

# Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers 1995

**02/03/1995** *Ottawa Citizen* *Ellwood*

**OTTAWA-CARLETON CONTINUES TO ENDORSE COMMUTER**

**RAIL:** The Transportation Committee of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton continues to endorse a CP Rail proposal to set up a commuter rail operation in the national capital. The project, linking Gatineau, Quebec, with the Ottawa International Airport, has yet to receive endorsement from either the Ontario or Quebec governments. (Branchline)

**08/03/1995** *West Quebec Post* *Lachute*

**LOG TRAINS ROLL ON THE LACHUTE SUBDIVISION.** After a lengthy absence, log trains have returned to CP Rail System's Lachute Subdivision. The western end of the line, which follows the north shore of the Ottawa River, serves a number of pulp and paper mills and, in its glory days, also carried many shipments of logs. This traffic disappeared for a number of years but is now back, thanks to poor local demand for softwood logs and a surging demand south of the border. Tonnes of hemlock logs are being shipped by rail from Buckingham to Glens Falls, New York. The 400 km journey is cheaper by rail than using logging trucks. There are also plans to ship logs to Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, as well as Quebec City. (Branchline)

**31/03/1995** *Le Droit* *Ellwood*

**COMMUTER RAIL NIXED IN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION:** The

Outaouais Regional Council has nixed a proposal by CP Rail System to operate a commuter rail system in the National Capital Region. Although the idea had been endorsed by Ontario municipalities, it was not as well received in Quebec. Transport critics have decried the decision, blaming it on a short-sighted government obsessed with building a new automobile bridge across the Ottawa River. CP Rail System had proposed a route using the Lachute, Ellwood and Prescott Subdivisions, with the possibility of rebuilding part of the Waltham Subdivision to link in the City of Aylmer, Quebec. (Branchline)

**05/04/1995** *Canadian Press* *Lachute*

**Company endorses railbus study.**

Canadian Pacific will participate in a study of the use of busses on rail corridors in the National Capital Region. This study, launched by the Outaouais Regional Government, will examine the use of commuter busses on rail rights-of-way. The regional Government launched the study after rejecting a CP Rail proposal to set up an inter-provincial commuter rail system linking Gatineau and Hull, Quebec with Ottawa.

**01/06/1995** *Brockville Recorder* *Westport*

**BROCKVILLE AND WESTPORT, RESIDENTS COOL TO IDEA OF HIKING TRAIL:** Residents of Leeds County, who live along CN's former Westport Subdivision, are cool to the idea of turning it into a hiking trail. Opposition is especially strong in the Westport area with farmers getting three of the on-line townships to pass resolutions opposing such use. It has been more than 40 years since the last train rolled over the Westport Subdivision which was dismantled in 1953. One would think that the passage of time would have ensured that right-of-way had completely reverted to the possession of on-line residents. This does not appear to be the case, however, with local newspapers reporting that Canadian National still owns that portion of the line between Forfar (junction with the now abandoned Smiths Falls Subdivision [Smiths Falls to Napanee] and Westport, a distance of approximately 8 miles. Between Forfar and Brockville, title for the land rests with on-line property owners. Bringing matters to a head was a recent Ontario Government announcement that it would identify and protect abandoned rights-of-way that have potential public benefit and turn them into either utility corridors or recreational trails. Way back in 1967, before hiking trails were fashionable, a similar idea was floated about the B&W. Local opposition also killed it at the time. (Branchline).

**13/06/1995** *Ottawa Citizen* *Chalk River*

**STILLBORN - RAILWAYS FAIL TO CONSUMMATE OTTAWA VALLEY RAIL DEAL** Although the economics said that it made sense to consolidate CN and CP Rail operations in the Ottawa Valley, the idea proved too radical for regulatory authorities. The deal was cancelled on June 12 thanks to court appeals and environmental requirements. The deal would have seen the closure of most of CP Rail's Chalk River Subdivision between Smiths Falls and Chalk River and part of its North Bay Subdivision between Chalk River and Mattawa. All through traffic would have taken Canadian National's Beachburg Subdivision between Ottawa and North Bay. Resistance to the deal was especially stiff from environmentalists who feared the impact of additional trains through Algonquin Park. There is no decision yet as to whether both companies will continue the status quo or whether either one or both will try to reroute their traffic via Toronto. (Branchline).

**23/06/1995** *West Quebec Post* *Maniwaki* *Wakefield*

**BRASS POUNDER RELIVES DAYS IN WAKEFIELD:** The rhythmic chatter of the telegraph key sounded once again in Wakefield, Quebec, as ex-CBC newsman Richard Inwood, who began his working career in the CPR station in Wakefield, Quebec, recently gave a demonstration of the mysteries of Morse via a special hook-up at the Wakefield General store. Inwood was connected with the Hull Station of the Hull, Chelsea and Wakefield Railroad, with passengers in Hull filling out messages that they wanted sent. Inwood was able to oblige with the messages although the medium for sending them was a modem on a telephone line as telegraph wires have long since disappeared. Inwood is the secretary of the First Canadian Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club Inc., which has 130 members throughout Canada. (Branchline)

**07/07/1995** *Ottawa Citizen* *Beachburg*

**COMMUTER RAIL PROPOSAL TABLED FOR OTTAWA:** Canadian National has suggested that it could establish a commuter rail service linking the west end of Ottawa with the downtown core. The plan proposes a rush-hour service along the Smiths Falls and Beachburg Subdivisions which would take riders to Ottawa Station where they could then transfer directly to the municipal transit service. Local politicians have a mixed reaction to the proposal, citing worries that it would siphon traffic off the already struggling bus service and that the line is poorly situated in terms of getting passengers to their places of work in a timely fashion. Previously CP Rail System proposed an inter-provincial commuter rail operation for the Ottawa/Hull region. The idea was opposed by Quebec politicians. (Branchline)

**17/10/1995** *La Presse* *Lachute*

**PROVINCE PROTECTS LACHUTE SUBDIVISION FROM ABANDONMENT:** The Province of Quebec has moved to prevent Canadian Pacific from dismantling that portion of its Lachute Subdivision between a point near Ste-Therese (mileage 28.0) and a point near Thurso (mileage 90.1). The company had received the necessary authority from the NTA to abandon the segment.

The Province of Quebec was able to invoke its Law on Special Development and Urban Planning to save the line, following requests made from politicians of affected communities along the line. The law protects the line from abandonment for up to two years, after which decisions will be required as to whether or not the abandonment will be allowed.

The Lachute Subdivision connects Montreal and Ottawa and is the only CP line to do so on a direct basis. Presently, the line is operated as two segments. Service from Montreal to Ste-Therese is provided by trains operating out of St-Luc Yard while service from Thurso west is provided by trains operating out of Ottawa. Most traffic between Thurso and Ottawa is forwarded to CP's main line via Bedell and a connection with the Winchester Subdivision. (Branchline)

**18/10/1995** *West Quebec Post*

*Maniwaki*

*Wakefield*

WAKEFIELD TRAIN HOSTS TOURIST CONVENTION: Approximately 500 representatives from tourist companies around the world took the Wakefield Steam Train on the evening of October 24 for a two-hour nostalgic journey up the Gatineau Valley. While on the train, the riders were treated to cocktails and a full-course, utensil-less meal. Now in winter storage, the Wakefield train, featuring Swedish equipment, carried approximately 30,000 riders this year as well as building a solid reputation for reliability. (Branchline)

**31/10/1995** *Financial Post*

*Beachburg*

TRAINS TO VACATE ALGONQUIN PARK: New labour pacts will allow CN to start re-routing transcontinental freight trains (mainly intermodal trains) out of the Ottawa Valley as early as the third week of November. These freights will now travel between Montreal and the west via Toronto. About 69 jobs will be cut.

CN is closing the Ottawa Valley route because it needs to cut excess rail capacity in Eastern Canada. After the re-routings, about 200 kilometres of track between Pembroke and Nipissing (near North Bay), may be abandoned because no traffic originates or terminates on the line. The track runs through the northern half of Algonquin Provincial Park. Existing weekday local service between Ottawa and Pembroke be maintained. (Branchline)

**17/11/1995** *Canadian Press*

*Chalk River*

OTTAWA VALLEY ROUTE RE-EXAMINED: CPRS has asked the National Transportation Agency to rescind abandonment orders on the railway's Chalk River and North Bay subdivisions in Ontario that were to take effect November 19.

The route's future remains far from certain. "We don't anticipate any difficulty getting the order rescinded," said CP spokesman Paul Thurston. "The NTA will probably welcome some direction." The reversal does not mean the lines are cost-effective - there are still too many tracks in eastern Ontario for the number of trains, he said.

The line, between Smiths Falls and Mattawa, was to be shut down when CP agreed in principle with CN earlier this year to utilize the CN route through the Ottawa Valley, but that agreement collapsed under objections from environmental groups opposed to increasing rail traffic on the CN line through Algonquin Provincial Park. CPRS was left with an abandonment order and no agreement with CN - hence the new application to have the order revoked. CPRS said the lines are being assessed. Daily freight service along the route will continue pending the outcome of the review, in which CPRS is actively exploring ways to reduce the cost of the operations. Almost all freight travelling the line is non-local in origin and destination. (Branchline)