

Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers - 1986

02/01/1986

Ottawa Citizen

Belleville

Sucker Lake

With picture.

A 90-car freight train derailed in an isolated area near Sharbot Lake Tuesday, spilling a dangerous chemical that could have caused an evacuation in a populated area.

Railway workers were building a dike today to contain the substance after one of the cars tumbled into Sucker Lake, about 150 kilometres southwest of Ottawa. The CP Rail derailment could have been dangerous enough to call for an evacuation if it had happened in a populated area, said Jim Renahan of Spills Action Centre, a provincial environmental agency.

No one was injured when the Toronto-bound train crashed about 7:30 p.m., tearing up about one kilometre of track. About 35 flat cars and eight diesel locomotives left the main Montreal-Toronto line.

Four containers, each containing 18,000 kilograms of the crystalized food preservative sodium hydrogen sulphite, were thrown from flat cars.

One container broke through the ice on the shallow water and cracked. CP Rail spokesman Herb Brooks said the crack is above the water line and while a small amount of the chemical may have leaked into the water, it has been determined that it wasn't enough to cause concern.

The chemical, when mixed with water, forms an acid and the resulting fumes can cause severe burning to eyes, skin and lungs.

Federal and CP investigators are trying to determine the cause. While there are no firm damage estimates, Brooks said the tally will likely be "several million dollars."

The lake drains into Bobs Lake, which is part of the drinking water system used by Perth-area residents. Provincial officials have said there is no immediate cause for concern.

The only resident near the crash site said he was warned not to drink water from the small lake by the O.P.P. "They said don't drink the water until everybody's sure," said Andrew Mathewson, 25, of Bay Street in Ottawa. He was spending the holiday at his family's cottage near the crash.

The accident site is five kilometres from the nearest road and can only be reached by foot, snowmobile or air.

Brooks expects the tracks to be clear by Saturday, and until then, traffic will be re-routed to the Canadian National line between Brighton and Brockville.

Passenger service on VIA Rail will not be affected.

The train was travelling about 70 km/h along a 10-metre embankment on the edge of the lake when it left the tracks, about 13 km from Sharbot Lake.

It was travelling within the recommended speed limit.

Mathewson said: "It looked like two of the engines had uncoupled and de-railed, but continued along the track for about a half-mile, ripping the track and splintering ties. It's a real mess."

04/01/1986

Ottawa Citizen

Belleville

Sucker Lake

SHARBOT LAKE - A citizens' railway safety group called Friday for a public inquiry into Tuesday's train derailment, as cleanup officials reported success in containing partially-sunken cargo containers filled with an acidic chemical.

Harold Morrison, chairman of the M-TRAC Rail Safety Organization, said: "This is a frightening wreck and I have a feeling there's a lot more (to it) than what you see."

Although the Canadian Transport Commission has announced an official investigation into the derailment of a CP freight train carrying more than 80 tonnes of hydrogen sulphate at Sucker Lake west of Perth, Morrison says a full-fledged public inquiry is needed.

He said he is "concerned about the speed of the train and how it was being operated on New Year's Eve" and questioned how safe it was to have 12 locomotives on a train.

M-TRAC, which stands for the Metro Toronto Residents' Action Committee, was formed by 25 community groups in Toronto after the 1979 Mississauga train wreck. CTC spokesman Evan Browne said public inquiries are reserved for fundamental policy issues affecting rail traffic across the country.

CTC officials and the provincial environment ministry also said Friday it is unlikely any charges will be laid in connection with the incident.

Meanwhile, cleanup crews at the wreck site, about 120 kilometres southwest of Ottawa, said Friday the cost of the accident and cleanup could run as high as \$12 million.

Thirty-five cars and eight locomotives are crumpled along a rail line flanked by a rock cut and the lake.

After earlier attempts to build a sand and gravel dike failed, workers managed Friday to build a plywood retaining wall around two cargo containers filled with hydrogen sulphate that crashed into the lake.

The plywood wall, sunk about one metre into the lake bottom, is a precautionary measure should the cardboard and plastic barrels in the rail container begin to leak.

Stan Kaplan, the Canadian Transport Commission's director of dangerous goods, said Friday the water under one of the partially submerged rail containers showed a slight acidity but levels were normal in other parts of the lake.

Kaplan said one or two barrels inside the rail container may have burst during the derailment, sending a spray of powder over other derailed cars and in the immediate vicinity of the chemical containers.

He said the acid levels were not enough to affect any form of life in the lake.

If all goes according to plan, the containers will be hauled gently out of the lake on Tuesday, he said.

Cleanup crews are also struggling to soak up thousands of litres of diesel fuel oil which seeped onto about 450 metres of frozen lake.

By late Friday afternoon, about 5,000 gallons of oil had been removed from the lake surface by cleanup crews using sponges to soak up the oil and shovels to scrape off the surface layers of ice, slush and oil.

Kaplan said test holes dug into the ice showed no oil was getting into the lake.

Glenn Swanson, CP's general manager of operations for the eastern region, said the train was travelling within the regulation speed of 45 to 50 miles an hour for unpopulated areas

Toxic drums removed individually. With picture.

About 100 barrels filled with toxic chemicals were being removed individually early today from a rail container that crashed into Sucker Lake during a train derailment New Year's Eve.

CP Rail crews used huge winches to lift one partially-submerged rail container from the isolated lake Saturday, but the second was too badly damaged to be lifted from the water while loaded.

A spokesman for CP said cleanup of the second container should be completed by day's end.

The shipment of sodium hydrogen sulphate was part of a 36-car derailment near Sharbot Lake, about 120 kilometres southwest of Ottawa.

The chemical makes sulfuric acid when mixed with water. Cleanup crews built a dike of sand, gravel and plywood around the submerged cargo to make sure the lake wasn't polluted in case of leaks from the containers.

Before they could get to the chemical, workers had to tackle other smashed containers that fell on the rail cars during the train wreck.

Stan Kaplan, the Canadian Transport Commission's director of dangerous goods, said the weekend salvage was time-consuming, but went according to plan.

"It is better to do it slowly and carefully than to do it quickly and screw things up," Kaplan said.

As the first container was pulled from the water, a small amount of chemical spilled onto the sandy embankment of the rail line, and was immediately neutralized with sodium carbonate.

Both CP and environment ministry officials regularly checked the water around the crash site for evidence of acidity, but concluded the spill was successfully neutralized.

Jack Pruner the environment ministry's officer for the Kingston area, said the chemical posed little danger to life in the lake.

"It's very localized and there's not enough to cause too much of a problem," said Pruner.

"We're fortunate the cars weren't carrying chemicals of a more toxic nature."

He said a greater environmental hazard was posed by thousands of litres of diesel fuel oil that seeped onto part of the frozen lake.

Most of the 22,700 litres has been sponged off the surface, and Pruner said the extent of damage will not be known until spring thaw.

In the meantime, he will conduct regular tests to make sure no fuel leaves the lake, entering the water system that supplies drinking water to Perth.

Eight locomotives and 36 cars of the 90-car train derailed in the accident, tearing up a kilometre of track.

The CTC, which suspects track problems caused the crash, is conducting an inquiry.

Four containers, each carrying 18,000 kilograms of the food preservative, were thrown from flat cars when the Toronto-bound train cr--

23/01/1986 *Low Down to Hull and Bac Maniwaki*

Includes a picture of Rene Chaumont, CP Rail Maniwaki subdivision Roadmaster, with Richard Wieland, Track Maintenance Foreman, supervising the cutting of the rails at mileage 20.5 of the Maniwaki subdivision, "forever ending rail service to Maniwaki". (Branchline).

04/02/1986 *Ottawa Citizen*

Montreal and Ottawa

Ottawa, Chateau Laurier

In an official statement on February 3rd, Marcel Masse, Minister of Communications, has announced that \$2.5 million will be expended on converting the abandoned railway tunnel adjacent to Ottawa's Chateau Laurier Hotel into a facility for the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography. Aside from renovations to the tunnel itself, the project will also involve the construction of a concrete and crystal entrance that will provide access from Rideau Street to the tunnel area beneath. The roof of the tunnel will continue to serve as the access road to the Chateau Laurier parking garage.

For those readers unfamiliar with Ottawa's rail scene, the tunnel provided access to Ottawa Union Station (located across the street from the Chateau Laurier) for Canadian Pacific trains arriving in Ottawa via the Alexandra (Inter-provincial) Bridge from various points in the Province of Quebec. Sharing the facility for many years as well, were the street cars of the Hull Electric Company whose double-tracked line paralleled both sides of the CPR across the bridge and into the tunnel until March 1946. It is also worthwhile to note that the Hull cars were turned on a loop located in the tunnel which also crossed the CP line. The structure was abandoned for railway purposes following the closing of the former Ottawa Union Station (now the National Conference Centre) in favour of the current suburban facility in Alta Vista during the summer of 1966. (From Branchline 3 1986)

21/02/1986 *Ottawa Citizen*

New York Central

Finch

The Women's Institute of Finch (Ontario) is trying to locate a movie shot in the 1950s by the National Film Board, called The Stationmaster which featured one Dalton Henry who was the station agent in that community. The film appears to have portrayed the life and duties of a stationmaster at a junction station, Finch, being the junction between the New York Central's Ottawa-Cornwall line and Canadian Pacific's Winchester subdivision. To date, all efforts to find the celluloid have been in vain. (Branchline).

23/04/1986 *Eganville Leader*

Renfrew

CN Offers Rail-Line To Grattan, Will Enter Negotiations

Canadian National Railway has officially offered the abandoned right-of-way and the Eganville Station to Grattan Township.

CN's offer was contained in a letter written by vice-president J. Roger Lagace to Grattan Reeve Mike Keller. Reeve Keller, who received the letter on April 14, read its contents into the record at last Wednesday evening's council meeting.

"Since the Province of Ontario had decided not to proceed further with the acquisition of abandoned railway lines and according to CN policy in such a case, I wish to inform you that CN is agreeable to the sale of the former station building for the sum of one dollar," Mr. Lagace wrote.

09/05/1986 *Globe and Mail*

Smiths Falls

TENDERS CALLED FOR LINE DISMANTLING: Canadian National is inviting bids for the dismantling and salvaging of approximately 36.3 miles of part of the abandoned portion of its Smiths Falls Subdivision (Ontario) between Chaffey's Locks (mileage 63.0) and Strathcona (mileage 99.30). Rumour has it that the rail will be re-used in branch line rehabilitation work in western Canada.

No word has been received on the eventual disposition of the remainder of the abandoned section which runs between a point just south of the Smiths Falls station and Chaffey's Lock. Sources confirm, however, that the Rideau Valley Division of the CRHA is negotiating with CN to acquire it for the purposes of setting up a tourist train operation. (Branchline).

28/05/1986 *Eganville Leader*

Eganville

CP Rail Line Goes Onto Marketplace

Grattan Township Reeve Mike Keller remarked dryly that when it rains it pours.

Reeve Keller made the comment upon the introduction of a letter from G.A. Swanson, general manager of Canadian Pacific Railway, regarding company practice on abandoned rail lines.

The CP line from Payne (near Renfrew) to Eganville was abandoned in 1982 and the firm was writing the township asking if it had any interest in it, should the province turn down the opportunity to purchase it. Admaston and Bromley Townships have also been forwarded letters.

For the past couple of years, Grattan has addressed the matter of the abandoned Canadian National right-of-way and has recently indicated to CN it would be interested in entering negotiations for the purchase of the portion of the line in the township and the Eganville Station.

As of last week's meeting, no further correspondence has been received by CN to the municipality's initiative.

As far as the CP situation is concerned, the township will hold tight until which time it is advised by the company the province has no interest in the line. Reeve Keller said he hoped there would be some input from the public if and when that juncture comes to pass.

VIA shares in costs of oil reservoir.

VIA Rail and the City of Ottawa will contribute jointly to the construction of a \$135,000 underground oil reservoir to prevent oil and fuel spills at Ottawa Station from seeping into the Rideau River. The reservoir will be built on the east bank of the Rideau River south of Hurdman Bridge. VIA will be responsible for pumping out the reservoir: its share of the construction cost will be \$60,000.

FERRY CAPTAIN DIES: In a recent edition. The Prescott Journal carried an obituary listing the death of Captain Doug Major, a retired boat captain off the St. Lawrence River. From the early 1930s to the 1970s, Major captained the tug Prescottont, owned by the Canadian Pacific Car and Passenger Transit Company, as it shepherded the rail car barge Ogdensburg back and forth across the St. Lawrence River between Canadian Pacific's terminal at Prescott, Ontario, and the Penn Central nee New York Central yard at Ogdensburg, New York.

Major started his career in the 1920s on the Great Lakes and became a mate on the Steel Electrician, one of the first diesel-powered boats on the waterway. The Prescottont also boasted one of these early diesel engines, in addition to other features such as ice breaking capabilities. Indeed, this diesel knowledge may have helped the Captain in securing a position with CP.

In keeping with nautical tradition, the Captain ensured that everything was just so. Indeed, member Duncan duFresne has never ceased to marvel at the pristine condition of this boat and her engine room which he had the chance to visit on numerous occasions when assigned to the Prescott coal train while he was a fireman with Canadian Pacific in the 1950s.

Another piece of history bites the dust.

The Thurso and Nation Valley Railway barreled along its track for the last time June 21, 1986, leaving behind a trail of sad and resigned people. The logging railway was originally built in 1926 by the Singer Manufacturing Company to, among other reasons, haul wood from the forests for its sewing machine cabinets. In 1964 The James Maclaren Co. bought the ailing Thurso Pulp and Paper Company and continued to use the track for its own logging purposes. It was the only logging railroad left in eastern Canada and one of the few left in North America. The train crew held out for just as long as they could, says railway superintendent, Gaetan Lafleur, but they were finally forced to surrender to progress. It is now cheaper to haul the logs by truck.

"We did everything we could to keep the cost low and the directors know it. We had very good workers and it was a special situation. It was like a family, a family affair," he says.

Since 1964 Lafleur has been superintendent of the railway, as was his father before him.

Perhaps the hardest hit by the closure, Lafleur seems on the outside to have taken it in his stride saying, "Well, you know, I take things as they come, there was no other choice."

But its not hard to see that deep feelings of regret lay underneath this well weathered man's composure.

"Last year I had an idea that the closure was coming but I wasn't sure. And then I thought we could keep it up. There was a 1974-75 study that showed it was still cheaper to haul logs by train. And they (management) had changed their minds before about closing it down. I thought they could change their minds again". But this time, management didn't change their minds.

In fact, says Bruce Hunt, manager of logging operations, the writing had been on the wall for the past few years.

Hunt explains that the concentration of cuttable wood got further and further away from the train tracks and that the train simply became an economically impracticable method to haul the logs. Right now plans are in the offing to construct a logging road which will open up a virgin-stand of wood in Papineau-Labelle Park.

But Hunt is quick to give credit where credit is due, saying the logging train "was definitely a good operation and it had very devoted employees."

So far, Hunt says, all 12 full-time train staff have found other jobs, some placed within the Maclaren's operation and others with Valleyfield Metals, the company who got the tender to remove the train track and ties.

Five men are without permanent jobs and now Lafleur has become superintendent of the wood yard, a job with which he says he is happy.

He says he feels sadder for those who have lost their jobs than the actual loss of the train, echoing more the sentiments, one would think, of a patron than a boss. But the Maclaren's people are not the only ones sad to see the end of an era.

Colin Churcher, director general of railway safety for Transport Canada and train buff from many years back, has been riding the train route along with Gaetan and his men for a number of years.

Along with five diesel locomotives and numerous tree-length flat cars used to haul logs, Maclaren's inherited an old Canadian Pacific Railway official car that had been built at Farnham, Quebec in 1907 and purchased by the Thurso and nation Valley Railway in 1929.

In 1979 Maclaren's later donated the official car to the Bytown Railway Society which promptly set about to renovate it right there on the premises. The Society also stores an old caboose on the grounds. And the logging train would often pull the two extra cars on a weekend run, into the bush.

Churcher talks of happy times spent on those excursions, good meals cooked on the business car's wood stove, stops along quiet streams and shared precious moments.

He laments that the end of the train is the end of an era and feels most sorry for the men who gave the railway all they had.

"They worked together, played together---really it's the end of a way of life for them.

"Their attitude and cooperation were admirable. They did everything from fixing engines, to welding and the ingenuity and energy that were exercised to keep the train running without too much expense was amazing."

Churcher emphasized that the train didn't just die out or be put out to pasture because it was old and derelict and he took pains to point out that it had performed an unflinching duty.

"That last train had a big log load and it delivered the logs as it had everyday. It fulfilled its purpose right to the end".

Two locomotives saved.

Churcher is in the process of writing the history of the line and explains, "we can't save the train but we can record its history for posterity before it gets forgotten."

At the end, the Thurso train consisted of five locomotives, 85 flat cars to haul the tree lengths and 15 cars which carried saw mill logs and was only used for slashed wood.

Some 27 miles of track was opened in 1926 running from Thurso to Singer, Quebec and by 1948 it consisted of a 56 mile main track reaching spots just north of Lac Ernest. During its lifetime the train used to haul between 26 and 32 loaded flatbeds of wood once a day which would equal about 34 to 40 truck loads.

A two-phase plan was implemented by Maclaren's to slowly ease the train out of operation.

In January of 1984 they moved their slashing equipment from the woods to the yard and they started their trucking operation less than two weeks ago.

Now the company will keep two of its locomotives and some of its cars to move wood from the slashing point to the saw mill on the six and a half mile track that will remain on the grounds.

As for the rest of the track, the first of the approximately 258,000 ties has already been torn from the ground.

Randy Douglas, Valleyfield Metals' director of merchandising, estimates that about 80 percent of the ties are good and has already sold the lot to one person. He believes there to be about 8,800 tons of good quality steel which he will sell to foundries and perhaps overseas where a lighter rail, such as this one, can still be used. North American trains, explains Douglas, need heavier rail on which to travel.

Douglas doesn't mind that a piece of history is being torn from the ground, saying it's better to pull it out than to let it rot, as he says it is in the process of doing.

"And of course, because it is cheaper to haul wood by truck, no one is going to spend money on a dinosaur," Douglas says.

No indeed.

And so the "dinosaur" will be removed. It will be taken from the ground with perhaps not the same grace and necessity with which it was placed.

Certainly the labor will be much easier and quicker than it must have been to lay the track down. After all, we have modernization to help us now. Quick and easy. The less sweat the better. Time is money.

The Thurso and Nation Valley Railway served its purpose well and one cannot feel remorse at the ending of an era, at a door of history being tightly shut and locked forever.

It seems rather appropriate that the last load of wood was taken from mile 26, the same place from which the first load had been taken almost 60 years ago to the day. The circle has been completed

Erin Scullion.

01/09/1986 *Vialogue**Kingston (CN)**Brockville*

RENOVATIONS COMPLETED: VIA Rail Canada has just finished renovating the interior of the Brockville (Ontario) station. The project involved an expansion of the waiting room from 645 square feet to 1,160 square feet. As well, a new ticket office and baggage room have been created. In addition, the Grand Trunk-era structure also received a new heating system as well as being made more accessible for disabled persons.

To free up space for the enlarged waiting room and new ticket and baggage facilities, the CN operator, yardmaster, and crew booking and dispatching operations were moved to the CN administration building located to the east of the station. The Operator's "Bay" now occupies the building's former main entrance to the building, while the crewing functions are carried out in an area on its west side, formerly occupied by the CN Police. (Branchline)

JAIL TERM FOR DERAILING TRAIN: A 19-year old Kanata (Ontario) man was sent to jail for two years less a day, and placed on probation for another 3 years after being found guilty of "causing the May 1984 derailment of VIA train No. 46. The derailment took place after the man opened a track switch on a siding into a lumber company, sending the four car train crashing into three empty bulkhead flat cars. But for the cars, the train would probably have gone down the siding and ended up in the Jock River, immediately to the east of the end of the siding. Damage to the train was estimated at \$2.25 million and 27 passengers were taken to hospital. The man derailed the train in order to take revenge upon the lumber company for previously firing him. At the time, the accident sparked intense calls for a review of passenger train operating practises in Canada (all documented in subsequent issues of Branchline), resulting in new rules with respect to operating high speed trains in non-signalled territory and in the equipping of main line turn-outs with safety locks instead of the normal switch lock. (Branchline)

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CN Decision Jeopardizes Tourist Train Smiths Falls. Plans to establish a tourist train run between here and Kingston are being jeopardized by a decision by CN Rail to sell and lift a portion of the track. "The idea will have to be canned if the track is lifted," says David Strong, president of the Smiths Falls Railway Museum, the group promoting the tourist train. "If the rail goes, we certainly can't afford to lay new track." CN has sold 58 kilometres of the track to Transport Canada for use in Western Canada, under a programme to upgrade branch lines there. Tenders for removal of the track are due Friday. Strong says his group has been lobbying area MPs and transport Minister John Crosbie to intervene and keep the track in place but so far without success. "We're still optimistic it can be stopped but time is running out," he says. The railway museum group had been negotiating with the railway to purchase the 80- kilometre track between Smiths Falls and Harrowsmith when informed CN intended to sell it to Transport Canada.

MEMORY PRESERVED: A larger than life mural depicting the arrival of a Brockville and Westport passenger train at the Athens (Ontario) station now graces one of the exterior walls of the town's local hardware store. The work was done by artist Lorrie Maruscak as part of a project commissioned by the village council to make the municipality's history easily visible. The idea was borrowed from a similar project in Chemainus, British Columbia where no less than 16 murals outline the history of that town. The mural features the original B&W station which was destroyed by fire during the 1940s. Its replacement, built by Canadian National, is now a residence about a mile away from its original site. The colours are accurate as is the station. The frame walls are painted red and the surrounding trim is in green and cream. Some artistic license has been used to depict the 4-4-0 type B&W locomotive and baggage car, but the overall effect is quite impressive. Canadian National received permission to abandon its Brockville to Westport Branch in 1952.

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MUSEUM SPUR IN JEOPARDY: The worst has happened. The Railway Transport Committee has allowed Canadian National to abandon that portion of its Smiths Falls Subdivision between Smiths Falls East (mileage 34.5) and Smiths Falls Station, home of the Rideau Valley Division of the CRHA, (mileage 35.3). The decision was handed down on October 14, 1986. The action clears the way for the removal of two bridges which carry CP Rail's Chalk River and Belleville Subdivisions over the subject trackage and their replacement with fill material. Under the terms of an agreement between Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern Railway which built the Smiths Falls Sub., the Canadian Northern, and its successor, was responsible for the maintenance of the bridges. CN will therefore be spared the expense of replacing the bridges (estimated to cost \$772,000) in favour of an earth fill embankment costing only \$157,000. The decision could not have come at a worse time for the Rideau Valley Division. As mentioned in last month's issue of Branchline, the removal of the bridges will cut off rail access to the the group's museum operation based out of the former Canadian National Station in Smiths Falls. This matter was considered by the Railway Transport Committee. The RTC concluded, however, that the cost of retaining the line just to guarantee the museum's rail link was not in the public interest. Unless an alternate solution can be found, the group's plans to set up a tourist train operation between Smiths Falls and Chaffeys Locks over a portion of the previously abandoned, but not dismantled, Smiths Falls Sub. will be placed in severe jeopardy. As mentioned in last month's issue, the Rideau Valley Division must now work actively to convince CP Rail to construct a connecting track between the west end of its Smiths Falls Yard and the erstwhile Smiths Falls Subdivision.

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As mentioned in last month's issue, the Rideau Valley Division must now work actively to convince CP Rail to construct a connecting track between the west end of its Smiths Falls Yard and the erstwhile Smiths Falls Subdivision. (Branchline)

16/10/1986 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

YET ANOTHER STUDY: The Wakefield (Quebec) steam train operation may not be making any money yet, but its potential existence has proved to be a bonanza for area consultants.

The line and the steam train operation were studied to death by the National Capital Commission prior to the transfer of ownership of the trackage from CP Rail to the three Quebec municipalities of Hull, West Hull, and La Peche.

Now, it seems that history will repeat itself. According to Hull Mayor Michel Legere, a seven-member committee will be set up to examine other tourist train projects with the idea of learning how to run the operation efficiently.

Financing for the project which will involve some travel elsewhere in Canada, and perhaps to the United States and Europe, will come from a \$269,000 fund which was established with money received from Canadian Pacific after the railway was bought by the three municipalities with a tax receipt.

While deciding on the study, the Hull Council also voted to begin negotiations with CP Rail for the use of the Hull Station (located on the site of the Hull West Station featured in this month's issue) as a base for the tourist operation and as an inter city bus terminal.

In what should be seen as an important move from a BRS perspective, the Hull Council also voted to search for a "non-profit group" to carry out right-of-way and track maintenance work during the spring of 1987 in order to get ready for operations next summer.

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31/10/1986 *Ottawa Citizen**Smiths Falls**Smiths Falls*

TENDER CALLED FOR BRIDGE REMOVAL: Canadian National has requested tenders for the removal of the bridges carrying CP Rail's Chalk River and Belleville Subdivisions (Smiths Falls, Ontario) over mileage 34.28 of the former's Smiths Falls Subdivision. The bridges would be replaced with approximately 5,000 cubic metres of fill material as well as a corrugated metal culvert pipe.

The move comes hard upon the heels of a recent CTC decision (Branchline, November 1986) authorizing CN to abandon that portion of the Smiths Falls Subdivision, including the bridges in question, between Smiths Falls East and Smiths Falls Station, (mileage 35.3).

Unless measures can be taken to ensure that the corrugated culvert pipe is of a sufficient size to allow for the passage of trains through it, the bridge removal and associated work will have the effect of eliminating the present rail connection now enjoyed by the Rideau Valley Division of the CRHA which hopes to set up a tourist train operation (See Along the Rideau elsewhere in this issue) out of the former CN station in Smiths Falls. (Branchline)

31/10/1986 *Ottawa Citizen**Smiths Falls**Smiths Falls*

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\$13,000 raised to save Smiths Falls rail line.

Smiths Falls. In only three days, citizens here have scraped together the \$13,000 needed to save a critical length of rail line from extinction.

The donations were raised over the weekend in a desperate last-ditch attempt to preserve the rail for future use by the Smiths Falls Railway Museum Association. But Ted Ferrant, a Smiths Falls architect and co-ordinator of the fund-raising blitz, said a further \$17,000 must be collected by Dec. 31 before the doomed line is safely out of the woods.

The two-kilometre stretch of track was recently purchased from Canadian National Railways by Herve Fournier Metal Inc. of Victoriaville, Que., a scrap metal dealer.

In past months the local Railway Museum Association "tried everything" to save the line, including negotiating with the president of CN and sending a telegram to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, said museum past president Bill LeSurf.

The rail line forms an integral link between the 196 km of unused CN line between Smiths Falls and Kingston that the museum group wants used for a tourist train, said Ferrant.

But CN contracted out demolition of the Smiths Falls stretch of line and authorized its removal without advising the museum group, LeSurf said.

When work began two weeks ago on tearing out the line "it came as a complete surprise to us," he said.

About 1,000 feet of line, and tracks in the yard adjoining the old station museum, were ripped up before town citizens could react. Ferrant, who is not a railway museum member and isn't "even that interested in railroads," was drawn to the cause out of a sense of urgency.

"I was appalled to think that something was being destroyed that should be developed for future generations," he said.

LeSurf said negotiations with the French-speaking scrap dealer have been done through a translator, "which was not easy to find in Smiths Falls."

The \$13,000 raised to date was donated mostly by professional people in town, LeSurf said.

OUT OF THE ASHES, A DISCOVERY: Another trace of the former New York Central branch which once linked Ottawa with the U.S. border at Cornwall, Ontario, across the river from Massena, New York, vanished in the flames of a recent house fire on December 6, 1986.

Under renovations at the time, the house was originally built as the Pana station, a stop on the NYC, about a dozen miles from Ottawa. The NYC ceased operations in the Ottawa area in 1957.

CP Rail's beautiful log station at Montebello, Quebec, has been sold for \$1.00 on the condition that it be moved from its present site. Land has been purchased across the street with the move of the 1930-era station scheduled for next summer (Branchline).