

Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers 1996

05/01/1996 *Globe and Mail* *Vankleek*

VANKLEEK SUBDIVISION FOR SALE: Canadian National has its Vankleek Subdivision up for sale. The 20-mile line links Glen Robertson (on the Alexandria Subdivision) with Hawkesbury, Ontario. Also included is the 4.4-mile L'Original spur between Hawkesbury and L'Original, Ontario, over a portion of the one-time Canadian Northern L'Original Subdivision. The CNoR trackage was part of that company's main line between Montreal and Toronto/Vancouver. Service is now offered on a 6-day-a-week basis by a road switcher out of Coteau, Quebec. The Vankleek Subdivision was built by J.R. Booth, legendary lumber king of the Ottawa Valley. Booth also built the Alexandria Subdivision as the Canada Atlantic Railway and the Ottawa, Armprior and Parry Sound Railway, connecting Ottawa with Depot Harbour, Ontario. Part of this line survives as the Renfrew Subdivision operated by CN under contract with the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. This is only one of several lines CN wants to sell. Another likely candidate is the line between Matapedia and Gaspé, Quebec, involving the Cascadepedia and Chandler Subdivisions.

19/04/1996 *Ottawa Citizen* *Chalk River*

OTTAWA VALLEY LINES TO BE SOLD TO CENTRAL WESTERN RAILWAY HOLDINGS CORPORATION: Canadian Pacific is losing little time in rationalizing its assets in eastern Canada. On April 18, residents of the Ottawa Valley were greeted by news that the company was negotiating the sale of its Chalk River, North Bay and Cartier Subdivisions between Smiths Falls and Coniston (near Sudbury), and the Temiscaming Subdivision between Mattawa, Ontario, and Temiscaming, Quebec, to the Alberta-based Central Western Railway Holdings Corporation. The new railway, to be called the Trans-Ontario Railway, will total 342 miles.

The operation would emulate the highly successful Montana Rail Link in the United States which involves a hand-off of transcontinental bridge traffic by the Burlington Northern Railroad. The TOR would continue to handle CP transcontinental traffic originating or headed to Quebec and the Maritimes as well as exploit any local traffic. For instance, the paper mill at Temiscaming is served on a daily basis by a switcher operating out of North Bay while there is limited local traffic provided at on-line points between North Bay and Smiths Falls. As and when required, there are major moves from the Canadian Forces Base at Petawawa, Ontario.

The deal with Central Western comes after CP was unsuccessful in launching the Ottawa Valley Railway Company, a joint enterprise with Canadian National that would have seen the abandonment of trackage between Smiths Falls and Mattawa in favour of consolidating all through traffic on CN's Beachburg Subdivision between Ottawa and a point near North Bay. The scheme fell through last year, prompting CN to abandon that portion of its Beachburg Subdivision between Pembroke and Nipissing (near North Bay) and route traffic via Toronto.

The CWR, Canada's first modern short line, operates in Alberta as well as having an interest in CN's former Murray Bay Subdivision between Quebec City and Clermont, Quebec.

10/07/1996 *Ottawa Citizen* *Maniwaki*

WAKEFIELD STEAM TRAIN, RESIDENTS WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH PURCHASE OF RAIL LINE:

Hull, Quebec, taxpayers have vetoed a proposal for the city to finance the purchase of the Laman Spur, running between Laman (junction with the Lachute Subdivision) and Freeman Road. The segment is the last portion of the former Maniwaki Subdivision still owned by Canadian Pacific and was retained following the 1985 abandonment of the line in order to give CP access to the Hull Industrial Park. The trackage is used by the Wakefield Steam Train, even including part of its station and maintenance facilities and is rented by the company.

Back in 1992, when the operation was set up, Hull agreed to purchase the line but received CP Rail agreement to defer the deal for several years. Now it is time to consummate the deal and a way has to be found to raise \$1.41 million. City Council was prepared to borrow the money until a citizens' movement got together and defeated the idea, winning by five votes. Opposition to the purchase is due to a feeling that municipal governments shouldn't be directly helping private enterprise when it means increases in taxes. Said a spokesperson for the citizens' movement, "We are really against this. It's a private enterprise. We are not in agreement with helping that. People are losing jobs, their salaries are diminishing. They don't want their taxes to increase."

A spokesperson for the Wakefield Steam Train has said that the operation wouldn't be doomed if the line were bought by someone else but that it would have to consider relocating all facilities to the portion of the line not owned by CP Rail, a fairly serious expenditure involving the relocation of its shop, station and turntable.

Friday 30/08/1996 *Ottawa Citizen* *Winchester* *Dalhousie Mills*

Deraiment, toxic leak force 200 to flee. (with aerial photo and location map)

TRAIN SPLITTING: More than 200 people were forced from their homes Thursday when 30 cars of a CP Rail freight train overturned and a fire broke out 155 kilometres east of Ottawa. One car leaked hydrogen peroxide. No one was injured.

DALHOUSIE MILLS, Ont. In what is becoming an increasingly common event, a CP Rail freight train carrying dangerous chemicals derailed on the Ontario-Quebec border, 155 kilometres east of Ottawa, forcing more than 200 people from their homes for six hours.

The derailment occurred at 11:40 a.m. Twisted wreckage straddled the border between Dalhousie Mills, Ont. and Dalhousie, Que. This was the 161st train to jump the tracks this year in Canada the most in a single year since 1985.

No one was injured in the crash, which saw 36 cars at the back of the two-engine, 69-car train break away from the front and plow into each other over a 400-metre stretch of CP Rail's mainline.

Three of the cars were carrying chemicals. Two carrying alcohol remained upright, but one carrying 70-per-cent pure hydrogen peroxide tipped over and leaked the chemical through a broken top valve.

Four box cars caught fire during the wreck, but were put out quickly.

People in this small community reported hearing the sound of the crash more than two kilometres away.

CP officials at the scene said they weren't sure what caused the crash.

"We have to check the tracks, the axles and all the mechanical components before we can say anything about the cause," said CP spokesman Michel Spenard.

Area residents were thankful the derailment was not in a populated area.

"That would have been awful," said Colleen Dance, "but nobody is hurt so it's just more of an inconvenience".

In the past six years, trains have been jumping their tracks in steadily increasing numbers.

After a decade of decline due to improved safety measures, derailments fell to just 102 in 1990. But that number rose to 156 in 1995, and this year derailments are on a pace to hit more than 240. While derailments will have doubled, rail traffic has only gone up by about 10 per cent over the same period.

"We really don't know why it's quite perplexing," says Gary McLaughlin who monitors railway accidents as director of investigations for the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

The board is especially concerned that the number of derailments with multi-car or dangerous goods on board has also gone up.

McLaughlin says the problems could be anything from a rash of bearing and wheel failures to broken rails.

Others say it's because railways are trying to get by with less money

"Travellers should equip themselves with a rosary and a St. Christopher's medal and pray," says Harry Gow of Transport 2000 Canada, a consumer group that follows transport issues.

"The federal government has kept cutting its funding of railways to the point where they can barely survive."

Gow says the elimination of railway freight subsidies and the reduction of funding to VIA Rail have a major impact on the Canadian freight industry

The cuts have resulted in staff reductions, while rail traffic has gone up.

Bob Ballantyne, director of the Railway Association of Canada, says spending on technology better protects safety than does spending on people.

Transport Canada met with the major rail companies recently to create new voluntary safety procedures.

CP Rail and CN Rail will start programs of more frequent track inspections, improved wheel and bearing checks and an extended flaw detection program.

RAILTEX ACQUIRES VANKLEEK SUBDIVISION:

RailTex Inc. of San Antonio, Texas, has reached an agreement to acquire CN's 21-mile Vankleek Subdivision between Glen Robertson and Hawkesbury, Ontario, plus the 4.4-mile L'Orignal Spur, for \$1.1-million. Operations commenced on November 2 on the line (named the Ontario L'Orignal Railway) which is the first sale made after passage of the Ontario Labour Relations Act. That law removes successor rights that would have required buyers of small railways to hire previous union employees and honour existing labour agreements. The transaction also represents the first CN asset sale in Canada since the new Canadian Transportation Act was passed earlier this year. The sale is scheduled to close on December 2. The company is expecting to handle 6,000 carloads on the line annually, primarily steel products from the IVACO mini-mill in L'Orignal, Ontario.