

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1985

14/01/1985 Ottawa Citizen Smiths Falls

Interrupted journey: Passengers reboard a VIA Rail train from Toronto to Ottawa after Nepean firefighters put out a fire in the engine Sunday. The fire broke out about 2:20 p.m. near Bentley Avenue, a few minutes before the end of the journey. No one was hurt. About 90 passengers were on the three-car train, which was towed into the station by a second engine.

22/01/1985 Ottawa Citizen Kingston (CN) Kemptville

Two-hour delays leave passengers angry, cold and in the dark.

Some passengers left in the cold and dark for two hours when a malfunction delayed their trains Friday and Saturday say porters could have at least handed out blankets to ease the discomfort.

Nepean resident Karen Griese, one of 162 passengers on the 5:30 p.m. Saturday Toronto-Ottawa train, said, "when the lights went out, we were literally in the dark as to what was going on. Kids were screaming. It was just a nightmare."

It was a replay of a situation that occurred on the 5:10 p.m. Friday westbound train from Ottawa to Toronto.

On both runs the train was forced to stop near Kingston when a warning light indicated an empty car right behind the engine had overheated bearings. Thick ice on the coupling meant it took almost two hours to unhitch the car. Meanwhile, power from the generators in the locomotive was cut off to the other cars, leaving passengers bewildered and cold.

Local radio broadcaster Ken Grant, on the Saturday train, said an emergency is understandable but "nobody went up and down the aisle (to reassure passengers) or hand out blankets."

For the passengers it was two hours of misery, he said.

Friday passenger Kevin Murphy said that even though he and fellow passengers questioned train officers "nobody at any point attempted to explain what was going on."

Brian Heath, VIA Rail's public relations manager, defended the porters' behavior, saying VIA's policy is to hand out blankets only on sleepers. The Friday and Saturday trains were LRCs (light, rapid, comfortable).

He added, "If the porters (who are out of touch with the conductor when the power is out) don't know what is happening then they shouldn't be passing on information."

However, he agreed the situation shouldn't have kept them from trying to comfort confused passengers.

He admitted it must have been uncomfortable Saturday night, but added, "did anybody die of frostbite?"

Griese said the conductor came on the intercom after power was restored and promised a porter would be around with free coffee and doughnuts for everyone.

"We didn't see hide nor hair of any porter."

08/02/1985 Ottawa Citizen Kingston (CN) Mallorytown

Mallorytown woman dies in train collision

A Mallorytown woman is dead after she crashed into a VIA passenger train Thursday morning.

Iris Snowdon, 59, was travelling south on Leeds County Rd. 5 outside of Mallorytown at 9:35 a.m. when she crashed into a west bound VIA Rail train.

No one on the train was injured, police said.

Snowdon had been driving into the sun and attempted to stop but slid on a snow-packed section of the road. She crashed through the crossing gate and hit the train between two passenger cars.

There were no other passengers in her car.

Mallorytown is about 18 kilometres southwest of Brockville.

09/02/1985 Ottawa Citizen Maniwaki

Company proposed to run Wakefield train

Wakefield steam train supporters want to form a private company to operate an expanded version of the Ottawa-Wakefield excursions in 1986.

The new corporation would run the train six times a week, from May to October, and look at adding more cars, said John Trent, a leading advocate of the plan.

He also said the National Capital Commission, which has been sharing the operation of the trips, will run the popular train again this summer.

Trent, president of the Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee, said Friday he hopes the corporation will be formed by early summer.

The company would then have to submit a proposal to the Canadian Transport Commission and come to an agreement with CP Rail, which controls the Hull-Maniwaki line.

Trent made the announcement at a one-day tourism conference sponsored by Canada's Capital Visitors and Convention Bureau.

The future of the excursions has been in doubt since December when CP received approval to abandon the money-losing line. The transport commission, however, gave groups until September, 1985 to come up with an agreement with CP to keep the 123-kilometre line open.

Since 1973, the excursions have been running twice a week in July and September and usually are sold out.

The 40-year-old train leaves The National Museum of Science and Technology and chugs through the Gatineau Hills on its way to Wakefield during a two-hour run.

But the train has been a consistent money-loser.

Trent said the committee has done a feasibility study, which shows the line could make a profit if it runs close to capacity. Fares, however, would be raised from \$12 to \$15.

Trent, a professor at the University of Ottawa, said the train's potential effect on tourism in the Outaouais is "enormous."

He said the line could create an economic boost to restaurants and hotels in several communities between Hull and Maniwaki. Although the group plans to run on the same Ottawa-Wakefield route next summer, Trent said one or two experimental trips to Maniwaki are being considered.

Start-up costs should not be overwhelming, Trent said, because the train could be leased from its owner.

While the committee is launching a membership drive, the corporation should have hired staff by this summer, he added.

Soldier manages to sleep through nearby derailment

Lloyd Newton slept through a train derailing in his backyard Sunday.

The soldier was awakened by pounding on his trailer home door and it wasn't until he opened his door, about 50 yards from the tracks, that he noticed there was something wrong.

"I didn't hear a thing," Newton said.

Like others, Newton was invited to spend Sunday at the community centre, but chose to visit friends and relatives instead.

He returned to his home after 6:30 p.m. Sunday, when emergency officials decided there was no longer a danger.

Dale Morris, 34, an army wife, of Lisa Crescent, was watching television with her son and heard, nothing.

When she looked outside, she saw smoke rolling down her street. ; She said after hearing about the disaster in Bhopal, India, she wasn't about to take any chances. She got out fast. Thousands died in Bhopal late last year when a deadly pesticide leaked from storage tanks at a nearby Union Carbide plant.

About 100 of the people who were evacuated spent the day at Petawawa Civic Centre. The operator of the snack bar at the centre said he had to go to several stores in the village to buy enough hamburgers and hot dogs to feed those evacuated.

The village paid for the food, but hopes it will get the money back from CP Rail.

Those at the centre spent their day watching television, playing games and watching a hockey game at the arena.

Six people who live on Lisa Crescent described the evacuation as orderly and without panic.

Their only complaint was about the lack of information they received throughout the day about the progress of the clean-up.

Renee Watson, 33, a resident of the Petawawa subdivision, south of the train wreck, said she was asleep and thought she was dreaming the train derailed.

Watson said some area residents paid no attention to the noise, having become accustomed to practice drills, flares, smoke and guns from military manoeuvres nearby.

"You always think it will happen somewhere else, but you never suspect it'll happen here," she said.

Crack in rail line suspected cause of crash

PETAWAWA Workers are clearing away a jumble of rail cars that carried dangerous chemicals in the wake of a derailment Sunday that forced the evacuation of about 500 people from their homes.

The residents of a nearby trailer park and subdivision were allowed to return almost 11 hours after the 7:45 a.m. derailment of a CP Rail freight train when the smouldering cargo of sulphuric acid was declared harmless.

By 6:30 p.m., when residents were allowed to return to their homes, cranes had been moved in to clear the burned-out wreckage and CP Rail officials were checking out a crack in the rail line as a possible cause of the accident.

There is still no estimate of the damage.

Meanwhile, CP Rail spokesmen maintain all safety requirements were adhered to. The train was operating within speed limits at 70 kmh and tankers carrying dangerous chemicals were separated from each other, they said.

There was only one injury as the westbound 86-car train went off the tracks within about 30 metres of the astonished residents of Pine Hurst trailer park. A crew member riding in the caboose suffered minor injuries.

Bob Rantz, clerk of Petawawa, estimated that 500 residents of the trailer park, Portage Place subdivision east of the train wreck and portions of Petawawa Township west of the de-railment temporarily moved out of their homes.

But fire and police officials here say they have no accurate figures on the number of residents involved.

"We're attempting to make up a list of the evacuated residents for CP officials today," Rantz said.

The line will remain out of service while up to a half-kilometre of track is replaced and repairs are made to a bridge over the Petawawa River that was damaged in the derailment.

The line is expected to back in service by Tuesday. A daily VIA Rail train running between Ottawa and Sudbury, which also uses the line, has been cancelled until repairs are completed. VIA has set up a bus service in the meantime.

Freight traffic has been rerouted to Canadian National lines and other CP lines to the south.

The train left Montreal earlier Sunday and was bound for a number of stops in Western Canada.

The investigation by six Canadian Transport Commission investigators from the federal transport department continues.

At this point, a crack in the rail line remains the most likely cause, said commission spokesman Peter Schnobb, adding the cracked rail may have given way under the weight of the train, causing the 26 cars and two locomotives to jump the track.

Schnobb said it is not uncommon for the steel rails to quick thaw, as the area has had over the past few days.

Tina Burgess, 11, whose trailer home is close to the rail line, witnessed the crash. "When I looked outside, the cars were wobbling, shaking from side to side. I ran to wake up my father and all the cars started flying. They were crashing everywhere."

Larry Proctor, 60, heard a rumbling at 7:45 a.m., looked out the window and saw the rail cars "flipping like matchboxes until the weight finally stopped it."

"My wife says she's not going to bed any more unless she has all her clothes on."

Proctor called the fire department before he fled his trailer home.

The train jumped the track in heavy rain and thick fog, leaving 26 cars strewn along 300 metres of track.

The wreckage caught fire, and dense smoke billowed throughout nearby neighborhoods, causing the evacuation of Portage Place subdivision east of the train wreck and portions of Petawawa Township west of the derailment temporarily moved out of their homes.

Evacuated residents of the subdivision left their homes on Lisa Crescent, Hilda Street, and Russell Road.

People who live on certain sections of Selkirk and Doran Street were also advised to leave their homes temporarily.

Few of the displaced families went to the Petawawa Civic Centre, where emergency accommodation and refreshments were offered during Sunday's crisis.

Fire officials were not certain what caused the fire, although Arnold O'Kane, fire chief co-ordinating the operation, said it might have been friction between the mangled rail cars.

People were evacuated from an area up to 3.5 kilometres from the crash.

Firefighters played their hoses on the cars throughout the day and it was not until evening that the fire was out.

Firefighters were concerned the rain and water from their equipment might react with the cargo in one car, five 40-pound barrels of liquid sulphuric acid that could form a toxic gas and cause vomiting and severe damage to eyes and lungs.

As well, emergency workers feared winds would shift and pick up from six to 22 kmh, thereby fanning the feared acrid fumes toward nearby CFB

Petawawa and the major portion of the village, with a combined population of about 10,000.

By 1 p.m., they had the fire under control and when they opened the boxcar with the sulphuric acid later in the day, they found it had burned off, apparently causing no harmful fumes.

CP Rail spokesman John Cox in Toronto said it posed no serious health hazard unless inhaled from close range and police said later that air samples taken by federal environment department officials showed no sulphuric acid was released.

Officials had considered a second evacuation involving up to 3,000 area residents and base personnel, but after an emergency meeting with CP Rail and transport commission representatives Sunday afternoon, it was decided not to evacuate more residents or base personnel.

Rantz said most of those who did evacuate visited friends and family in other parts of Petawawa.

Two tanks containing 20,000 gallons of flammable low-grade lubricant oil presented some concern and Pembroke's water filtration plant was closed down after environment ministry officials discovered a low-grade petroleum oil leaking into a ditch that drains into the Petawawa and Ottawa Rivers.

But Pembroke Mayor Angus Campbell said the city has more than three million gallons of water in reserve that can last until the end of the week.

The city filtration plant pumps between 300,000 to 400,000 gallons of water to city residents and parts of neighboring Stafford Township daily.

Campbell said officials had prepared to implement a prepared emergency plan on Sunday if the situation worsened and forced 10,000 Petawawa residents to vacate their homes.

Luck, experience helped limit impact of crash.

A combination of luck and lessons learned from the 1979 Mississauga train wreck prevented Sunday's CP Rail derailment at Petawawa from being more serious.

Canadian Transport Commission spokesman Peter Schnobb said two tank cars that normally carry propane and another that normally carries methyl alcohol were empty when the freight train left the tracks.

"There was the potential for something much bigger," Schnobb said Monday.

As it was, it took 11 hours for 50 firefighters to bring the blaze under control so 500 people could return to their homes.

CP spokesman Herb Brooks said today the line was expected to be open by 6 p.m. this evening.

Schnobb said even if those tank cars had been full, numerous safety precautions resulting from the Mississauga accident would have reduced the danger of a disaster.

Rail carriers must now separate tankers carrying dangerous chemicals from cars carrying flammable products. The positioning of cars on the derailed train was checked and met the requirements.

Chemical carriers are also now more resistant to damage and fire because of structural improvements made to the cars. "We can no longer duplicate Mississauga," said Schnobb.

A six-member transport commission investigation team is on the scene and a report will follow. No date has been set for its release.

Preliminary damage estimates put the cost at \$350,000.

At this point, a crack in the rail just east of the derailment remains the most likely cause, said Schnobb, adding that the broken rail may have given way under the weight of the train.

Schnobb said it is not uncommon for the rails to crack, especially following a quick thaw like the one that hit the area over the past few days.

He said the track is inspected by the railway company on a regular basis and the CTC carries out periodic reviews as well.

Schnobb didn't know when the line was last checked. That type of information will come but in the investigation.

The issue came up in the House of Commons Monday when Liberal MP Len Hopkins asked Transport Minister Don Mazankowski for a review on how often rail inspections were carried out.

Mazankowski said no action would be taken until the investigation is complete.

Officials said the derailment could have resulted in a much larger evacuation.

Firefighters were concerned the rain and water from their equipment could have reacted with the cargo in one car carrying 200 pounds of sulphuric acid, A toxic gas could have formed, causing vomiting and severe damage to eyes and lungs.

As it turned out, fire officials found when they opened the boxcar that the sulphuric acid had burned off without causing any dangerous fumes.

Lubricant oil also caused concern. Pembroke's water filtration plant was closed after environment ministry officials discovered the oil leaking into a ditch that drains into the Petawawa and Ottawa rivers.

The plant resumed normal operations early Monday. Environment ministry spokesman Andrew Policy said only a small amount of oil leaked into the Petawawa River, posing no threat to the water supply.

The 86-car train was traveling westbound at 70 kilometres an hour at the time of the 7:45 a.m. derailment. That was within recommended speed which varies according to weather conditions, geography, proximity to urban areas and track configuration.

One of four crew riding in the caboose suffered a bruised knee

About 100 CP employees worked throughout Monday and by 2:30 p.m. the track had been cleared of the 27 derailed cars. A nearby bridge, which spans the Petawawa River, needs extensive repairs with about three-quarters of the timbers in need of replacement because of damage from the derailment.

In the meantime, VIA Rail trains from Ottawa to Sudbury which use the line have been cancelled and a bus service is being provided.

CP has rerouted its freight traffic to other lines.

Derailement still echoes in trailer park.

PETAWAWA Pinehurst trailer park residents evacuated during the 27-car train derailment near here are having trouble forgetting the accident that shook them from their sleepy Sunday morning.

A steady stream of curious onlookers trudged through the water, and slush Monday to watch as mammoth cranes removed the twisted remains of the freight train from the tracks.

Some shook their heads as they looked at the boxes of bicycles that had tumbled from one wrecked car

Esther Jourdain, the wife of a soldier, sipped coffee and squinted into the bright sunlight as she watched the cleanup from the doorstep of her trailer home.

"I'm always thinking about trains now," she said, remembering the thundering crash of the train.

Jourdain and her husband and two children have lived in the trailer for about 10 years and have no plans to move out.

"We have to stay here. Where else would we go except the PMQ's (private married quarters) at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa," she said.

"After all, this couldn't happen again."

Others, like Ed and Mary Jane McGuey, who have an 11-month-old daughter, said trains are dangerous but they weren't upset by the derailment.

"It doesn't scare us that much. It could happen anywhere," said the 31-year-old father.

Trains coursing the rails again after Petawawa wreck cleared

PETAWAWA Exhausted workers who have struggled to clean up Sunday's CP Rail train derailment here were rewarded Tuesday with the sight of the first train in two days thundering through the village.

The 90-car freight train clattered over about 500 metres of new track toward Montreal, officially returning the line to service.

The repair crews "all sounded pretty elated" said CP spokesman Herb Brooks.

A few hours after the early-morning derailment, cranes were brought in to move the 26 cars that left the track, sparking a fire in one car containing 200 pounds of sulphuric acid.

Although as many as 500 people left the area, emergency workers later said the acid posed no danger.

The blaze was out by Monday morning and wreckage was removed from the track later that day.

Workers have also repaired a railway bridge damaged in the derailment less than a kilometre from the residential areas of Petawawa.

Officials suspect the derailment was caused by a cracked rail that broke under the weight of the train.

05/03/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Chalk River

Petawawa

New road sought to provide escape after derailment

Residents of a subdivision near the site of the recent Petawawa train derailment convinced Petawawa Township council Monday to study escape routes for emergency evacuation.

Emotions ran high before about 10 residents of Hoffman Subdivision won council's agreement to look into the possibility of a second road.

New Street, the only access to the subdivision, crosses the Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks to link with Highway 17.

Residents of the 67-lot development said that creates a safety hazard because the area can be isolated if the track is blocked.

Reeve Jim Jones told residents that they should have been aware of the access-road situation when they bought homes in the subdivision.

He said council would examine the land it now owns to see if a road could be built for emergencies.

Jones at first vetoed the idea of building a new road because of the cost, but later said a road that would serve the subdivision might be built as part of the township's nearby industrial park.

Coun. Alex Campbell will examine the township's roads and property to devise a plan satisfactory to the residents.

Two residents also argued an alternate route would improve convenience as well.

They said they had often waited in their cars for up to two hours while trains separated them from their families in the subdivision.

Group spokesman Aileen Power said if New Street were ever blocked by a train derailment similar to the one in Petawawa on Feb. 23, the only route to safety would be through the deep snow south of the subdivision.

She urged the township to set up an emergency plan that would facilitate speedy evacuation if necessary.

"Most of us came here not to blame council, but to ask for help . . . We're in a situation that's really dangerous," said subdivision resident Robbie Robinson.

A former councillor, Robinson said the issue of safe secondary access wasn't given serious consideration when residents brought similar concerns to council twice before.

"If the train wreck that happened in Petawawa two weeks ago had happened at New Street, we all would have been running out in the snow," Robinson said.

14/03/1985

Brockville Recorder

Brockville and Ottawa

Brockville

Ghost-trains in the Brockville Tunnel? This is how it appeared during the afternoon of March 13, after smoke was detected curling up from beneath the doors of the abandoned railway tunnel in that community. For a while, things got to the point that smoke was even coming out the original vents for the 1700 foot long structure. These vents are located within the Brockville City Hall. From the exterior, however, they only appear as additional chimneys. In the end, the problem was traced to some - as yet - unfound youngsters who had dragged a considerable amount of wood into the bore and ignited it. Fire fighters finally managed to extinguish the blaze and measures have been taken to secure the entrances as fully as possible to prevent a re-occurrence of the incident,

21/03/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Alexandria

Alexandria man killed by train

ALEXANDRIA (STAFF) - A 75-year-old local man died instantly Tuesday when he was hit by a train while crossing the tracks on foot here.

Alexandria OPP said Louis Carriere was crossing the tracks opposite the Alexandria train station at about 7 p.m.

A retired bus driver, Carriere was hit by a westbound train not scheduled to stop in Alexandria.

Carriere lived alone near the train station in this town, which is about 85 kilometres east of Ottawa.

22/03/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Lachute

LaBrosse Boulevard

Woman badly hurt in car - train crash

A 33-year-old Gatineau woman is in stable condition this morning at Outaouais Regional Hospital after the car she was driving Thursday crashed into the side of a freight train in Gatineau.

Denise Larcher, of Laurier Street, underwent surgery Thursday night for head injuries after the 11:30 a.m. collision at the LaBrosse Boulevard train crossing.

The signal lights and warning bells were working when Larcher drove her car into the side of a Canadian Pacific locomotive pulling 42 freight wagons, said Ralph Wilson, a CP spokesman.

As well, the locomotive's front light was on and its bell was ringing at the crossing, he said.

Both Larcher's blue Honda car and the train were travelling at about 25 kilometres an hour when they collided.

The car hit the metal stairs at the front of the engine and spun almost 360 degrees before coming to a stop against a signal post, Brisebois said.

Ambulance attendants with the help of Gatineau policemen moved the car from the post to remove Larcher.

The freight train was travelling from Montreal to Ottawa and was slowing down to enter the Gatineau station when the accident occurred.

There is no barrier at the LaBrosse Boulevard crossing but Wilson said it is rare to install barriers at crossings which have only one track.

Residents living near the crossing said Thursday that traffic is heavy on LaBrosse and motorists often speed on the road.

29/03/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Lachute

LaBrosse Boulevard

Outaouais asks for rail barriers

Outaouais Regional Council asked CP Rail and the Canadian Transport Commission Thursday to install electronic barriers at its train crossings in the region.

The request, made by Gatineau Coun. Louis Simon Joannis, comes a week after a near-fatal accident last Thursday in Gatineau.

Denise Larcher, 33, of Laurier Street, in Gatineau has remained in a coma at the Outaouais Regional Hospital since the car she was driving crashed into the side of a freight train at the LaBrosse Boulevard train crossing.

The signal lights and warning bells were working when Larcher drove into the side of a CP locomotive but Joannis says a barrier might have stopped her.

He said the LaBrosse crossing is near the Gatineau train station and trains often back up on the track, setting off the lights and bells even though no train is coming.

"Many drivers go across the tracks when the warning lights are on because they know the train isn't coming. But this situation invites accidents like this one," he said.

Gatineau Council is to vote Monday on a similar resolution asking for barriers on all six crossings in the city, Joannis said.

He said at least 40 buses cross at LaBrosse each day from a nearby high school.

06/04/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Moodie Drive

The 17-year old Richmond man charged in the \$2-million derailment of a VIA train last June has been committed to trial.

Randy Rankin will appear in district court May 3 to set a date for trial.

Rankin was charged after a VIA train on the Ottawa-Toronto line derailed, sending 27 people to hospital with minor injuries.

He is charged with interfering with a transportation facility.

Car-train crash kills woman

An Ottawa-area woman was killed instantly Tuesday afternoon when her car was struck by a Montreal-to-Ottawa VIA passenger train at a level crossing near her home on the outskirts of Moose Creek, near Casselman.

Sharon Rombough, 37, was crossing the CN tracks as the two-car train, with 90 passengers, came by at 4:10 p.m. None of the train passengers was injured. The train was delayed two hours.

Provincial police at Long Sault said that just before the collision, Rombough was driving east along a sideroad that runs parallel to the tracks.

When she came to an intersecting road, she made a left turn and drove across the tracks into the train's path. The crossing's flashing warning lights were working and police say it's a mystery why Rombough continued across the tracks, especially since she could have seen the approaching westbound train while driving east along the side-road. They said the afternoon sun would not have been in her eyes.

Rombough was going to pick up her 4½-year-old daughter from the babysitter when the accident happened, said her husband Earl Rombough, 34.

He said at first he feared both his wife and only daughter were in the car when he was told of the accident by a friend.

"I didn't know if she had picked up our daughter yet. I thought I lost them both." Rombough said the train engineer told police his wife appeared to have stopped at the crossing, which is less than a kilometre north of the couple's home, and then proceeded again slowly across the tracks.

"I don't know why she didn't see the (warning) lights."

04/05/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

VIA takes over ticket sales for Wakefield steam train

In what could be its last year of operation, the steam train excursion to Wakefield is going national.

VIA Rail is taking over promotion and ticket sales for the excursions, which will run this year between July 6 and Oct. 13 from the Ottawa train station.

Pierre Lortie, VIA Rail spokesman, said tickets will be sold at all of the Crown corporation's ticket terminals in Canada and will even be part of a one-day VIA package excursion from Montreal to Ottawa.

Lortie said an announcement of when ticket sales will begin will be made May 15.

In an effort to make the train route more financially viable, the National Capital Commission and the National Museum of Science and Technology have approved several changes to its operation.

Ticket prices have been raised and the excursions will run weekends only.

NCC spokesman Mark Lamontagne said ticket prices for the excursions of Steam Engine 1201, which have been running since 1973, will be raised to \$16 for adults and \$8 for children under 12, up from \$12 and \$6.

The 40-year-old train will chug through the Gatineau Hills on its way to Wakefield each Saturday and Sunday until Sept. 1. Special fall excursions to take in the autumn leaves will be run Sundays until Oct. 13.

The future of the steam train has been in doubt since December when CP Rail received approval to abandon the money-losing Hull-Maniwaki line.

The transport commission, however, gave groups until September, 1985 to come up with an agreement with CP Rail to keep the line to Wakefield.

21/05/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Drive to save Wakefield steam train seeks \$100,000

A campaign to save the Wakefield steam train got on the rails today as organizers announced a \$100,000 fund-raising drive.

John Trent, chairman of a committee of government representatives and community volunteers, said his group hopes to see the train running six times a week between May and October next year.

This year, it will run twice a week - on Saturdays and Sundays - between July 6 and Sept. 1 and there will be three special fall excursions to see the leaves.

But this could be its last year.

Its owner, CP Rail, has permission from the Canadian Transport Commission to tear up the tracks, but must wait until Dec. 31 to give others a chance of taking it over.

Trent said the \$100,000 sought by the Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee would go towards submitting a formal proposal to the commission to run the train.

He said the first year's operating budget has been estimated at about \$1 million and capital expenditures will be at least another \$500,000.

The program would be run by a private corporation that would be established in the fall.

Trent said the prospects of operating the train next year are excellent.

"All the institutions and organizations (in the Ottawa-Outaouais region) are behind it and so are the different levels of government.

"Even CP supports it and is ready to negotiate a takeover by the private corporation."

He said the train probably would run most of the time between Hull and Wakefield and a few times between Ottawa and Wakefield.

This year, it will run between the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa and Wakefield, leaving Ottawa at 10 a.m. and returning at 4 p.m.

Fares this year are \$16 for adults and \$8 for children under 12, a museum spokesman said.

22/05/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Fundraising drive begun to save steam train

Supporters of the Wakefield Steam Train need to raise \$100,000 before August in an attempt to keep the old engine running along the Hull-Maniwaki line.

The Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee Tuesday unveiled a money-making scheme at the Museum of Science and Technology that will raise the cash needed to save Steam Engine 1201. The money will go toward submitting a formal proposal for the committee to operate the service.

The group will sell \$2 buttons, books, posters and crests and \$5 conductor hats this summer.

Ticket prices for the excursions through the scenic Gatineau Hills are being raised to \$16 for adults and \$8 for children this year.

Supporters also can buy honorary certificates for \$5 to become a committee member, for \$25 to become a trainman, \$50 to become a conductor or \$100 to become an engineer.

Displays will be set up in area shopping centres during the summer starting at Bayshore Shopping Centre and Les Galeries de Hull on May 24, 25, 31 and June 1.

The future of the steam train has been in doubt since December, when CP Rail received approval to abandon the money-losing line.

The Canadian Transport Commission gave groups until September to come up with an agreement with CP Rail to keep the line open.

The committee wants to form a private company to operate an expanded version of the Ottawa-Wakefield excursions in 1986.

John Trent, committee chairman, said the group will submit an application to the CTC before Sept. 1 for its proposal to run the train on the Hull-Maniwaki line.

07/06/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Clearing the track

Monday in this column we told a story about the "All Aboard" campaign to save the summer steam train excursions to Wakefield. In that story it was said the train could fall victim to government cutbacks.

Not quite the case, say campaign organizers, who fear people might resent being asked to pick up government slack.

The CPR has approval to discontinue the line to Wakefield and plans to take up the track. All Aboard intends to raise \$100,000 to buy the line and with co-operation from Museur i Canada, will keep old stjjim engine 1201 operating.

11/06/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Chalk River

Pembroke

Anglers survive with minor injuries in brush with train

PEMBROKE Two young men fishing on a town railroad bridge Saturday narrowly escaped death as they jumped from the path of a freight train and clung to the edge of the trestle as the train brushed against them.

Richard Allen Bedard, and Mark William Lintick, both 19, of Quesnel, B.C., were not seriously injured as the westbound Canadian Pacific train crossed the trestle over the Muskrat River near Lake Street at 4.40 p.m.

Lintick was taken to Pembroke General Hospital with leg injuries and transferred Sunday to Ottawa Civic Hospital where he is listed in satisfactory condition with a compound leg fracture.

Bedard was treated for a sore back and shoulder and released.

The exact speed of the train was not available, but police estimated it was travelling less than 45 kilometres per hour as it passed through town.

"I'll never fish there again," said a shaken Bedard in an interview Monday.

Both he and Lintick, who were visiting Bedard's father in Pembroke, had caught several fish from the trestle bridge last week.

Bedard said they returned late Saturday afternoon to try their luck again, not expecting to see a train.

They had been fishing for about two minutes when they heard a train whistle signalling its approach, Bedard said.

When they looked up, the train appeared to be about 20 feet away and seemed to be travelling "fast", Bedard added.

He said they had no time to escape and believes he saved himself by pushing his body against a raised side bar a few inches from the side of the track and holding on.

The train grazed Bedard's back as it passed by. Lintick's leg was struck by the passing freight.

Area fishermen sometimes fish from the trestle although there is regular train traffic along the track.

In a press release Monday, Pembroke police said the incident should warn others not to trespass or loiter on railroad trestles.

14/06/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Lachute

Gatineau

Brush with train shakes up pair

Two Orleans men were shaken up Thursday when their van couldn't quite cross rail tracks in time to avoid a CP freight train in Gatineau.

Gatineau police Const. Michel Lafrance said the van was crossing the rails at Montee Paiment and Maloney Boulevard when it was struck at 11:15 a.m.

Benoit Lacroix, 21, of 10th line, and Daniel Lalonde, 22, of Marcoux Street, were treated for bruises at Gatineau Hospital and released.

Lafrance said the signal lights at the crossing were operating when the westbound train caught the rear of the southbound van.

08/07/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Syd Mortimer and Mary Armour talk to train engineer Lome Blackburn

Popular steam train on track in season debut

Although this may be the last season for the Wakefield steam train, spirits were high on board Saturday as it set out for its first trip of the summer through the scenic Gatineau Hills.

About 230 passengers, including train buffs, heritage supporters and families with picnic baskets, boarded the 41-year-old Steam Engine 1201 at Ottawa Station.

The round-trip excursions to Wakefield have become so popular in the past 12 years that they're usually sold out, but they still may fall victim to federal cutbacks.

The Canadian Transport Commission announced in December that CP Rail could scrap the money-losing Hull-Maniwaki line at the end of this year.

However, the commission gave supporters of the train until Sept. 1 to reach an agreement with CP Rail to keep the line open part-way to Wakefield.

Many passengers Saturday said steam engines like the No. 1201 are worth saving and were concerned the train might be making its last run this summer.

Said Jim Nubel of Ottawa: "I've seen the government spend money in some stupid, wasteful ways, and if that many people get enjoyment out of (the Wakefield train), why can't they subsidize it?"

"There's nothing like seeing a steam train in action," said Bert Michel of Petawawa, a train history buff.

Michel owns a collection of old steam tractor engines. He brought his 13-year-old daughter Melodie along for her first train ride, hoping she'll come to share his love of steam engines.

Yvonne and Guy Morchain were making the trip with daughters Claudine, 11 months, and Liliane, 10, and friend, Robin St. George, 10.

Yvonne Morchain, originally from Holland, was particularly excited about the trip because she had contributed to the Out-aouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee campaign to save the rail line.

"I sponsored this train" she said proudly. "I'm a non-Canadian and I really felt that it was something I wanted to do."

On Saturday and Sundays during July and August, the train leaves Ottawa at 10 a.m. and arrives in Wakefield at 11:45 a.m. It then leaves Wakefield for the return run at 2:15 p.m. and arrives at Ottawa station at 4 p.m.

10/07/1985

Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Nepean urges ban on train whistles

The sound of the locomotive whistle may soon be a thing of the past in Nepean.

Aldermen want to make it illegal for trains to sound a warning at crossings within city limits.

"Council has had more than an earful of complaints from residents over the years. It's about time," Aid. Frank Reid told a Nepean works committee meeting Tuesday.

The committee wants a bylaw drawn up to restrict the sounding of warning whistles and bells at railway crossings on Cedarview, Jockvale, Greenbank, Fallowfield and Merivale roads, and Woodroffe Avenue.

Five of the locations have been outfitted with automatic gate systems eliminating the need for a warning sound from train engineers.

A final automatic system is to be installed at Merivale and CN Rail tracks later this month, said David Atkins, a Nepean city engineer.

"Most major cities have an anti-whistle bylaw as long as safety considerations are maintained," Atkins said.

Ottawa has had a similar bylaw for several years.

Council is expected to pass the bylaw at its Thursday meeting, but the sound of a train whistle will still be heard in Nepean for at least another four to six weeks pending approval by the Canadian Transport Commission, which regulates railways.

11/07/1985

Brockville Recorder

Brockville and Ottawa

Brockville

Workmen engaged in rehabilitating the south end of the Brockville Tunnel to permit it to continue to withstand the heavy pounding of vehicular traffic from where it crosses under Water Street have discovered that the structure may be stronger than originally concluded in a consulting engineering report from the Kingston firm of McNeely Engineering and Structure. While scraping away the material and street over the top of the tunnel in order to install a concrete reinforcing cap under the street, it was discovered that the base of the double skin thick rubble stone tunnel liner is supported along by stone buttresses spaced at seven to eight foot intervals. The discovery was somewhat of a surprise as the consultants had previously concluded that the only support for the tunnel was coming from the till material above it and not the masonry liner. In light of the discovery, the city has now sought a second opinion from the consulting firm. In spite of the discovery, however, the city has proceeded to reinforce the crossing of Water Street. This has involved the removal of the outside skin of stone in order to pour a thick concrete arch over the liner. The arch should alleviate any fears of a potential collapse because of heavy vehicular traffic. The rehabilitation is being done in a sympathetic manner and the distinctive high hump of the street over the tunnel - long a deterrent to the successful passage of long vehicles - remains. Indeed, because of the design of the reinforcing ring, the hump is actually one inch higher than it was previously!

(Branchline)

Train warning system rejected

A committee that reviews Canadian Transport Commission decisions has rejected an appeal by Nepean to have a sophisticated warning system for train conductors installed on a rail line through the city.

Nepean started the appeal for a warning system and gate protection at level crossings along the Canadian National line after the CTC's railway transport committee gave approval in October for VIA Rail trains to travel up to 150 kilometres an hour.

The only conditions on the higher speeds were that discussions be held between the railways and the committee on gate protection, modern locks be installed on switching devices on spur lines and headlights be added to the locomotive.

Trains along the stretch were slowed to 110 kmh until those conditions were met.

In November, the committee ordered gates installed at eight level crossings in Nepean.

Before that motorists were warned of approaching trains by lights and an alarm.

The crossings are at Moodie Drive, Woodroffe Avenue, Jockvale, Cedarview, Merivale, Fal-lowfield, Greenbank and Eagleson roads.

Nepean spokesman David Atkins said despite the decision by the review committee, Nepean achieved something the installation of gate protection.

The signalling system, which would provide warning to conductors of trouble five kilometres down the line, could still be introduced if appealed to cabinet, said Atkins.

Safety concerns arose after an accident last year when a VIA train left the tracks in Nepean after a switch was tampered with. Thirty-three passengers were injured in the accident.

01/08/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Wakefield train should run year-round from Hull: study

The steam train that chugs between Ottawa and Wakefield on summer weekends should be made into a year-round attraction between Hull and Wakefield, says a consultant's report released today.

The report was commissioned by the National Capital Commission, the Outaouais Development Corporation and the National Museum of Science and Technology.

It says the plan could increase spending in the area and recommends the train be considered part of a master plan to increase tourism in the Outaouais.

According to a development corporation newsletter, the Hull-Wakefield plan could draw between \$2.5 million and \$4 million from tourists to the region.

The Wakefield train now runs once a day on weekends, with departures from the museum on St Laurent Boulevard and the Ottawa train station.

The trip is so popular that rides on the 332-seat train are already sold out for the rest of the summer.

"Ottawa gets over 2.5 million visitors in the region and few of them cross over to the Outaouais," says Marc Lamontagne, an NCC media officer "This (the Hull-Wakefield line) was suggested to enhance the development of the Outaouais region.

The train now carries about 6,000 tourists every summer, but the NCC is hoping the new plan will see at least 70,000 people taking the ride annually.

The NCC and the museum now split the \$130,000 cost of operating the summer train.

The future of the train has been in doubt since December when CP Rail received approval from the Canadian Transport Commission to abandon the money-losing Hull-Maniwaki line. Other groups have until Dec. 31 to attempt to save the line.

The Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee, a group of volunteers, is attempting to establish a private corporation to operate the train daily.

Committee vice-president Raymonde Cahill said the group won't take a stand on the new report until their own study is complete.

A substantial increase in financing would be required to make the Wakefield-Hull plan work, says Lamontagne.

Tracks along the route are in need of repair and the stations in Hull and Wakefield would require some renovation to accommodate the increase in tourist traffic.

As well, the study says Wakefield and Hull will need to develop facilities for tourists. The Wakefield station house has already been converted into a tearoom and a free shuttle bus there now takes visitors to various interest spots in the city. The old mill has also been restored.

The NCC and the museum have been running the excursions since 1973.

28/08/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Steam train group requests more time to make proposal/

Supporters of the Wakefield Steam Train have asked the federal government for a four-month extension to submit their proposal to save the train.

The Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee says it needs more time to raise money, prepare consultant reports and study a report on branch lines released last week by a transport ministry inquiry.

The Canadian Transport Commission had given interested groups until Sept. 1 to make submissions on the closure of the Hull-Maniwaki line.

The future of Steam Engine 1201's summer excursions to Wakefield has been in doubt since December, when CP Rail received CTC approval to abandon the money-losing line.

A CTC spokesman said the application for an extension was received Tuesday and would be answered later this week.

Raymonde Cahill, spokesman for the committee, said the group has only raised about \$15,000 of its \$125,000 goal.

The committee plans to approach potential large donors, such as municipal governments and companies, in September.

It wants to establish a private firm to run the train on a daily basis all year long.

Marc Lamontagne, spokesman for the National Capital Commission, said the proposal it and other interested organizations are preparing will be ready on time.

The NCC is meeting with the Outaouais Planning Corp. and municipal officials from Hull and La Peche this week to complete its submission.

An NCC study released in July said the steam train is a practical proposition that would become profitable at the 62,000-passenger level.

The train could eventually carry up to 160,000 passengers yearly and contribute \$17 million to the local economy, the study said.

This year, the train will carry only about 7,000 passengers.

31/08/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Wakefield steam train bound for B.C.

The Wakefield steam train won't be making its fall foliage run in the Outaouais this year. Instead, it's going a little further afield it will participate in ceremonies commemorating the 100th anniversary of "The Last Spike" in British Columbia in November.

The regular summer run ends with an excursion today and Sunday. Because of the guest appearance in B.C., this weekend's trips could be the train's last.

CP Rail and a committee representing train supporters reached an agreement this week to keep the Hull-Maniwaki rail line intact for another two years, but it's not clear yet whether the train will run during that time.

Negotiations between CP and several groups will continue until the end of the year to find a way of financing the money-losing rail line so the tourist train can survive.

The Canadian Transport Commission recently gave permission to the Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway committee to continue negotiations with CP until December in hopes of finding a money saving formula for the line.

A second group, representing the National Capital Commission, the Outaouais Planning Corp., the National Museum of Science and Technology, the Wakefield Community Association, Hull, West Hull and La Peche is also discussing with CP setting up a foundation to take ownership of the line.

In a brief to the CTC, this committee said the NCC and the Outaouais Planning Corp. would provide "seed money" to start up a new train operation.

The rest would be raised from private and corporate donors, said Planning Corp. president Roger Blais.

Smiths Falls train to open as rail museum station

SMITHS FALLS - A historic railway station that has been unused since 1978 will soon reopen for business tourist business, that is.

The picturesque Canadian National station on William Street was saved last year when the CNR sold it for \$1 to a group of railway enthusiasts known as the Smiths Falls Railway Museum.

The group will lease the land for \$2,000 a year, with a \$100 annual rent increase.

The group, which has about 267 members from Pembroke to Brockville, has worked since the spring to restore the building and grounds, says president Bill Le-Surf.

Their efforts will be rewarded Oct. 5 when the first phase of the museum, a baggage express room, is opened to the public.

Eventually, the group hopes to refurbish the entire station and run a steam train excursion, perhaps to Chaffeys Locks, said Le-Surf.

Donations from members have supported the group so far, although "we hope to attract government funding eventually," he added.

The station was built in 1914. CN discontinued passenger service in the mid-1970s and the station was then used by VIA Rail.

In 1982, a CN "abandonment notice" galvanized local railway buffs into forming a "save our station" group, LeSurf said. "That kind of notice usually means it will be torn down."

10/10/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Whistle stop: Steam engine 1201, famous for its scenic runs from Ottawa to Wakefield, made a stop in Carleton Place this week. The steamer was on its way to Craigellachie, B.C., to take part in a ceremony marking the driving of the last spike in the trans-Canada railway. The train will winter in Coquitlam, B.C., then appear at Expo 86 in Vancouver in the spring.

28/10/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria*

Motorist killed in train collision

A 17-year-old Cumberland youth died in one of two weekend highway accidents involving VIA Rail passenger trains in the Ottawa area.

Pierre D'Aoust, 17, of Sarsfield, a village east of Ottawa, was driving south on Dunning Road near Vars Saturday about 7:30 a.m. after being called unexpectedly to work when his car collided with an eastbound VIA Rail train.

In the other accident, on the outskirts of Ottawa, a pickup truck carrying three people was pushed 80 metres along the tracks by a train. No one was seriously hurt.

None of the train passengers was hurt.

In the first accident, the Montreal-Ottawa train was delayed one hour 15 minutes and in the second, the Ottawa-Montreal train was held up for one hour five minutes.

The Canadian National crossing near Vars is not equipped with signals, but has a railroad crossing sign.

D'Aoust, who worked full-time at a local insulation company, had been called at home Saturday and asked to fill in at the last moment for another worker who was ill.

Provincial police in Rockland said the train's engineers spotted D'Aoust's car approaching the crossing at a high speed. They sounded the train's horn and when they realized the car wasn't going to stop, applied the emergency brakes to slow the locomotive, which was travelling at 130 kilometres, the train's normal speed.

"We all drive over those tracks countless times day and night," said D'Aoust's grandfather, George Chartrand.

D'Aoust's funeral is 11 a.m. Tuesday at St-Hugues Church in Sarsfield.

The second accident occurred about 2 p.m. Saturday near of Belfast Road and Michael Street when a pickup truck smashed into the train.

Police said the crossing is equipped with a flashing signal, but they are not certain why the truck drove into the train's path.

Ottawa police Sgt. Mike Paquette said one passenger in the truck had a broken collar bone.

"They're lucky the train was going only 20 kilometres per hour. It could have been a lot worse."

01/11/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria*

Dunning Road crossing signals now top priority for CN

Canadian National Railways is giving top-priority treatment to a request for flashing lights and bells at a level crossing near Vars where a teenager was killed on the weekend, a CN official said Thursday.

John Brayne, regional engineer for the railway's technical services branch, said that after a CN meeting Thursday, the railway had established the Dunning Road automatic signals as its top priority because of the accident and the publicity surrounding it.

He said the signals could be installed by spring.

There is now only a wooden X-shaped sign at the crossing saying "railway crossing."

Pierre D'Aoust, 17, of Sarsfield, was killed Saturday when his car was hit at the crossing by an eastbound VIA Rail train.

The Canadian Transport Commission recommended automatic signals for the crossing in a letter to CN and Cumberland Township Council a year ago.

When the commission didn't hear from the railway, it followed up the original letter with four reminders this year.

CN didn't reply to either the letter or the reminders.

Brayne said no action was taken because other priorities arose for his office.

He added that even if his office had responded to the CTC's letters, the signals probably would not have been in place by the weekend.

07/11/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Brockville*

Brockville Man stable after being hit by train

A 27-year-old man is in stable condition at Brockville General Hospital with cuts and bruises after being hit by a train Wednesday while walking along the tracks near town.

James Fykes, of Brockville, was walking east along the tracks when he was struck by an eastbound train at 10:45 a.m.

Fykes was knocked to the ground by the step leading to the locomotive.

He was taken by ambulance to hospital where he underwent surgery to close a deep gash to his buttocks and leg.

Glen Robertson's 66-year-old train station is gone after demolition crews razed the structure Friday.

On Tuesday a CN spokesman said the building, which has been closed for the last few years, wasn't of any use to CN or VIA Rail and it had been offered for sale to the Township of Lochiel. The decision was then made to bring in the wrecker's ball.

"We did go to the township, asking them if they wanted the building, but we received no answer," Louise Filion, an employee in CN's public affairs department, said. "We went to tender for the job and didn't receive any bids. We then asked four companies if they would do it and we finally picked a company in Quebec."

Mrs Filion said CN wrote to the township on Sept. 10, 1982 advising them that it would be approaching the Canadian Transport Commission to close the station. The firm did not receive a reply from the township.

Lochiel Reeve Ron MacDonell confirmed that CN had offered the station to the municipality, but said it wasn't interested in it at the time.

"They offered to sell it to us," he said, "but we didn't know it was going to be torn down."

The caption under the two photographs reads:

Landmark Gone

A Glen Robertson landmark disappeared over the weekend as the train station was torn down. The station was built in 1919 after the original station, located across the tracks, was destroyed by fire. The station was in operation until about two years ago. The top photo shows the original station, built around 1880. It shows Station Agent Dave Robertson, left and Catherine Jane Robinson, right. The bottom photo was taken about 1950 and shows, left to right, Station Foreman Jim Rickerd, Edith Morrison, Station Agent Norman Milke and Grace Hanley, sister of Edith Morrison.

Photos courtesy of Ray Rickerd.

Teenager killed, two hurt jumping from freight train

It was supposed to be just an adventurous lark for three Smiths Falls teenage friends as they hopped a freight train Saturday morning for a carefree 15-kilometre ride to nearby Merrickville to visit a friend.

But it ended in tragedy when one of the boys died from head injuries he suffered when the three youths jumped from the fast-moving, Montreal-bound Canadian Pacific train at 9:30 a.m.

The train was five kilometres east of Kemptville, about 35 kilometres east of Smiths Falls, when the youths realized the train was on a non-stop trip to Montreal.

The adventure turned into a chilling horror when they decided to jump as the train sped along at about 60 kilometres an hour.

Derek Jordan, 14, the only child of Sharon and Allan Jordan, died in hospital late Saturday, never regaining consciousness after striking his head on the rocky terrain where the boys chose to jump from the back of the tanker train.

The other two youths escaped serious injury: Robert Dumouchel, 14, broke his right leg in three places and Frank MacRae, 14, suffered a broken thumb.

The three Grade 9 students at Smiths Falls District Collegiate Institute embarked on their ill-fated trip at 9 a.m. Saturday.

Having decided to visit a friend in Merrickville, they went to the Smiths Falls train yard and climbed aboard a tanker car.

In their mind, the train would stop in Merrickville and they would hop off, said Marcel Dumouchel, whose son Frank will remain at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario until Tuesday for treatment of his injuries.

But when the train continued through Merrickville and then Kemptville without slowing to less than 60 kilometres an hour, the boys decided to jump, said Dumouchel.

"They never did anything like this before. They did not think it was dangerous."

Dumouchel said the three youths were close friends who were always together.

After they jumped from the train, MacRae, the least injured, ran for help to a nearby farm house across a field.

Dumouchel, who was immobilized because of his broken leg, remained with his unconscious friend.

Jordan was described as an average teenager and a "very good boy" by his aunt, Edith Pilon, of Ottawa, who was at the victim's family home Sunday.

Contacted at home this morning, MacRae declined to comment on the accident. Asked if other youths in the area hop train rides, he said, "not that I know of."

Police and CP officials also said such train rides are uncommon.

"I've been here for 12 years and this is the first time I've heard of any such incident," said Paul Jolicoeur, a CP public relations spokesman.

CP police Insp. Bob Veary said the practice was common several years ago when teenagers were in the habit of hitchhiking across Canada, but that it has not been happening in recent times.

Sgt. Larry McMaster of the OPP Kemptville detachment added "that's the first time I've ever heard tell of (youths hopping on trains) down here."

Better protection at train crossing urged in verdict

Coroner's jury inquires into deaths of two young people in Ottawa - train smash at Iroquois.

Iroquois, November 20th- Placing part of the blame on the dangerousness of the crossing, a coroner's jury inquiring into the deaths of Earl Perry, 19, of Cardinal and Wilda Ellis, 17, of Iroquois, instantly killed at the Victoria Street crossing in Iroquois last Friday by an extra freight train of the C.N.R., strongly recommended protection for the Crossing.

The following verdict was rendered: "Wilda Ellis and Earl Perry came to the death as a result of a collision of a car with an east-bound extra freight on Friday, November 15th, at 7.55 p.m., in the village of Iroquois where Victoria Street crosses the Canadian National Railway. In the opinion of this jury the accident was partly due to the dangerousness of this crossing and strong recommendation is made for either a bell or a subway at this point. Attention is drawn to the fact that this makes three deaths at this point in the past 10 years."

Saw Pair Parish

The Crossing was only 75 ft from the home of the late Miss Ellis. Evidence disclosed that her Father, William Ellis, and a brother of Earl Perry, Bertle Perry, had seen the two young people go to their deaths.

He had looked out of the window of his home, about 75 feet from the railway tracks, and had seen the back of the car go up on the railway, the father testified. There was nothing to obscure the vision of the north side of the tracks, he said. Immediately afterwards he heard the crash. He did not hear the train whistle. "I usually hear trains whistling for this crossing, but I would not like to say positively that this train did not whistle."

No whistle Heard

Bertle Perry also did not hear the train whistle, although he was on the street in front of the Ellis home. He did not even hear the bell of the train ring, he said.

Standing in front of the Ellis home with Perry was Miss Doreen Hutt of Iroquois. She did not see the train coming until it was almost on top of the automobile, she testified, and not in time to give warning to the motorists. She did not hear the train whistle nor the bell ring, and could not recollect having seen the headlight of the train.

Evidence of the train crew was to the effect that all the proper signals had been given for the crossing. This part of the evidence also revealed that the automobile had been caught by the rear axle in the pony engine and had been dragged until the train had come to a stop.

Swears he gave signal

James Denny of Montreal, engineer in charge of the train, swore that he had blown the whistle and rang the bell for the crossing. The train was travelling about 35 miles an hour, he said, and was carrying 34 cars. As soon as he heard the brakeman shout, he applied the emergency brakes and was able to stop the train within the length of itself. The headlights was burning and he thought it could be seen at least one-half mile away when the train was brought to a stop. The train could not have been stopped any sooner, he said.

Curtis Owens, fireman, said he saw the automobile drive right in front of the train. He also was of the opinion that the train was stopped as soon as possible, and was certain that the whistle had been blown and the bell rang for the approaching crossing. There was nothing to prevent occupants of the automobile seeing the approaching train, he asserted.

John Morris, Brakeman, testified that as the train was approaching the crossing he saw the car approaching the tracks, going about 10 miles an hour. It's seemed to be picking up speed and crossed the tracks right in front of the approaching train. He shouted to the engineer to apply the emergency brakes. Right after he did so, he heard the impact as the train struck the car. He first saw the automobiles when the train was 200 feet from the crossing and had a clear vision of it. The whistle of the train was blowing and the bell was ringing, he averted.

Dr. F.W. Snedden of Iroquois stated that he was at the scene of the accident a few minutes afterwards. He found the lifeless body of Wilda Ellis lying on the south side of the track 75 or 150 east of the crossing. She had a fractured skull. Perry had not been thrown from the car.

Perry was the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Perry of Cardinal. He and Miss Ellis were just starting out by automobile to see a moving picture show when the tragedy occurred.

Dr. E.H. Marcellus, coroner, presided at the inquest. The jury was composed of E. A. McInnis, Foreman, William Barclay, John W. Marcellus, E. W. Keck, Colin Cameron, H. B. Everett, Earl Merheley and J. C. Gilder, all of Iroquois.

30/11/1985 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

CP rail seeks tax deduction for steam train

CP Rail has offered to give the rail line between Hull and Wakefield to the group trying to save the Wakefield Steam Train in return for a tax receipt for a charitable donation of \$2.9 million.

In a letter to a committee of train supporters, CP also offers to operate the tourist train on a contract basis starting next year.

The Canadian Transport Commission has agreed to extend by 15 days the Dec. 1 deadline given to groups to come up with an agreement with CP to save the line, Roger Blais, president of the Outaouais Planning Corporation, said Friday.

Blais is a member of the committee, which also has representatives from the National Capital Commission, the National Museum of Science and Technology and West Quebec municipalities.

Blais said the committee will meet today to discuss CP's offer.

CP received permission last December to abandon the money-losing line Dec. 31, 1985 if no agreement is reached with the supporters of the train.

In a brief to the CTC in August, the committee said it is discussing with CP setting up a foundation to take ownership of the line, with the NCC and the Outaouais Planning Corp. providing "seed money" to start up a new train operation.

CP is now offering to turn the Hull-Wakefield line over to such a non-profit foundation in return for the tax receipt

It says it would rip up the track between Wakefield and Maniwaki and provide the foundation with material for the maintenance and expansion of the Hull-to-Wakefield section.

Supporters hope CP offer puts steam train back on the rails

People trying to save the Wakefield steam train say they're pleased with CP Rail's recent offer to give them the rail line between Hull and Wakefield.

CP offered the line to a committee of organizations supporting the train, in exchange for a tax receipt for a charitable donation of \$2.9 million, its estimate of the line's value.

The National Capital Commission and the National Museum of Science and Technology jointly run the popular train service in the summer months.

But CP owns the Hull-Maniwaki line and has wanted to close it for several years because it is hardly used but still must be maintained.

Dr. William McGowan, director of the National Museum of Science and Technology, said, although he didn't know all the details, he was thrilled with the offer.

"I'm absolutely delighted. I think this means we'll see the train on the tracks for a good many years to come."

In December 1984, CP received permission to abandon the money-losing line Dec. 31, 1985, if no agreement was reached with its supporters.

NCC chairman Jean Pigott said she was waiting to hear the details of the offer at a meeting today, but added she was happy with the offer and hopeful it would lead to an agreement with CP.

"I think this offer means the train is back on the rails."

Representatives from municipalities in West Quebec also sit on the committee, which is setting up a non-profit corporation to run the train.

Hull Mayor Michel Legere was not as enthusiastic as McGowan and Pigott, saying the committee was waiting for a feasibility study to see if it could maintain the line.

"It's nice, we asked CP to give us the line. But we still don't know if we can run this thing efficiently."

Ligere said the feasibility study should be done by the end of December, when the group is to sit down to negotiate with CP.

Staff from the NCC, the museum and West Quebec municipalities met Saturday to discuss CP's offer and formulate recommendations to make to Pigott, McGowan, Legere and other political representatives that belong to the group at a meeting today.

Jean-Guy Noel, chairman of Saturday's meeting, refused to tell *The Citizen* what those recommendations would be until then.

04/12/1985 *Ottawa Citizen* *Maniwaki*

Study boosts Wakefield train trips

Daily train excursions to Wakefield, operated by a private corporation, between May and October each year would be a money-making proposition, a study prepared by supporters of the Wakefield steam train says.

The Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway Committee submitted the study to the Canadian Transport Commission this week to convince it to keep CP Rail's Hull-Maniwaki line open after Jan. 1, 1986.

The railway committee proposed to the CTC that a public agency or department of government acquire the line and turn over its operation on a lease basis to a private sector operator.

Denis Petters, spokesman for the committee, said regional businessmen have been approached to form a corporation to operate the line.

The future of the excursions has been in doubt since last December when CP received approval to abandon the money-losing line Jan. 1, 1986.

The commission, however, said it would reconsider if supporters can come up with an agreement with CP to keep the 123-kilometre line open.

CP has recently offered the Hull-to-Wakefield part of the line in exchange for a tax receipt for a charitable donation of \$2.9 million, its estimate of the line's value.

However, the railway committee objects to the offer since it would see the Wakefield-to-Maniwaki segment of the line abandoned. It says this segment is necessary for the economic development of the region.

The committee said demand from tourists is great enough to make the operation possible.

The railway committee, made up of 1,400 members, has raised about \$50,000 to save the train excursions this year, Petters said.

Another committee, which includes the National Capital Commission, the National Museum of Science and Technology and the Outaouais Planning Corporation are negotiating with CP Rail to come up with an agreement to keep the line open.

The CTC has given the group until Dec. 15 to reach an agreement.

05/12/1985 *Ottawa Citizen* *Maniwaki*

Daily tourist excursions proposed for steam train

A daily tourist train to Wakefield could be chugging along the once-doomed Hull-Wakefield CP Rail line by 1987.

Several investors in the Outaouais are enthusiastic about forming a company to run at least 150 excursions a summer by 1987 and 240 by 1991, says John Trent, spokesman for the Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway committee.

The railway committee, a community group of 1,400, has been fighting to save the Hull-Maniwaki line since last December, when CP was given permission to abandon the line by Jan. 1, 1986 if no agreement could be reached with its supporters.

CP has wanted to close the line for several years because it is hardly used.

For 12 years the National Capital Commission and the National Museum of Science and Technology have jointly run about 20 trips a summer on the line.

NCC Chairman Jean Pigott said the group's plan was a good idea that would bring lots of tourists into the region.

"But before we consider their proposal we have to make sure the line is saved."

CP has offered the Hull-Wakefield part of the line to a committee of organizations supporting the train, in exchange for a tax receipt for a charitable donation of \$2.9 million, its estimate of the line's value.

Today, representatives from the NCC, the science museum, West Quebec municipalities and the railway committee meet to make their decision on CP's offer.

The group has until Dec. 15 to reach an agreement and a negotiator for the group will probably meet with CP shortly to work out the details, said William McGowan, the science museum's director.

"I'm 100 per cent sure we can reach an agreement, and I'm thrilled about it," said McGowan.

If the line is saved, McGowan said the NCC and the museum will continue to offer the same twice-weekly service until they find someone else to take it over.

"We were never thinking of permanently running it ourselves," he said, adding the railway committee's plan seems a good one.

Wednesday, the railway committee submitted a report to the Canadian Transport Commission stating daily excursions to Wakefield, operated by a private corporation between May and October each year, would be a money-making proposition.

A research study commissioned by the group showed the trains would probably run 70 per cent full, meaning 90,000 passengers a summer by 1991.

Revenues would be at least \$1.3 million and could be as high as \$2 million a year, said Trent, adding the line would probably cost \$900,000 a year to run.

If the Outaouais group takes over, diesel trains would mostly be used for the excursions because of the difficulty and expense of operating steam trains on a daily basis, said Trent, adding charter, evening and dinner excursion would also be offered.

The line would be owned by a public agency or government department, and leased to investors, so the private company would not have to pay for the upkeep of the track.

Steam train group accepts CP offer of Wakefield line

CP Rail's offer to donate the Hull-Wakefield line in return for a \$2.9-million charitable tax receipt has been accepted by groups trying to get a daily tourist train on track.

The decision Thursday improves the outlook for the Wakefield steam train, which had been thrown into doubt when CP was given permission in December to abandon the Hull-Maniwaki line.

"Only months ago, the possibility of coming up with a solution seemed insurmountable," said Outaouais Development Corporation president Roger Blais. Blais is chairman of an umbrella group, which includes representatives of the National Capital Commission, the National Museum of Science and Technology, several West Quebec municipalities and the Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway committee, a community group of 1,400.

Under the agreement the train will continue to be operated by the NCC and museum for the next two years.

The umbrella group will form a corporation that will own the track and hire another company to run the popular excursion to Wakefield.

John Trent, spokesman for the Outaouais and Gatineau Valley Railway committee, says several local investors are enthusiastic about forming a company to run the line.

The twice-weekly steam train carries about 21,000 passengers annually. The break-even point is 60,000 passengers a year.

Revenues are expected to be at least \$1.3 million. It is expected to cost about \$900,000 a year to run the train.

Blais said several parts of the agreement still have to be worked out, such as who is going to issue CP with the charitable tax receipt.

It may be issued by a federal department or a West Quebec municipality.

13/12/1985 *Ottawa Citizen* *Alexandria* *Glen Robertson*

Motorist killed in collision with VIA Train

A woman was killed Thursday night when she drove around a car stopped at a rail crossing and smashed into a Montreal-bound VIA passenger train in Glen Robertson, 100 km east of Ottawa.

Monique Bertrand, 40, of RR 1 Dunvegan, was killed instantly in the 9:10 p.m. collision at the level crossing on a back street in the small town of 600.

Provincial police in Long Sault said the woman was alone in her car when she disregarded the flashing signal lights at the crossing.

None of the 40 passengers on the train was injured, said a VIA spokesman from Montreal.

The passengers were bused the remaining 100 kilometres to Montreal.

The VIA spokesman said that because the main railway line was blocked, passengers on a Ottawa-bound train were transferred to buses at the Coteau station just west of Montreal.

Police said it took until 12:30 a.m. this morning to clear the mangled car from beneath the train.

A motorist who arrived at the scene moments after the crash said debris from the car was spread over a kilometre.

Louis Lamoureux, of Hawkesbury, said he was heading to Glen Robertson to visit a friend when he saw a large flash in the sky

"There was nothing left of the car."

The fatal car-train accident is the third this year and second in seven weeks along the the Ottawa-Montreal line. There were also two other deaths involving elderly pedestrians struck by trains.

The most recent of the fatalities occurred Oct. 26 when Pierre D'Aoust, 17, of Cumberland, was killed in a collision with a Montreal-bound VIA passenger train at a level crossing near Vars, which was not equipped with flashing signals.

In April, Sharon Rombough, 37, of Moose Creek, was killed when her car was struck, by a Montreal-bound VIA train at a crossing equipped with warning lights near her home.

23/12/1985 *Ottawa Citizen* *Prescott* *Manotick*

Police amazed as man escapes with scratch from crash with train

'An area man received his Christmas present early this year a scratch on the head and police say he's lucky that's all he got.

John Partridge, 38, of Greely, was in a car struck by a train as he drove over a CP crossing near Manotick Station about midday Saturday,

The crossing has signals but no gate.

"Everyone has told me I should be in a coffin. I guess it hasn't sunk in yet," Partridge says.

Partridge's car was a total loss and one passer-by said, "It didn't look much like a car any more."

The locomotive was pulling five box cars.

"He got his Christmas present. Someone must have been looking out for him," said Manotick OPP Const. Ray Sabourin.

"When I saw the wreck I said, Here's another death," Sabourin says. "I don't understand how he walked away from it."

Partridge says his seatbelt saved his life.

"I would have been thrown out of the car, there's no question. I will never get in a car without one (a seatbelt)," Partridge said.

He says the bruises left by the seatbelt on his shoulders and waist are painful, "but at least I'm around to feel them."

Sabourin says, "He must have braced himself well and he had almost made it across." He added that if the train had arrived at the crossing a moment sooner, Partridge and his car would likely have been dragged several hundred yards by the train, which was travelling at about 50 kilometres an hour towards Smiths Falls.

Partridge says sun light coming from behind made the warning signal difficult to see.

"I'm not a fast driver and I don't drink."

Partridge, who says he crosses the tracks nearly every day, was returning to his home a few miles from the accident site from a day of shopping on Merivale Road.

"My wife hasn't seen the car yet. It's probably best that she doesn't."

Partridge believes he owes his life to a gift of God. "I guess that's the only way you can interpret it at this time of year."

Partridge's car, struck by the train the left rear fender, was thrown about 20 metres by the impact, Sabourin said.

The train's engineer saw Partridge's car and pulled the emergency brake, but the train didn't stop until about 65 metres beyond the intersection, Sabourin said.

Partridge has been charged with failing to stop at a flashing railway crossing. The charge carries a \$53 fine.