

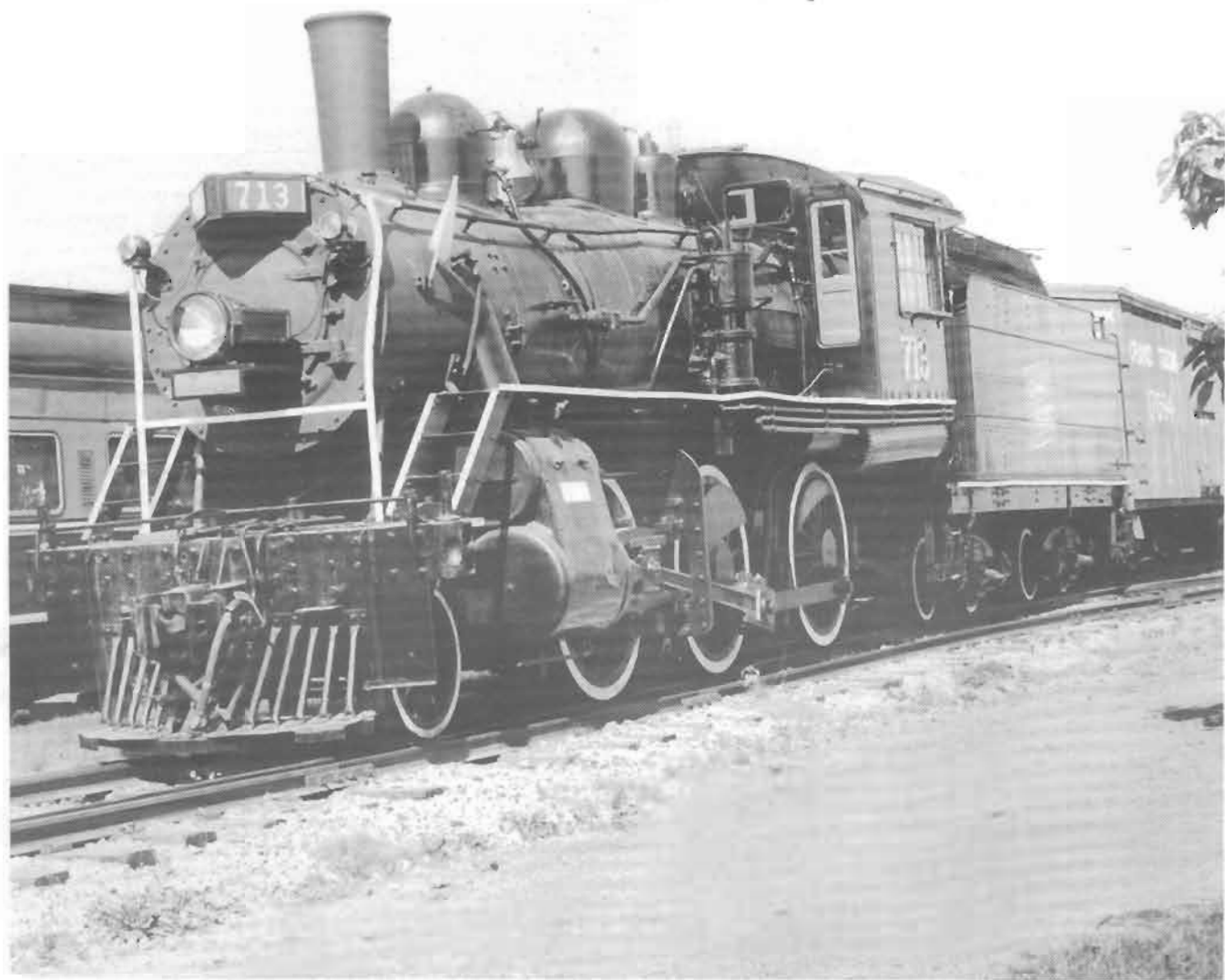
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Canadian Rail is continually in need of news, stories, historical data, photos, maps and other material. Please send all contributions to the editor: Fred F. Angus, 3021 Trafalgar Ave. Montreal, P.Q. H3Y 1H3. No payment can be made for contributions, but the contributor will be given credit for material submitted. Material will be returned to the contributor if requested. Remember "Knowledge is of little value unless it is shared with others".

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FRONT COVER: For Members Day in June 1989, a number of pieces of equipment, generally stored inside, were brought outside the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson. One of these was former Grand Trunk Mogul number 713, built in 1900. This locomotive was transferred to our collection from the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. In this photo, 713 heads up a freight train consisting of early 20th century equipment. Photo by Douglas N. W. Smith.

As part of its activities, the CRHA operates the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson / St. Constant, Que. which is about 14 miles (23 Km.) from downtown Montreal. It is open from late May to early October (daily until Labour Day). Members, and their immediate families, are admitted free of charge.

The Reid Newfoundland Company and Its Influence on Newfoundland 1898 to 1923

Since the abandonment of the railway in Newfoundland in 1988, there has been considerable interest expressed in hearing more about this major narrow gauge system which was once of such importance to the colony, and later to the province. In this issue of Canadian Rail we are fortunate to be able to present two excellent papers dealing with the Reid Newfoundland Company which operated the railway and steamship lines for many years. In "Czar of Newfoundland", Mr. Peter Locke gives a brief biography of Sir Robert Reid, the builder of much of the Newfoundland Railway, and details his connection with the railway and development in Newfoundland in general. The second paper deals with the, seemingly unfair, competition between the railway and the coastal steamers, all owned by the same company. We hope our members will enjoy reading about this most interesting chapter in our railway history.

Czar of Newfoundland A Profile of Sir Robert Gillespie Reid

By Peter D. Locke

I

Introduction

The Reid family name has enjoyed a special status within Newfoundland history as land developers, engineers, and industrialists. Newfoundland's crippling economic dependency on external political entities and markets has probably contributed to a distinct shortage of "captains of industry"; men who have come to the island and altered the course of development as have few before them. Robert Gillespie Reid first came to Newfoundland in the fall of 1889, and over the course of the next three decades his influence on the development of the island as an economic, political, and social community was decisive.¹ R.G. Reid's ventures stand out in Newfoundland history because, taken collectively, they represent an ambitious but only partially successful effort to realize the island's potential as a diversified, resource-based economic unit. Through his work, R.G. Reid not only created a physical legacy with the construction of the railway and lesser undertakings, but he also began the process of breaking down the isolation and segregation of Newfoundland society. While it is difficult to measure precisely, R.G. Reid and his descendants have thus left a distinct cultural and social legacy.²

This research paper will detail the initial ventures in which Robert Gillespie Reid became involved in Australia, Canada, and the United States, and the impact on Newfoundlanders resulting from his involvement in the island's industry, transportation, and communications.³ As one would expect, the central importance of the construction of the Newfoundland Railway amongst the

endeavours of R.G. Reid will necessitate a special focus on this undertaking. Indeed, it is for the construction of the Newfoundland Railway and its subsequent operation by the Reid Newfoundland Company as well as for his steamship operations that R.G. Reid is best remembered.⁴ The various other commercial undertakings of the Reid Newfoundland Company Ltd. will also be dealt with, the balance of which were power, transportation, mining, pulp and paper, and land development concerns.

The final section of this paper will deal with the intangible contributions which Reid made to Newfoundland. I think that it is impossible to verify the impact on Newfoundland culture and society resulting from R.G. Reid's ventures. I do believe, however, that it would be amiss for me to ignore the role played by Reid's concerns in easing the isolation and segregation which pervaded Newfoundland society.⁵ R.G. Reid's enterprises also provided alternative sources of income in an economy with a crippling reliance on a single major resource industry, and gave the colony a taste of progress in things material that had been previously unknown. Joseph R. Smallwood promised to drag Newfoundland kicking and screaming into the twentieth century. Considering the progress that had been realized by the time Smallwood became premier, I'm not quite sure where R.G. Reid had to start "dragging", but certainly to characterize the island's transportation and communications links as "backwards" would have been rather generous.

II

Youth and Early Engineering Achievements of Robert G. Reid

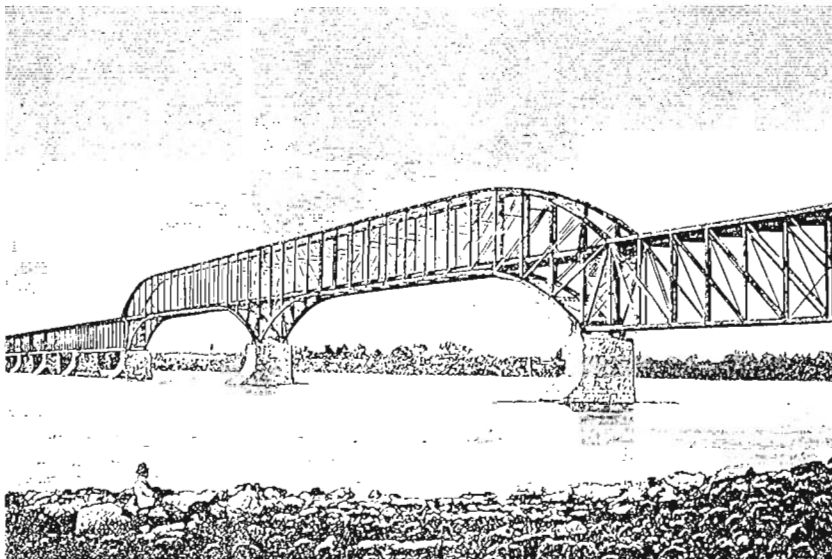
Robert Gillespie Reid was a native-born Scotsman whose family hailed from the village of Coupar-Angus, near Perth, and where he was born in 1842. Reid's father owned a number of small linen mills which served the local population, but when his son left school at seventeen he was apprenticed as a stone-mason at a nearby quarry. It was while working as an apprentice stone-mason that R.G. Reid developed what is best described as a natural intuition for engineering, in that the man had no formal education in the discipline apart from that he had received on the worksite.⁶ Reid's apprenticeship lasted until 1862, after which time he decided to continue on in his trade until word was received in Scotland of gold strikes in Australia. Leaving his native Scotland in 1865, R.G. Reid journeyed to Australia with the intention of prospecting for gold with a number of companions.⁷

These young men soon became discouraged with the prospects of easy wealth, however, and Reid was left to his own recourse. Reid turned to the manufacture and sale of stone ovens for baking bread in order to earn a living, saving the proceeds while engaging in mining ventures and the construction of public works.⁸

While in Australia, R.G. Reid began to build a lasting reputation as a man capable of undertaking exacting tasks in construction engineering, especially in bridge building. With his abilities as a competent and cost-efficient engineering contractor confirmed, R.G. Reid left Australia for the North American continent in 1871. Reid came first to Canada, a country in which, at that time, a man with his talents could become quite wealthy. R.G. Reid brought with him his son, William Duff Reid, and a wife, Harriet Reid, whom he had married in 1866.⁹ The union of R.G. Reid and his wife yielded two other sons, Harry Duff Reid and Robert Gillespie Reid Junior, born in 1872 and 1876 respectively, and a daughter, Nellie Reid, whose birthdate has proved to be unobtainable.¹⁰

R.G. Reid's first major North American contract came when he was engaged to undertake the construction of the International Bridge across the Niagara River near Buffalo, New York. Reid completed the work in 1872 and from that time on was

constantly occupied in the building of bridges, railways, and buildings. Further contracts for the construction of bridges on the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway (QMO&O) gave Reid additional experience in engineering on the continent. During this engagement R.G. Reid made the acquaintance of the wealthy, influential men who headed the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Bank of Montreal and who were to remain his close friends throughout his life. I think it is a valuable measure of R.G. Reid's stature as an engineer and a developer that he could count among his peers such men as Sir William Van Horne and Lords Strathcona and Mount Stephen.^{11 12}



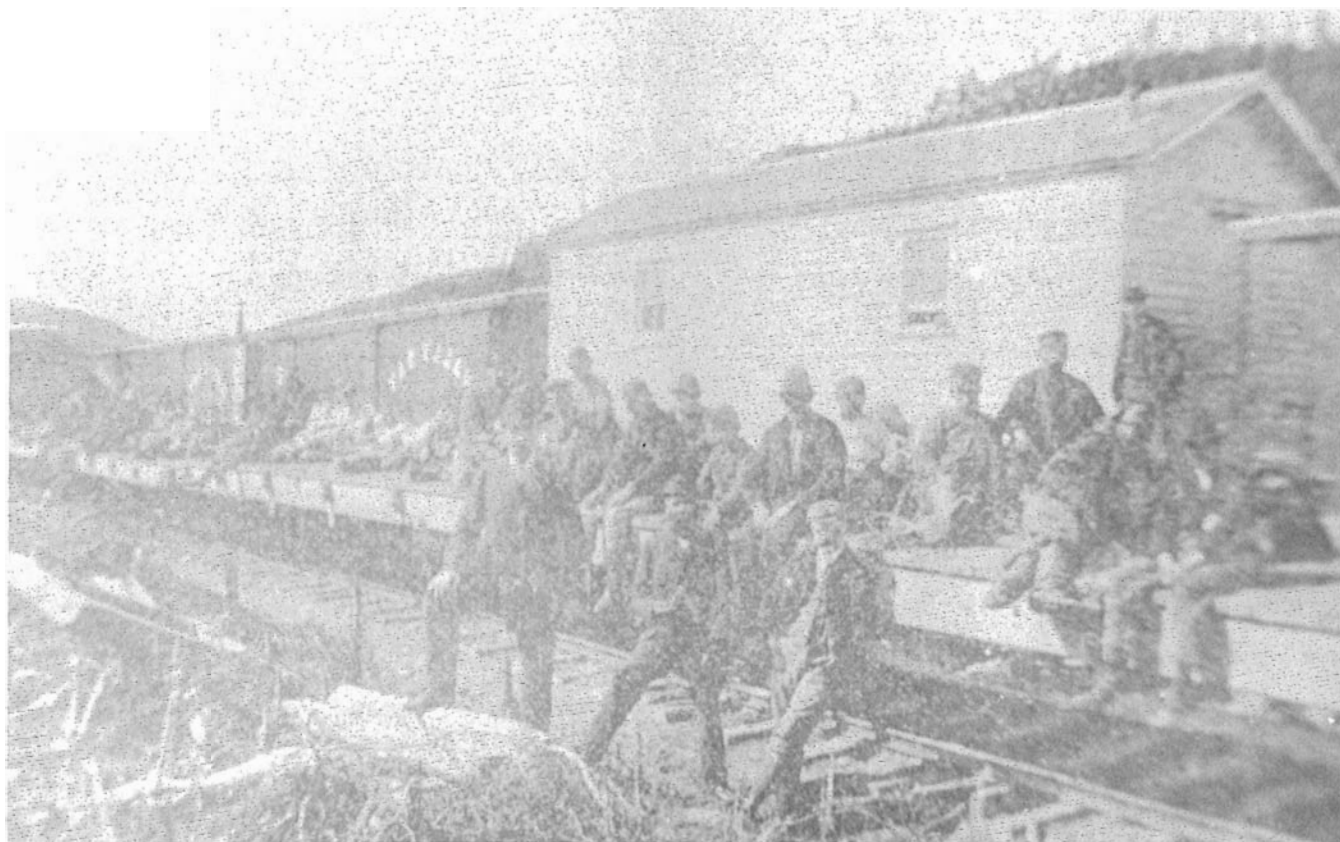
The CPR bridge near Lachine, Que. as it appeared when new in 1887.

For some five years following the completion of his work for the QMO&O, R.G. Reid was engaged in bridge building and railway construction in the State of Texas. Following the steady expansion of the American railroad network, R.G. Reid was responsible for the construction of all bridges on the International Railway which ran from Austin to Laredo on the Mexican-American Border.¹³ Reid also took on the construction of

all iron and masonry bridges over some two hundred and fifty miles of the Southern Pacific Railway. In fulfilling his contract with the International Railway, Reid built a bridge in 1882 over the Rio Grande River linking the United States and Mexico. This structure, the International Bridge, was Reid's pinnacle of achievement in American construction engineering and bridge building.¹⁴

Over the course of the next eight years, until 1890 when his involvement with Newfoundland began, R.G. Reid occupied himself with work for the Canadian Pacific, Canadian Government, and Intercolonial Railways. Among the challenges faced by Reid while working for Canadian Pacific on the railroad north of Lake Superior was the excavation of a tunnel through four hundred and fifty feet of solid granite. Reid's ability as a bridge builder was also demonstrated during the 1880's by the construction of two remarkable structures. The Lachine Bridge crossing the St. Lawrence River near Montreal was almost a mile in length and was completed by R.G. Reid in under half a year.¹⁵

In 1889 Reid also contracted to build the Grand Narrows Bridge between Cape Breton and the Nova Scotian mainland. While the actual length of this structure was not extraordinary, at around seventeen hundred feet, the actual process of laying the masonry foundation was. The Grand Narrows Bridge was prefabricated in Montreal by the Dominion Bridge Company, and



Sir Robert G. Reid and construction workers at Camp Number 3, Southern Harbour in 1891 or 1892. Reid is the closest man to the camera, and is wearing a bowler hat with his hand resting upon his knee..

Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives. Memorial University of Newfoundland, Photo MF-231(1).

then was shipped to Grand Narrows. An iron forge was set up on the site for the express purpose of producing rivets, and a fleet of scows were used to facilitate the sinking of masonry foundations.¹⁶ Before beginning construction, Reid spent some three weeks testing sea bed sediments and measuring the currents running through the Grand Narrows.¹⁷ During the construction of the Grand Narrows Bridge, Reid contracted severe rheumatism, a result of prolonged exposure to cold water. This condition was to weaken him progressively while building the Newfoundland Railway, and contributed to his early demise at only 66 years of age.¹⁸

III

Narrow Gauge Across Newfoundland

R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway

Robert G. Reid visited St. John's Newfoundland in the fall of 1889 shortly after completing the construction of the Grand Narrows Bridge in Nova Scotia. While working in Nova Scotia, Reid became aware of the controversy and difficulties faced by the Whiteway and Thornburn administrations in Newfoundland over the construction of a railway from St. John's to Rantem, with

branch lines to Harbour Grace and Placentia.¹⁹ Reid decided to stay in Newfoundland after the government called tenders for the completion of the main line to Hall's Bay. Reid offered to complete a railway of 261 miles between Rantem and Hall's Bay within five years at a cost of \$15,600 per mile. Reid further agreed in his contract offer to provide the requisite rolling stock for the railway, and to operate the branch line to Placentia free of charge.²⁰ The government accepted Reid's bid, and the contract to build the railway was signed on June 16, 1890, with payment in the form of 40-year 3% government bonds.²¹

Why did R.G. Reid decide to divert his attention to the building of the Newfoundland Railway rather than pursuing the lucrative contracts available in railway construction in Canada and the United States? The discouraging history of Newfoundland's finances and of her political turmoil would almost certainly have served to deter all but the foolhardy from engaging in such an enterprise, with so many unpredictable variables involved. According to J.W. McGrath in his lecture *The 1898 Railway Contract*, R.G. Reid would have continued his work in Canada, however, his family no longer wished to join their father's travels across the continent. Faced with the reality of his family wishing to adopt a more settled lifestyle, R.G. Reid decided that the challenge of railroad construction in Newfoundland would suit his ambitions.²²

Upon completion of the railway to the Exploits River, it was decided by the government to continue the line from the Exploits River along the most direct route possible to Grand Lake and then along the west coast to Port-aux-Basques. Having profited from his first contract, R.G. Reid signed, on May 16, 1893, the contract to continue construction of the narrow gauge railway a further distance of some 285 miles. According to this second contract, Reid was to complete the railway by 1897 at a cost of \$15, 600 per mile to be paid in 3 1/2% Newfoundland Government bonds. Structures necessary to service the railway such as access roads, stations, water towers and so forth would also be constructed by Reid, but at government expense. Another contract signed by Reid on the same day charged him with operating the Placentia branch line and the railway from Placentia Junction to Port-aux-Basques for ten years from September 1, 1893. For this service, R.G. Reid's interests received five thousand acres of land as payment for each mile of the 485 mile line.²³

The government's choice of R.G. Reid to build the island's railroad proved to be a wise one, as work proceeded on schedule and within budget. Reid showed an uncommon willingness to absorb losses which occurred within his jurisdiction, refusing to go with cap-in-hand to the Newfoundland Government. During the negotiation of the 1893 operating contract Reid decided he would consult his chief engineer, a Mr. Massey, on the terms of the agreement. The two men agreed that the railroad would be operated year round and that all losses on operations would be borne by R.G. Reid, but Massey was subsequently immobilized by snow on a westbound train and decided to wire Reid and advise him to agree to operate only during the summer. Reid had neither signed the deal, nor had it become legally binding, but having already given his word through a non-binding verbal agreement, he decided not to go back on the agreement.²⁴

By April 1898 the Newfoundland Railway had been completed by R.G. Reid and his team of engineers and surveyors, many of whom were also Scotsmen.²⁵ R.G. Reid's sons had participated extensively in the construction of the line, acquiring in the process a vast knowledge of railroad construction and operation. They would remain in command of the Newfoundland Railway until 1923, when ownership reverted to the Newfoundland Government.²⁶ Reid had also completed, as part of a contract signed in 1897, the construction of the branch lines to Lewisporte and Tilton, and the extension of the branch line from Harbour



Newfoundland Railway bridge at Codroy on the island's west coast circa 1900. Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Photo: MF-321(2).

Grace to Carbonear.²⁷ Faced with a depressed economy and the prospect of three thousand unemployed railroad labourers, the government decided to encourage R.G. Reid to develop some of his sizable land holdings. Reid was uncertain about the future of railway operations on the island, however, and therefore while being aware of the resource potential of his properties he did not see fit to develop them.²⁸

Realizing that the operations of the railway would in all likelihood remain unprofitable, and with a pressing need for stable employment, the Winter government signed a contract in 1898 with Reid charging him with the Railway's operation until 1951. Under the terms of the agreement, Reid would absorb all losses on operations. He would, however, receive 2500 acres of land for each mile of the railway, and would be given ownership of the entire line at the contract expiry date in return for a \$1,000,000 payment. Other key clauses of the 1898 contract transferred ownership of the government-owned dockyard to R.G. Reid for \$325,000 and the telegraph system for \$125,000. To complete the picture, Reid was also to purchase and operate a fleet of eight steamers which would call at settlements not served by the railway. In return for this service, a subsidy would be provided of \$92,000 annually.²⁹

Despite the monopoly position in transportation which the Reid Newfoundland Railway (as it came to be titled) enjoyed, and a diversification into other interests, the railway remained in the red with steadily increasing losses. The renegotiation of the 1898 contract in 1901, under the government of Robert (later Sir Robert) Bond, did not remove responsibility for losses from under Reid's shell, and these losses steadily mounted. Unfortunately, for both

the Newfoundland Government and R.G. Reid, the development of the interior which was to mitigate the losses incurred by the railway was never realized. While the railway did make possible the development of pulp and paper and logging operations at Grand Falls, Bishop's Falls and later Corner Brook, and spurred limited mining operations in the island's interior, these developments proved to be insufficient.³⁰

The Newfoundland Railway failed to earn money for numerous reasons. In addition to a lack of industrial traffic, there existed a distinct lack of passenger traffic. The narrow gauge of the railway, its high average elevation and track curvature, and the restricted motive power available meant that trains could only travel at relatively slow speeds and with a limited freight capacity. Problems encountered with the vagaries of Newfoundland winters, especially in the Gaff Topsails region, resulted in high snow-clearing costs and unreliable schedules.³¹ In addition, the operation of the spectacularly unprofitable branch lines proved to be a burden which was impossible to sustain.³² By 1920, with the railway under the presidency of W.D. Reid, and with losses totalling over six million dollars, the Reid Newfoundland Company was searching for a way out. This came on July 1, 1923, with the transfer of the railway to the Newfoundland Government in return for \$2,000,000 in 5% bonds, thus ending the Reids responsibility for the Newfoundland Railway.³³

IV

The Reid Newfoundland Company Limited

One of the provisions resulting from renegotiation of the 1898 contract in 1901 concerned the creation of a limited liability company to control the holdings of R.G. Reid. While in England enlisting investors for the construction of a pulp mill at Grand Lake, R.G. Reid found that he would be able to attract substantially more investment capital if he incorporated his holdings rather than keeping them under his name. It was pointed out to Reid that, in the event of his demise, the dissolution of corporate assets and the payment of outstanding debts could become quite complicated.³⁴ The Reid Newfoundland Company Limited was therefore founded on August 2, 1901, to manage the interests of R.G. Reid and his three sons.³⁵

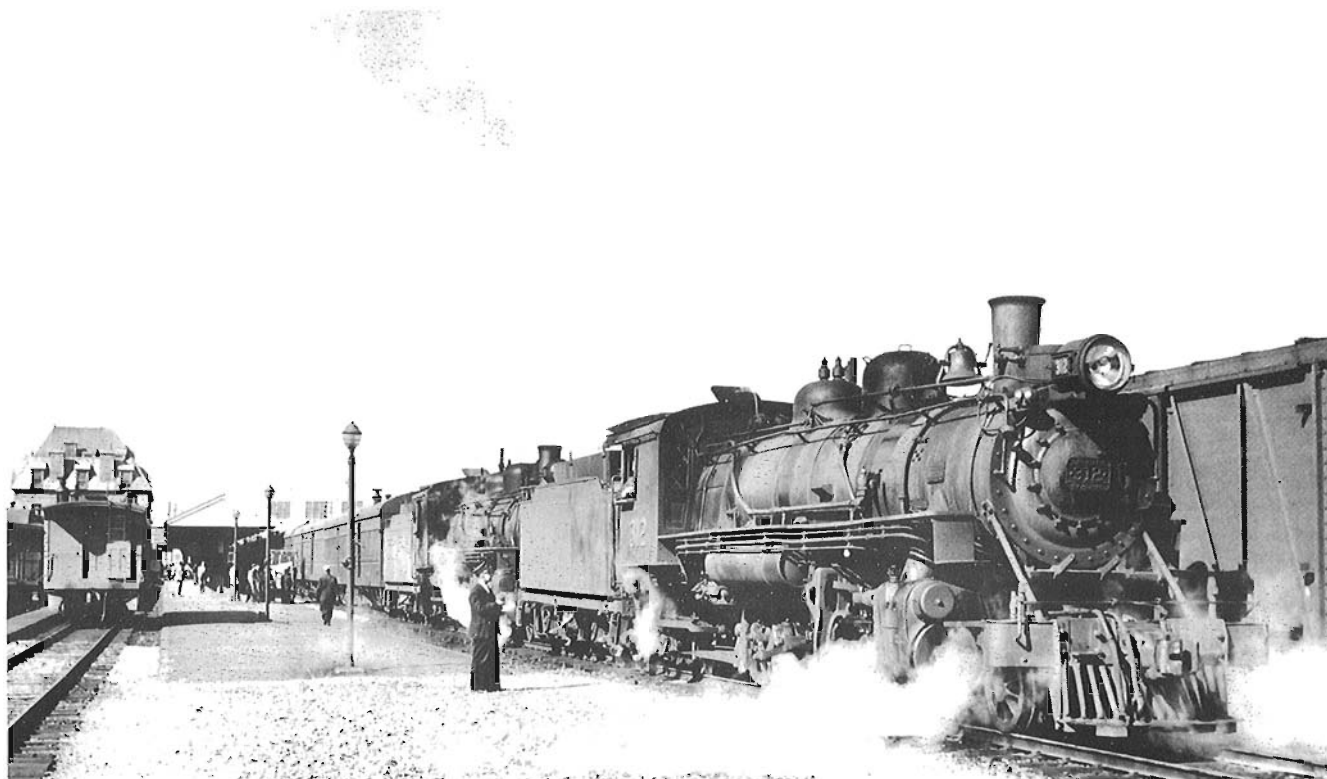


Ships in drydock at St. Johns in 1954. This dock was one of the assets owned by the Reid Newfoundland Company. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-156.

The Reid Newfoundland Company Limited was begun with an initial share capital of \$25,000,000, with the controlling interest in the company held by R.G. Reid. It would be accurate to describe the Reid Newfoundland Company as a holding company for a number of resource and industrial development concerns scattered throughout the island, engaged chiefly in lumbering, pulp and paper, hydro power generation and mining operations. The balance of the activities undertaken by these concerns involved active exploration, extraction, and processing of raw resources taken from the over four million acres of Reid lands (about one-sixth of the area of Newfoundland). However, some of the concerns constituting the Reid Newfoundland Company existed for the sole purpose of attracting investment and industry from external sources, in essence managing a landlord-tenant relationship.³⁶

Newfoundland Timber Estates was the first venture to result from the incorporation of the Reid interests. Formed in 1903 by William Duff Reid and a lumber merchant, Harry J. Crowe, this company was engaged in sawmilling operations and lumbering around Millertown and Glenwood in central Newfoundland. In 1920 Newfoundland Timber Estates was purchased by Gander-Gambo Pulp and Lumber Co., but the Reid's interests in sawmill operation and lumbering were maintained through the purchase of a large number of the latter's shares.³⁷

The exploitation of the island's timber stands continued to be carried out after the demise of Newfoundland Timber Estates by



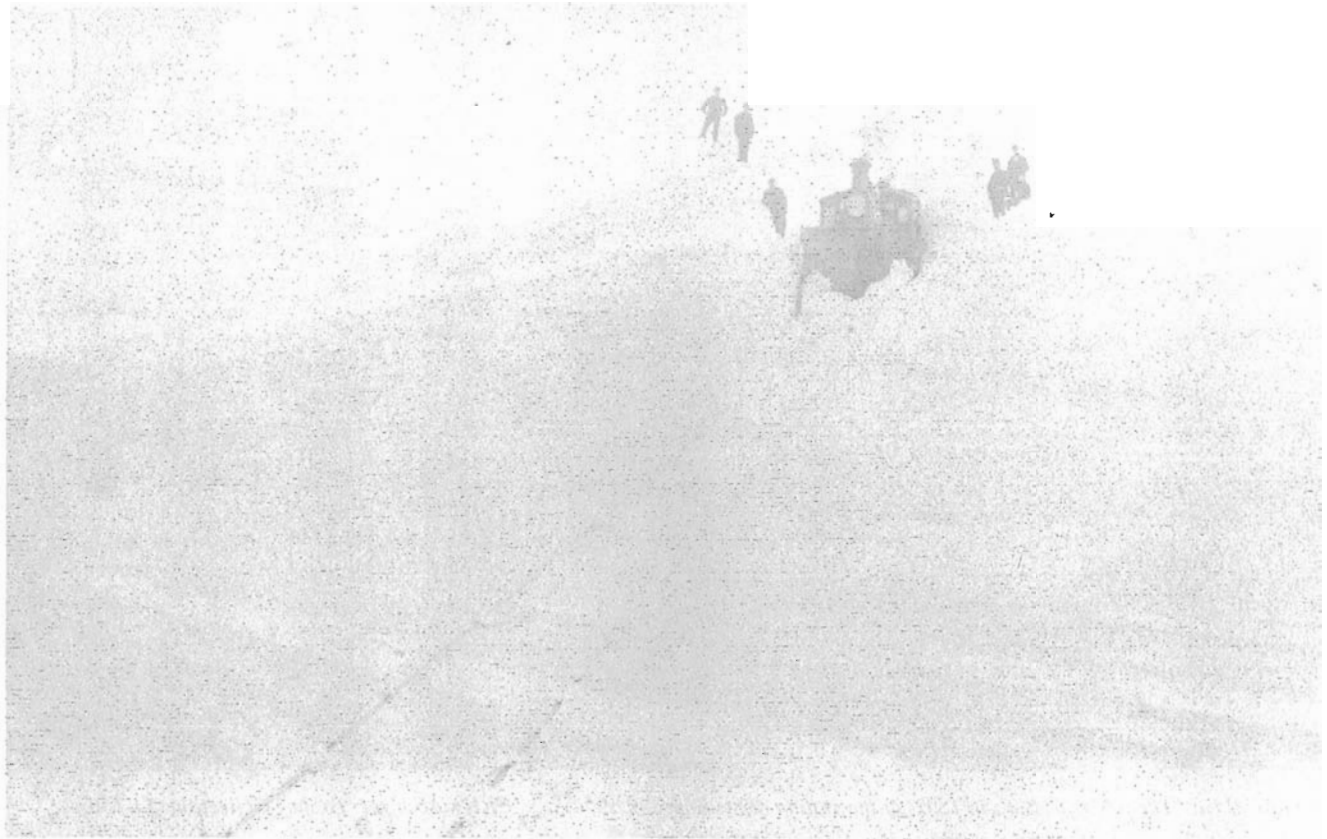
*The "Caribou" about to leave St. John's, in October 1954, for Port Aux Basques 547 miles away.
CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-150.*

the Newfoundland Products Corporation, the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company, and Mines and Forests (Newfoundland) Limited. The Newfoundland Products Corporation was founded in 1915 and managed timber stands for the Reids in western Newfoundland. Surveys were also carried out in return for water rights on the Hamilton and Northwest Rivers in Labrador, and by 1920 the corporation had become involved in producing chemicals and industrial products, including cement. Newfoundland Power and Paper Company, founded in 1922, contracted with Armstrong, Whitworth and Company in 1922 to build the Corner Brook paper mill. Newfoundland Power and Paper would, in turn, erect the hydro station at Deer Lake that was to power the mill and would lead in the construction of Corner Brook itself.³⁸ With the opening of the Corner Brook mill in 1925 the Newfoundland Power and Paper began to lose direction, and the company's Corner Brook operations were subsequently dissolved between 1928 and 1938. Although Newfoundland Power and Paper interests were controlled at first by the International Pulp and Paper Company, and from 1938 onwards by Bowater Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Limited, the Reid Newfoundland Company continued to engage in the leasing of timber and mineral rights to the new owners.³⁹

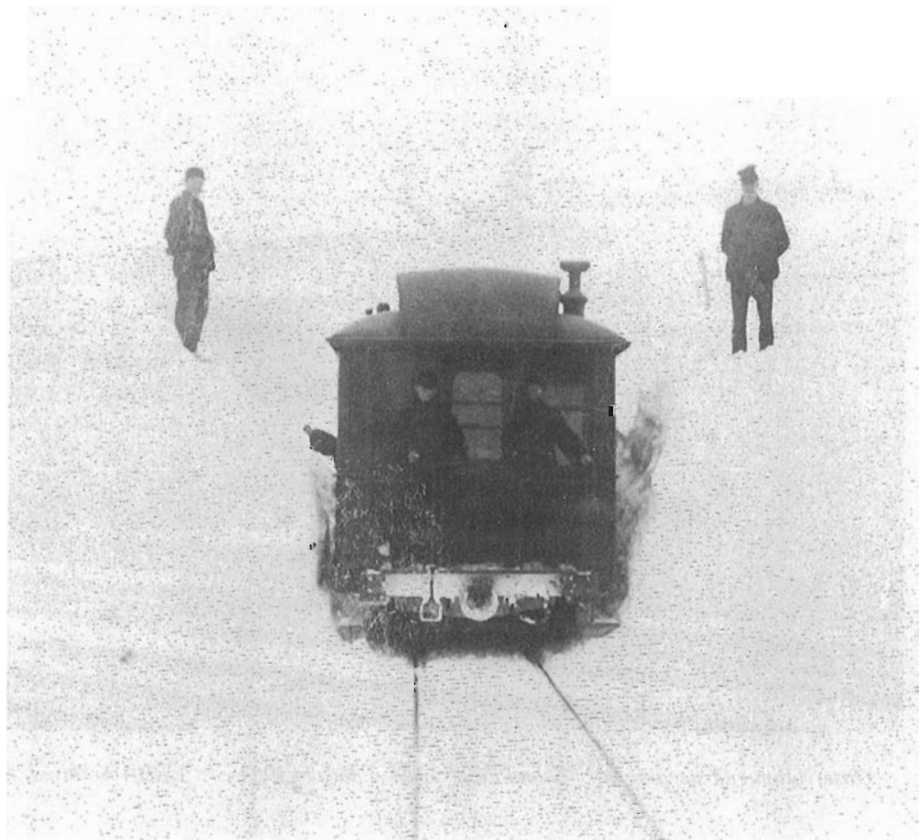
Mines and Forests (Nfld.) Limited and the Gander Valley Power and Paper Company, incorporated in 1920 and 1924 respectively, were engaged almost exclusively in the development of R.G. Reid's timber concessions and did little themselves in the way of extraction or processing. Mines and Forest (Nfld.) was a Reid Newfoundland Company subsidiary from 1920-28 and from

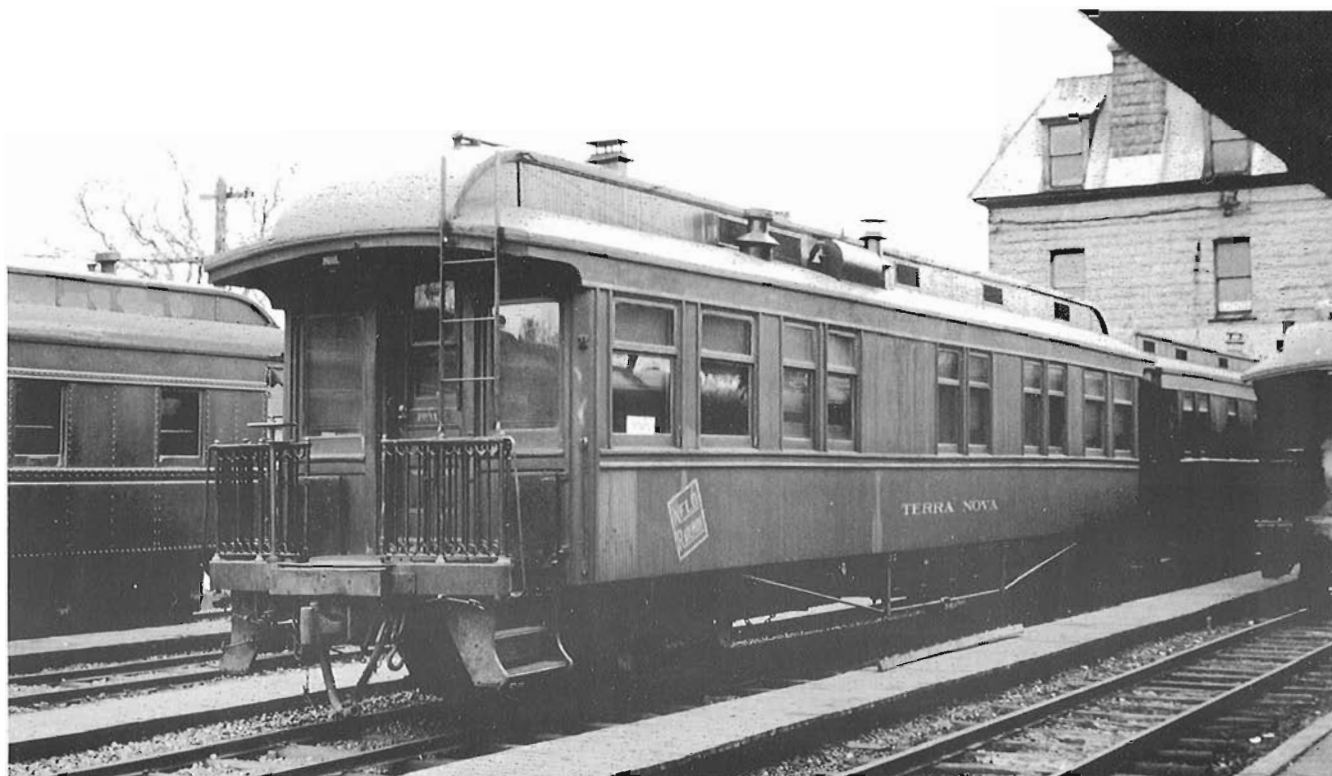
1941-62, and as its purpose the leasing of mineral and timber rights. The Gander Valley Power was built around plans to construct an \$8,000,000 pulp and paper mill in the Gander area in a joint venture with Bowater. This fell through when Bowater decided to purchase the Corner Brook mill outright, and with the end of the "Gander Deal" came the demise of Gander Valley Power and Paper.⁴⁰

The legacy of industrial and resource development begun by R.G. Reid and perpetuated by the Reid Newfoundland Company also entails three other major enterprises. Newfoundland Atlantic Fisheries operated from 1917 to 1926 and was involved in the export of frozen fish to English markets and the import of poultry, beef, and pork products. Throughout the 1920's, the Reid Newfoundland Company acquired the mining operations of R.G. Rendell Materials, and from this company formed a number of minor subsidiaries engaged in mining in locations such as Tilt Cove, South Brook, and Bell Island. These operations were invariably unprofitable and cost the Reid Newfoundland Company dearly. Land development, involving the promotion of mining, electric power, and oil exploration schemes figured prominently in the interests of the Reid Newfoundland Company after 1945. As an alternative to direct participation, Reid land concessions have been offered for sale to both corporate and individual buyers. According to information contained in the Reid collection at the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Archives, the last such venture occurred in 1983.⁴¹



Two views which illustrate graphically the difficulties of railway operation in the winter in central Newfoundland. Both photographs were taken in the Gaff Topsail region, near the summit, about 1900, soon after the line opened. Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Coll-041.





Official car "Terra Nova", built in 1892, at the station at St. John's in 1954. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-136.



Observation-end sleeping car "Grand Falls" at St. John's in 1954. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-134.

V

R.G. Reid in Retrospect

Robert Gillespie Reid's impact on the lives of the people of Newfoundland and their industries has been thus far couched in economic terms, describing the impact which Reid's ventures had in adding to the economy of the island including its transportation and communications infrastructure. Without dispute R.G. Reid is indeed best remembered for his endeavours as an engineer and builder of railways and bridges, as well as for the numerous other enterprises to which he turned his hand. I think that it is true to assert that he was in the final analysis a contemporary of other "great men" of the era such as Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, Lord Strathcona, and Sir William Van Horne.⁴² While R.G. Reid was variously described as the "Czar of Newfoundland" and "the unnamed King" in newspaper accounts of his death in 1908, the man also held positions as a director of Canadian Pacific, the Bank of Montreal, and the Royal Trust Company.⁴³ It is therefore clear that R.G. Reid not only was a man of great stature within Newfoundland, but on a continental basis as well.

In addition to this somewhat capitalistic appraisal of R.G. Reid, I think that a case can also be made for the argument that R.G. Reid's greatest and most undeniable impact was on the social habit, unity, and cultural identity of Newfoundlanders.⁴⁴ R.G. Reid's enterprises brought Newfoundlanders together as never before, both as employees and patrons. During its construction under Reid the railway brought thousands of men from around the island together. In essence, Reid had drafted and assembled an army of labourers. R.G. Reid's legacy of industrial and resource development, carried on after his death by his sons under the Reid Newfoundland Company Limited, resulted in a cluster of what were essentially "company" towns. Corner Brook, Bishop's Falls, Deer Lake, Botwood, and Grand Falls were settled by men and women from across Newfoundland who had generally left the privation of the fishery in hope of a better future.⁴⁵

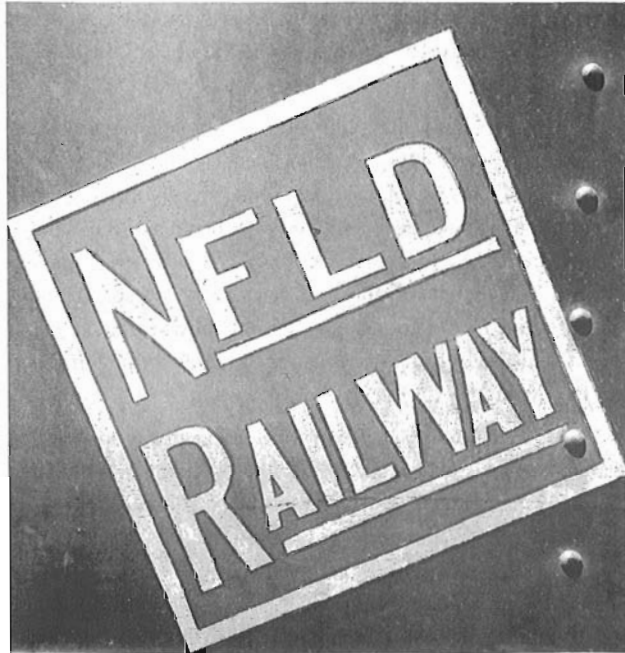
Before the advent of the railway, an island-wide telegraph system, and the Reid Newfoundland Company coastal steamers, travel and communication in Newfoundland was very restricted, especially during the interminable winter months. Travel within a radius of around 20 miles of the community was possible through the use of large fishing boats, but then only if the coast was free of ice.⁴⁶ Schooners and the like were generally occupied in the fishery in the summer months, spending the winter resting on blocks while under repair, or else in Caribbean and American waters. Steamships visited the smaller coastal settlements of the island only occasionally, bringing fishing crews, returned from the Labrador cod fishery, or sealers home from "the front". In the coastal settlements subject to

ice fouling and especially in those along the northeast coast, the only method of travel available of any flexibility was the horse and sleigh.⁴⁷

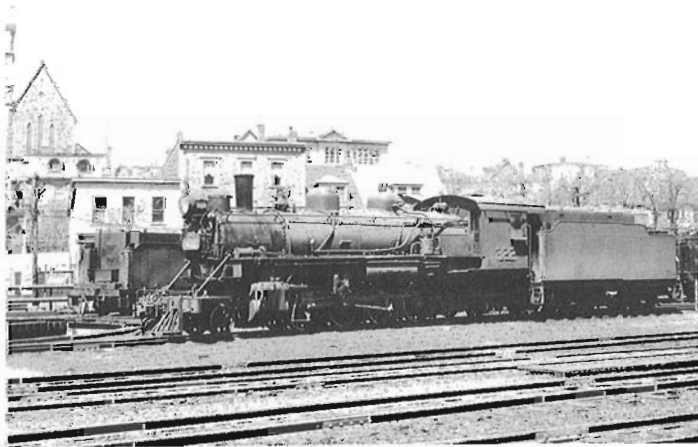
The transportation link afforded by the Newfoundland Railway and the Reid coastal steamers ended this isolation. Where their personal finances allowed, people no longer had to contemplate long periods without access to the larger centres of the colony or that traditional outpost mecca, St. John's. Newfoundlanders found that they had not only obtained a railway, but a new social mobility that assisted in promoting our cultural growth and in making wealth more obtainable through greater opportunity for employment.⁴⁸

By the same token, the coming of the railway and the cross-channel service between Port-aux-Basques and North Sydney, Nova Scotia resulted in a migration of Newfoundlanders to the North American continent. The United States was the prime recipient of this exodus, with the majority of young men and women going to the "Boston States", to New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.⁴⁹ It has been estimated that by the 1920's the wealth brought home by these emigres equalled that generated by the island's cod fishery after debts to merchants had been paid and supplies bought.⁵⁰ Along with their Yankee money, these men and women also brought back with them a new concept of what was an acceptable standard of living. Acculturation within American society resulted in the importation of new work procedures and practices, different clothing styles, a better trained and experienced workforce, and a belief in material progress that contrasted with the hand-to-mouth reality of the cod fishery.⁵¹

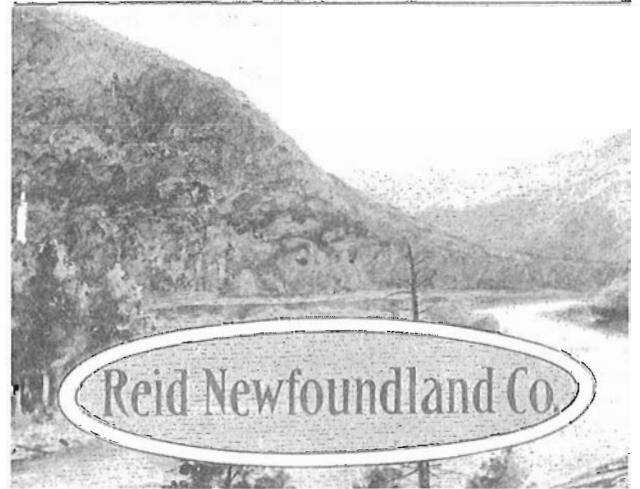
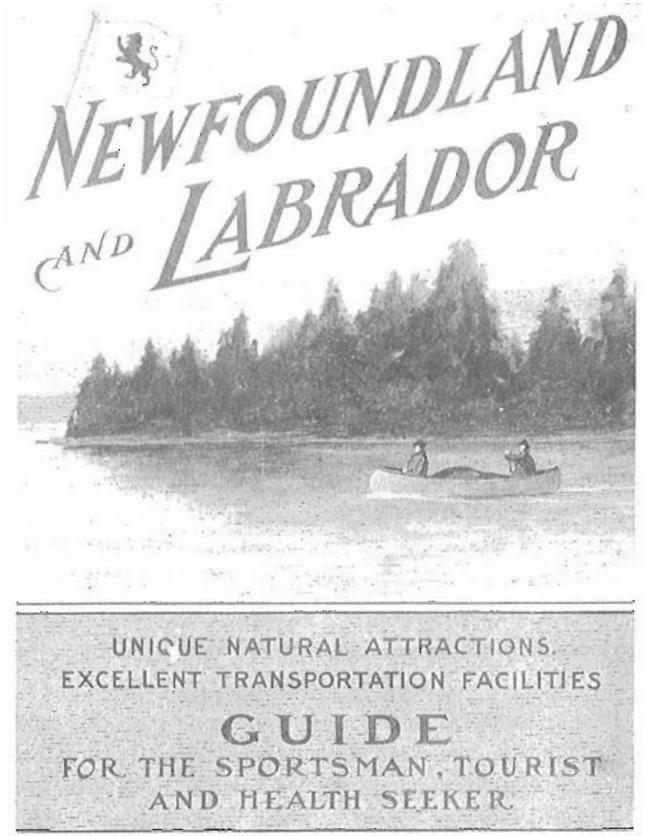
In a rather peculiar sense, one can perceive the net impact of R.G. Reid and his enterprises as being quite a good example of the tendency for the results of initiatives taken on the island to be the opposite of what would be expected elsewhere. Reid believed his enterprises, and especially the railway, to be the harbingers of a new era of economic growth and diversification in Newfoundland. This would have been the end result elsewhere, and yet it appears in retrospect as if the railway and its primary sector offspring were intended to function more as agents of social and cultural change than as viable enterprises. In the case of the railway, a line built from nowhere to nowhere, this unarguably appears to be the verdict. Considering the exportation of profits from those few Reid-inspired ventures which achieved a degree of permanency, much the same can be said. I think that while R.G. Reid should be remembered as a pioneer and a man of industry and ambition who left a lasting impression of the soul of Newfoundland, we should also realize that as an economic colonialist he stood with the best of his time.



The symbol of the Newfoundland Railway (1923 to 1949) as applied to the railway's rolling stock. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-138.



Locomotive 322 in the yard at St. John's in October 1954. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-133.



The cover of a very attractive 80-page guide book produced by the Reid Newfoundland Company about 1910 to promote tourism on the island. It contains maps, tour schedules and much information of use to tourists. Collection of Fred Angus.

NOTES

1. J.W. McGrath, "The 1898 Railway Contract", Newfoundland Historical Society (St. John's: Newfoundland Historical Society, 1973) page 2.
2. J.W. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", Newfoundland Historical Society (St. John's; Newfoundland Historical Society, 1971) page 25.
3. "Sir R.G. Reid Dead", The Gazette (Montreal), June 3, 1908. Reid Newfoundland Company Papers (RNCP), File No. 522 Death Notice Clippings of R.G. Reid, Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL). Footnote references to the Reid Newfoundland Company Papers (RNCP) and the Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) will be made hereafter using these acronyms.
4. Ibid.
5. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", pp. 24-25.
6. "Sir R.G. Reid Died in Montreal", The News, June 3, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
7. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", pp. 6-7.
8. "Sudden Death of Sir Robert Reid", The Montreal Daily Witness, June 3, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
9. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 7.
10. Finding Aid No. 95, RNCP, PANL, p. 1.
11. "Sir Robert Reid Dead at Montreal", The Morning Chronicle, June 4, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
12. "Last Tribute to Sir Robert G. Reid", The Morning Chronicle, June 8, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
13. "Sir Robert Reid died in Montreal", The News, June 3, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
14. "Death of Sir Robert G. Reid took place today", The Daily Star, June 3, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
15. Ibid.
16. Michael MacKenzie, "Intercolonial Railway: Cape Breton Line", Glimpses of the Past (Robinson-Blackmore: Grand Falls, 1984) p. 55.
17. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 8.
18. "Sir R.G. Reid died in Montreal", The News, June 3, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
19. McGrath, "The 1898 Railway Contract", p. 2.
20. A.R. Penney, "Centennial of Newfoundland Railway 1881 - 1981", St. John's: Creative Printers, 1981, p. 6.
21. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 6.
22. McGrath, "The 1898 Railway Contract", p. 5.
23. Penney, p. 15.
24. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 13.
25. Ibid, p. 12.
26. Ibid, p. 21.
27. Penney, pp. 15 - 27.
28. Penney, p. 27.
29. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 14.
30. Ibid, pp. 18 - 19.
31. Ibid, pp. 22 - 23.
32. "Summary of Main Reasons for Losses in Operation Reid Newfoundland Railway", pp. 16 - 17.
33. Penney, p. 55.
34. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", pp. 16 - 17.
35. Penney, p. 35.
36. "Backlog Project Report Reid Newfoundland Company Collection", RNCP, PANL, pp. ii - iv.
37. Ibid, p. iii.
38. Ibid, p. iii.
39. Ibid, p. iv.
40. Ibid, p. iv.
41. Ibid, p. iv.
42. "Last Tribute to Sir Robert G. Reid", The morning Chronicle, June 8, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
43. "Sudden Death of Sir Robert Reid", The Montreal Daily Witness, June 3, 1908. RNCP, File 522, PANL.
44. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 25.
45. Ibid. p. 18.
46. McGrath, "The 1898 Railway Contract", p. 1.
47. Ibid, p. 1.
48. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", p. 25.
49. Ibid, p. 21.
50. Ibid, p. 22.
51. Ibid, p. 22.



Train standing on the dock at Port Aux Basques, 1954. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-108.

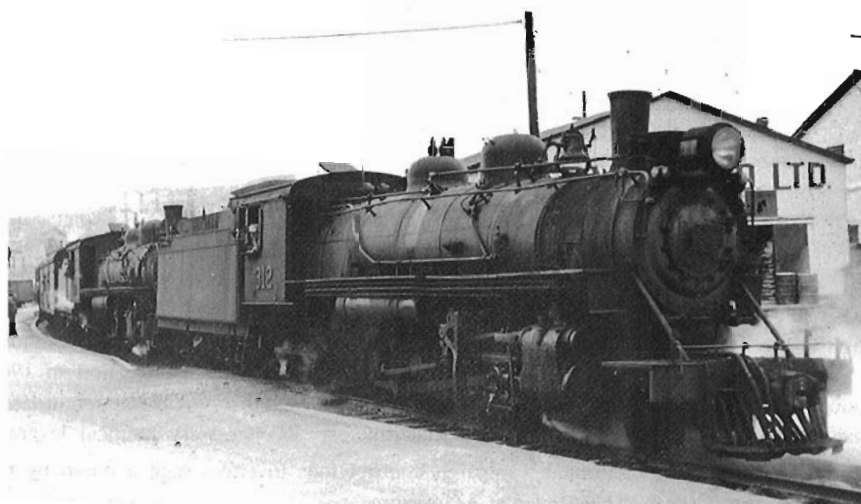
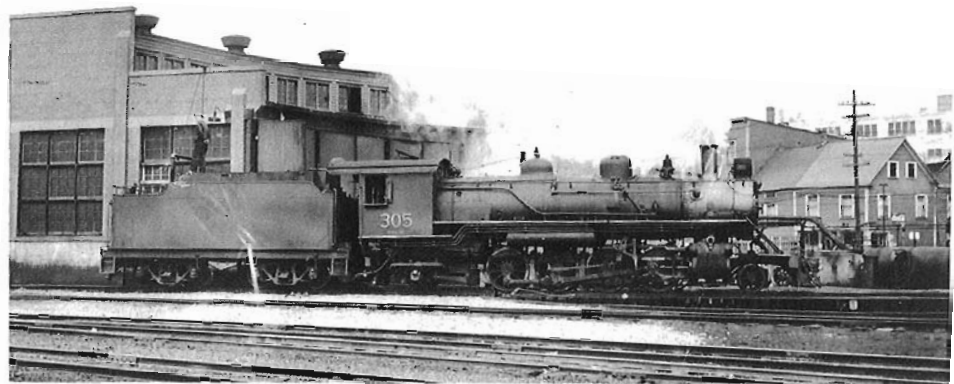


Eastbound "Caribou" crossing the causeway at Grand Bay, a few miles east of Port Aux Basques. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-114



The eastbound "Caribou" climbing up from Grand Lake to the summit near Pond Crossing, October 1954. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-123.

Locomotive number 305 moving on to the turntable at St. John's, October 1954. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-145.



Locomotive 312, a 2-8-2, is the front engine of the double-headed "Caribou" standing in the station at Corner Brook. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection, 54-117

Coastal Steamer and Branch Railway Line Revenue Competition in the Reid Newfoundland Company

By Peter D. Locke

I

Building on Dreams: The Reids and the Creation of an Island Railroad

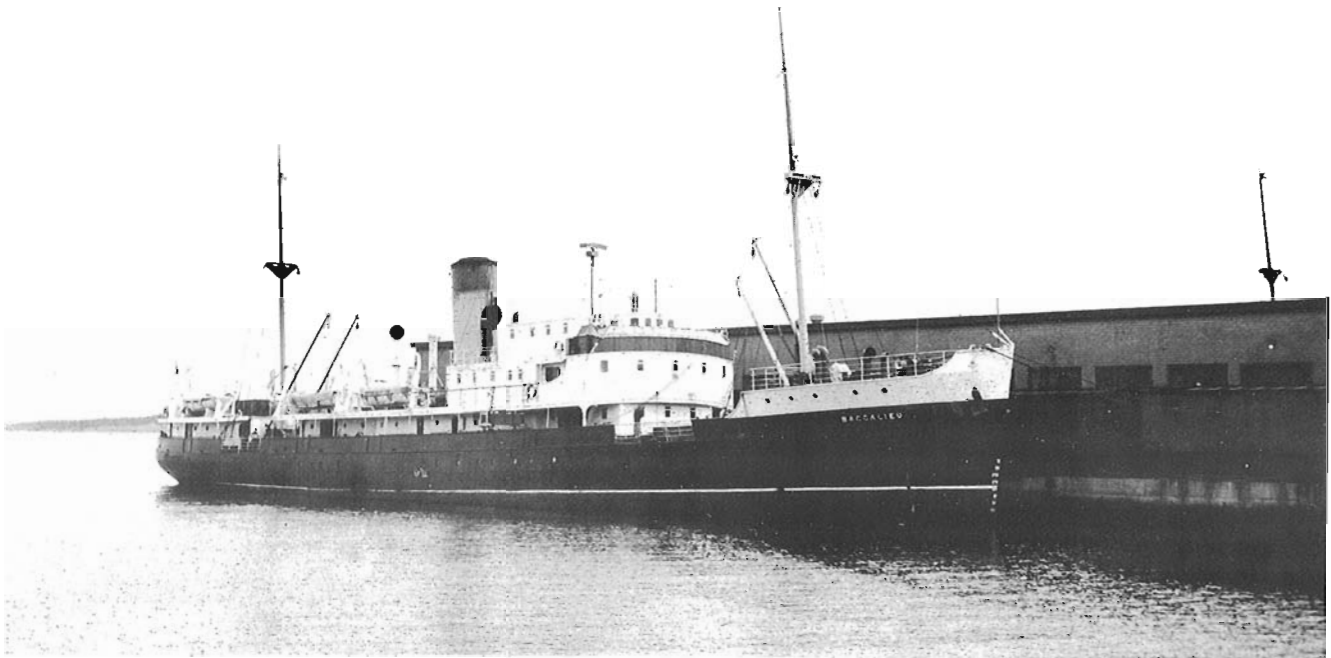
Coastal Newfoundland in the 1990's is still a difficult constituency to which to provide scheduled freight and passenger service. This factor has been recognized since merchants from St. John's, Bonavista, and other communities began such service as an accessory function to the fishery, and particularly the inshore fishery, in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹ As identified in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Newfoundland Transportation Volume I, "...the reality of a tiny population of fewer than 500,000 people occupying a "ribbon of development" extending over 10,000 miles posed problems of gargantuan proportion to governments charged with the responsibility of providing basic service including adequate transportation and communications."² Before the development of the province's road network and the beginning of the air age, the only means of delivering such service was by sea or rail. The purpose of this paper is to describe the competition between the coastal steamers and branch rail lines of the Reid Newfoundland Company during the years 1909-1923, the developments which led up to this, and the ramifications for the earning potential of these branch rail lines.

A ward of the government today, scheduled freight and passenger service to the outports began under the banner of the Reid Newfoundland Company and its progenitor, (Sir) Robert G. Reid. Reid first became involved with island transportation in the fall of 1889, when he came to St. John's to tender for the completion of a railway line from Placentia Junction to Hall's Bay, on which the present day town of Springdale is located.³ Reid secured to contract from the government without much dispute, and proceeded to work on the line to Hall's Bay. By 1893, work had progressed to a point near the Exploits River, to the satisfaction of both the Reids and the Newfoundland Government. Reflecting their confidence in Reid's abilities - and concern over an impending election - the Whiteway government decided in 1893 to extend the Reid's contract to cover the railway's completion to the Bay of Islands and then on to Port-aux-Basques.⁴ This would bring the length of the main line to 547 miles. In that the Reids were not only constructing the Island's railway during the period 1893-1898, but were operating the trains which ran on it as well, their role in the future of Newfoundland transportation was guaranteed.

In 1898 the line across the Island was finally completed, and at 7:20 p.m. on June 29 of that year the first passenger train left St. John's for Port-aux-Basques.⁵ Having completed the railway, the Newfoundland Government was now faced with the task of running it. The government was fully conscious of the difficulties encountered in running a railway. The experience of running the Placentia and Harbour Grace lines in the pre-Reid years weighed heavily on the collective minds of the newly elected Winter-Morina cabinet.⁶ Fortunately, negotiations with R.G. Reid resulted in the 1898 Operating Contract, in which the Reids were to run the railway, the St. John's drydock, the telegraph system, and were to construct and operate the St. John's street car service. All this was in return for 2500 acres per mile of track. In addition, Reid agreed to build and operate a fleet of eight coastal steamers for a \$92,000 annual subsidy from the Newfoundland Government.

These vessels were defended as a necessary adjunct to the existing rail operations, linking settlements bypassed by the railway and funnelling freight, passengers, and mail to the main railway line - an asset in the search for revenue to justify the main line's existence.⁷ It was also agreed that should these coastal steamers earn a profit, such a surplus in revenues would revert to the Newfoundland Government.

Although the 1898 Operating Contract was renegotiated in almost its entirety in 1901 under the government of (Sir) Robert Bond, the clause concerning the construction and the maintenance of coastal steamers was left untouched.⁸ The Reids carried on with their contractual responsibilities, operating the Island's rail and coastal steamer service at a loss which amounted to some \$152,122 annually by 1908.⁹ By that year, the Newfoundland Government's foreboding of unprofitability having been realized, the Reids were casting about for some kind of development which would return income on their considerable investment in the Island's economy. With only the construction of a paper mill at Grand Falls (completed in 1909) in the works, the Reid Newfoundland Company, now under the leadership of William D. Reid, following the death of his father on June 3, 1908, turned to lobbying for the construction of a series of branch rail lines to complement main line operations.^{10, 11} A tie between (Sir) Robert Bond's Liberals and (Sir) Edmund Morris's People's Party in the 1908 general election in 1909 general election, which was to result in a run off election in 1909, would give the Reid interests the necessary political leverage through campaign contributions to effect such a move by the Newfoundland Government.¹²



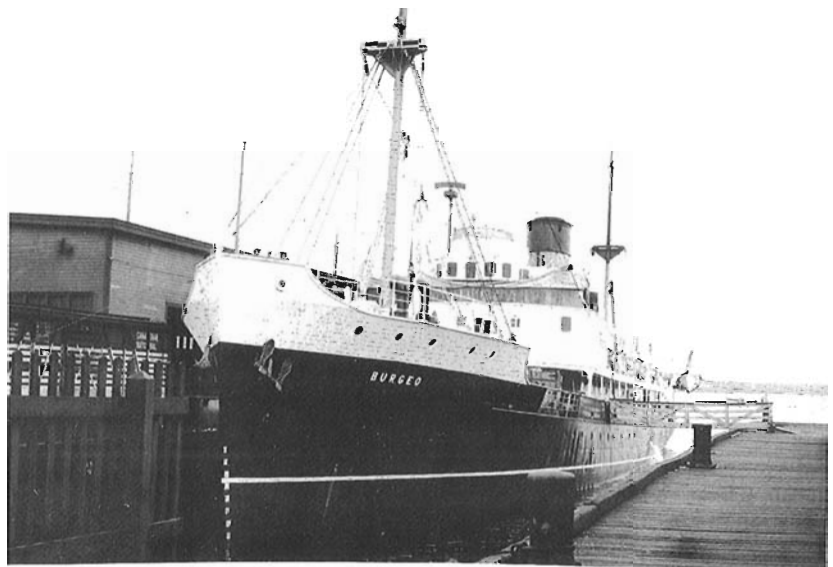
II

Rails of Despair, A Dream Unfulfilled

On December 9, 1909, the Reid Newfoundland Company and the Morris government signed a contract for the construction of six branch lines to Trepassey, Bay de Verde, Heart's Content, Bonavista, Terrenceville, and Bonne Bay, an estimated 250 miles of rail in addition to the 547 mile main line and the branches to Placentia and Harbour Grace, of 26 and 7 miles in length respectively.¹³ ¹⁴ It was estimated that the cost of building the branch lines, the Morris government's repayment to the Reids for their successful campaign in the May 8, 1909 run-off election, would amount to some \$4,000,000.¹⁵ This was a princely sum in those times, so the Morris government defended the branch line construction program on the grounds that the branches would provide an overland, all-season transportation route to the larger outports of Newfoundland's northeast coast and would increase passenger and freight revenues on the main line.¹⁶

The truth be known, however, the branch railway lines covered in the 1909 contract were built, as discussed in Frank Martin's "More Blood, Sweat and Money. The Development of Branch Railways in Newfoundland":

"...to provide immediate employment to those who had suffered as a result of a failure in the fisheries. The Morris railway platform was an electioneering platform...a look at the districts which



Two views of Newfoundland coastal ships photographed in 1954. M.V. "Baccalieu" is seen at Port Aux Basques, while M.V. "Burgeo" is pictured at North Sydney, N.S. CRHA Archives, Toohy Collection 54-188 and 54-190.



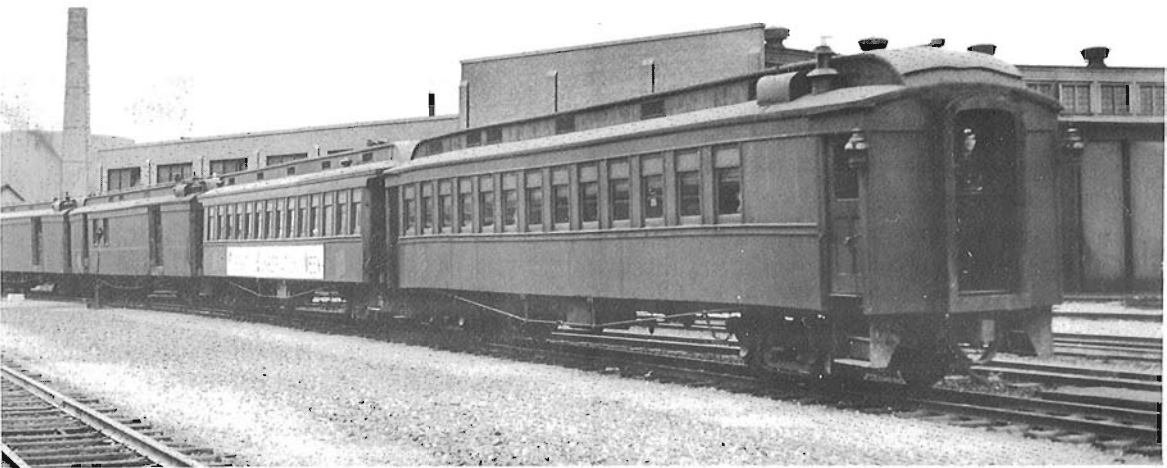
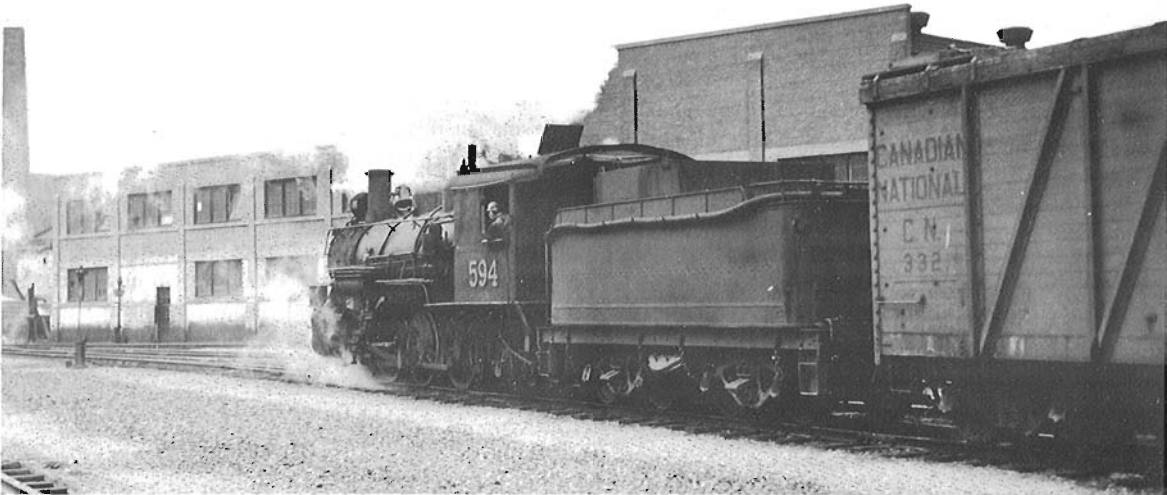
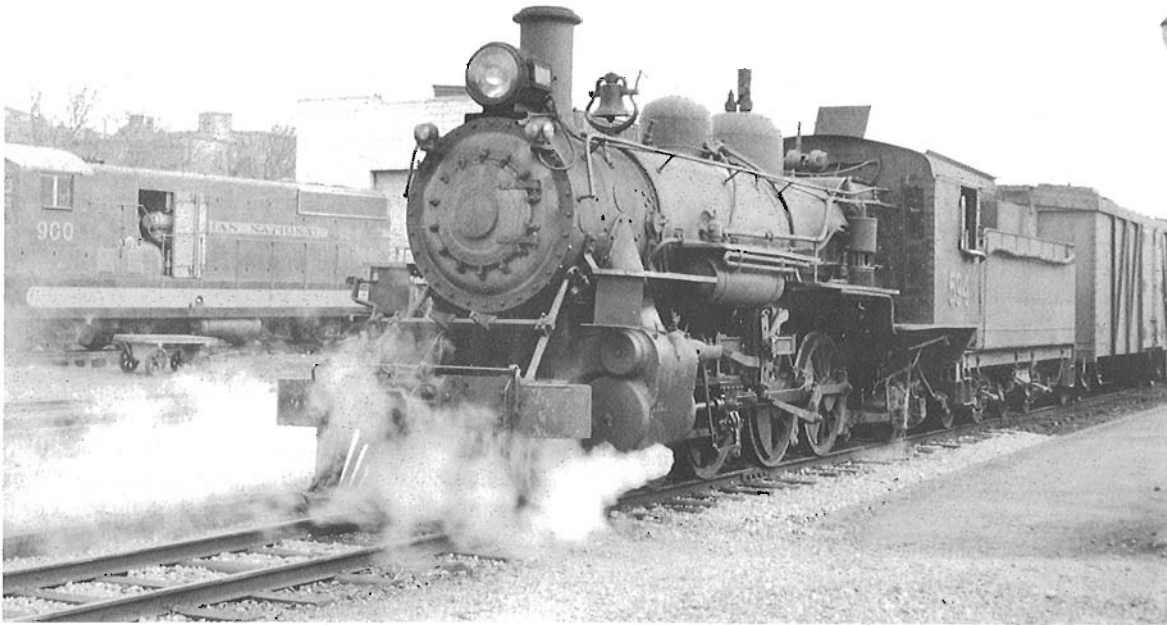
The S.S. "Kyle" (large ship) and the "Finback" at Carbonear, preparing to leave for the ice in 1965. Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland Coll-075.

changed support in the 1909 election (those which had been Liberal in 1908 but went Tory in 1909) were the ones in which the branches were to be constructed."¹⁷

The financial consequences of constructing these branch lines appeared to have been lost on the government of the day, in that the four lines, which were completed to Bay de Verde (52 miles), Bonavista (88 miles), Heart's Content (42 miles), and Trepassey (106 miles) by 1915, cost considerably more than estimated - an additional \$3,000,000 in total.^{18 19} However Morris's Don Quixotic paternalism for the electorate of the northeast coast did not entirely cloud his sensibilities for, as was the case with the 1898 Operating Contract, the Reids were again paid for the actual construction of the branches, netting a \$1,500,000 profit, but were contractually obliged to operate them within their own resources.²⁰ Subsidies for the entire railway's operation would be limited to a mail subsidy, which averaged \$55,808 between the year in which the first branch line, the Bonavista branch, opened and 1920.²¹ If the branch lines and the main line were to be profitable, the Reids would have to make them so; the government would not.

By some strange twist, however, the attitude of the Newfoundland Government towards subsidizing the Reid's fleet of coastal steamers, still sailing under the terms of the 1898 Operating Contract, was quite favourable. In 1911, the total subsidy paid to the Reid Newfoundland Company was some \$146,870 for its steamship service, with an average annual subsidy increase from 1906 to 1912 of \$8,617.²² With the opening of the branch rail lines to Bonavista, Trepassey, Bay de Verde, and Heart's Content from 1911 onwards, the subsidy to the Reid Newfoundland Company's steamship service was increased to cover the loss of passengers and freight to these branch rail lines. From 1912 to 1918, the average annual subsidy increase was some \$20,170, so that by 1918 the Reid Newfoundland coastal steamships were receiving a \$282,598 subsidy from the Newfoundland and Canadian governments, while the entire Reid Newfoundland Railway was subsidized to the tune of only \$61,251 annually.²³ As a percentage then, the railway as a whole received a subsidy equal to 21.8% of that collected by the coastal service of the same owner, the Reid Newfoundland Company.²⁴

Opposite Page. Three views of a mixed train at St. John's in 1954. The top photo shows locomotive 594 and train ready to depart from the station heading for one of the branch lines. Note diesel 900 (Newfoundland's first main line diesel, now preserved) in the background. Centre, the mixed train is under way, while the bottom view shows the rear of the train with its ancient wooden coaches CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 54-109, 54-139, 54-146.



The key point behind these figures is that while the Reids could not retain profits from the coastal steamer service, as stipulated under the 1898 agreement, any losses attributable to the service would be covered by Newfoundland Government subsidies; these increased drastically as branch rail lines serving coastal communities opened the outports to rail service.²⁵ This stands in contrast to the insufficient mail subsidy paid to the railway, intended as compensation for carrying mail on behalf of the government, and yet not enough for even this function. Whereas in 1917-1918 and 1918-1919 the "book" profit made on operating marine equipment by the Reid Newfoundland Company was \$151,581 and \$210,792 respectively, the railway recorded a loss for the same years of \$205,351 and \$341,924.^{26, 27}

Despite an average operating loss on the ships "Argyle" (Placentia Bay), "Petrel" (Trinity Bay), "Ethie" (Bay of Islands and Battle Harbour), "Clyde" (Port Union - Lewisporte) and "Home" (Notre Dame Bay) of \$19,546 per ship in the year 1919 and further losses for the same year on the "Glencoe", "Sagona", "Kyle" and other ships serving on the Labrador and south coast as well as the North Sydney-Port-aux-Basques service, the coastal steamers of the Reid Newfoundland Company recorded a solid, though illusory profit.²⁸

It may be argued that we do not know the full measure of discriminatory subsidization in favour of the coastal steamship service on the branch railway lines, in that few figures are available giving a complete breakdown of revenues for each branch line and its compatriot coastal service. For the time period from July 1920 to June 1921 the Reids did keep such a spreadsheet, however, which gives additional credence to my hypothesis that the unnecessary duplication of services provided by the Reid Newfoundland Company's steamers was the chief drain on the earning abilities of the branch rail lines and the railway. During this period, local revenues from the Trepassey branch and its proportion of through traffic accounted for earnings on the branch itself of \$38,878. The steamship earnings attributable to the same branch came to a pittance - \$181 - so that the income of the former, serving the same general market as the latter, was greater by 214 times.²⁹

Admittedly, this is a worst case scenario, but comparing cost recovery figures for the other coastal steamers running parallel with the branch rail lines yields a similar disparity in earnings. Total branch earnings as a proportion of through traffic and from local revenue for the Bay de Verde branch rail line totalled \$30,013 for the same period, while the coastal steamer(s) serving the same area accounted for \$2009, a difference of almost 1400%. On the Heart's Content branch, coastal steamers contributed earnings of \$2,339, while the line earned \$29,476, while figures for the Bonavista branch were \$13,827 and \$52,122 respectively. To summarise, for the 12 month period July 1920 - June 1921 the coastal steamers share of earnings for the Trepassey, Bay de Verde, Heart's Content, and Bonavista branch railway lines was \$18,357, while total branch earnings attributable to their proportion of through traffic and local revenue came to \$150,492 in total.³⁰ Taking into consideration the Reid Newfoundland Railway's net losses in 1920 and 1921 of \$1,335,107 and \$1,650,000, there is still no justification for the unrealistic, politically motivated subsidies extended to the coastal steamers of the Reid Newfoundland Company.³¹

In retrospect, the solvency of the Reid Newfoundland Company's coastal steamer service was a fictional creation resulting from a level of subsidization against which branch rail line service to the outports could not compete, draining revenues earned from the main line in order to maintain branch line services. Although high annual snowfalls, engineering and operating difficulties, and a small market population undoubtedly added to the unprofitability of the branch lines, the primary reason for their status as economic failures rests with a series of governments lacking the political courage to undertake transportation rationalization in the best interests of Newfoundland at the time. To conclude, a 1922 report by R.C. Morgan on the Reid Newfoundland Company, in recommending a \$185,000 subsidy for railway branch lines, noted that "...while this direct subsidy would not cover the actual branch line loss, it would take care of a large proportion of it, and would have the merit of placing the expenditure where it belongs."³²

NOTES

1. Arthur M. Sullivan et. al., "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Newfoundland Transportation", Volume I. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Service, Canada, 1978. p. 14.

2. Ibid, pp. 13 - 14.

3. A.R. Penney, "A History of the Newfoundland Railway" Volume I (1881 - 1923). St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1988. p. 36.

4. Penney, p. 42.

5. Penney, p. 63.

6. J.W. McGrath, "R.G. Reid and the Newfoundland Railway", Newfoundland Historical Society (St. John's: Newfoundland Historical Society, 1971), p. 13.

7. Ibid, p. 14.

8. Ibid, p. 17.

9. "Abstract of Statistics from June 30, 1903 to June 30, 1921". Reid Newfoundland Company Papers (RNCP), File No. 321, Reid Newfoundland Railway Statements 1902 - 1919, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL).

10. Penney, p. 93.
11. A.R. Penney, "Centennial Newfoundland Railway 1881 - 1981", St. John's: Creative Printers, 1981. p. 47.
12. Penney, p. 95.
13. Frank Martin, "More Blood, Sweat and Money: The Development of the Branch Railways in Newfoundland". St. John's: Memorial University Centre for Newfoundland Studies, 1982. p. 33.
14. Penney, pp. 32 - 33.
15. Martin, p. 33.
16. Ibid, p. 33.
17. Ibid, p. 33.
18. "Proposed Reduction in Train Service June 28, 1921". RNCP, File 324, Newfoundland Railway Situation, 1921. PANL.
19. Penney, p. 96.
20. Ibid, p. 96.
21. "Subsidies from Newfoundland and Canadian Governments". RNCP, File 324, Newfoundland Railway Situation, 1921. PANL.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. "Reid Newfoundland Company Ltd. - Operating Marine Equipment". RNCP, File 312, Railway Claims, PANL.
27. "Abstract of Statistics from June 30, 1903 to June 30, 1921". RNCP, File 321, Reid Newfoundland Railway Statements 1902 - 1919, PANL.
28. "Bay Boats (1919)". RNCP, File 321, Reid Newfoundland Railway Statements 1902 - 1919, PANL.
29. "Estimated Operating Expenses of Various Branches for Year Ending June 30th 1921". RNCP, File 311, Branch Line Receipts 1920 - 1921, PANL.
30. Ibid.
31. "Abstract of Statistics from June 30, 1903 to June 30, 1921". RNCP, File 321, Reid Newfoundland Railway Statements 1902 - 1919, PANL.
32. "Report of the Government Members of the Railway Commission, St. John's, Newfoundland, June 15, 1921". RNCP, File 324, Newfoundland Railway Situation 1921, PANL.

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"Estimated Operating Expenses of Various Branches for Year Ending June 30th, 1921". Reid Newfoundland Company Papers (RNCP). File No. 311. Branch Line Receipts 1920 - 1921. Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL).

Martin, Frank. "More Blood, Sweat and Money: The Development of the Branch Railways in Newfoundland". St. John's: Memorial Centre for Newfoundland Studies, 1982.

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"Proposed Reduction in Train Service June 28, 1921". Reid Newfoundland Company Papers (RNCP). File No. 324. Newfoundland Railway Situation, 1921. Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL).

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Sullivan, Arthur M. et. al. "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Newfoundland Transportation" Volume I. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1978.

The Last Days of the Newfoundland Railway

By Claude Hoddinott

After more than a century of service, the final run of the railway in Newfoundland took place on September 30, 1988. The vital importance of the railway had declined with the opening of the Trans Canada highway across the island in the 1960's, and the main-line passenger train had been discontinued in 1969. In the 1980's the branch lines were closed and finally, in 1988, it was announced that the entire railway would be abandoned. Passenger service, via a mixed train, continued through the remote "Topsails" region until the very end, long after the other passenger runs had gone. Our member Claude Hoddinott, of Grand Falls Newfoundland, took a number of photographs shortly before the end of service, as well as others after the abandonment. We are pleased to publish these historic photos as a conclusion to this series of articles on the Newfoundland Railway



Passengers at Bishops Falls ready to board mixed train 203 for Corner Brook, July 17, 1988.



Westbound train 203, bound for Corner Brook, photographed from an underpass just west of Bishops Falls on July 17, 1988.

The last train crew about to leave Bishops Falls on September 30, 1988, the last day of operation. Left to right, standing in front of the locomotive, are trainmen Gerald Turner, Patrick O'Reilly and William Penney. Engineer Patrick O'Reilly and conductor Carl Dillion stand in front on the track.



En route to Corner Brook for the last time. The last scheduled train photographed at Grand Falls station on September 30, 1988.

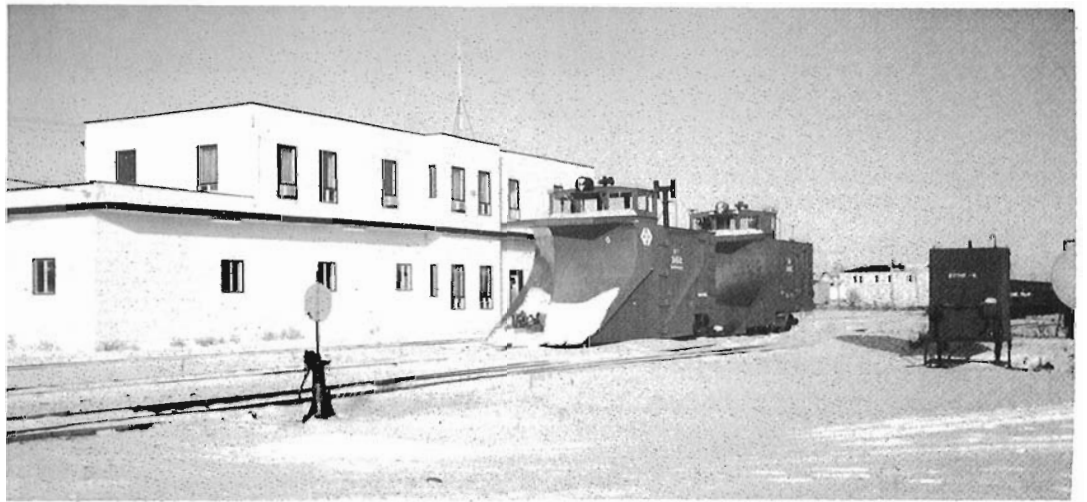
More than a year after abandonment, this photo shows crews lifting the rails at Mount Moriah, ten miles west of Corner Brook, on November 10, 1989.



The last two remaining diesels, 943 and 927, at St. John's on August 27, 1989. Excluding work train locomotives and preserved units, the rest of the engines were either sold to South American countries or scrapped. Eight or ten units were kept in use for dismantling the railway. As of January 1990, the only section of the railway remaining was the 150-miles between Bishops Falls and Clarendville, and this was expected to be torn up before the end of 1990.



Snow plows parked near the station at Bishops Falls on November 26, 1989. This once busy rail centre is now quiet, and the plows will never again battle the snowdrifts over the Topsails region. It is truly "THE END OF AN ERA".



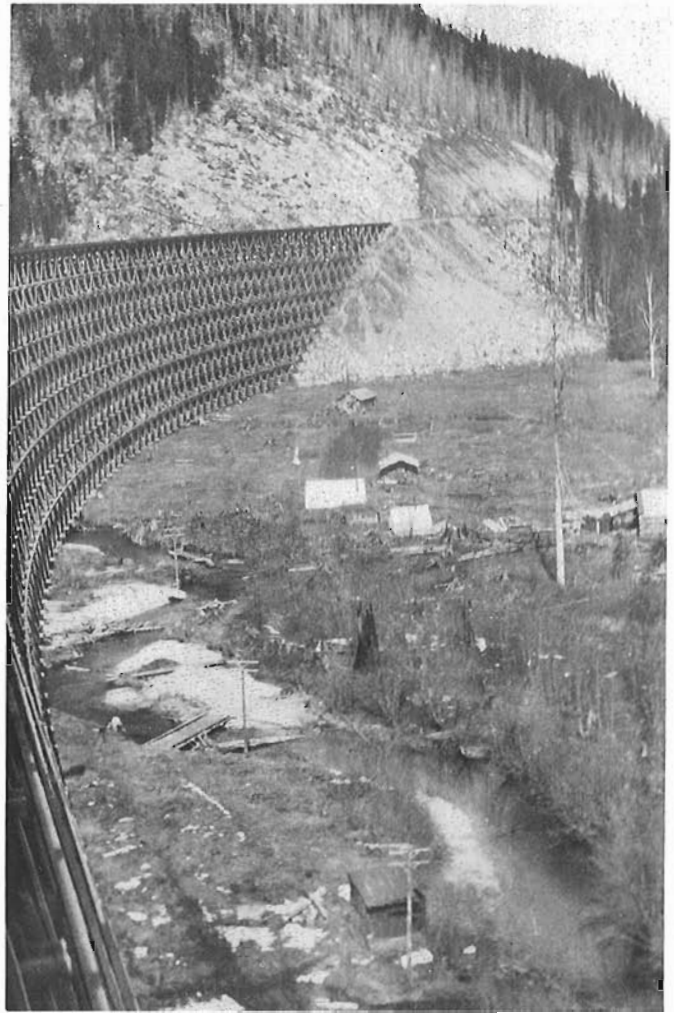
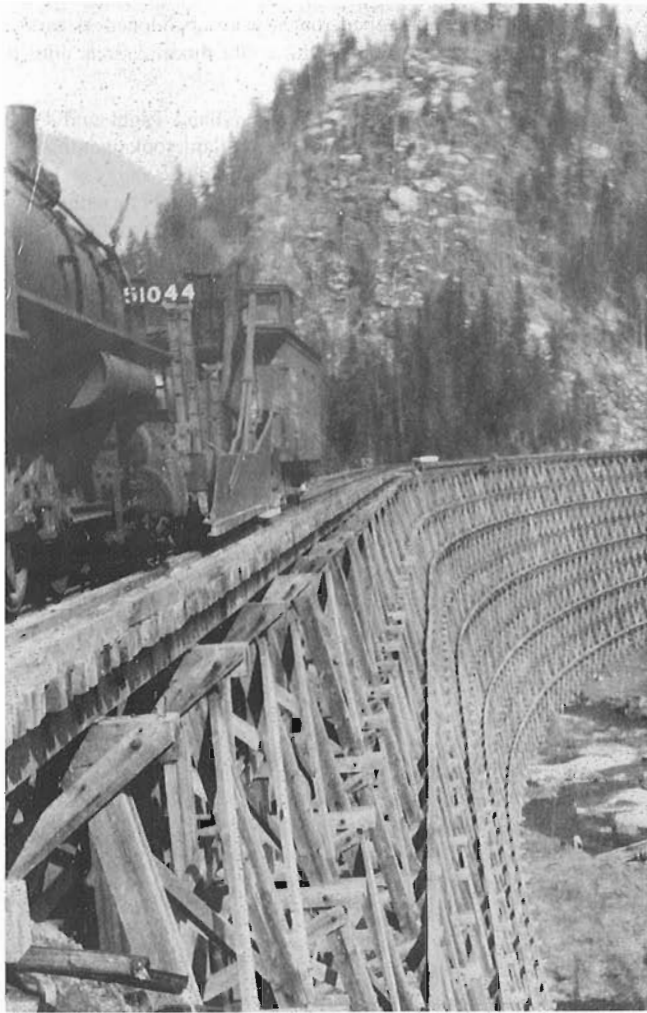
A view at the station at St. John's on March 24, 1989.



The first main line diesel locomotive, number 900, has been preserved and is here shown at Pippy Park in St. John's on July 8, 1989.

Embankment Update

By David Davies



SEQUEL: On reading the "Embankment" article in the November-December 1989 issue of Canadian Rail, Mr. Leslie Kozma of Edmonton Alberta wrote supplying more details as well as two photos.

Mr. Kozma says the trestle was completed in February 1914 at a cost of \$66,270. Employee timetables for the period June 1926 through October 1928 show a "Magoffin Spur" at mile 17.1 with a capacity for two cars. Trains 1 and 2 were noted to stop at this point to exchange mail.

The two photographs were taken by Ray Matthews and are undated, but are presumed to be the early to mid 1920's. Both are taken from the southern end of the trestle looking north.

ADDITION: The following item should be inserted at the bottom of the right-hand column on page 186: Western Wheeled Scraper Co., Aurora. This company was in business from 1892 to about 1934 and at one time employed 1500 men at Aurora, a city 30 miles west of Chicago. As its name implies, the company started off in life making horse-drawn scrapers and graders but soon got involved in the construction of dump cars for permanent standard gauge railways or rickety and temporary narrow gauge lines. The customers were mines, steel plants and all kinds of construction projects from roads to harbours. In 1904 the Western Wheeled Scraper Company designed and built the world's first air-dump railway car, and by 1907 had supplied 700 of them to the Panama Canal Commission.

Book (and Video) Reviews



THE STREET CARS OF OLD ST. JOHN'S

By William Connors

Published by: Creative Publishers, P.O. Box 8660
St. John's, Newfoundland

Price: \$11.95

Review by Fred Angus.

There has been much published in recent times about the Newfoundland Railway and its history. This is understandable in light of the recent abandonment of the system. Less well known, but of considerable interest, is the story of the street car system that served Newfoundland's capital city of St. John's for almost half a century; from 1900 to 1948.

As early as 1889 there was a proposal, by Halifax businessmen, to build and operate a street railway in St. John's. Approval of the scheme was delayed by the Newfoundland Legislature until 1892, and there were further delays. In 1896 a Street Railway bill was passed by the legislature, but Royal Assent was withheld at the request of Sir Francis Evans, receiver for the bankrupt Newfoundland Railway Company, who feared that the street railway might offer competition to the steam railway! Finally, on October 13, 1897 the bill was signed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria and, in February 1898, a contract was signed with Sir Robert Reid (the builder of the Newfoundland Railway) to construct the street railway.

The first rails for the street railway were laid on August 8, 1899, and the first car was delivered on August 24, 1899. There were eight identical cars on the system, single truck 3'6" gauge double-enders. Curiously, although double-ended, they had doors on only one side, a peculiarity shared by their Birney successors of 1925.

These first cars were built by N. & A.C. Lariviere, the well known car builders of Montreal, and they closely resembled the single truck closed cars built by the Montreal Street Railway between 1896 and 1900. Service began on May 1, 1900 and continued until 1948. Some lightly-travelled routes were abandoned as early as 1902, but the rest continued, with slight modifications until the end.

In 1924 the recently-formed Newfoundland Light and Power Company, controlled by Izaak Walton Killam, took over the street railway from the Reid Newfoundland Company, and proceeded to rebuild it completely. The entire system was rebuilt with heavier rail, eight new Birney Safety cars were ordered from the Ottawa Car Co., and the old cars were retired. These eight Birneys furnished the entire service for almost a quarter century more. Finally, in 1948, just before Newfoundland joined Canada, the old street car system was abandoned after serving St. John's well for many years.

In *The Street Cars of Old St. John's*, William Connors gives us an idea, both nostalgically and historically, of what this long-gone street car system was like. The 8 1/2 X 11 inch pages of this 98-page book are arranged in a horizontal format to allow reproduction of the photographs in the largest possible size. There are 42 photographs, most of which are full page, plus one map, two reproductions of notices, as well as pictures of tickets and transfers. Two interesting sentimental poems are also reproduced, one written in 1925 on the demise of the old cars, the other from 1943 when the ageing Birneys were struggling under the wartime overcrowding. There is no car roster, but this is not much of an omission as the roster was so simple (the old cars were numbered 1 to 8, the Birneys were 10 to 17). The photos are arranged in chronological order, starting with views of the powerhouse, tracklaying in 1899, and the start of the service in 1900. The photo coverage shows the old cars in all kinds of weather and service, and depicts the gradual ageing and deterioration of the fleet to the point where they developed extreme sags and bulges at the roofline!

The second part of the book starts with the modernization of 1925, the introduction of the Birneys, and follows the story through the Depression, World War II, and on to the final end of service on September 15, 1948. The last picture is a copy of an offer to sell the eight Birney cars after the service ended.

There is some introductory and explanatory text, but most of the story is told through the medium of contemporary newspaper accounts. These are placed mostly on the left-hand page, while a photograph of the same period is placed, full page and with an informative caption, on the right-hand page. The effect of this procedure is to make the story more intimate and cause the reader to feel that he is actually observing the street railway instead of merely reading about it. Another unusual effect is achieved by underlaying the text on the left-hand page with a faint image of the photo which appears on the corresponding right-hand page. The result is striking indeed and enhances the appearance of the book.

Whether for the street car enthusiast, the nostalgia fan, someone who likes old city scenes, or simply one who wants a nice, well-done work on a little known (to the mainlanders) transit system, *The Street Cars of Old St. John's* is a good buy.

Streetcars of Montreal



STREETCARS OF MONTREAL

By Fred Angus and Olive Wilson

Available from CRHA, Box 148,
St. Constant, Que. J5A 2G2

Price \$13.75 (\$12.75 to CRHA members)

This 80-page bilingual book is a pictorial history of Montreal's street car system from the first horsecars in 1861 to the last day of operation of electric cars - August 30, 1959. The majority of the 160 illustrations in the book are from the collection of Richard M. Binns, one of the longtime members of the CRHA and one of the founders of the Canadian Railway Museum. Although there is a brief introductory history of the Montreal system, most of the story is told by the pictures and their captions. The illustrations are arranged in chronological order of the date the photo was taken, not necessarily the order in which the cars depicted were built. Thus car types which operated at the same time are shown together regardless of their builder's date.

The book is divided into eleven parts, the introductory section and ten chapters, each covering one decade, starting with the 1860's and ending with the 1950's. Many of the early pictures from the horsecar era are line drawings (since few tram photos of that period exist), but coverage of the period after 1885 is mostly by clear photographs. Many of the photos show street scenes, while others depict the rural suburban lines. All these portray vividly how the city and its environs appeared during each of the decades covered. All pictures are fully captioned, and each plays its part in telling the Montreal street car story. Every photo is reproduced by a special fine-screen process and is printed on high quality paper to ensure the highest degree of clarity of these vintage illustrations.

Streetcars of Montreal should appeal to all traction enthusiasts as well as anyone interested in the history of Montreal.



"THE GAFFER"

Produced by Peter Murphy

Available from: CRHA
Box 148, St. Constant Que. J5A 2G2
Price \$27.00

Reviewed by Fred Angus

"The Newfoundland railway may be gone, but it will never be forgotten". Such is the comment at the end of this one hour and forty minute VHS video tape of a trip on Terra Transport's mixed train between Bishop's Falls and Corner Brook on August 14, 1988, only weeks before the abandonment of rail service in Canada's easternmost province.

Now that you have read the story of Robert Reid and the Newfoundland railway in this issue of Canadian Rail, why not "see the movie" and relive the experience of a trip on this scenic line over the spectacular countryside of the Gaff Topsail area of Newfoundland, from which the name of the video is taken? This area, one of the most remote in all of Canada's eastern provinces, was the last in Newfoundland to have passenger service, and the first to have the tracks torn up after the line was abandoned in 1988.

Soon after the announcement was made of the pending abandonment of the railway, the CRHA organized a trip on the last remaining mixed train on the island, and this tape is a record of that excursion. It starts at Bishop's Falls on a rainy Sunday morning (a "soft day" as they would say in Newfoundland) as passengers purchased tickets for the trip. After some shunting, the train starts (one hour late) and proceeds to Grand Falls where there is more shunting while several container cars are picked up. Then on to Badger, where engine and caboose are turned before the trip up to the Topsails. In this video there are scenes from the car platforms, from the cupola of the caboose, inside the cars, and even a rare sequence from the engine cab as the train descends the long grade after the summit. The entire mood of the trip is captured, from the songs

sung by the passengers en route to the comments by the train crew and others about the operating conditions on the line in days long ago and more recently. As Peter Murphy says in the introductory comments "No names have been changed to protect anyone, what you see is how it was".

The high point (both literally and figuratively) of the trip was the run past at the summit, 1551 feet above sea level within sight of Gaff Topsail mountain, and this is fully captured on tape as the train runs by at track speed while photographers capture the scene on film and tape. Following the steep descent, where one can hear the squeal of brakes and see the smoke from the brake shoes, the viewer is treated to a run down the scenic Humber valley and then on to Corner Brook where the historic museum train, with the only preserved Newfoundland Railway steam locomotive, is shown. On the return trip, the train runs up the Humber valley as darkness falls ending the taking of movies for the day.

"The Gaffer" concludes with views in St. John's showing the soon-to-be-abandoned railway facilities together with many of the pieces of now-retired equipment. At the end there are scenes of the loading of the large container ships which have taken over the traffic and put the Newfoundland railway out of business.

The photography in this video is excellent ("bordering on genius" as one critic said), and the picture quality, both inside and out, is very good indeed considering the weather conditions that prevailed at the start of the trip. The sound is excellent, and one can plainly hear the sounds of the train, as well as the comments of the passengers and the songs they played and sang that day. Spoken comment, while fully adequate, is purposely held to a minimum so that the viewers can appreciate the unique sounds of the Newfoundland railway. Altogether "The Gaffer" is a wonderful memento of an era in Canadian Railroading that is, alas, no more.

MONTREAL TRAMWAYS VIDEO TAPE

Produced by Ray Neilson

Available from: GPS Video
Box 5895, Postal Station "A"
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P3
Price \$59.95

This one-hour video tape combines a selection of rare early still photos (many from the CRHA Archives) with full-colour movies of the Montreal street car system in the 1950's. Until 1952, most of Montreal's major routes were still operating, and many of these are covered by films taken by John Mills (1950 to 1955) and Fred Angus (1955 to 1959). In addition, some commentary by authorities on the history of the Montreal system helps to explain the story of Canada's largest urban rail transit system.

The Montreal Tramways Company network was noted for its long stretches of private right-of-way as well as the large variety of street cars on its roster. Even as late as 1950, there were almost 1000 cars, of 30 different classes and sub-classes, on the Montreal system. The company was taken over by the city in 1951 and, during the next eight years, all street cars were replaced by busses.

The 10-minute history of the system, at the start of the video, covers the earlier types of trams from the horsecars of the 1860's and 1870's to the electric cars of the 1930's. Then, after some historical commentary, the movies take the story up to the end of service in 1959. The video concludes with sequences of former Montreal street cars operating at museums including the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson.

Montreal Tramways gives a good view of this interesting transportation network, and is a fine companion to the CRHA's own picture book on the same subject.

STEAM IN THE VALLEY

By Don Loney

This beautiful full colour print, measuring 20 by 28 inches, depicts a Canadian Pacific "Selkirk" class locomotive at the head end of the "Dominion" during the late 1940's. The scene is not a specific location but represents the typical landscape through which this famous and popular train passed on its journey through the Rockies.

The "Selkirks" were 2-10-4 locomotives, of which there were two major types on Canadian Pacific lines. The first type was introduced in 1929 while the second first saw service in 1938. The name "Selkirk" did not come into use until 1938 and was the winning submission in a contest held for CPR employees. The locomotive shown in the picture, number 5934, is one of the latter type. Two of this type have been preserved; 5935 is at the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson, while 5931 is at Heritage Park in Calgary.

The original painting, acrylic on masonite panel, is the property of Gordon and Barbara Belot of Calgary. Barbara's father, Ed (Tod) Currie, had been an engineer on the Canadian Pacific working west out of Calgary.

The artist, Don Loney, presently resides in Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia. He retired from St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish N.S. in 1984 where he had served for 23 years. While at St. Francis Xavier University he established himself as one of Canada's foremost university football coaches, retiring as head coach with a record of 133-31-2. Recognized as the father of Atlantic Universities football, Don has been inducted into the St. Francis Xavier and City of Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame. Prior to joining St. F-X he played professional football in the Canadian Football League with Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Calgary, and in 1989 was inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame. Since taking up the brush in 1965, he has specialized in railroad and marine subjects. His interest in railroads came naturally as his father was an engineer on the Canadian National. His feeling for ships probably resulted from his service with the Canadian Navy and the fact that he has lived close to the sea since he came to live in Nova Scotia in 1955.

More information, prices etc. for "Steam In The Valley" may be obtained from:

Don J. Loney

P.O. Box 128, Sherbrooke, NS, B0J 3C0

CRHA Communications

CRHA CONFERENCE 1990

The 1990 CRHA conference was held in southern Alberta and British Columbia in late August. The following article, by Ruby Nobbs, appeared in the Revelstoke Review on Thursday, September 6, 1990.

A HERITAGE CONFERENCE OF A DIFFERENT KIND

The 1990 conference of the CRHA commenced in Calgary on the evening of August 24 with a get-acquainted reception. Next morning we were off to Champion Park, near Calgary's south boundary. It is a 55 acre private park, owned by a Calgary real estate man who grew up in a railway station where his father was CPR agent for over 40 years. A station, identical to that at Champion Alberta, was moved 60 miles to the site and beautifully restored both inside and out. In front of the station about a quarter of a mile of track has been laid, along with a vintage CPR diesel engine and steel caboose. Parked at the end of the track is the business car "Saskatchewan" [the fourth of that name], completely furnished.

From Champion Park we travelled to High River, visiting its Museum which used to be one-half of Calgary's former sandstone CPR station. (The other half went to a town a few miles south of High River). After looking over High River's collection of railway cars we enjoyed dinner in the beautifully restored CNR dining car - then back to Calgary.

Sunday morning started with an hour-and-a-half conducted tour of Calgary's Light Rapid Transit repair service facilities, followed by a charter tour over the three legs of the LRT line. A shop foreman, who had been called in at overtime pay for our benefit, seemed to enjoy the whole thing as much as we did. After lunch we were driven to Camp Gardener, near Bragg Creek. Here were three exquisite miniature engines, operating on live steam, on a considerable length of miniature track which crossed a grassy "plain" and wound through "forest" groves. The light engine hauled the driver and a caboose. The other two engines could each haul two cars with eight-foot wooden seats on each of which four or five passengers could sit astride. It was a real fun afternoon!

All day Monday was spent at Calgary's Heritage Park. First we inspected the Selkirk steam locomotive 5931 (no longer erroneously numbered 5934) which is in the process of being sandblasted and repainted. Across the road is the restored 7019, one of the CPR's earliest diesel locomotives. It was built in 1944 and is therefore almost five years older than 5931. We were given a conducted tour of the roundhouse and the car shop. Then, on the platform of restored passenger coach number 141, the CRHA 1990 award for the preservation and restoration of railway heritage was presented to Heritage Park for their work on 141. The natural colour of the wooden exterior of this ancient coach now sparkles under its varnish finish. The inside sparkles also, with its polished woodwork, clerestory windows and exquisitely rebuilt rattan seats with backs that swing over so passengers never need to ride backwards.

Throughout the conference, seminars were held on various subjects - the signal project at Champion Park, the history of the CRHA and its early acquisitions, the struggle to save and preserve 7019, the Northern Alberta Railway, the restoration and operation of heritage mobile equipment.

At 8 AM on Tuesday, August 28, delegates departed for Revelstoke and the second section of their conference. They travelled on the old No. 1 highway following the CPR main line through Cochrane and Exshaw to Canmore. First stop was at Banff to have a look at the station. Listening on their scanner they learned that a trainload of sulphur was approaching, so we waited for it to roll by - 50 gondola cars, two robots, then 51 more gondolas. The next stop was to visit the heritage-designated Lake Louise station, and to wave at the crew as the sulphur train went by once more. From the lookout platform at the "Big Hill" it was the sulphur drag that wound around the mountain and through the upper and lower spiral tunnels, for our railway enthusiasts to photograph. We drove in to Field for a brief look at the station and yards.

At Golden we inspected the old railway station at its new location, then went on for a look at the new CPR yards. The interpretive centre at Rogers Pass was much enjoyed, and then came a walk around the site of the historic Glacier House. As we stopped at the bottom of the short access road to view the west portal of the Macdonald tunnel, an eastbound freight came by at just the right time to allow us to get pictures of it entering the tunnel. That evening, Revelstoke's Selkirk Division of the CRHA welcomed the visitors at an informal get-together in the Museum.

Wednesday morning they inspected the site of Revelstoke's proposed Railway Museum and had a look at the CPR yards and what is left of the CPR facilities. They had all heard of the beautiful lawns and gardens that used to be on the hill behind our former heritage station. Alas, these are all gone but fortunately we had coloured postcards we could give them. A drive to Craigellachie, following the main line through Eagle Pass, was much enjoyed, and of course group pictures were taken at the Last Spike cairn. After lunch there was a drive to the Revelstoke dam and the lake behind it, turning off on the way back to view the golf course, the Court House and other heritage buildings. They had a free hour or so to explore our revitalized downtown core before gathering at the home of a Revelstoke member for a bar-b-que supper. By 8:30 Thursday morning they were off for Nelson and Cranbrook, with a visit to the S.S. Moyie at Kaslo on the way.

At the many conferences I have attended I have never seen enthusiasm to equal that of this group, and there was not one railroader in the lot. We had two science professors, one from Vancouver and the other retired from McGill, a corporate lawyer from Toronto, a regional sales manager for a Montreal industrial firm, a data processing manager, an electrical engineer and so on. Their intricate knowledge of railway history and the operation of railway equipment was extensive. The preservation of Canada's railway history is in good hands!

P.S. The Vancouver "Province" of August 30 carried a picture of the freighter "Golden Mizushima" docked at the inner harbour where it had just taken on four unit trainloads of sulphur. One of these trains may be the one we saw going through the Rockies.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The editors, production staff, and all others connected with Canadian Rail, wish all members and readers A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

DOUBLE MAILING

Members have undoubtedly noticed that issues 417 (July-August) and 418 (September-October) were mailed together in the same envelope. The reason was very simple - to save money. Due to our adoption of computer processing, we are rapidly catching up on the backlog with the result that these two issues were ready quite close together. Since our printer was on vacation in mid-summer the two issues were even closer together.

Under the present first-class postage rate it costs (in Canada) \$1.17 to mail one copy of Canadian Rail, whereas two copies can be mailed in one envelope for \$1.56. Hence the mailing of the two issues is reduced from \$2.34 to \$1.56, a saving of 78 cents per member, or more than \$1000 in all. We decided that this kind of money was better spent improving the quality of Canadian Rail, instead of being given to Canada Post, so we opted for the double mailing. We trust that the membership will approve.

PRINCE GEORGE RAILWAY MUSEUM ON TRACK

We have recently received the latest issue of On Track, the publication of the Prince George Railway Museum which is now the CRHA's newest division. This journal reports much progress in the development of the Museum.

The British Columbia Ministry of Social Services and Housing has approved a grant of \$52,224.15 for a work project covering May 24 to October 26, 1990. This project involves clearing land for future expansion, repairing and painting rolling stock, building public washrooms, installing an underground sprinkler system and some landscaping. The Museum has also obtained institutional membership within the B.C. Museums Association.

Early in June, the long-predicted spring flood hit as the combined effect of last winter's heavy snowfall plus the spring's unceasing rainfall caused the Fraser river to overflow its banks. Although the Museum is not on the Fraser it was affected due to its proximity to the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako rivers. However the effect on the Museum was relatively minor, consisting mainly of a partially-flooded parking lot and the temporary conversion of the brand-new turntable pit into a swimming pool! B.C. Rail suffered worse from the rains as a small slide blocked their main line north of Prince George.

A large group of California tourists visited on May 30, and were very impressed with the Museum. One gentleman said "I can't believe it. I've been to railway museums all over North America and I've never seen anything like this. This is a real undertaking.

On June 5 the grand opening of the Museum's new firehall took place. For several years Director and firefighter Warren McLean has spearheaded this project, and on June 5 it all came together. The Hall now sports new flooring, wiring, insulation and a paint job of white with red trim. Inside are gleaming, fully restored and operational, artifacts - numerous hose-carts, a 1918 fire sleigh and a gorgeous 1927 Reo Speed Wagon chemical pumper. A tower attached to the fire hall houses the 1920's fire bell from South Fort George.

The Division has now adopted the official name of The Prince George-Nechako-Fraser division of the CRHA.



JAMES CRACK, LATE MUSEUM VOLUNTEER

Jim Crack brought to the Canadian Railway Museum the skills that he had learned and practised over his many years in the employ of Canadian Pacific as a steam locomotive mechanic. Although Jim was in his eighties, he was very active, particularly on the warmest of days.

Jim's particular interest lay in reinstalling the drive rods of many of our steam locomotives. The rods had been removed before the locomotives were shipped to the Museum in the early 1960's. His skills were especially useful in overcoming the problems precipitated by the nearly 30 years of outdoor storage - seized nuts and bearings. Our locomotives now look as they should, with all rods in place.

Our photo shows Jim in typical position working on CPR 999. The date was August 26, 1987.

Jim passed away on July 14, 1990. May you rest in peace, Jim. We'll miss you.

VICTORIA BRIDGE EXHIBITION IN 1992

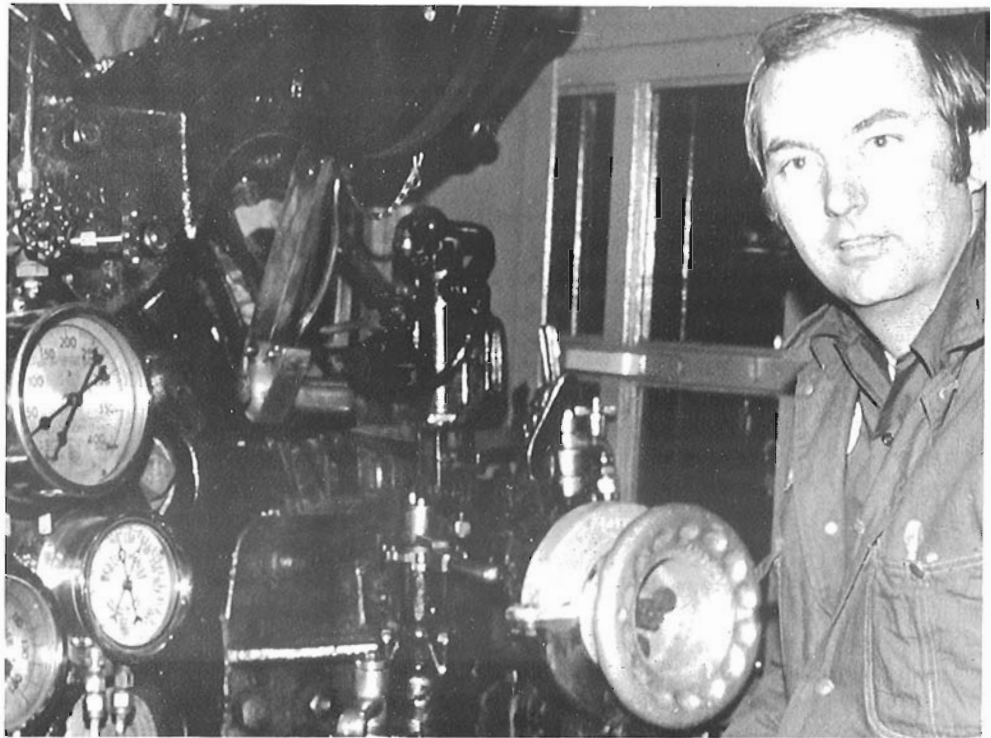
The McCord Museum of Canadian History, situated in Montreal, is presently undergoing a major renovation and will be opening in the spring of 1992 with a series of major inaugural exhibitions. One of these shows, which will also commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding of Montreal, will be a comprehensive exhibition on the Victoria Bridge. The story of its construction across the St. Lawrence River between 1854 and 1859 will be the central theme of the exhibition, which will describe the important role the bridge played in the social history of Montreal in the mid-nineteenth century. This included providing the city with a year-round transportation route to the Atlantic Ocean at Portland Maine. The viewer will also learn something of the economic, political, industrial, social and cultural significance of the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, which linked Montreal with Upper Canada and the American midwest.

Objects from almost every one of the McCord's collections - Costume and Textiles, Painting, Prints and Drawings, Ethnology, Archives, Decorative Arts and, of course, the Notman Photographic Archives - have been selected by the curators for presentation in the exhibition. They range from a gigantic bound engineer's report and engineering drawings, through costumes worn at the Prince of Wales inaugural ball, to numerous photographs and archival documents.

Should any member be in possession of any material relating to the Victoria Bridge, such as photographs, documents or family mementos, Stanley Triggs, coordinator of the project and Curator of the Notman Photographic Archives, would be very happy to hear from you. Mr. Triggs can be reached at (514)-398-7100.

OMISSION

On page 150 of the September-October issue we printed a photo which was intended to portray Mr. Doyle McCormack in the cab of Royal Hudson locomotive 2860 during a visit to Seattle. Unfortunately, some injudicious cropping cut out the guest of honour! We hereby print the picture the way it was supposed to be. We offer sincere apologies to Mr. McCormack, as well as Mr. McGarry, the author of the article.



CP 2850 "THE" ROYAL HUDSON

The Board of directors of the CRHA has approved a plan to restore, cosmetically, former CP locomotive 2850, presently at the Museum at Delson - St. Constant, to the paint and decorative scheme as used during the Royal visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada in 1939.

Mr. Alan C. Blackburn has been appointed Coordinator, 2850 project and, in conjunction with the Canadian Railway Museum, planning is now underway.

In researching this project we find that such materials as stainless steel, Endura paint, woodworking etc. are available to undertake this work. However not all the work can be provided through volunteers; thus skilled craftsmen (and women) will have to be employed where necessary to complete this undertaking. Keeping in mint the aforementioned, this singular locomotive MUST be restored to pristine condition in keeping with its Royal character, and this brings up the point of funding. It is estimated that a suitable restoration will cost approximately \$250,000, of which about \$8000 has already been collected.

To achieve the required amount we will be appealing to members of the CRHA and "Friends" along with fund-raising attractions to realize our goals. The locomotive is intact under cover at the Museum, and restoration will not proceed until the funding is in place.

We would appreciate any colour photos (or slides if they exist) of 2850 in its 1939 Royal paint scheme. This would greatly help the project as well.

ANNUAL AWARDS FOR 1990

For the fourth consecutive year, the Canadian Railroad Historical Association is offering its Annual Awards for 1990. Results of the program will be featured in Canadian Rail, in the newsletters of the divisions and in other rail publications.

Members and all other persons are earnestly requested to participate in this activity as it can only be successful by your making nominations, such that the Association can honour those who do so much to record Canada's rail history.

As in previous years there are five awards: Lifetime Achievement, Preservation, Book, Article in a CRHA publication, Article in a non-CRHA publication.

Please make your nominations as early as possible and before February 28, 1991, attaching any supporting documentation.

Nominations should be sent to:

CRHA Annual Awards
Compartment 132, R.R. 2
Picton, Ontario K0K 2T0

FIRST "HOLE-THROUGH" OF CHANNEL TUNNEL

As we go to press it was reported that, on October 30 1990, a two-inch probe, 300 feet long, was drilled through between the two faces of the Channel Tunnel connecting England and France. The holing through of the full bore is scheduled for early January 1991 when a ceremony will be held. This is the first direct connection under the English Channel and a major and historic step in this project which has been contemplated since the time of Napoleon, almost two hundred years ago.

The Business Car

CN SELLS BRANCH LINE TO TEXAS OPERATOR

Canadian National Railways is selling its 112-kilometre branch line from Stratford to Goderich for \$4 million to Railtex of San Antonio Texas, the largest U.S. operator of short lines, and one that prides itself on running a non-union shop.

This is the first such spinoff of a branch line in Ontario, and the first to a U.S. company. Both CN and CP have earmarked several branchlines for sale as short lines to feed their main lines. The sale has upset the unions and the municipalities involved, but for different reasons. The union is worried because there are at present more than 100 unionized workers operating the line, and the issue of whether a buyer inherits existing labour contracts is now being challenged by an Alberta short line railway before the Supreme Court of Canada. The city of Stratford is concerned that the line remain open because otherwise about 150 trucks a day, carrying salt from the mines at Goderich, would destroy its roads in three months. Stratford had backed the plan of the Ontario Midwest Railway Company Ltd., run by Peter Bowers. Mr. Bowers said that CN rejected his bid because of financing (or lack thereof) and had not given him a chance to rearrange it. CN is not concerned whether the bidder is American or Canadian, but whether he has the wherewithal to keep the line running.

Railtex was founded in 1974 by Bruce Flohr, its chief executive officer, who formerly worked with the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, and with the Federal Railroad Administration in Washington. The company was listed last year as 464th in the 500 fastest growing U.S. companies, with 1989 revenue of \$16.6 million (U.S.) and a projected 1990 revenue of more than \$20 million. It has 1500 kilometres of track and moved 80,000 carloads of freight in 1989.

Source: The Globe and Mail, September 28, 1990.

SMART TRAINS COMING

A 120-car train, carrying toxic chemicals, approaches a graded curve in a suburban community where the track speed limit is 15 miles per hour. The train fails to slow down and derails spilling its deadly load. This is one scenario played out on a computer screen in the Montreal plant of Dynamic Sciences Ltd., the largest locomotive simulator company in the world. The object of the simulator is to develop systems that will consign such real-life disasters to the past.

In the simulator, the engineer sits with the controls flanked on his left; before him are two TV monitors. One screen shows a train moving through Phoenix Arizona, tracks and scenery whizzing past in colour. The second monitor has a split image in which the bottom third features the track configuration and what is coming up ahead - in this case the curve and the steep grade. The train itself is a moving blob in the upper portion of the screen, which also displays the train's speed, the local speed limit, dispatcher's messages and track for the next four miles, including such details as track work being done.

As the speeding train approaches the 15 MPH zone, the screen flashes a warning that a lower speed is required and indicates where the slowdown should start. If the engineer fails to respond, a loud

whoosh is heard as if the air had been let out of the brake system, stopping the train and preventing disaster. The infraction has also been entered on the engineer's record. The system represents an advance in railway technology that observers compare to the leap from steam to diesel locomotives.

Welcome to the world of Advanced Train Control Systems, which can control everything from the running and dispatching trains to signalling and even repairs. By the year 2000, computer controlled trains should be running on about 200,000 miles of track in North America. Canadian National is leading the testing. In 1983 CN, CP Rail, five U.S. railways, the American Association of Railroads and the Canadian Association of railways met in Montreal and decided that technology was available to make trains as flexible as trucks. This year, CN fitted the Level Three ATCS system to BC Northland Railway, a unit of CN, on a 180-mile stretch between Prince George and Harvey which will be fully operational next spring. Level four, the last phase, will involve operations in high-traffic areas. It will cost CN about \$300 million to convert to "smart trains", but the annual benefits will be about \$100 million, not counting customer benefit. Thus the conversion would pay for itself in three years.

The ATCS concept links all the control systems of a train, its route and the configuration of the track on which it will travel, to an on board computer terminal on the locomotive. It puts all the data under the supervision of a central dispatch computer. The on board computer sends a beam of energy to transponders embedded every few miles of track. The transponders are electronic devices designed to receive and relay the train's position to both the central and on board computers. Under the existing system, railways simply estimate the approximate location of a train based on its departure time and reports filed by the conductor at the end of each shift. In its tryout of the ATCS transponders, Union Pacific found that it could pinpoint trains to within 200 feet. The system virtually eliminates the cause of rear-end collisions by eliminating human error. No safety instructions can be ignored.

The central computer eventually would receive information from the 500 freight trains that run daily on 35,000 miles of track. If two trains are headed on a collision course, the computer decides which gets the right-of-way and which is directed to a siding. If two trains are between sidings and neither stops the computers will do the braking for them. CN engineers believe that accidents like the Hinton disaster of 1986 are preventable under ATCS; however safety is just one of several aspects. Because the railways will know where trains are, they can use shorter faster trains and run them closer together.

In terms of wear and tear, the on board computer will monitor such diverse things as wheel bearings and amount of fuel in the tanks, and can advise the engineer and the next station as to whether repairs or fuel are needed. One of the most crucial benefits is that the system uses standard equipment. Thus a train using another railway's tracks will be able to use that carrier's central computer.

Two threatening situations prompted the railways' development of ATCS. Firstly, the 1979 Mississauga derailment and other accidents raised the question of public safety. Secondly, the trucking industry was (and is) quickly gobbling up the freight trade. In Canada, trucks carry almost 70% of the freight while a decade ago railways

carried 70%. The railways' image as an outdated method of transport was such that a few years ago Canada Post took out large ads to announce that the mail was no longer moving by rail [not so in the United States where the U.S. Post Office has re-discovered the benefits of mail-by-rail]. To compete, the railways had to find other advantages besides their ability to move large amounts of freight. They decided they had to be able to predict deliveries accurately and be flexible enough to offer just-in-time delivery. As one CN official said "What pulled ATCS into the forefront was what systems of this nature promise for the future viability of the railway business".

Source: Globe and Mail, September 24, 1990. Zuhair Kashmeri.

PRIVATE RAIL CARS ULTIMATE IN LUXURY

More than 300 Americans have bought their own private railroad cars, one of the most luxurious modes of travel ever invented. No form of transportation had the elegance of the private railroad car as it flourished from about 1880 to the stock market crash of 1929. Recently Amtrak has been encouraging private car ownership again since it is a way of collecting substantial revenue by hitching the cars to regularly scheduled trains.

In their heyday, private cars had three or four staterooms, servants' quarters, a formal dining room, a kitchen and a drawing room that opened onto a brass-railed observation deck. They were known in railroad jargon as "private varnish" because of all the elaborate varnished panelling that lined their interiors. Even at the height of rail travel, there were never more than a few hundred of them. Their occupants often owned the railroad as well as the railroad car, which gave them the privilege of travelling at top speed, all other trains having been cleared from the tracks ahead of them.

Railroad titan Jay Gould owned more than 7000 miles of track, over which he travelled in a convoy of private cars with French chefs, English butlers, secretaries, a barber and a physician. His personal dairy cow rode in a private baggage car. William H. Vanderbilt of the New York Central was asked in 1882 why the trains he maintained for the public were not up to the standard of his own car. He replied with the immortal words "The public be damned". [This is one version of the story. There are others. ed.]

With the decline in railroads after World War II, the number of functioning private cars dropped sharply, until Amtrak revived them. Earlier this year, 12 owners brought their private cars to a conference of private car fanciers in Savannah Ga. The man who organized the gathering was Jack Heard, a funeral director from Fernandina Beach Fla. His car, with its cherry-panelled observation lounge, was originally used by the president of the Georgia Railroad.

Dante Stephensen, an Atlanta restaurateur, lives in his car full-time. It was built for Jessie Woolworth-Donahue. "Sleeping in a moving train is more pleasurable than sleeping still" Stephensen said. "There's a rocking motion. When trains roll past the siding where I'm parked they rock me and I feel like I'm moving".

Source: Montreal Gazette, August 19, 1990.

GANANOQUE STATION DESTROYED

On September 24, 1990 a wind-fanned blaze destroyed the landmark Stationhouse restaurant on the waterfront of Gananoque, causing about \$200,000 damage. The building had been erected in 1929 by the Thousand Islands Railway, owned by Canadian National.

Strong winds were blowing out of the north when the 26-member Gananoque fire department arrived at the restaurant on the shore of the St. Lawrence and found the 61-year-old former railway station engulfed in flames.

Fire Chief Jim Stevenson said he did not know what caused the fire, which also caused about \$2000 in heat damage to the nearby Canada Customs office. No one was injured.

Source: Globe and Mail, September 25, 1990.

MONT LAURIER LINE BEING TORN UP

During the past summer, CP Rail crews began to take up the rails of the famous and scenic railway line to Mont Laurier Quebec. This line, which passes through the Laurentian mountains north of Montreal, had been abandoned earlier this year. An attempt had been made to form a shortline company to take over the line, but this fell through. As a result all the track north of St. Jerome will be removed, so bringing an end to this historic line that served the Laurentians for almost one hundred years.

LAKE ERIE & NORTHERN RAILWAY FAREWELL

Effective August 4, 1990 CP Rail abandoned its London Division, Simcoe Subdivision, having been given permission by NTA order to do so. Since CN had taken over switching at Brantford on August 2, there was no farewell last run to be observed by railway enthusiasts or the news media. The line involved was the former Lake Erie & Northern electric line in which CP had been involved since 1912.

OF STYLE AND STEEL

VIA UNVEILS ITS REBUILT CARS

By Fred Angus

VIA Rail's \$200 million revival of the silvery passenger trains of the 1950's finally began to bear fruit in mid-September as the first train of rebuilt Budd stainless steel equipment began a cross-country promotional tour entitled "Of Style & Steel".

The train consisted of locomotive 6441, baggage car 8604, coach 8104, Skyline dome car 8515, dining car EMPRESS, sleeper ELGIN MANOR and dome observation car TREMBLENT PARK. It was first shown to the public in Montreal on September 21, and is scheduled to visit Moncton, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Regina and Vancouver.

The program to rebuild the stainless-steel cars was announced in 1987 after it was decided not to follow the example of Amtrak and purchase new double-decker equipment. When the massive cuts in VIA service were announced in October 1989, many feared that the car-rebuilding program would also be curtailed. Happily, this is not the case and the program, although a year behind schedule, has now begun to produce tangible results. A major reason for the delay is that the project is, as VIA says, a "labour of love" of unprecedented scope in which design work alone took two years as engineers prepared 1600 technical drawings.

VIA is banking on the restored cars to cut losses and to recapture part of the leisure travel market, especially across the Rockies. But it will need three more years to convert the entire fleet. By the spring of 1992, all cars for the Toronto - Vancouver run should be converted, while those for the two Maritimes runs should be ready about a year later.

Since the service cuts in January 1990, the number of passengers carried on the VIA system has declined to little more than half that of 1990, a somewhat greater decline than had been anticipated by VIA. The decline is, however, not surprising in view of the ill advised "pruning" of the feeder lines, as well as the increase in fares. Another factor in the decline in ridership is the extreme negative publicity given to VIA by the news media in the wake of the service cuts. Many people think that all passenger trains are gone, and one VIA official said that the biggest problem now is to convince the public that VIA is still in business. Just recently your editor heard a comment, on the morning show of a well known Montreal radio station, that they once used to announce the arrival times of trains but now "there are no more trains"! Hopefully the introduction of the "new" equipment will help to dispel this attitude.

The plan now is to push VIA into a more expensive segment of the market and capture more of the leisure business. This seems to be a sound idea in view of the fact that those who are simply travelling a long distance will probably fly, while those going a short distance will drive. The long-distance passenger train will take on the character of a cruise ship, and will cater to older, affluent foreign tourists who would go on a cruise or ride such trains as the Orient Express. This may mean a further fare increase from the already-high \$397 (plus \$280 for a sleeper) fare from Montreal to Vancouver, but may also include further first class services. In some ways this would be a return to the days of long ago when the railways provided first class luxury services at prices well above those which the average passenger could afford. VIA hopes that all this, as well as less maintenance on the rebuilt cars, will cut its operating expenses by \$20 million per year. Many people will miss the reduced fares which once existed (thanks to heavy government subsidies), but one must realize that this is 1990, not 1960, and the days of cheap long-distance rail travel in Canada are over. As one VIA spokesman said "This is not a museum piece running from one end of the country to the other. It is a train that means business and is business".

As most railway enthusiasts know, the cars being rebuilt are the stainless-steel passenger cars built by the Budd Company in Philadelphia for the Canadian Pacific Railway in the years from 1953 to 1955. They were intended for the new improved transcontinental train "The Canadian" which was operated by CP from 1955 to 1978, and by VIA from 1978 to 1990. The present VIA transcontinental train uses the same name but runs on a different route. At the time they went into service, Budd claimed that these cars were among the finest in the world, and the ensuing thirty-five years have proved them right. Although they were getting old, their basic stainless-steel structure was always sound and it seemed that they could be brought up to date if it was ever decided to do so. Now it is being done, the cars are being rebuilt from top to bottom and the obsolete steam heat has been replaced by modern head-end power (fully compatible with Amtrak and other modern passenger railways); in short the equipment is being brought up to the standards of the late twentieth century.

The first impression one gets on seeing the train is that of meeting an old friend that has been magically rejuvenated. Walking through the cars, one cannot help but compare the train to the "Canadian" of 1955. Much of the ambience that made that train so attractive is still there. The dome cars, the Mural Lounge, the dining cars with their glass partitions containing edge-lighted pictures of birds, sleeping cars with a variety of accommodations (even some open sections), and numerous small details such as those neat stands in

the observation car, designed to hold glasses steady as the train rounded curves, all these have been retained. In the diner, the tables were set as if for a meal and one could almost hear the jingle of the silverware (yes, it was real silver plate in 1955) as the pieces vibrated against each other while the train sped on. The first impression is that of being transported back to 1955 and seeing the "Canadian" new again.

Soon the realization comes that this is not the "Canadian" of 1955, but is a new train of the 1990's. The first thing noted is the absence of the steam pipe and the hissing of escaping steam. This anachronism from the steam locomotive is gone and is replaced by a 440-volt electric system drawing its power from a generator in the locomotive. Strangely this feature, one of the most important of all, was not emphasized in the publicity releases concerning this train. The coach seats are more comfortable and have retractable shelves, a feature borrowed from the airlines. In each sleeper there is one less open section because the space is now occupied by a shower available to all sleeping car passengers. In the mural lounge there are once again original paintings by well known Canadian artists. They are quite different from the old ones and just as attractive in their frames and protected by plexiglas. All the paintings intended for the "Park" cars (except for the one installed in "Tremblent Park") were displayed in a large tent adjacent to the train. The electrically-operated stoves and other appliances in the dining car galley should make life easier for the crew and still provide first class meal service to the passengers. In the "Park" dome car is a clock with multiple faces showing the time in most Canadian time zones (even Newfoundland time is shown). The loudspeakers are still in the dome cars, and one hopes that the public-address and music system will be revived after being silent since the 1970's. Not visible, but of greater importance, are the new brake and suspension systems which will ensure a smoother and safer ride.

Some people will certainly criticize the spending of about a million dollars per car to refurbish equipment that will, after all, still be 35 years old, and perhaps this criticism is justified. In a future issue we hope to discuss more the pros and cons of ordering Superliner equipment. One major advantage is being able to carry many more passengers without increasing the number of cars per train, and hence the charge by the railways. However the cost of the rebuilding will still be much less than that of new equipment and will result in passenger cars that are, to all intents and purposes, new. VIA, and the designers of the rebuilding program have shown a certain element of genius in that they have succeeded in reconciling two widely different goals. They have created a train with the technological features of the 1990's while still retaining those features that made this equipment so attractive three and a half decades ago.

One year ago there was much despair and the feeling that the passenger train in Canada was headed toward extinction. While this apprehension is still very much present, the "launch" of the new equipment shows that VIA means business in its attempts to fight back and upgrade the service. Whether this attempt will be successful remains to be seen but with more help and cooperation, less government interference and less negative comment from the news media and others it has a chance of success. On seeing the train one could not help but recall the words of Thomas Storrow Brown who was present at the opening of the Champlain & St. Lawrence Rail Road in 1836. On that occasion he said "We are so accustomed to see things done ill that a work well done is a miracle". The rebuilt passenger cars appear to be a work well done; the future will tell if they will be the miracle needed by Canada's passenger rail system.

MONTREAL COMMUTER SERVICE LIKELY TO WORSEN

On October 15, 1990 four more cars from the Montreal - Deux Montagnes commuter line were removed from service due to poor condition, but a CN official says that this will be only the beginning of headaches for commuters. Under the terms of a 1982 agreement between CN and the Quebec provincial department of transport, CN will shut the line down completely in 1992 if the province doesn't upgrade it by then. The trouble is that if they started tomorrow it would take three years to modernize the line. The start of work is being held up until "an environmental impact study is completed and complex jurisdictional questions are ironed out" [translate this as "red tape"]. Altogether the various authorities need four years to do a job with a two-year deadline; thus they are two years late already. The line has never been upgraded since 1918 when the first Canadian Northern trains began running between Montreal and Deux Montagnes (then known as St. Eustache sur le Lac). The first locomotive that passed through the tunnel in 1918 is still in regular service. The electrical system is 72 years old. Replacement parts must be hand crafted by CN artisans because no one sells them any more. A worldwide search for a type of brake shoe turned up some in China where CN had to pay eight times the normal price for such a part.

In August 1988 then transport minister Marc-Yvan Cote said that \$175 million would be devoted to modernizing the line. This June, the transport department said the overhaul would happen "with the briefest delay". But nothing is happening now except technical studies. They've been doing studies for 20 years. Another study isn't going to get anything done.

Source: Montreal Gazette, October 11, 1990.

Editors note: Whichever way this situation turns out, the CN electric service will not continue in its present form for much longer. Railway enthusiasts are advised to ride the line, and take photos and videos of this truly vintage electric operation, while they still can.

THE END OF NS&T CAR 130

Back in 1914 the Preston Car & Coach company built six large arch-window interurban cars for the Niagara St. Catharines and Toronto interurban line. These were among the last of this truly classic type of interurban design, for in the same year World War I broke out, and soon the interurban industry began its long decline into near-extinction. The first of these cars was retired in 1935 and the last, number 130, was taken out of service in 1954, five years before the end of all electric service on the NS&T. An excellent account of these cars appeared in Canadian Rail number 231, April 1971.

Car 130 was shipped to the "Rail City Museum" at Sandy Point New York where it remained for thirty-five years. Rail City had been established by a Syracuse dentist as a part of his extensive real-estate holdings but, for various reasons, had languished. By 1964 the property appeared run-down, although the museum was

still in operation, and car 130 had been severely vandalized. Subsequently, the operation closed down and it was believed, as early as 1971, that 130 had been scrapped.



NS&T car 131, identical to 130, at St. Catharines on July 22, 1948. CRHA Archives, Toohey Collection 48-368.

In actual fact 130 had not been scrapped, but was gradually decaying as the surrounding vegetation slowly reclaimed the site until it reached the condition where it "resembled the Maya archaeological sites of Central America" as one enthusiast put it. In 1989 the Seashore Trolley Museum of Kennebunk Maine, as part of "Operation Last Roundup", an effort to make an attempt to preserve some of the significant electric railway artifacts still around, visited what was left of Rail City. Most of the former exhibits were gone, but old 130 still remained. An inspection revealed that it was too much deteriorated to save, for the small hardware was gone, the woodwork rotted and the roof caved in. As a final indignity, some vandals had sawed through every window-post with a chain saw.

It was not quite the end of the story, however, for the original Taylor trucks under 130 were still good. Seashore had recently acquired the body of Rochester and Sodus Bay car 113, built in 1899, and thus one of the oldest interurban cars in America. It did not have trucks, and it required just the type that were under 130. The owner of Rail City, convinced at last that the car was indeed beyond repair, donated the trucks to Seashore. On September 12, 1989 the trucks were removed and soon brought to Maine. The original plan was to tip the car body on its side but, out of respect for the old veteran, it was jacked up, the trucks removed, and then it was left upright. At last report, what was left of 130 is still in existence, twenty years after it was believed to have been scrapped, but it is certainly too far gone to save and is slowly disintegrating. It is sad indeed that one of Canada's finest interurban cars is ending its career this way, but we are thankful that its trucks will give new life to a really significant car - a rare interurban of the 1890's, the decade when the industry began.

BACK COVER: All Aboard for Newfoundland! Sixty-five years ago, five-eighths of the entire fleet of Birney cars for the Newfoundland Light & Power Company were pictured at Montreal harbour being loaded on a barge prior to being transferred to a ship for the trip to St. John's. The date was October 27, 1925. National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection PA-164734 and PA-164730.

