

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1983

17/01/1983 Ottawa Citizen Prescott Glen Smail Road

Prescott woman injured in car-train collision

A Prescott woman is in satisfactory condition in Brockville General Hospital after the car in which she was a passenger collided with a train on Glen Smail Road, about three kilometres north of Prescott, Friday.

Irene Hutt, 47, of RR 4, Prescott, was driving with her 19-year-old son James when the westbound vehicle collided with a northbound . train about 3 p.m. James Hutt was uninjured.

Prescott police said the Hutt car was demolished and there was minor damage to the train.

24/01/1983 Ottawa Citizen Lachute Maloney Boulevard

Man in critical condition after car-train crash

A Gatineau man is in critical condition after the car he was travelling in collided with a freight train in Gatineau early Saturday.

Gatineau police said the passenger was injured when the car slammed into the side of a CP Rail train at the Maloney Boulevard railway crossing, near the Canadian International Paper mill.

The driver was taken to the Outaouais Regional Hospital and was treated and released.

Police have not released the names of the men, but said they were from Gatineau and in their mid-20s.

An investigation into the 3:15 a.m. accident is continuing.

10/02/1983 Ottawa Citizen Chalk River Pembroke

Teacher, son killed in car-train crash

PEMBROKE A pall hung over Hillcrest Elementary School Wednesday after word came that a special education teacher and her son, a student at the school, had been killed in a car-train crash.

Carolyn Frausell, 40, and son Sean, 9, died instantly when their 1979 Volkswagen Rabbit was struck by a westbound Canadian Pacific freight train Wednesday morning.

The car was demolished and thrown beside the track about 20 metres from the point of impact. The crossing is about 200 metres from the Frausell home and within view of the accident site.

The crossing has no mechanical warning devices. The Old Mill Road, where the accident occurred, provides the main access to six homes in a new development along the Ottawa River just east of Pembroke.

Steven Goltz, a resident of the development ,for about two years, said he knew of no previous safety problems at the crossing. He was unaware of any steps having been taken to get CP to install mechanized signals.

CP spokesman Paul Jolicoeur said the Canadian Transport Commission's rail transport committee decides when automated signals must be installed at a particular crossing.

17/02/1983 Ottawa Citizen Kingston (CN) Cornwall

Train spill blocks line

CORNWALL (CP) Fifteen cars of a 127-car freight train derailed just east of here late Wednesday night, blocking both tracks of Canadian National Railways' main track between Toronto and Montreal.

Mike Matthews, CNR spokesman, said no one was injured in the accident and no hazardous materials were contained in the derailed cars.

Of the 15 cars that left the track, five were empty and the other 10 contained automobiles, auto parts, soy beans, flour and general merchandise, said Matthews.

Repair crews were on the scene but Matthews said he did not know when the track would be cleared.

Meanwhile, some traffic, including VIA Rail passenger trains, was being rerouted over Canadian Pacific Railway lines between Brockville and Dorval, Que.

Matthews said the cause of the derailment was still being investigated.

18/02/1983 Ottawa Citizen Maniwaki

Museum of Science and Technology

-- regular tours of steam locomotive 1201, now under repair, will be made

21/02/1983 Ottawa Citizen Chalk River Haley's

Farmer killed as his tractor hits CP train

A 46-year-old Renfrew man was killed when the tractor-trailer he was driving hit a freight train on Hwy. 17 Saturday, about two kilometres from Haley Station.

Bernard Fiebig was killed at about 4:40 p.m. when his westbound vehicle hit the Canadian Pacific train. A passenger, Douglas Wallace, 35, also of Renfrew, was treated and released from hospital.

Cpl. John Bromilow of the Ontario Provincial Police in Renfrew said Fiebig possibly didn't see the signal that the train was crossing.

He said the train's engine was extensively damaged and another engine had to be sent before the tracks were cleared. The \$60,000 tractor-trailer was destroyed.

A relative of Fiebig's said he owned his own trucking firm, B and E Fiebig Trucking.

Fiebig is survived by his wife and three children. The funeral will be held Tuesday in Renfrew.

01/03/1983 Ottawa Citizen Kingston (CN) Cornwall

Car axle broke

CORNWALL (Staff) A broken box-car axle caused the freight train derailment almost two weeks ago just east of here, Canadian National officials say. Although no one was injured, damage was "substantial" when 15 cars of the 127-car, east-bound train left the tracks.

None of the derailed freight cars two of which were loaded with new cars carried hazardous material.

Retiring after 43 years, railroads still in his blood
After 43 years of riding the rails as a conductor, Don Gaw made his last official run Saturday on Via Rail's Train 178 between Sudbury and Ottawa. Now he'll travel mostly by bus or plane, the 60-year-old Ottawa trainman said Sunday.
Gaw said he expects to start a part-time job as a travel conductor with a local agency "in the near future," and most of his tours will be by bus. ,
But in the immediate future, he leaves on a flight for Florida this week for a brief holiday.
Railways are still in his blood and he thinks it's a great shame that Ottawa is not served by transcontinental train service.
He said passenger train service may be down, but it's not out yet.
"There a certain element of the public that likes to travel by train, you know, they don't want to travel on the bus and they don't want to fly."
He recalled getting numerous complaints from train passengers who had to be bused between cities when trains broke down.
"I think the (train) business is there if it's properly managed,"said Gaw.
Now that he's retired, he plans to play some golf, do some charity work with the Ottawa Shriners Club, of which he is president, and maintain an interest in the Bytown Railway Society when he isn't occupied with the bus tours.
Looking back on his career, which included 16 years on CP Rail's service between Ottawa and Montreal, he said the highlight was Queen Elizabeth's 1977 steam engine trip to Wakefield. He was the conductor on that trip.
"It was a really big thrill," he recalled, although the rainy October weather made it hard for Her Majesty to appreciate the true colors of the autumn leaves.
He had worked the Ottawa-Sudbury-Ottawa run since November, 1981

24/05/1983 *Ottawa Citizen* *Walkley Line* *Conroy Road*

Three killed as truck slams into freight train
A pre-wedding party ended in tragedy Sunday when a pickup truck taking three young people home slammed into a slow-moving freight train on a level crossing.
Two men and a woman, all in their 20s, were killed instantly in the crash early Sunday on Con-roy Road near Walkley Road in the southeast Ottawa suburbs, police said.
Their new Datsun pickup truck was demolished after hitting the train broadside in foggy darkness soon after 2 a.m.
The empty CP Rail freight train stayed on the tracks and its crew was unhurt
Since all three occupants of the pickup truck were killed and there were no witnesses, police are uncertain of the cause.
But Ottawa police and CP Rail investigators both say flashing signals at the level crossing were working and the train was already on the crossing when it was hit by the truck.
The danger signals flash automatically when a train approaches, say CP Rail officials.
Dead are Gayle Ter-Mitchell, 28, married with two children; Charles Taylor, 26, married with one child; and Richard Hemming, 23, who was to be married next month.
Ter-Mitchell and Hemming were neighbors on Heatherington Road in southeast Ottawa. Taylor, who police say was driving the pickup truck, lived on Jolliet Avenue in Vanier.

11/06/1983 *Ottawa Citizen* *Maniwaki*

Steam train not running until August
Those hoping to ride the National Museum of Science and Technology historical steam train between Ottawa and Wakefield in July will be left sitting at the station.
The train, which usually makes the daily round trip between early July and October, probably won't get back on the rails until August, said Jean-Guy Monette, a museum spokesman.
Monette said fie engine is overhauled every five years, but the repairs have taken longer than expected this year.
However, he said excursion plans for August to October are going full steam ahead, with the first trip set for Aug. 3.
The 346-seat train is usually full on every journey, so the loss of a month's excursions "means some people are bound to be disappointed," said the supervisor of ticket sales.
She said the 28 people who had reserved seats for the first excursion on July 3 will be reimbursed.

22/06/1983 *Buckingham Post* *Buckingham* *Buckingham*

Worried about unstable soil conditions and additional noise and traffic in the downtown, R.B. Walker - a former plant manager of ERCO in Buckingham (Quebec) - has spoken out strongly against plans to link the plant with CP's Buckingham Spur by constructing a bridge over the Lievre River. Instead, Walker advocates a new line into the plant from nearby Angers on the Lachute Subdivision. Doing this would eliminate the need for a bridge since the plant is on the same side of the river as Angers and would do away with the current steep grade on the Spur up from Masson". At present, the grade limits uphill loads to between 3 and 4 cars per train, while loaded cars moved downhill must be moved in conjunction with quite a few empties in order to provide enough braking to prevent runaways. According to Walker, even Canadian Pacific once examined the feasibility of relocating the spur. However, the plan was subsequently dropped. (Branchline).

28/07/1983 *Ottawa Citizen* *Montreal and Ottawa* *Bourget*

Truck crashes into train
BOURGET A 20-year-old man narrowly escaped serious injury here Wednesday when the truck he was driving collided with a moving train.
Luc Guindon, of nearby Hammond, Ont., was hurled about 15 metres through the open window of his truck after it struck a 12-car freight train crossing Champlain Street North.
He landed near a telephone pole in a patch of knee-high grass that apparently cushioned his fall.
Guindon is in good condition at the Ottawa General Hospital where he was treated for a broken rib and minor bruises.
Gerald Cousineau, of Champlain Street, said he was washing the windows of his house near the railroad crossing when the accident occurred at 2:47 p.m.
"I could see the lights were flashing and bells were ringing at the crossing. When I heard the train whistle and the sound of the truck, I knew he wasn't going to stop in time."
Cousineau glanced toward the level crossing just as the northbound truck struck the front corner of the locomotive.
"He didn't even make an effort to brake," said Cousineau.
Guindon was delivering lumber in a truck owned by J. Lalonde Construction Ltd. of Hammond.
The truck was dragged about 20 metres along the track, spilling lumber from its lorry along the way.
Cousineau rushed inside his house to call the police and then ran to Guindon's aid.
"He was a little hazy when I got to him. There was a pain in his chest and some blood on his forehead, but he seemed alright. He was really lucky."
The Canadian Pacific train was en route from Vankleek Hill to Ottawa, and was travelling at about 60 kilometres an hour, said a CP spokesman.
He said warning lights and bells at the level crossing were working at the time of the accident.

04/08/1983 *Ottawa Citizen* *Maniwaki*

Bygone technology: It was "All aboard!" once more on the steam train to Wakefield Wednesday as Engine 1201 was back on the rails after being sidetracked for a month for repairs. Douglas McElroy, left, was engineer on the train's first day back for its two-hour journey from the National Museum of Science and Technology to Wakefield, Que. A couple of potential conductors, right, were among those on board. The train leaves the museum each Sunday and Wednesday during August at 10 a.m.and returns at 4 p.m., after a two-hour stopover in Wakefield. Similar trips are scheduled for Sept. 4 and 25, and Oct. 2, 8, and 10. Adult tickets cost \$10.50, tickets for children aged 2 to 12 are \$5.25. For further details, call 998-4566.

CN to abandon historic Barry's Bay railway link

BARRY'S BAY The Canadian Transport Commission has decided to allow Canadian National to abandon an 85-year-old stretch of historic railway linking Renfrew with Whitney, near Algonquin Park.

Commissioner Anne-Marie Trahan, who presided over the daylong tribunal on the proposal late last year, said in a 14-page report that the railway was uneconomical and likely to remain so.

Politicians and area business men stressed at the meeting that CN had allowed the 140-kilometre stretch of line to fall into disrepair. They said CN's freight rates were raised beyond the competitive range over the years, forcing logging companies and other industries to use less expensive trucking companies for transportation.

The final transport commission report said Highways 60, 41, and 17 provide adequate alternate transportation for lumber and woodchip operations and serve the area well in all seasons with reasonable prices.

It also said the rail line was not worth repairing.

The condition of the line between Barry's Bay to Renfrew was listed in "good to fair" condition but the Whitney section is considered "poor" and impassable due to washouts.

Although enough maintenance was performed on the Renfrew Junction to Barry's Bay section to keep it in safe operating condition, there has been no train service to Barry's Bay since Jan. 1, 1982.

CN said repairs to the Barry's Bay-to-Whitney section were stopped because traffic once handled by rail had been diverted to trucking and attempts to regain the traffic were unsuccessful.

Evidence at the hearing showed the cost of continuing the line in operable condition would be about \$29 million at 1982 prices.

CN contended the limited freight business generated from the area was not worth the effort to save the line.

Peter Gonzalez, vice-president of Madawaska Wood Products, said abandonment of the line will cost the company an additional \$45,000 a year.

10/08/1983 *Eganville Leader**Renfrew*

The Canadian National Railway line between Renfrew Junction and Whitney will be abandoned in fewer than 90 days.

In an order dated August 2, the Railway Transport Committee agreed with CN's contention that the 90.26 mile line was not feasible financially to keep in operation any longer.

The order, which was signed by committee acting secretary M. L'Ecuyer, concluded the "branch line is uneconomic and is likely to continue to be uneconomic and the operation thereof should be abandoned."

It gave Canadian National three months from the date of the order to shut down the line and advise the committee that the route has been officially abandoned, and the removal of tracks and other facilities has been completed.

The Railway Transport Committee's conclusions thus ends a saga which has been going on for several years, but heated up when CN elected to stop winter service on the line back in January, 1982. Service was discontinued between Barry's Bay and Whitney in 1974.

No Effect

A public hearing was held in Barry's Bay last December before one member of the three-person committee to debate CN's application to abandon the complete line.

It was from submissions heard during this day-long hearing that Commissioner Anne-Marie Trahan compiled her final report which was completed on July 20.

At the Bay hearings, CN outlined its financial situation regarding the line, while those in favour of keeping it in operation (including Grattan township) argued that once the economy picks up, the service will once again become attractive to those companies along the line and possibly attract new firms.

Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MP Len Hopkins and Renfrew south MPP Paul Yakabuski asked that the application be suspended for five years to see if the rail line could be viable once again.

The committee determined that CN's actual losses ranged from \$492,615 in 1978 to \$551,500 in 1980. In 1981 it was \$515,217, and carloads on the line decreased from 61 in 1977 to 28 in 1982 due mainly to increased freight charges for wood chips and other mill materials. Mills subsequently found it cheaper to ship by truck.

Pertaining to the future of the area, if the line was shut down, Mme. Trahan outlined several points.

She wrote that forestry, agriculture and tourism are the major economic activities in this part of the Valley, but none of the firms related to these have used rail service to a great extent in the past decade and she reached the conclusion "there was no substantive evidence presented to suggest that, in the foreseeable future, there would be significant developments in these activities which would require rail services."

As for the shift from trucking to rail transportation, the commissioner did not deny there was a potential for such a shift as outlined by Robert McRae of McRae Mills in December. However, she added that such a shift would depend on whether rail would become financially feasible in the future, and there was no indication of that at the present time or in the future.

"For these reasons," read the report, "I consider it unlikely that such events will occur in the foreseeable future even if the line were retained for a five year period..."

Furthermore, the committee saw "no evidence to indicate that any industry requiring rail service is contemplating locating in the area, or that mineral resources are likely to be exploited in the near future."

08/10/1983 *Ottawa Citizen**Chalk River**Pembroke*

5 hurt in Pembroke train-truck collision

Five VIA train passengers received minor injuries Friday afternoon when a tractor-trailer slammed into a passenger car at a city crossing in Pembroke.

The injured were treated for minor cuts and bruises at Pembroke General Hospital and were able to continue the journey by bus. The incident caused a four hour delay for the 55 travellers on the train.

"My father said he saw the truck heading for the train and he threw my mother to the floor and ducked. He says the next thing he knew there was a truck in the train," said Ken Seward, whose family was travelling on the train. They were among the injured.

A Pembroke police spokesman said the train, travelling from Ottawa to Sudbury, was hit as it crossed the Hwy. 17 intersection near the city's main commercial area.

The incident is under investigation and police are uncertain about the cause of the accident.

The truck driver, Eddie Weisenberg, of Pembroke, was treated for minor cuts and released.

VIA officials, however, said the train conductor was not at fault.

"The train always has the right of way," said VIA spokesman Daniel Rossel. "The car always has to stop. It's much harder to stop a train.

"What happens quite often is that cars try to beat the train and sometimes they get hit.

"It's too early to tell how much damage was actually done to the track and the crossing, but the train is in very bad shape."

Police said there was also extensive damage to the transport.

Rossel said service between Ottawa and Sudbury will be continued by bus while repairs are completed.

He said everything should be back to normal by Sunday, or "Monday at the latest."

The driver of the truck received an award during the summer celebrating 25 years of safe driving for Taggart's Service Ltd.

Charge laid in collision

A Pembroke man, Eddie Weisenberg, has been charged with disobeying a railroad crossing sign after driving his tractor-trailer into a VIA train Friday afternoon. -

Police said the train, travelling from Ottawa to Sudbury and carrying 55 passengers, was hit as it crossed Hwy. 17 in Pembroke.

Five passengers and the truck driver suffered minor cuts and bruises, and were treated at Pembroke General Hospital. The train passengers then continued their journey to Sudbury by bus.

There was extensive damage to both the train and the truck, police said. The tracks also were damaged, and service was continued by bus while repairs were completed.

VIA officials said train service was back to normal on Monday.

31/10/1983 *Ottawa Citizen**Walkley Line*

Boy loses leg in train accident

A 13-year-old Limoges boy visiting Ottawa lost part of his left leg Saturday when he tried to jump onto a moving freight train and fell under the wheels.

Karl Begin and his younger brother Kirk were playing on the tracks near Bank Street and Ledbury Avenue about 2:30 p.m.

Ottawa police Sgt. Gordon Iafoley said Karl tried to jump onto a boxcar when he slipped and caught his foot under the wheels of the CN train.

He was taken to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, where doctors amputated his leg below the knee. Iafoley said the boy was in stable condition.

The boy and their mother were visiting friends on Ledbury Avenue at a home about 75 metres from the tracks.

Two area residents said they were surprised a child hasn't been injured before.

"There's berry-picking in the summer and a creek down by the tracks," said Judy Ladouceur, a mother of two who lives on Ledbury Avenue

"Everybody takes the path (near the spot where Karl was hit) to cross the tracks. The kids are always down there."

Cathie Kingma, who also lives on Ledbury, said neighborhood children frequently play around the tracks.

09/11/1983 *Ottawa Citizen**Renfrew*

Door manufacturer wins delay in death plan for CN rail line

BARRY'S BAY Madawaska Wood Products Ltd. has won a delay in the end of service by CN's Renfrew Subdivision, the rail line serving the town.

The route was to have been abandoned by the beginning of November, but that has been put off until the federal transportation commission completes a review of the move requested by Madawaska.

Company vice-president Peter Gonzalez says his firm could go under because of the \$50,000 estimated increase in annual freight rates expected after the closure.

"It seems unfair that nine years after we were established under a Department of Regional Economic Expansion grant and created 17 jobs, the federal government would allow the tracks to be removed and probably put us out of business."

Earlier this year the Railway Transportation Committee's Commissioner Anne-Marie Trahan ruled to close the little-used branch line which CN said was losing more than \$500,000 annually.

Madawaska brings in B.C. red cedar to build interior and exterior doors.

Gonzalez argues CN's poor service accounts for the drop in area rail use, and he details a list of problems he has had over the years with the crown corporation.

He points to high rates, late deliveries and rail cars parked backwards making unloading impossible as evidence of CN's lack of commitment to continued rail service in the region.

And for the past two years, goods have been trucked to and from the rail depot in Pembroke at CN's expense because no trains have run on the line to Barry's Bay.

But when the abandonment takes effect, Madawaska will have to pay approximately \$1,000 cost of trucking a boxcar load to or from the railhead.

Gonzalez does not accept Trahan's view that the increased product costs resulting from conversion to trucking would be "minimal considering the value of the finished product."

"It's such a competitive product that sometimes a ten-cent difference on a door from your competitor's price "can win or lose a sale."

He says the success of the company, which employs 67 and markets doors around the world, hinges on delivery, quality and service. Losing the railway could destroy the delivery component for his business.

Gonzalez still thinks that the railway could show a profit if it made a serious effort. He suggests wood chips as one commodity CN could make money hauling.

Pointing to evidence given at the commission hearing on the proposed closure, he says McCrae Lumber in Whitney alone ships the equivalent of 29 boxcars of chips weekly primarily to Consolidated Bathurst at Portage du Fort.

If the economy improves that quantity could increase by 60 per cent.

CN has argued Portage du Fort is a difficult destination because it's on a CP line, and that prompts Gonzalez to wonder whether CP was ever approached to buy the line.

19/12/1983 *Ottawa Citizen**Chalk River**Cobden*

Orleans woman dies in train collision

One person was killed and another injured in a car-train collision at an unmarked railway crossing near Cobden Saturday.

Lynne Lecouffe, 26, of Orleans died when the car she was in was hit broadside by a westbound Canadian Pacific freight train at 4:15 p.m.

Her husband, Stephane, 35, who was driving, is in serious condition at the Ottawa Civic Hospital. He is an employee of the Canadian Bank Note Co. in Ottawa.

The Lecouffes were crossing the tracks from a farmer's laneway off Hwy. 17 in Ross Township near Cobden when the accident occurred. Cobden is about 32 kilometres northwest of Renfrew.

The laneway is private property, with the railway tracks cutting across it.

Ontario Provincial Police Const. Sherwood Cavanaugh said the crossing did not have any signals or markings.

Police have not established how the accident occurred.

21/12/1983 *Ottawa Citizen**Chalk River*

Man killed in collision

CARLETON PLACE A Smiths Falls-area man was killed Tuesday when the car he was driving struck a Canadian Pacific train at a level crossing in Beckwith Township west of Carleton Place.

Donald James Wilson 25, of RR 6 Smiths Falls was driving east on the 6th Beckwith concession when his car hit the side of the northbound train's engine shortly after 8 a.m.

It was the second car-train collision in Lanark county this month. Three weeks ago another area man was seriously injured when his vehicle hit a CP train.