

# Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers - 1991

09/01/1991 *Le Droit*

*Waltham*

## MUNICIPALITIES WANT RAIL CORRIDOR:

The communities of Hull and Aylmer (Quebec) have asked CP Rail to transfer ownership of the Waltham Subdivision right-of-way to them as opposed to the federal government's National Capital Commission. CP Rail wants to abandon the line - now only used for hauling ballast from an abandoned iron mine beyond Aylmer. The Hull to Aylmer section is approximately 12 miles long. It is proposed to protect the corridor for possible future use as a bus rapid transit or light rail route between the two communities.

*Monday*

14/01/1991

*Ottawa Citizen?*

*Alexandria*

*Carlsbad Springs*

Derailement cuts service to and from Montreal (with picture)

VIA Rail service between Ottawa and Montreal remained cut this morning as workers cleared the mess of Sunday's CN freight train derailment near Gloucester. . Until the tracks are repaired, VIA trains to and from Montreal are being replaced with bus service, said Paul Garneau, VIA's manager of station services in Ottawa. About 300 VIA passengers took the bus Sunday.

CN district manager Andre Pronovost said this morning he expected the tracks to be cleared, repaired and back in service by 3 p.m.

Thirteen cars from a Montreal-to-Ottawa freight train jumped the tracks at Russell Road and Farmers Way near Carlsbad Springs at about 2:45 a.m. Sunday.

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No one was injured and no hazardous substances spilled in the Russell Road mishap. It will take several days to establish the cause of the derailment and a damage estimate, CN spokesman Richard Boileau said today.

The cause is still under investigation, Pronovost said a damaged car carrying rolls of steel may have broken the tracks.

Officials from Environment and Transport Canada were on the scene to ensure the derailment did not cause any dangerous leaks. Some cargo that concerned officials included battery fluids and naphtha, a flammable petroleum distillate commonly used as fondue fuel.

One box car that particularly concerned officials contained dangerous chemicals including naphtha, phosphoric acid and ethamine. It was, opened shortly after 6 p.m. Sunday and was found to be safe, said Fred Scaffidi, a Transport Canada spokesman.

CN brought two cranes from Montreal to lift the strewn cars from the snowy banks onto the tracks.

Transport Canada official Noel Sabbagh said there was no evidence of leaking. Area residents had no reason to be alarmed he said.

07/02/1991

*Globe and Mail*

*Smiths Falls*

VIA buys portion of Toronto route.

VIA Rail Canada and Canadian National have reached an agreement with respect to the passenger rail corporation purchasing that portion of CN's Smiths Falls subdivision between Richmond and Smiths Falls. CN had earlier received permission to abandon the line effective February 1992.

The move is precedent setting in that this is the first occasion for VIA to own main line trackage. Aside from yards, it does own the right-of-way of Canadian Pacific's former M&O subdivision between Rigaud, Quebec and Ottawa. The latter route has been set aside as an eventual high speed rail corridor.

14/05/1991

*Le Droit*

*Alexandria*

*Ottawa*

"PANORAMA" RETURNS TO OTTAWA; Once upon a time, it was Canadian National's alternative to the "Super Continental". Alas, the train died in the late 1960s in the post Expo 67 slump in passenger rail traffic.

Now, VIA Rail has resurrected the name in Ottawa with the christening of its new first class lounge on May 14.

Similarly-named facilities are located in Montreal and Toronto. The Ottawa lounge takes up the former Operator's office and crew "booking room" on the east side of the concourse.

21/08/1991

*West Quebec Post*

*Lachute*

*Masson*

TOWN COUNCIL TO CONSIDER FATE OF MASSON/BUCKINGHAM JUNCTION STATION: To the west of Lachute lies the community of Masson which boasts a hyphenated station name, "Masson - Buckingham Junction". The latter signifies that Masson is the junction with the 4 plus mile "Buckingham Subdivision", which serves its name sake community at the top of the hill overlooking Masson, which is situated on the edge of the Ottawa River.

The station there is a long frame structure, dating back to the Quebec, Montreal and Occidental Railway, the original builders of the Lachute Subdivision. Its architecture is very distinctive and decidedly "Quebecois".

The last passenger train (VIA No. 177) cleared Masson -Buckingham Junction on November 14, 1981. Since then the facility has been used by Maintenance of Way crews.

Now CP wants to remove it. The town council is interested in acquiring it and turning it into a tourist site in a move reminiscent of the community of Montebello to the east where two years ago, the community moved the distinctive log station there to a prominent location on the main street.

A feasibility study has been commissioned. Here's hoping that they are successful.

21/08/1991

*Ottawa Citizen*

*Maniwaki*

ON TRACK FOR '92, WAKEFIELD PROJECT APPEARS TO HAVE RECEIVED OFFICIAL GO-AHEAD: Proponents of a revived steam excursion train along CP's former Maniwaki Subdivision between Hull and Wakefield, Quebec, may finally be seeing the light in the distance.

After months of negotiating, the Province of Quebec has finally delivered a \$1.4 million grant for the operation conditional upon the full agreement of all parties involved in the original proposal (which dates to 1985). These include the municipalities of Hull, Chelsea and La Peche as well as ski resort operator Andy Tommy, who has a contract to run the train. The Province also demanded that its grant be secured by the proponents with a combination of cash and land.

Overall, nine agreements must be finalized before any government money is spent. Three of these agreements must be signed with the municipalities.

Additionally, other agreements must be signed with Canadian Pacific for running rights over the Laman Spur and the Ellwood Subdivision in order to link the Wakefield track with the Hull Station. The National Capital Commission is also involved and requires agreements with respect to the Hull Station and surrounding lands - which it owns, as well as the turntable in Wakefield.

For the municipalities involved in the deal, a formal agreement is required with the operator, Andy Tommy. Currently they only have agreements in principle.

The \$1.4 million grant will be paid in stages. An initial payment of \$450,000 will be made when all of the agreements are made. Completing the upgrading of the line and other associated work will yield an additional \$450,000 in two separate payments of \$200,000 and \$250,000. The final payment, \$500,000, will be made when trains are running.

Tenders for line rehabilitation and associated construction have already been called. According to John Trent, president of the association formed to revive train service, work on rehabilitating the line could start in the very near future.

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01/09/1991 *Branchline**Maniwaki*

Three Day Move.

Equipment for the planned Hull, Chelsea & Wakefield steam excursion operation moved over the former CP Maniwaki Subdivision in mid-July. The 14-mile move from Hull to farm Point, Quebec, required three days as most of the crossings had to be 'dug out'. The move represents the first movement over the line since the national Museum of Science and Technology's 4-6-2 1201 departed Wakefield on September 1, 1985. No start up date has been announced. (Harry Gow, Willard Clark).

28/09/1991 *Le Droit**Waltham*

Portion of Waltham subdivision bought by National Capital Commission.

The national Capital Commission will purchase a portion of CP Rail's now abandoned Waltham subdivision running between Hull and Aylmer, Quebec.

The right of way, which parallels the Lower Aylmer Road - the former Hull Electric Railway - will be "banked" for future transit projects.

The rest of the Waltham subdivision, from Aymer to Wyman, is for sale at market prices. Rails and ties were recently lifted.

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PORTION OF WALTHAM SUBDIVISION BOUGHT BY NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION: The National Capital Commission will purchase a portion of CP Rail's now abandoned Waltham Subdivision, running between Hull and Aylmer, Quebec.

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The rest of the Waltham Subdivision, from Aylmer to Wyman, is for sale at market prices. Rails and ties were recently lifted.

05/10/1991 *Le Droit**Maniwaki*

SNOWMOBILERS MAY USE ABANDONED RAIL LINE: Canadian Pacific has reached an agreement with the Gatineau Valley County Regional Municipality permitting snowmobilers to use its now-abandoned Maniwaki Subdivision between Low and Messines, Quebec.

Although the tracks were removed in the spring of 1986, CP still retains title to the land. Negotiations to sell it to the Gatineau Valley Regional Municipality have been fruitless to date. The main obstacle to a transfer of the land has been a determination of what constitutes fair market value for the corridor. CP wants \$860,000 for the corridor.

Local municipalities have promoted the snowmobile corridor and are reacting bitterly to CP's move. The asking price is considered to be too steep but they will be making an offer in the interest of preserving the right-of-way and preventing it from being sold off on a piece meal basis.

A lease has been signed for an undisclosed price. The provincial government was called in and intervened with Canadian Pacific to have any decision on the fate of the right-of-way deferred until March of 1992. The Quebec Department of Transport, in the meantime, will evaluate the corridor in terms of negotiating a purchase price with CP. (Le Droit, 05/10/91 and 25/10/91)

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**21/10/1991 L'Argenteuil Watchman Lachute**

CP Rail shows tremendous patience over disposal of stations.

Canadian pacific does not seem overly anxious to proceed with plans for the disposal of its stations at Lachute and Calumet, Quebec. Both facilities are surplus to company requirements. In each case community support for their retention has been strong and the company - in the case of Calumet - has given the town two years to come up with the funding to acquire the facility and convert it into a library. Proposals for the Lachute station are still under consideration with a Save the Station Committee holding an open house on October 23.

**23/10/1991 West Quebec Post Lachute Montebello**

Recession closes station gallery.

Financial difficulties have lead to the closure of the tourist information bureau and art gallery, located in the former Canadian Pacific station in Montebello, Quebec.

Built of logs - to match the Chateau Montebello - the station was moved from its trackside location to the town's main street in the summer of 1989 and shortly thereafter, opened as a tourist bureau and art gallery.

According to the art gallery owner, the station has been "a victim of recession." At the moment the Board of Directors is soliciting the provincial government for funding.

**01/11/1991 Branchline Alexandria Ottawa**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPLEMENTED AT OTTAWA STATION: VIA Rail Canada has embarked upon an ambitious energy efficiency campaign at Ottawa Station. The effort is part of a large campaign that finds the passenger rail corporation getting on board the environmental band wagon.

Specific work at the 25-year-old Ottawa Station include a low-energy lighting system in the concourse; high pressure sodium lighting in the parking lots and revisions to the station power plant that will reduce steam production, leading to annual savings of \$50,000,

From an environmental perspective, VIA has removed its fuel racks - located at the west end of the station. All fuelling now takes place from a tank truck and the removal of the racks and underground storage tanks will clean up an environmental hazard that has seen oil slicks periodically contaminating the nearby Rideau River.

In an effort to cut costs, the station boilers will be converted from bunker C to light fuel oil although one wonders why the company didn't opt for much cheaper natural gas as a source of primary energy.

Other "green" programs include paper recycling and enhanced employee awareness. (Vialogue, Volume 13, No. 4)

**10/12/1991 Ottawa Citizen Maniwaki**

NEW 'BACKER' EMERGES TO SUPPORT GATINEAU TOURIST TRAIN:

A new financial backer has emerged to support the operation of a steam tourist railway between Hull and Wakefield, Quebec, over what remains of CP Rail's former Maniwaki Subdivision. He is Marc Grondin, an Outaouais business man with extensive experience in the tourist industry. Grondin has offered to put up \$1 million in return for running the train over the next 25 years. Grondin's proposal comes after the original contractor operator, local tourist promoter Andy Tommy, backed out of the project. Tommy had put together an investment package to develop and run the train, conditional upon financial support from the Quebec and local governments. Just when thii was confirmed, Tommy balked at some of the conditions attached to the money.

Grondin believes the secret of financial success will be operating the train all year. Initially he intends to operate two daily trips in the summer, plus off-season tripe determined by passenger demand. He has announced that operations will commence on June 27, 1992. Grondin has announced that it will cost about \$700,000 to buy a '50-year-old antique train' from an American wholesaler, and another \$300,000 in start-up costs.

The project is now in its seventh year of development following the cessation of government-sponsored excursion service. The National Museum of Science and Technology's ex-CP 4-6-2 1201 powered the last excursion trip from Wakefield on September 1, 1985. (The Ottawa Citizen, 10/12/91 and 06/01/92 via Branchline)