck by a train Feb. 10.

In a report released Tuesday, the Canadian Transport Commission said primary responsibility for the accident belongs to the driver, who failed to open a door in swirling snow so he could see whether a train was approaching.

The 28 students in the bus escaped serious injury when the Canadian Pacific snow-removal train plowed into the front of the bus as it pulled out of the entrance of Sacre-Coeur school, 70 kilometres north of Ottawa.

The bus driver, Donald Lemens, 44, was treated for a fractured skull at the Ottawa General Hospital and was released five days later.

The report said the driver may have been "subconsciously conditioned to believe there was no winter train service" since trains only passed about once a month during the winter.

Because the driver did not open the bus door, he probably did not hear the train whistle due to the background noise of the students.

Swirling snow around the train did not allow the driver to see the approaching train, the report said.

A request by Gracefield Council to install warning lights at the crossing is being examined by the CTC. However, the CTC has reduced the speed limit of trains to 16 kmh at the crossing. There had been no speed limit and the train was travelling at : 51 kmh when it struck the bus.

Since the accident, the schedules of trains passing on the line to and from Maniwaki have been altered so they don't pass when school buses use the crossing.

Public hearings are to be held this summer to determine whether to retain the seldom-used 120-km Gatineau-to-Maniwaki railway.

Only 39 freight cars moved on the line in 1983.

The report also recommended that a copy of the report be directed to the attention of the Quebec road authorities to consider possible changes to existing road regulations.

The inquiry into the accident was ordered because numerous lives were endangered in the crash.

*05/06/1984 Ottawa Citizen*

*Maniwaki*

Train trips to Wakefield to go full steam ahead

The popular train excursions between Ottawa and Wakefield, Que., are going full steam ahead July 8 despite attempts by CP Rail to drop the line.

"CPR wanted to abandon the line (from Hull to Maniwaki), but the Canadian Transport Commission has not yet given its final word," said Jean-Guy Monette, spokesman for the National Museum of Science and Technology, which along with the National Capital Commission runs the train trips every summer.

"CPR has given us permission to continue this year," he said.

CP Rail wants to drop the Hull-Maniwaki line because it's unprofitable. But that would mean the end of the steam-engine rides to Wakefield, which have been running since 1973.

The trains will take the two-hour trip, leaving from the Museum of Science and Technology on St. Laurent Boulevard, every Sunday and Wednesday from July 8 to Sept. 2.

The 346-seat train will leave the museum at 9 a.m., arriving at Wakefield at 11:30 a.m. The return trip starts at 1:15 p.m., arriving at the museum at 3:45 p.m.

Four additional trips have been planned Sept. 30 and Oct. 7, 8 and 14 so people can see the autumn leaves.

The tickets, which can be reserved in advance at the museum and at the NCC visitor's bureau at 14 Metcalfe St., cost \$12 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under.

With picture.

Sabotage suspected in train derailment.

Police are looking at sabotage as a possible cause of a train derailment in Nepean Thursday night that sent 27 passengers to hospital with minor injuries. The LRC "super train" on the evening run from Toronto to Ottawa was sidetracked on to a dead-end spur line in a Nepean lumber yard as it slowed on its approach to Ottawa.

Investigators are trying to determine how a padlocked railway switch was opened Thursday evening, diverting the VIA Rail train on to the side track.

Police said today that someone with access to a CN railway switching key apparently opened the switch on the spur line leading into the Kott Lumber yard sometime Thursday evening. There was no signs that the padlock had been forced.

The train's engineer spotted the open switch and immediately put on his brakes but the four-car train went on to the spur line and ploughed into three flat-bed cars.

Police said if the flat bed cars, including one loaded with lumber, had not been there the LRC (Light, Rapid, Comfortable) locomotive and some of the four passenger cars would have landed in the Jock River.

The last train passing over the closed switch went through safely at 4.50 p.m. The accident occurred at 10.45 p.m.

CN official Bruno Leroux said it's possible that someone without CN authorization may have gotten the keys. Only CN trainmen and section foremen have access to the keys.

Leroux said cleanup operations will take the rest of day.

The front of the locomotive was embedded in the flat cars. None of the passenger cars turned over but some were partially off tracks.

Canadian Transport Commission investigators and police are trying to find out how the padlocked switch was opened, putting the LRC train on to the siding. There were about 85 passengers on the train. Twenty-seven were taken to three hospitals for treatment of cuts and bruises and were released.

A modified version of the region's year-old hospital disaster plan was put into action for the first time.

A first-of-its-kind instrument installed last October that connects all the region's hospitals on a special radio frequency was switched on at the regional ambulance dispatch centre.

"It really helped us tremendously," said Gerry Savoie, assistant executive-director at Queensway-Carleton Hospital and head of the hospitals' disaster plan for the last three years.

"We had at least 20 minutes' notice before any patients arrived."

Seventeen injured passengers were treated at Queensway-Carleton. Savoie said because the hospital had warning and the accident happened just as shifts changed, extra staff were kept on, allowing the hospital to accommodate the extra patients smoothly.

The new radio system also allowed all the other hospitals in the region to keep up-to-date with how the situation was being handled and to communicate with Queensway-Carleton.

Savoie said he was very pleased with how the plan worked and said it shows regional hospitals are prepared to handle a larger disaster.

Only one person, thought to be a woman in her 50s, had to be taken off the train on a stretcher. She apparently suffered back injuries.

About 60 uninjured passengers were taken to the CN station by four OC Transpo buses.

Spokesmen for the CTC, CN and Via Rail said that neither reconstruction work on the rail line nor the locomotive that ran the five-unit train were factors in the derailment.

CNR officials on the scene refused to answer reporters' questions.

"When we're allowed to release any information, we'll give it to you and nothing more," said one of the officials, who refused to identify himself.

The official threatened to have Nepean police throw reporters off the Kott Lumber Company property.

But one of the passengers, Ed Kulbida of Saskatoon, a trainman, said he had heard that a switch to a sidetrack was locked open, directing the train onto the spur line.

Kulbida estimated the speed of the train at about 70 km/h.

Nepean firemen were on the scene, but Fire Chief Keith Davidson said there was no danger of fire.

The engine, which came to a halt about 10 metres from a building on the Kott lot, was dented at the front when it struck a lone boxcar filled with lumber. The lumber was strewn about the yard.

Passenger Kay Wisn of Halifax, who suffered cuts to her legs, said there was no warning.

"I just went on the floor. There was a grinding noise and that was all."

Afterward, she noticed many passengers lying on the floor nursing minor cuts and bruises.

"There was no advance warning," said John Tilton, of Mississauga.

"All I know is that I was thrown across the aisle and I ended up on the floor with a cut eye and a cut chin."

Jennifer Barrett, 24, was travelling to Ottawa for a job interview. She was sleeping when the accident occurred.

"All of a sudden I felt the train shaking, and then it was over and my car was on a slant," she said.

"I was a little nervous at first, but then everything seemed to be under control."

Steward Ahmed Mokrane was standing in the aisle collecting dishes and cleaning up in preparation for the train's arrival in Ottawa.

"I jumped in between two seats when the train started to shake and then there was a loud boom and the lights went out," he said.

Second Story.

Train wreck could have been avoided

A saboteur and a \$1,000 switch protected by a \$20 padlock are at the root of Thursday night's \$2-million train wreck in Nepean.

Someone unlocked the switch, without damaging the lock, then locked it again after shifting it to steer the train onto a dead-end siding.

The switch has a signal a round piece of reflecting red metal that turns to face oncoming trains when the switch is moved but it wasn't visible until the train was too close for the engineer to stop it before entering the siding. A Canadian Transport Commission investigator said Friday an electronic warning system used on more heavily-travelled tracks would have given the engineer ample warning.

But the track on which the VIA train from Toronto to Ottawa derailed, sending 27 people to hospital with minor injuries, is not used enough to warrant the multi-million dollar investment in such signals, said investigator Alex Kocsis.

The Toronto-Ottawa line only has the electronic system between Nepean's eastern edge and Ottawa station that stretch is part of CN's centralized traffic control, which uses a computer and dispatcher to direct switching from the station.

CN dispatcher Mike Mongeon, said with the computerized system, any change to a switch would show up in the central dispatch and he could radio a warning to the train.

Light signals on the track would also automatically flash red, warning the train engineer, Mongeon said.

The last train passing over the switch involved in the accident went through safely at 4:50 p.m. The accident occurred at 10:45.

Switching onto industrial spurs on the Ottawa-Toronto line west of Ottawa is done manually by a crew member. The manual switches simply push a piece of rail one way or another to steer the wheels of trains passing through.

Kocsis said the train driver saw the red reflector attached to the switch, indicating the track was directed onto the industrial spur, but by then it was too late to stop.

Red means the switch is not tied to the main line. But a train as not like a car. With the steel wheels going on the steel track at 80 km/h it takes at least a quarter of a mile to stop. And he just didn't have a quarter of a mile."

There are only six passenger trains a day on the track where the accident occurred and it wasn't economically feasible for the railroads to install the system.

There are 52 trains daily using the Montreal-Toronto line, he said.

It comes down to economics. It costs money to install and money to maintain an electronic switching system, Kocsis said. Canadian National spokesman Rene

Chappaz said Friday the padlock was placed back on the switch in a way contrary to CN operating procedures. "It does not appear that that the switch was opened through an error by a CN employee." CN official Bruno Leroux said it's possible that someone without CN authorization has the keys. Only CN trainmen and section foremen are supposed to have them.

Nepean police Insp. Wayne Phillips said Friday: "It is obvious that somebody tampered with a switching device that diverted the train onto a spur line. We have some leads and we are following them."

Phillips said someone got at the switch controls either by having the key necessary to open a padlock or by opening it through some other means. Travelling about 80 km/h, the normal speed for trains passing through the switch, the train tore up more than 60 metres of track. The new Light, Rapid, Comfortable locomotive and four passenger cars plowed into three flatbed freight cars in the Kott Lumber Company yard on Moodie Drive. The freight cars stopped the train before it landed in the Jock River.

The force of the impact crumpled the front end of the \$2 million locomotive and heavily damaged the wheels and underbody of it and some of the cars. The passenger cars were extensively damaged inside, too. The CTC and police investigation is expected to take more than a month.

The switch at the Kott spur line had last been opened Wednesday morning, when the freight cars were delivered, officials said. It must have been closed again, though, because numerous trains passed through since.

The CN line was expected to be reopened this morning. CN trains used CPR lines Friday. There were about 85 passengers on the train.

**23/06/1984   Ottawa Citizen                      Smiths Falls                      Moodie Drive**

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**26/06/1984   Ottawa Citizen                      Smiths Falls                      Kott Lumber**

Switch moved in Via crash widely used

By Mark Kennedy Citizen staff writer

The manual switch involved in last week's \$2-million train derailment in Nepean is used throughout Canada, even on highspeed routes, a senior Canadian Transport Commission official said Monday.

And in the wake of the derailment, CTC officials are closely examining VIA Rail's proposal to increase the speed limit on the Ottawa-Toronto line from 80 to 150 kilometres an hour.

The train company's proposal to operate a speedy Ottawa-Toronto passenger service wouldn't be unique in its use of manual switches, said John Green, director-general of the safety and services branch of CTC's railway transport committee.

Investigators believe the VIA train jumped the tracks Thursday evening (21/6) after a switch to a spur line was deliberately opened by a saboteur and locked in place.

Green said in an interview many Canadian inter-city routes have similar switches and operate at speeds of 150 kmh.

"It's not unusual that they're asking for this," said Green. "They're all over the country. I can think of the Calgary-Edmonton route as one example."

But Green added it's now up to the transport committee to consider the application in light of the derailment.

The increased speed would reduce the Ottawa-Toronto trip by 90 minutes to four hours. VIA has spent more than \$20 million on roadbed improvements.

At issue is whether VIA should be required to extend its central traffic monitoring system beyond the Ottawa city limits and improve switch security.

If a switch operated by the central system was altered by a saboteur, a flashing light on a console would immediately warn workers at the traffic office.

Derailement probe to take 6 weeks

TORONTO (CP) An investigation into the June 21 passenger train derailment in Nepean will likely take another six or seven weeks, a federal official said. The train was diverted from the main line onto a side track near a lumber company after a switch was tampered with.

"When you're dealing with passenger trains, you've got to be that bit more careful to make sure that everything is done right," James Cruden, manager of accident investigations for the Railway Transport Committee, said in an interview.

The accident, the first to involve VIA Rail's new LRC (light, rapid, comfortable) trains, sent 27 people to hospital, but no one was seriously injured.

09/07/1984 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Wakefield train back on rails

Bell ringing, steam hissing, whistle blowing, Engine 1201 rolled into Wakefield, Que., Sunday to open another summer season.

For the 11th year, the National Capital Commission is offering steam train excursions from Ottawa to Wakefield. But if CP Rail has its way, it will also be the last year.

CP owns the line that runs from Ottawa to Maniwaki through Wakefield. It's a money Joser, and CP would like to shut it down.

It last attempted to close it in 1981, but were ordered to operate it for three more years and then report to the Canadian Transport Commission.

Hearings on CP's study of the line, and the fate of the steam excursions, began today.

Meanwhile, Sunday's excursion was a great way to let off steam. Many of the 300 people on the train were remembering the old days of steam travel.

"It sure does bring back memories," said Frank Mean-well of Gloucester. "We used to take this train to go skiing. It's a beautiful trip, a real tourist attraction."

For others, the excursion was something to make memories of Diane Lemieux of. Cornwall brought her daughters Stephanie, 6, and Catherine, 4, to Ottawa for their very first train ride.

"It's fun," Stephanie said. "I was never on a train before, not a big train like this."

Engineer Bert Canning has been working for CP since the days of the steam trains he got his start as a fireman, shovelling coal. He's just as glad the 1201 has been converted to oil.

"You can't imagine what it was like to be a fireman," he said. "This is much better. It's cleaner and more fuel-efficient."

The 140-ton engine uses about 500 gallons of diesel fuel to make the trip.

Track-side in Wakefield, passengers could watch a magician, listen to a band, or buy hotdogs to benefit the Wakefield Hospital Auxiliary.

There were also shuttle buses to take them to the Wakefield Grist Mill, where displays and festivities were marking the restoration of the mill to full working order.

The train begins the two-hour trip at the Museum of Science and Technology on St. Laurent Boulevard at 9 a.m. Sundays and Wednesdays until Sept. 2. Tickets, \$12 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under, can be reserved at the museum or the NCC visitor's bureau at 14 Metcalfe St.

10/07/1984 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Save Hull-Maniwaki rail line, CTC urged

WAKEFIELD, Que. Canadian Pacific Railway shouldn't be allowed to abandon its Hull to Maniwaki line despite losses of almost \$2 million since 1980, a Canadian Transport Commission hearing was told Monday.

Municipal officials and special interest groups opposed to the railway's application to abandon the 125-kilometre line the route used for steam train excursions between Ottawa and Wakefield told a three-member commission panel that the railroad is still a vital freight link for the area.

CP wants to abandon the route because it says the company is losing roughly \$500,000 a year since 1980.

CP last attempted to close the Hull-Maniwaki line in 1981, but was ordered to operate it for three more years.

However, the federal government continues to reimburse CP for the losses because it ordered the line to remain open.

Company officials blame their losses on the lack of freight traffic.

In 1983, the track was used 37 times and about half the trips were steam train excursions, operated in the summer by the National Capital Commission.

In 1982, the track was used 40 times and in 1981, 45 times.

CP officials told the hearing that various freight customers in the area have told them they would simply switch to trucks if the route was closed.

But West Hull Mayor Doug Minnes said thousands of residents are opposed to having the railroad closed because freight loads would have to be transported on already heavily-travelled highways.

Minnes also said if the line was closed, the biggest loser would be the Maniwaki area's forestry industry, which has already experienced serious setbacks due to the recession.

Because the area's poor road network, Minnes said the lack of a freight line would discourage future investment in forestry.

Colin Churcher of the Bytown Railway Society, a group of local railway enthusiasts, said the least CP should be forced to maintain is the section between Hull and Wakefield so the NCC's steam train can continue to operate.

Almost always filled to its 320-passenger capacity, Churcher said the steam train has proven itself as a tourist attraction.

He also said the steam train, the only one operated in Ontario and Quebec, is also part of Canadian history.

"Without the railway, there is a part of our heritage that we won't be able to show future generations."

Churcher said the train, which operates on Sundays and Wednesdays, also brings tourist dollars into Wakefield.

10/07/1984 *Ottawa Citizen**Smiths Falls**Moodie Drive*

Youth ruled fit to stand trial for VIA crash

A 17-year-old Richmond youth charged in the \$2-million derailment June 21 of a VIA train has been found fit to stand trial.

A court-appointed psychiatrist testified Monday in provincial court that although Randy James Leslie Rankin suffers from emotional problems and should seek psychiatric treatment, he was capable of instructing counsel.

Dr. William Blair told Judge Robert Hutton the youth, charged Friday by Nepean police with interfering with a transportation facility, appreciates the nature of the charges against him and is capable of understanding the court proceedings.

Rankin remains in custody.

There were about 85 passengers on the four-car LRC (light, rapid, comfortable) train when it smashed into three flatbed cars on the spur line, injuring 33.

Cattle killed on new train's maiden trip

A new VIA train slammed into a herd of cattle near Brockville Wednesday killing 35 Holstein heifers and strewn carcasses along a quarter-mile stretch of carnage.

The Light Rapid and Comfortable (LRC) train, operating on a new faster service Wednesday, hit the cows valued at \$35,000 near Manhard, four miles north of Brockville.

Wednesday was the first day of a new Toronto-Ottawa schedule that allowed speeds to increase from 50 to 70 mph on the stretch of line between Brockville and Smiths Falls.

"It was pretty gory," said Brockville OPP Const. Mike Benn, who was sent to the scene shortly after the accident occurred at 9:15 p.m. "The cows were mangled up pretty good."

Benn said the train's engineer saw the cows ahead on the straight stretch of line but couldn't avoid them.

"You can't stop those things on a dime," he said.

Although the train remained on the tracks, the accident delayed it for 3½ hours while crews cleared carcasses wedged under the engine.

The train arrived in Ottawa at 1:50 a.m. this morning. There were no injuries to the passengers and the amount of damage is still unknown.

The cows, belonging to Ed Williams of RR 5 Brockville, entered CPR rail property through a hole in the railway fence, said William's daughter Joyce.

"Once they were on the track there was no way of getting out of the path of the train," she said.

The cows were trapped in a narrow corridor created by fences lining both sides of the railway line.

The young dairy cows are valued at \$1,000 each, she said.

A spokesman for CPR said investigators were still on the scene this morning and reports wouldn't be released until later today.

This is the second accident in less than two months for the Toronto-Ottawa service.

A similar train derailed in June after it was diverted from the main line onto a side track near a Nepean lumber company.

A 17-year-old Richmond youth was charged with tampering a rail switch, causing the accident.

VIA had planned to introduce a new four-hour service between Ottawa and Toronto Wednesday employing speeds up to 95 mph.

The Canadian Transport Commission delayed that service when it decided to hold public meetings before sanctioning the higher speeds.

Under the schedule introduced Wednesday, the trip takes 4 hours and 45 minutes. The train, which hit the cows, left Toronto at 5:30 p.m. and was scheduled to arrive in Ottawa at 10:15 p.m.

25 cars derailed near Chesterville

A Canadian Pacific Rail freight train derailed early today in Chesterville, about 60 kilometres south of Ottawa, spilling the contents of 25 cars.

The 89-car eastbound train was carrying lumber and flour when it derailed at 2:20 a.m.

The accident blocked two main tracks used by freight trains, said CP Rail spokesman Paul Jolicoeur.

The four employees on the train were not injured.

Jolicoeur said the derailment occurred after cars near the end of the train somehow became separated from those at the front as the train was going about 100 kilometres an hour. Twenty-five of the rear cars derailed. :

"There was extensive track damage," said Jolicoeur. "Crews began working right after the derailment to ...clear the track, but it's hard to say when it will be all cleaned up."

He said the level crossing in Chesterville was not blocked and traffic has not been affected. "

The cause of the accident has not been determined and damage has not yet been estimated.

Damage \$500,000 in train derailment

CHESTERVILLE CP Rail is trying to determine why 25 cars of a high-speed freight train thundered off the track near here Tuesday, telescoping about a dozen boxcars.

No one was hurt when the middle section of the 89-car train left the rails, destroying at least 10 boxcars and ripping up about \$50,000 worth of track.

The transcontinental train was heading to Montreal through this village 60 kilometres southeast of Ottawa when the accident occurred at 2:20 a.m.

A spokesman for CP Rail said the crew was trying to stop the train when it crashed.

"They spotted some marks along the track, and not knowing what they were, they pulled the (brake) air line," said Paul Jolicoeur of CP's Ottawa office.

"They were travelling well within the authorized speed, but it was an 89-car train and you can't stop those on a dime."

Jolicoeur said the railway would have to wait for the investigation results to know what the marks on the line were.

Jolicoeur estimated damage to the train at \$500,000, and said the tracks should be open by tonight.

Seven of the cars that left the track were empty, one had CP supplies, eight contained flour, and nine were flat cars carrying lumber from Vancouver.

Ontario Provincial Police and CP officials were on the scene by 3 a.m., and cleanup crews arrived at dawn.

By 9:30 a.m. Tuesday a portable crane and several bulldozers were tearing apart the crumpled heap of boxcars and pulling up huge curls of ruined rails while CP workers loaded sacks of flour on carts and wheeled it into tractor-trailers.

Several local men were hired to salvage wood "that cascaded over the wreck like spilt matchsticks."

CHESTERVILLE Local rail traffic is being re-routed through Ottawa today while CPR workers clear away wreckage following a spectacular 25-car derailment in Chester -ville early yesterday morning.

Train No. 482, on a Vancouver to Montreal run, uncoupled 30 cars from the caboose at 2:20am as it entered the west end of the village. The 60-ton cars slammed into each other, sending up a shower of sparks 50 feet high.

The five-man crew on the freight train, which was carrying lumber and flour, were uninjured.

Stan Harris, superintendent for CP's Smiths Falls rail division, said yesterday that the derailment, just across from the arena, is under investigation and that the cause of the accident and the amount of damage have not been determined.

While onlookers gathered around the wreckage, which in one section looked like a broken accordion as six cars leaned up and over each other, a 20-man maintenance crew was joined by 40 workers from CPU's specialized wrecking crew to pull the cars from the tracks.

As the wreckage was lifted away, trucks backed up to pick up the strewn cargo.

The lines - both eastbound and westbound lines were blocked by the wreckage - were expected to be cleared today. Railway ties were scored and broken for more than a mile.

"I heard the train coming down the tracks, that noise you're used to, and then all of a sudden it didn't sound right," said Paul Monast, the first resident at the scene. "I jumped up and looked out and saw a pile going up and sparks going up in the air."

Monast, whose home is just across a field from the derailment site, met the crew coming up the track with flashlights.

When he saw the wreckage, he said, he couldn't believe it.

"You're so damned surprised, you don't know what to say or to do. You're kind of shocked."

John Van Bruinessen, Monast's neighbor, was also jolted out of bed by the crash.

"I knew something had happened," he said. "There was a big crash and a rumble and roar. We (he and Monast) took the truck down and when we saw a coupler on the ground I knew that it had separated."

Both men helped workmen pinpoint the worst areas of 'amage, including the Carl Smith crossing where the ties had been ripped out.

For other residents living along the tracks, seeing the wreckage answered the question of what they had heard during the night but had not given any more thought to.

"I was thinking the train was really, really loud last night," said Pauline White. "But I looked out the window and saw nothing and went back to bed. Then I got up at 8am and saw this.

"When I moved to a small town I thought I wouldn't have this kind of excitement."

Bob Delorme was taking a nap in his truck at Nutrite Fertilizer before starting his early morning shift when he heard "something like an earthquake".

"It sounded like a bunch' of tin- crumpling up and it went on for about five minutes," he said. "But I didn't pay much attention."

"I've been living here 38 years and I've never seen anything like this," said Harold Armstrong. "When I heard the noise last night I thought it was a truck going over the crossing."

"It's a hell of a mess," said CP truck driver Garnet Sands of Smiths Falls. "I've seen a lot of pictures of derailments but I wasn't expecting anything quite like this."

Rapid trains stalled by lack of signals on Ottawa-Toronto run

VIA Rail trains from Toronto are arriving in Ottawa as much as 40 minutes late because inadequate signalling devices are forcing speed reductions between Brockville and here.

Company officials say Ottawa-area residents should call to check arrival times for the Toronto-Ottawa trains, which have routinely been later than scheduled by 20 to 40 minutes.

VIA had expected to increase the speed of its high-speed LRC passenger trains Aug. 1 to 153 kilometres an hour from 113 kmh and altered arrival times in its summer-fall schedule.

But the Canadian Transport Commission, concerned signalling devices on the Ottawa-Brockville line were inadequate for the new trains, passed an order June 15 limiting the speed on that portion of the line to 113 kmh.

As a result, arrival times in the schedule starting Aug. 1 are wrong.

Thursday, for example, people meeting friends supposedly arriving from Toronto at 9:30 p.m. had to wait until 10:15 p.m.

"I know it's frustrating and there's been some confusion, but we can't do much other than try to tell people before they come," said Derek Goldthorp, Ottawa district manager for VIA.

"Once something is published and in the hands of the public it's hard to get around it."

He said people can avoid the problem by calling VIA's arrival and departure information number before going to the station. He added people now are told when they purchase tickets that the trains will be arriving late.

He said the cost would be too high to print new schedules now but added something probably will be done for the new schedules, which are to be issued in November.

The transportation commission will hold an inquiry Sept. 17 in Hull to decide whether the lines that don't have an adequate signalling system, which warns trains of broken tracks and other obstacles, are safe.

Commission spokesman Peter Schnobb, said he couldn't estimate when VIA will be able to operate the trains at the faster speeds.

"That depends on the commission's decision."

But Goldthorp says regardless of the commission's decision, VIA is committed to increasing the speed of its trains to shorten the Toronto-Ottawa trip to four hours.

It now takes between five and seven hours, depending on the trip.

"If they tell us we have to make improvements in the Ottawa-Brockville line first, then we'll do them quickly and get on with it."



Rail group chugs ahead with Maniwaki line fight

It may be too late, but they've got plans for the Hull-Maniwaki rail line.

With a Canadian Transport Commission decision expected soon on whether the line should ( be abandoned, a citizens' committee has formed to try to save the examine the economic impact and development of the 120-kilometre line.

John Trent, spokesman for the new Gatineau Valley Railway Committee, said the group wanted to show the commission the community is serious about maintaining the line.

He said he hoped the transport commission would consider the formation of the group as a reason to maintain the money-losing line.

During two transport hearings in July, CP Rail, which wants to abandon the line, said it lost \$150,000 last year as only 39 freight cars used the route compared to 122 in 1975.

A similar request to abandon the line in 1981 was rejected.

The committee escorted journalists to a part of the line in Tenaga, about 10 km north of Hull, to show them what it deems CP Rail's failure to maintain the route. "We want to make sure CP keeps the line in good condition for the region's future development," Trent said.

The group wants to bring together the National Capital Commission, the Museum of Science and Technology, CP and the CTC to iron out the line's fate.

The committee also wants to develop the Steam Train, which has run between Ottawa and Wakefield twice a week in the summer for 10 years.

Trent said the train could play a major role in the development of the region's tourism.

While the train only carries 350 passengers a year, [sic] Trent said it could eventually operate year round.

As well, it could operate farther north for special events in other communities and carry skiers to Outaouais ski hills.

The group has written the CTC chairman Jean Marchand for a meeting on the line.

Evan Brown, spokesman for the CTC, said a decision on the line is expected soon.

05/10/1984 *Ottawa Citizen**Beachburg**Bells Corners*

Tender Call. CN Rail has called for tenders for the construction of an embankment to replace the bridge over the former CP mainline at Bells Corners (Mile 12.44 of CN's Beachburg Subdivision). Work consists of supplying, placing and compacting approximately 20,000 cubic meters of fill material. Tender close was October 16.

13/10/1984 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Sunday could be train's last gasp

The steam train to Wakefield is booked solid for the last run of the season Sunday, a run that could be the end of the line for the scenic rail tour.

The Canadian Transport Commission is still considering a request from CP Rail to close the 120-kilometre stretch of rail from Ottawa to Maniwaki. The line runs through Wakefield.

The commission held hearings in July, at which CP argued the rail line should be closed because it is losing money. Commission spokesmen said Friday no date has been set for the panel's decision.

A similar request in 1981 was met by strong public protest and the company was ordered to keep the line open for a three-year period.

"We want to keep it going. No other run in the region is as beautiful as that," said Jean-Guy Monette, a spokesman for the Museum of Science and Technology.

This Sunday's 346 passengers bought their tickets more than three weeks ago for the fall foliage run, he said.

Engine 1201, converted from coal to oil, is maintained by museum staff at the yards off St. Laurent Boulevard. It's operated by an engineer, fireman, two brakemen and a conductor hired for each trip from CP.

The National Capital Commission collaborates with the museum to subsidize excursion costs not covered by the \$12 charge to adults and \$6 for children, Monette said.

"It's one of the nicest tourist attractions in the region. It winds around and follows the river, passes over two bridges, goes through a tunnel under Dow's Lake.

With good weather this weekend, it will be a beautiful trip through the autumn colors."

The train leaves the Museum of Science and Technology at 9 a.m. and returns at 3:45 p.m.

15/10/1984 *Ottawa Citizen**Smiths Falls*

Ottawa-Brockville high-speed trains approved by CTC

The Canadian Transport Commission has given VIA Rail approval to increase passenger train speeds to 150 kilometres an hour between Ottawa and Brockville in a move that will reduce the Ottawa-Toronto travelling time to about four hours.

However, the new speeds won't be implemented until VIA has improved security on switching devices and agreement is reached on concerns Nepean has about the safety of level-crossing in the municipality.

VIA has spent \$38 million over the past two years improving tracks in a bid to cut travel times between Ottawa and Toronto, now about five hours, and attract more passengers.

Trains have been restricted to a maximum of 110 kmh for most of the route between Ottawa and Brockville. When trains reach Brockville they move on to the main Montreal-Toronto high-speed track.

VIA had planned to introduce its faster Toronto-Ottawa service in August, but was forced to delay it when the commission refused to approve the higher speed.

Concerned the signalling devices on the Ottawa-Brockville line were inadequate for the new trains, the commission passed an order in June limiting speeds to 110 kmh.

The track was originally designed for freight trains travelling about 60 kmh.

The approval of the higher speed is conditional on VIA installing vandal-proof locks on switches along the 110-km route and equipping trains with safety lights.

VIA spokesman Brian Heath said schedules won't be changed until the tamper-proof locks, which are manufactured in the United States, can be installed. He expects these locks to be installed within a few weeks.

Concerns about the switches arose after an accident in June, when a VIA train left the tracks in Nepean after a switch was tampered with. Thirty-three passengers were injured in the accident.

In May, the CTC recommended automated barriers for 15 railways crossings in Eastern Ontario, 11 in Nepean, before VIA Rail begins its faster service.

CTC spokesman Therese Giroux said today those recommendations will be reviewed by VIA Rail officials and the transport commission this week in Montreal.

She said the faster service will not go ahead until the two sides agree on which recommended barriers are required.

Nepean officials told the CTC in March that the safety improvements, including the construction of three overpasses at Merivale Road near MacFarlane Road, Woodroffe Avenue north of Fal-lowfield Road and Followfield at the northeast corner of Barrhaven, are crucial to motorists' safety if plans to speed up VIA's Ottawa-Toronto route go ahead.

VIA maintains current crossing protection and train signalling in Nepean is sufficient for higher speeds.

VIA's regular return train fare from Ottawa to Toronto is \$74, but if travellers leave any day but Friday and return within seven days return fare is \$55.

Voyageur Colonial charges regular return bus fare of \$62.40, and offers a discount fare of \$48.30 if passengers leave any day but Friday and return with seven days.

The Ottawa-Toronto bus trip takes about 4½ hours, but buses often make the trip in less time than that.

24/10/1984 Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Fast-trains decision appealed

Nepean will appeal a decision to allow passenger trains to travel through the city at 150 kilometres an hour without the installation of safety gates on level crossings.

The federal Railway Transport Committee will be asked to reconsider a decision three weeks ago to allow VIA Rail's new fast trains to pass through Nepean at high speed without installing gates.

The decision allows the trains to run until the committee has had an opportunity to consider the effect and safety of high-speed trains across the country.

The city, which had initially protested the high-speed trains, agreed to them if gates could be installed.

But Nepean's works committee was told by city staff Tuesday that VIA has not done any studies on the safety of increasing speeds and that the transport committee decision went against the advice of its own staff, who said safety gates should be installed at VIA's expense at 11 of Nepean's 12 level crossings.

26/10/1984 Ottawa Citizen

Renfrew

Herzberg Road

Beaverbrook Trains to stop for traffic

Canadian National trains will stop for motor vehicle traffic at a level crossing south of Carling Avenue and Herzberg Drive starting in late November.

Kanata Mayor Marianne Wilkinson said the Canadian Transport Commission ordered the change in August (R-37096 of 22 August 1984) because cars are often forced to stop on the tracks due to the closeness of, the traffic light at Carling and Herzberg.

About two trains a week use the track.

Wilkinson said a train signal connected to the traffic light will make the intersection safer. Trains will stop before reaching the intersection and remain there until the light changes to red on Herzberg Drive.

The connected rail and road traffic signals have been installed, but will remain covered until late next month.

The mayor said the unusual safety precautions are necessary because the tracks are so close to the intersection and Herzberg is used by OC Transpo and school buses.

21/11/1984 Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Moodie Drive

VIA Rail rapped over failure of safety measures

A federal report on the June train accident in Nepean that injured 28 people has demanded VIA Rail answer why emergency measures failed to work, thereby "aggravating the anxieties of passengers."

Released late Tuesday, the Canadian Transport Commission report criticized the failure of emergency lighting and intercom systems during the accident in which a VIA train carrying 90 passengers ran into three flatbed cars sitting on a spur line.

The report also faulted VIA for not making emergency tools such as a hammer available to break windows for easy exit.

The commission wants to know why several seats and equipment such as microwave ovens broke loose during the collision.

A written explanation outlining design changes to the passenger cars is expected.

The report agrees with earlier conclusions that a \$20 padlock was tampered with and the switch was changed to divert the LRC (light, rapid, comfortable) train to a spur line servicing Kott Lumber on Moodie Drive.

The report decided the accident was due to sabotage because the padlock was placed back on the switch upside-down, which was contrary to operating procedures for CN Rail, which owns and maintains the line.

The engineer of the four-car train spotted the open switch and put on the emergency brakes to slow the 80-kilometre-an-hour train.

A Richmond youth has been charged in connection with the \$2-million accident.

Among the recommendations made was that the railway come up with a tamper-proof padlock for replacement on the switch.

However, following hearings by the Railway Transport Committee last month into an application by VIA to increase train speeds to 150 kmh along the Ottawa-Brockville line, a new type of lock has been identified and will be put in place.

The report also calls for the installation of a second lock on the switching device.

Finally, the report says all VIA, ticket envelopes should include information on the location of emergency exits, tools and provide tips on what to do in the event of a crash.

Canadian Transport Commission spokesman Peter Schnobb said the recommendations now will go before the railway committee for consideration before any changes are made mandatory.

24/11/1984 Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Santa Claus Express set for shopping in Montreal

The Santa Claus Express is set to roll again next month.

Algonquin Travel, in co-operation with VIA Rail, is organizing a special Christmas train with Santa Claus on board Saturday, Dec. 8 and Saturday, Dec. 15 for a day's shopping in Montreal.

Children will be able to speak to Santa and there will be Christmas sing-alongs, candy canes and small gifts for all the kids. The train leaves the Ottawa station at 7:15 a.m. and passengers can return anytime that day.

Tickets for the Express are \$22 return for adults, \$11 for children 5 to 11 and \$2 for children under five years of age.

29/11/1984 Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Ottawa New

The City of Ottawa and CN Rail are considering an underground reservoir to control oil seeping into the Rideau River from the Ottawa Station. The proposed reservoir would be linked to a storm sewer on the east bank of the river near Hurdman Bridge. Oil would be pumped out of the reservoir regularly so it would not flow into the river. An above ground reservoir was proposed but the National Capital Commission, which owns the land, wants the more expensive underground reservoir.

Gatineau steam train given eight month reprieve

Don't wave good-bye to Steam Engine 1201 to Wakefield just yet.

Some did last week when the Canadian Transport Commission announced that CP could scrap the money-losing Hull-Maniwaki rail line a year from now, on Dec. 31, 1985.

But the CTC has given supporters of the train until Sept. 1, 1985 to reach an agreement with CP Rail to keep the line open part of the way, to Wakefield.

"The decision seems to say it's time to put your money where your mouth is," said John Corby, a curator at the Museum of Science and Technology.

The museum and the National Capital Commission have been operating the twice-weekly excursions on a 40-year-old steam train since 1973. The 346-seat train is always sold out and filled to the rafters for the scenic chug through the Gatineau Hills between July and September.

Four additional trips were added this year so people could take in the autumn leaves.

But the museum and NCC spent about \$100,000 more than the \$70,000 collected in fares this year.

And CP estimated that it lost about \$100,000 on the Hull-Wakefield segment of the rail line in maintenance and personnel costs, among others.

Following last week's CTC decision, the NCC and the museum will announce their 1985 plans for the train sometime in January, said NCC spokesman Iain Barrie.

He said they are examining continuing the trips after 1985, but federal funding restraints will be a consideration.

While the federal government has picked up CP's estimated \$370,000 loss on that segment of the line since 1981, it will not continue that practice after 1985.

John Trent and the Gatineau Valley Railway Committee, which was formed in September, are trying to whip up community support to keep the rail line and steam train to Wakefield.

Trent talks about launching daily train excursions that would not operate at a loss.

"The CTC has thrown down the gauntlet and we have to come up with a workable plan," said a determined Trent, citing other operations, like the excursion trains in Colorado, Sault Ste Marie and Vancouver, which transport as many as 150,000 passengers a year.

"We have to think big. It could be a paying proposition and in terms of a tourist attraction, it's a gold mine," he said.

His argument is supported by one of the three CTC commissioners who held hearings last July before last week's decision on the fate of the 190-year-old line.

Unlike the other two members of the commission, Robert Orange argued closing the line would hurt Wakefield's growth.

"The operation of the train carrying passengers over the branch line has augmented the economic viability of Wakefield," Orange said.

He says the train would enhance the potential of a diopside quarry and plant to open in 1988 near Wakefield.

More than 20,000 tonnes of diopside will be extracted a year and the final fibreglass-like product could be shipped by rail, Dong Minnes, mayor of West Hull and owner of the property, told the hearing.

The 150-member Gatineau Valley Railway Committee received \$1,000 in donations when it ran a clip-out ad asking for donations in local papers.

Trent is planning a mail-in campaign in West Quebec to boost the committee's membership and will meet with the NCC and the museum to see what can be done to maintain the train.

The committee is seeking a grant from Labor Canada to perform a feasibility study on the steam train excursions. And Trent thinks a public corporation should run the train.

Transport Minister Don Mazankowski announced a moratorium on rail branch line abandonments Sept. 28. Officials are trying to figure out how they can reinforce the moratorium by law or include it in the regulations governing the CTC.

The rail firms would be forced to come up with alternative uses for lines they want to abandon.

How this is going to work will be announced next week, spokesman Tom Van Dusen said.

The moratorium was directed at grain lines in the West. Van Dusen said Mazankowski is pleased that the CTC allowed nine months to decide the fate of the Hull-Wakefield line.

But there appears little chance the rest of the line to Maniwaki will be kept open. The 123-km line already received a three-year stay of execution in 1980 when CP Rail first asked to abandon the line.

The CTC had to reimburse CP for the estimated \$2 million it said it had lost since then as traffic from Maniwaki to Hull dropped from 662 carloads in 1974 to 37 in 1983.

Not a single customer of CP Rail asked the CTC to keep the line open.

Yet the CTC refused to allow CP to close the line because of the traffic potential created by the province's promise to support a fibreboard plant in Maniwaki.

The province supported the plant, but it was located in Mont Laurier, making the line abandonment inevitable.