

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1988

**11/01/1988 Ottawa Citizen**

**Chalk River**

**Pembroke**

Man slightly injured when tow truck hits train .

A Pembroke man suffered only minor injuries after his tow truck collided with a CP Rail freight train Saturday. Christopher Glover, 34, of Horace Street, was treated and released from hospital after the 2:45 p.m. crash. OPP say Glover saw the train approaching, but couldn't stop on icy Old Mill Road and slid into the path of the train. The impact knocked Glover's truck clear of the train. It rolled over into a ditch but landed upright

**26/01/1988 Ottawa Citizen**

**Brockville**

**Smiths Falls**

VIA bus run on track to Toronto

Everything ran smoothly Monday on the first day of VIA's temporary bus service between Toronto and Ottawa, said a VIA official.

For the remainder of this week, VIA has replaced most regularly scheduled trains with buses for all or part of the trip while an old railway bridge spanning the Rideau River at Smiths Falls is replaced. The bus-train exchange is made at Brockville.

"This is the first day of the new service and we've had no complaints so far," Marcel Bordeleau, public affairs officer with VIA's Montreal office, said Monday. The temporary service is having a different impact on each of the eight regular runs four each way between the two cities.

The two overnight runs have been cancelled. The early morning runs are replaced by buses for the entire trip. The late afternoon runs are divided in two parts, with the train running between Brockville and Toronto, and buses handling the rest of the trip.

Only the two early afternoon trains are running the full distance between Ottawa and Toronto because of the construction schedule at the bridge.

**18/02/1988 Ottawa Citizen**

**Maniwaki**

Hull may put \$500,000 towards Wakefield train

Hull Council is considering putting \$500,000 towards getting the Wakefield Steam Train back on track by 1989.

Hull Coun. Yves Ducharme said in an interview Tuesday the money, if approved by council March 1, will be conditional on the revival of the steam train with co-operation from business and other levels of government.

Ducharme said the municipal support for the project should encourage more outside investment.

The revival of the steam train was also given a boost earlier this month when Lapeche Council agreed to commit about \$50,000. The decision is conditional on obtaining \$150,000 in grants from the province.

The money is to be used to relocate the turntable used to turn the old steam locomotive around at the end of the railway line in Wakefield.

The municipalities of Hull, West Hull and Lapeche, tourism groups and supporters of the steam train have been trying to get the train running again since it stopped operating in 1986.

"It's going very well," said Ducharme of the efforts to restart the train excursions as a profitable tourist attraction.

In November last year, the Tourism Development Council of Hull-Lapeche released a study saying the steam train would require about \$2.8 million in public funds and about \$1.05 million in private investment.

Hull Coun. Fern Nadon said all three levels of government support the project, but finding the necessary funds is another matter.

Nadon did not want to predict whether council members would approve the \$500,000 commitment, saying only: "Hull is in favor if we can find the money."

Nadon said that with the opening of the new Museum of Civilization in Hull in 1989, the steam train excursion would help keep tourists in the Outaouais region.

Ducharme said Hull's contribution would be used to renovate the old Hull train station off Montcalm Boulevard.

While the train station is still owned by CP Rail, and the surrounding land by the National Capital Commission, Ducharme doesn't foresee any trouble reaching an agreement.

CP turned over the railway line from Freeman Road, at the northern limits of Hull, to Wakefield, to the three municipalities in 1986 for a tax write-off of \$2.9 million.

Ducharme said if the necessary funding falls in place soon, he hopes work can start this spring on getting the railway line in shape to begin operation by the spring of 1989.

The tourism study said an investor could expect to lose money for two years, but the project would eventually generate a healthy profit.

**24/02/1988 Ottawa Citizen**

**Smiths Falls**

**Fallowfield Road**

OC Transpo bus almost hit train, says CBE trustee

OC Transpo is investigating a report that one of its buses was almost hit by a train Friday in Nepean.

Marilyn Cameron, a Nepean trustee on the Carleton Board of Education, said her teenage son and two other Confederation High School students were returning home Friday afternoon on a Transpo bus when it screeched to a halt at a train crossing on Fallowfield Road, west of Woodroffe Avenue, near Barrhaven.

The students told her the crossing's barrier then closed and came to rest on the roof, about two metres from the front of the bus. A train passed moments later, she said.

Cameron said two of the students told her the crossing's warning lights were operating as the bus approached.

A Canadian National official said Tuesday that the signals, which were checked shortly after the incident, were working properly.

**11/03/1988 Ottawa Citizen**

**Chalk River**

**Renfrew**

Renfrew man seriously hurt in car-train crash

RENFREW - An elderly Renfrew man is in Ottawa Civic Hospital, following a train accident here early Wednesday afternoon.

Daniel Vincent King, 80, a resident of Grove Park Lodge Nursing Home, sustained serious head injuries, said Const. Paul Dowdall.

King apparently failed to obey the train crossing lights at Munro Avenue and Raglan Street, said Dowdall. The train hit King's 1984 sub-compact, hurling the car 125 metres down the track.

The train was northbound to North Bay.

Dowdall said the warning signals were working at the time of the accident. The crossing has flashing lights and bells warning cars to stop, but there is no barrier.

There were no other passengers in King's vehicle. He was listed in serious but stable condition in the hospital's intensive care unit Thursday night.

Mayor Audrey Green said the town has been pressuring CP Rail for several years to have a barrier installed at the crossing.

Renfrew police Sgt. Maurice McQuade said that in the last 12 years there have been 16 accidents at the town's eight railway crossings. Since 1980 there have only been two deaths at the crossings.

The Monroe street railway crossing has had four accidents since 1976 with no fatalities.

16/03/1988 Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Wakefield train proposal given boost

The Wakefield Steam train revival got a boost when councillors voted to spend up to \$500,000 to renovate the Hull train station. The money is conditional on \$1.5-million coming from the provincial and federal governments and \$1.05 million from private investors. Organizers hope the train will be running by summer 1989.

23/03/1988 Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Fallowfield Road

OC Transpo clears driver in near miss

The driver of a bus nearly hit by a train was not negligent, an internal investigation by OC Transpo has found.

However, OC Transpo spokesman Oxana Sawka said that as a result of the incident, a new policy to take effect in early April will require OC Transpo buses to stop at all railway crossings.

OC Transpo's investigation of the Feb. 19 incident found the driver erred on the side of safety, said Sawka.

The bus reached the rail crossing on Fallowfield Road, west of Woodroffe Avenue, just as the warning signals activated, she said. Seconds later, a train went through. The crossing barrier came down on the roof of the bus.

Sawka said the bus driver would have had time to cross the tracks, but decided to stop under the barrier.

A truck driver who was following the bus corroborates the bus driver's version of events, Sawka said. OC Transpo would not release the witness's name.

But a Canadian National Railway spokesman said there should have been a seven- to eight-second delay between the time the warning lights and bells were activated and the time the barrier started to come down.

After the delay, it takes the barrier 10 seconds before it reaches its horizontal position, said Ed Gurinskas, CNR's Ottawa-area maintenance supervisor of signals and communications.

Marilyn Cameron, a Carleton Board of Education trustee, said her 15-year-old son and two other Confederation High School students were on the bus.

Cameron said her son and one of the other students told her the warning lights were operating as the bus approached the crossing.

Currently, all inter-city and school buses are required by law to stop at all train crossings at all times.

04/04/1988 Ottawa Citizen

Chalk River

Arnprior

Train death ruled accidental

The death of a 53-year-old Arnprior man who was struck by a train Thursday has been ruled accidental by Ontario Provincial Police in Arnprior. James Lentz was walking along the track at 5:30 p.m. on his way to fish in the Madawaska River when he was struck from behind east of Daniel Street in Arnprior, his brother Gerald said Sunday. "The engineer spotted him and blew the horn. James tried to jump, but it was too late." The freight train, which was travelling through town about 50 kilometres an hour, was en route to Smiths Falls from Chalk River.

14/04/1988 Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Wakefield train still needs \$1M to be rolling by 1989.

Promoters of the defunct Hull-Wakefield tourist train say they have now raised enough public money to get it rolling again by 1989, but still need to find a private operator with \$1 million to invest.

"We now have sufficient support from the public sector to say, from this moment, we are assured the support for the infrastructures and can now go ahead to the private sector to find an entrepreneur to operate the tourist train," said John Trent, president of the Hull-La Peche Tourist Development Council at a press conference Friday.

Trent said the municipalities of Hull and La Peche have agreed to pay part of the cost of reviving the 27-kilometre rail line.

Hull has promised a \$500,000 investment over the next three years to renovate the Hull station and surrounding area. The funding is conditional on other levels of government, as well as the private sector, contributing equal amounts.

La Peche has also agreed to invest \$50,000 to develop a reception area in Wakefield.

West Hull has stated it is "prepared to consider" funding the project as long as there are "direct economic benefits" to the municipality. Those benefits could come in the form of a repair shop and a permanent base located there.

Gilles Rocheleau, Hull MNA and Quebec Minister of Supply and Services, said the province may also contribute, as long as ; the operating reins are eventually turned over to the private sector.

A study released in November ; by the tourism council estimated \$2.8 million in public money would be needed to get the project off the ground.

An additional \$1 million would have to be invested by a private operator to buy train equipment, including a steam engine and passenger cars, Trent said Friday. First-year revenues are projected at about \$900,000 on expenses of \$1.1 million. In five years, revenues are estimated to top \$2.6 million on expenses of \$2 ; million.

Marc Toupin, a spokesman for Michel Gratton, Quebec's tourism minister, said the ministry is prepared to offer financial assistance to the eventual operator.

Other contributions would come in the form of the establishment of visitor reception facilities by the Quebec Planning and Development Office and the Outaouais Region Planning Secretariat; the NCC's transfer of the turntable and other installations and land in Wakefield and Hull; technical support from the Outaouais Development Corporation and the Outaouais Regional Community and promotion by the Caisse Populaire de Hull.

The track, owned by Hull, La Peche and West Hull, was closed in 1986 because it was losing money.

Interested groups have until July 15 to submit their offer.

28/04/1988 Ottawa Citizen

Lachute

For steam buffs National Museums' old CPR steam engine 1201 will be fired up for some short nostalgia trips May 14 and 15. With a string of vintage cars the steam train will pull out of the museum station three times on each of those two days.

It will be a run to Hull and back, but organizers from Bytown Railway Society point out that includes a run over two bridges (Rideau and Ottawa Rivers) and the tunnel at Dow's Lake. The excursions are jointly sponsored by the society and National Museum of Science and Technology.

Plans are already being made for longer trips later, including one to Maxville July 30 for the annual Highland games, and a fall color tour to Pembroke Oct. 2.

Tickets for the short trips are available at the science museum at \$15 for adults and \$10 for children.

29/04/1988 Ottawa Citizen

Beachburg

Greenbank Road

Train hits teen on overpass

A 17-year-old boy was rushed to hospital Thursday after being hit by a train on a railway overpass at Greenbank Road.

Nepean police said the youth was walking across the overpass, just north of the community of Craig Henry, at about 11 a.m. when he was struck by a westbound CN train.

Police would not identify the youth, who is listed in critical condition at the Queensway-Carleton Hospital.

Police have warned students to stay off the trestle. Teenagers apparently use the trestle as a short cut to Sir Robert Borden High -School.

30/04/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Maniwaki*

TENDERS CALLED FOR OPERATION OF TOURIST TRAIN: Almost three years after the termination of tourist train service to Wakefield, Quebec, over the erstwhile Maniwaki Subdivision of CP Rail, tenders have finally been called for the private sector operation of a tourist train service between Hull, Quebec, and Wakefield, a distance of 20 miles.

The notice, issued by the Conseil de développement touristique Hull-La Peche was published in the April 30, 1988 issue of The Ottawa Citizen in addition to several other newspapers.

Of interest both to readers and potential bidders are the following items: 1) the proposal is for the operation of a tourist train for a "continuous period of twenty-five years;" 2) aside from relevant experience, the successful firm is to have the financial capacity "to invest \$1,000,000 in the project;" 3) all proposals must be accompanied by a certified cheque for \$10,000 or a security bond.

For a fee of \$100, proposal call documents are available from Mr. Rosario Dutrisac, Caisse Populaire de Hull, 41 Victoria Street, Hull, Quebec, J8X 3Y5.

All proposals are to be in Mr. Dutrisac's hands by no later than 11:00 hours, on July 15, 1988.

08/06/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Brockville*

Car stalls on train track A woman whose car stalled on a railway track Tuesday near Smiths Falls leaped from her car; seconds before it was demolished; by a VIA train. Provincial police in Brockville said Karen Graham, 29, was driving home to Jasper at 7 p.m. when flashing red lights at a railway crossing warned a train was approaching. After Graham decided to race for it her 1978 station wagon stalled in the middle of the crossing.

14/06/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Alexandria*

The steam scene

Changes in the operations of "Old No. 1201" seem to be causing confusion. Many still refer to it as "the Wakefield train," although it never goes there anymore. Because it's owned and maintained by the Museum of Science and Technology, many steam buffs look to there for a ride on a steam train. But there are no tickets there.

The next steam excursion is set for July 30 Ottawa to Maxville to Hawkesbury and return by the same route. For \$50, you get the full round trip. For \$35, you can stop off in Maxville and take in some of the annual Highland Games.

The excursions are organized by the Bytown Railway Society. Tickets are available through the society, only by mail. Write the society at Box 141, Station A, Ottawa, K1N 8V1

24/06/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Kingston (CN)* *Coteau East*

Montreal-Ottawa trains delayed by derailment

COTEAU-EAST, Que. (CP) -VIA Rail passengers travelling between Montreal and Toronto faced delays of up to two hours today after 25 cars of a freight train derailed on CN Rail's main line Wednesday.

Trains between the two cities were rerouted on CP Rail tracks between Dorval, Que., and Smiths Falls, Ont, said VIA Rail official Marcel Bordeleau.

Trains between Montreal and Ottawa, which were delayed one hour by the derailment, were rerouted by Debeaujeu, near the scene of the accident, about 40 kilometres west of Montreal, Bordeleau said.

VIA Rail chartered a bus for passengers originating at stations between Cornwall and Brockville, because that stretch of rail line was closed. In addition, VIA will give passengers who faced long delays a 50-per-cent credit on the price of their tickets, Bordeleau said.

The track was expected to reopen by midnight Thursday, when train schedules would return to near normal.

Bordeleau said trains may be delayed by 10 to 15 minutes for the next several days because they will have to travel more slowly than usual near the site of the derailment.

Between 15 and 20 trains were affected by the derailment, Bordeleau said, but there were no injuries.

CN Rail official Jean-Guy Brodeur said the cause of the accident would be known only after an investigation by the National Transportation Agency.

He said he could not estimate the damage to the train, which was made up of three locomotives, 56 loaded cars and 78 empty cars.

Twelve of the 25 derailed cars were loaded with rolls of newsprint while the others, including a tanker car, were empty.

24/06/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Carleton Place*

Bridlewood Pedestrian crossing delayed

A pedestrian railway crossing linking Shetland Park with southern sections of Bridlewood won't be constructed until spring.

Kanata planner David Krajaefski said it will take at least eight months to order and install a grade-level crossing off the Palamino Drive park.

Once installed, the crossing will have a sign, flashing lights and a bell to warn pedestrians of approaching trains.

Krajaefski said a CP passenger train uses the section of track twice daily.

Krajaefski said Coscan Development Corp. would have to wait three months for project approval from the Canadian Transport Commission.

The crossing will be built at Coscan's expense. Coscan is developing some 600 units in north Bridlewood.

12/07/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Alexandria* *Moose Creek*

MOOSE CREEK Man dies after being hit by train A 79-year-old Moose Creek man died after being bit by a train: Monday afternoon. Police believe that Albert Houle, who suffered; from severe hearing loss, didn't hear the train coming. Although there are no barriers along the tracks, about 25 km north of Corn-: wall, there are warning lights and bells. The tracks are just down: the street from the retirement home at 250 Labrosse St where; Houle lived.

19/08/1988 *Ottawa Citizen* *Winchester* *Monkland*

Man killed in crash with train

A man was killed and his passenger seriously injured in a collision between a train and van Thursday in Monkland.

Darcy Steven Dear, 32, of Apple Hill, died at 7:25 a.m. when an eastbound Canadian Pacific freight train hit his 1988 van at a level crossing on Strathmore Road.

"The railway crossing is not protected by gates or lights. It only has the little X," said Sgt. Norm Mailhot of the Long Sault OPP. Strathmore is a gravel road about a kilometre south of Hwy. 43.

Passenger Nancy Vale, 35, was taken to Hotel Dieu Hospital in Cornwall.

A hospital spokesman said her injuries were serious, but not critical.

Monkland is about 75 kilometres southeast of Ottawa.

27/08/1988

Ottawa Citizen

Winchester

Monkland

Accident sparks calls for rail crossing improvement

Neighbors of an Apple Hill man killed at a railway crossing last week are angry that flashing lights and gates will not be installed there until the spring.

Darcy Steven Dear, 32, died Aug. 18, and his companion Nancy Vale, 35, was seriously injured when their van was struck by a Canadian Pacific freight train as they crossed the tracks.

"The neighbors are all up in arms around here," said Dan Lipson, who worked with Dear and Vale at Chubb Alarms of Ottawa. The victims had moved to Apple Hill just three weeks before the accident, he said. The village is about 20 kilometres north of Cornwall.

Residents complain that the simple X-type crossing does not warn them when a train is coming, and that sometimes visibility is poor.

"The front of your car has to be over the tracks to see the train coming," said Katherine Davidson, Lipson's wife, who is caring for Vale's 10-year-old daughter.

Railway officials agree there is a visibility problem. Nearly two years ago, in October 1986, engineers from the National Transportation Agency reported that brush obscured the line of sight, and recommended improved signals at the crossing.

However, red tape and lack of funds have stalled the work.

"It's very frustrating and time-consuming," said Roxborough Township Reeve Donald Cum-ming. "The township couldn't do it on their own. It's a very costly thing" to install new signals, Cumming said.

"It's unfortunate this had to happen."

Media relations chief Peter Schnobb of the NTA said it took until April of this year for the agency to find the money for \$120,000 worth of flashing lights, gates and ringing bells to be installed. And from then, it will take a year for CP to order and receive the necessary equipment.

The wait makes Davidson and Lipson nervous.

"There's at least six school buses that go through there every morning and every night," said Davidson. They vow to keep pressure on CP.

"If we have to park all the cars and trucks up there on the tracks, that's what we'll do."

Vale is still recovering in hospital.

28/09/1988

Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Group makes appeal to save railway line

SMITHS FALLS - A group struggling to save an abandoned rail line near here has appealed to the government once again to halt CN Rail's most recent plans to tear up some of the tracks.

David Strong, president of the Rideau Valley Heritage Railway Association, said CN has "threatened half-a-dozen times to tear up the -rails," since the line was abandoned almost three years ago.

In September 1986, Ontario Premier David Peterson intervened on behalf of the railway group to postpone CN plans to demolish the tracks.

This time the group has asked federal Transport Minister Benoit Bouchard to request that CN halt the demolition.

Strong, president of the heritage railway association, said the group learned of CN's latest scheme in a recent Globe and Mail advertisement calling for tenders for the removal of 29 miles of track between Forfar and Harrowsmith.

The section of track is part of a line running from Smiths Falls to Strathcona, near Napanee, which was abandoned by CN almost three years ago.

Since then, the heritage railway group has been negotiating with CN to purchase the 50 miles of track from Smiths Falls to Harrowsmith for eventual use for tourist-train excursions.

An eight-month feasibility study funded by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications states the project would cost \$14 million in the first five years, but would produce \$96 million in "direct and indirect economic benefits" for Eastern Ontario.

The railway group was counting on federal, provincial, private and corporate funding for the first phase.

But Strong said a meeting between four ministries in late August decided no funds were available.

"We were not contacted for any input into this decision, nor did CN have the courtesy to come to us" before calling for tenders for removing the track," he said.

Strong said the group was told by Ministry of Tourism and Transportation representatives at a Sept. 24 meeting that the group should prepare a less ambitious plan "not something first class, just a bare bones plan and then they would have a look at it."

Mike Matthews, CN public affairs manager, said CN "has waited long enough. We can't delay removing that stretch of track any longer."

The valuable track is needed for use elsewhere in the CN system. Matthews said CN will wait until spring before tearing up the remaining portion of track from Forfar to Smiths Falls "to give the group another opportunity to get its act together."

But Strong said to be economically successful, the tourist-train project would need the track from Smiths Falls through to Harrowsmith, not just Smiths Falls to Forfar.

Matthews did not know how much it would cost to purchase the railway line.

During earlier negotiations with CN, Strong said the group was told it would cost \$3.6 million to purchase the line.

"We are not just a group of railway buffs," he said. "The only way this plan can succeed is as a business and that is the approach we are taking."

29/09/1988

Ottawa Citizen

Belleville

Perth

CP freights giving Perth residents steel rail blues

PERTH The lonesome sound of a train whistle once conjured up romantic visions of rural Canadian life, but for some residents here it means sleepless nights.

Never mind the twangy country songs extolling the virtues of train whistles, they say: that scream can ruin the best of nighttime dreams.

Perth Council this week was asked by a group of citizens to ask CP Rail to order engineers not to blow train whistles when freights pass through town.

And, earlier this month, the board of the Great War Memorial Hospital passed a motion stating the whistle tooting could have an effect on patient care.

Eighteen trains pass through Perth daily and, with four level crossings in town, there's a lot of whistle blowing.

Councillors introduced a motion to request the railway not to use whistles between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., but it has been tabled for two weeks.

The town wants to talk the matter over with railway officials and study the safety aspects of the situation.

The impact of the nocturnal whistle blasts, says Coun. Phil Aston, depends on the train engineers.

"Some of them tend to lean on the whistle right through town."

It's not the first time the problem of nighttime train whistles has come before council. In the past requests from sleepless citizens didn't get very far, with council citing safety factors as the reason not to silence the trains.

19/11/1988

Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Santa Claus train ready to roll

You'd better watch out, you'd better act fast, the Santa Claus Express Train is coming to town - and it will probably be a sellout.

The seventh annual Santa Claus train, organized by VIA Rail, departs from Ottawa station Saturday, Dec. 3 at 9:10 a.m. for a leisurely day-long return journey to Montreal. Santa will be the star attraction of course, but there will be treats, clowns and balloons along the way and maybe some singing of favorite Christmas carols.

This year, like past excursions, the Santa Claus Train is expected to be sold out, say organizers. Six cars have been reserved to accommodate just over 400 passengers and organizers urge people to book as early as possible. The Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa-Carleton was given 12 passes to be distributed to local needy children.

The cost of the package is \$35 per adult and \$20 for children two to 11 years old. Children under two are free. Price includes return rail transportation, a light snack on both legs of the trip, treats, entertainment and admission to a big craft show at Place Bonaventure in Montreal.

The train leaves Montreal at 4 p.m. and is expected back at the Ottawa station about 6:20 p.m.

Ottawa police investigating after youth, 17, hit by train

Ottawa police are investigating a Friday incident in which an Ottawa teenager was hit by a VIA Rail passenger train.

Seventeen-year-old Michael Walsh received a broken leg when he was hit by the east-bound train

VIA Rail spokesman Daniel Rosseel said Walsh was seen stepping on and off the train tracks behind the Billings Bridge bus station seconds before being hit.

"We couldn't stop the train in time," Rosseel said.

He said the area is private property and Walsh should not have been walking there.

A spokesman for Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario said Walsh's parents have refused to permit the teenager's condition to be discussed with the press.

**POLITICS PLAYS HAVOC WITH TOURIST TRAIN PLANS:**

Hopes of resuming tourist train service to Wakefield, Quebec, during the summer of 1989 have been placed in jeopardy following an announcement by the Province of Quebec that the federal government should contribute up to 50% of the money required to rehabilitate the Gatineau Valley line. According to estimates, some \$2.8 million of public funds is required before the line can become operational.

The official stance of the Provincial Government notwithstanding, the project still has the backing of the local MNA, Michel Gratton. Also the Minister of Tourism, Gratton claims that his hands are tied, however, and that the Quebec Treasury Board is the one that is attempting to rewrite the game plan by insisting that the Federal Government become involved. Federal involvement is necessary, it appears, because of the previous involvement of the National Capital Commission and the National Museum of Science and Technology in the operation of a tourist train service between Ottawa and Wakefield from 1973 to 1985. According to some sources, moreover, the Provincial Government may even take things to the point of withholding all financial support for the initiation of the project.

Ironically the controversy has sprung up at a time when studies by the Department of Tourism have concluded that the Outaouais region, where the line is located, has never been a big draw for tourists, partly because of a lack of attractions and partly because of a lack of knowledge of the area. The train is seen as a way of stimulating tourism in the region.

Formerly CP Rail's Maniwaki Subdivision, the Wakefield line was last used on September 1, 1985. It was officially abandoned in January of 1986 with the Wakefield to Maniwaki portion dismantled during the spring and summer of that year.

In mid-december, former Thurso Railway GE 50-ton switcher No. 5132 (ex-No. 10) was hauled by truck from Thurso, Quebec, to the end of track at Wakefield, Quebec. The 43-year old switcher will be used for track maintenance on the planned tourist operation over the remaining 17 miles of the Canadian Pacific's former Maniwaki subdivision.

Christmas Eve 1854

Slide back through the years to Christmas Eve, 1854. Here we are standing Burgh-side (New Edinburgh, Ottawa) on the bank of the Rideau River not far from the foot of present-day Victoria Street. A small crowd, excited, muffled in heavy scarves, chatters in the cold of this cold, snowy night.

The darkness is broken by the light of a half dozen fires built of logs and tended by an older man who, with his snow-covered beard, could pass for old St. Nick himself. He moves among the people wishing "Merry Christmas" here and a "t'wont be long now" there.

Approaching sleigh bells jingle the arrival of some of the MacKay family snuggled under Buffalo robes. They alight into boot-top snow and a warm Yule punch appears from the sleigh. Hearty cheers are extended while the horses, sporting large red bows, seemingly snort their cheers from frosty noses. But the greater excitement of the evening is still to come and the crowd settles again into pockets of conversation.

Suddenly, the chatter stops. Firelit faces peer through the snow toward Beechwood, towards a new sound the far off wail of a whistle. Silence. Then, again, the whistle, but closer now. A single, throaty note followed by a rhythmic chuffing sound.

Nearer and louder these strange new sounds pierce the night and then from the falling snow a single, dimly-lit light

appears like a giant eye gliding ghostly above the snow - the whistle breaks into a series of staccato notes! The crowd responds with an excited three cheers! and "Old St. Nick", lantern swinging, signals the steamy locomotive to a sliding stop. From the cab, the Engineer bellows "Merry Christmas" to a very happy crowd. History buffs will know that the first passenger train service to Ottawa did, in fact, arrive on Christmas Eve, 1854, 140 years ago this Christmas Eve, at New Edinburgh. The train travelled from Prescott on the Bytown and Prescott Railway. A bridge across the Rideau did not exist so the passengers were taken by row boat or sleigh across the river to Lower Town, near where the Foreign Affairs building is now located.

It was this little "Burgh" line that first spurred my interest in railroading as a young boy. I have often tried to visualize the arrival of the first train. This is my attempt.

And a "Merry Christmas" to the BRS.

(From the New Edinburgh News, Christmas edition 1988, thanks to Robert Short)

Ed note: In history books, the date of the arrival of the first train in Ottawa is shown as Christmas Day, 1854. Perhaps the first arrival was on Christmas Eve, 1854. (Branchline)

Loss of CN line could derail plant expansion

A decision to abandon a Canadian National Railway branch line has struck a blow to Arnprior's major industry.

The National Transportation Agency announced Friday it has granted permission for CN to abandon its operation between Nepean and Renfrew.

As well, the NTA granted permission to Canadian Pacific to abandon its 30-kilometre line between Carleton Place and Nepean. Only CP freight service will stop on this line. VIA Rail passenger trains will continue.

BASF, a manufacturer of nylon carpet yarn employing 350 people in Arnprior, uses the CN line to ship tanker cars of a petrochemical used to make nylon.

BASF is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BASF, a German-based multinational.

Arnprior Mayor Tom Sullivan said it's mainly his community that will be affected by the closure of the CN line.

"We tried so hard to attract national industries to create employment, then you get a slap a face ... is anyone out there listening to us at all?" said Sullivan.

"CNR has the only rail access to the plant now, and BASF needs the rail to carry out their operation."

He said BASF is in the midst of a \$30-million expansion that would add another 100 jobs by 1990. But he fears the expansion could be in trouble with the closing of the line.

BASF plant manager Larry Marshall said the company has been negotiating with CP, in anticipation of CN's decision to abandon its line. They have asked CP to build a spur from its main Montreal-Vancouver line, which runs 2,000 metres from the plant.

However, CP officials "are very reluctant" to build the spur, Marshall said. "In fact, in their heart of hearts, I think CP would (like to abandon service to the Ottawa Valley as well."

Without rail service, the Arnprior plant could be in trouble. "Rail has to be the best way to transport bulk," Marshall said. Trucking the chemical "wouldn't be economical."

CN trains now make weekly trips to the Arnprior plant, usually carrying two railway cars of the chemical, Marshall said.

In justifying its decision Friday, the NTA said that from 1984 to 1986 the 70-kilometre branch line lost more than \$780,000. It said there was no prospect of the line becoming profitable in the foreseeable future.