



# Canadian Rail

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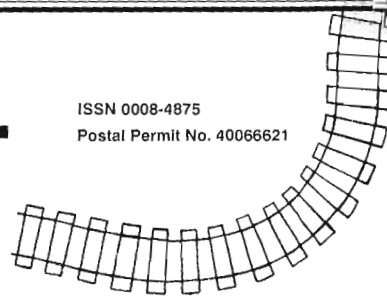
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*FRONT COVER: British Columbia Railway Royal Hudson 2860 was photographed at the northern terminus of its run at Squamish B.C. on July 7, 1996. Photograph Fred Angus.*

*BELOW: End of the line for Canadian Pacific 2860 which is stored in the scrap line at Winnipeg's Ogden Shops. This is the condition of the locomotive when it was 'discovered' and eventually saved. Photo CRHA Archives, Fonds Corley.*

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EDITOR: Fred F. Angus

CO-EDITOR: Douglas N.W. Smith, Peter Murphy

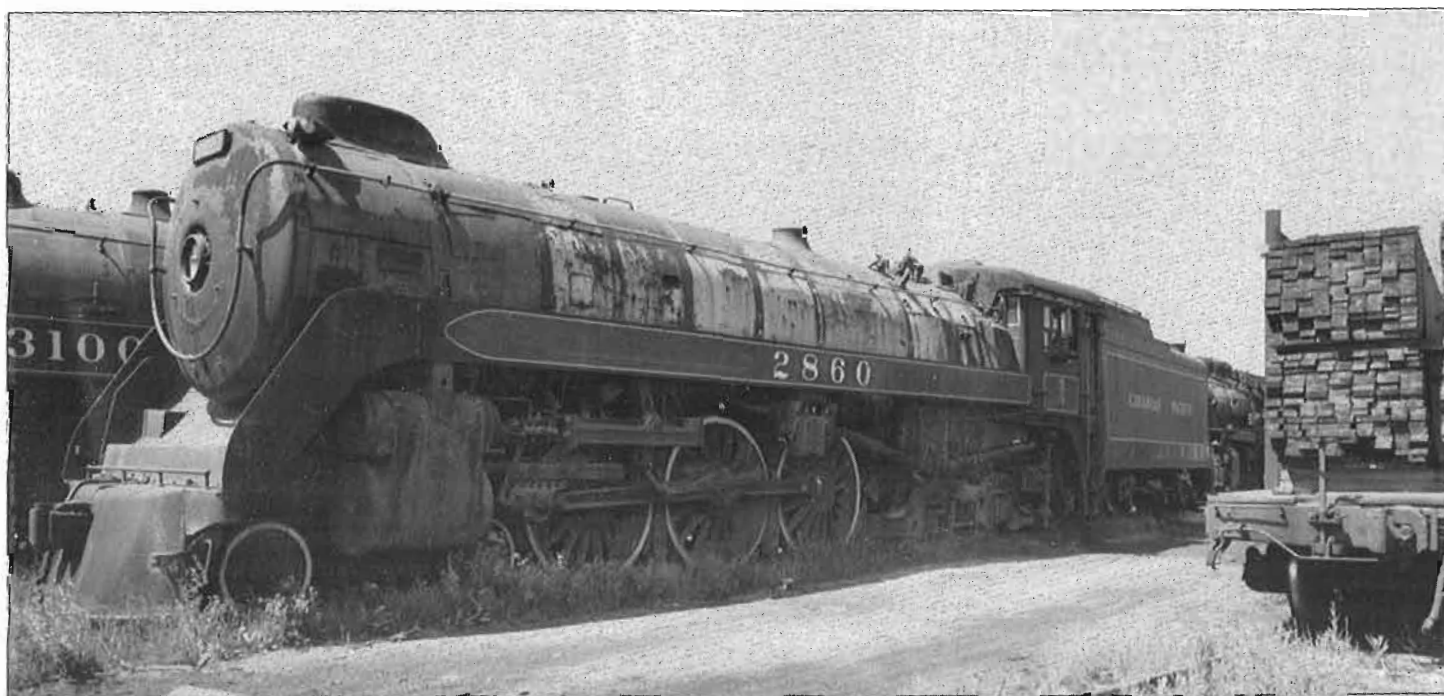
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# The Story Of Canadian Pacific Royal Hudson No. 2860

By Don Evans

## Canadian Pacific's Royal Hudsons

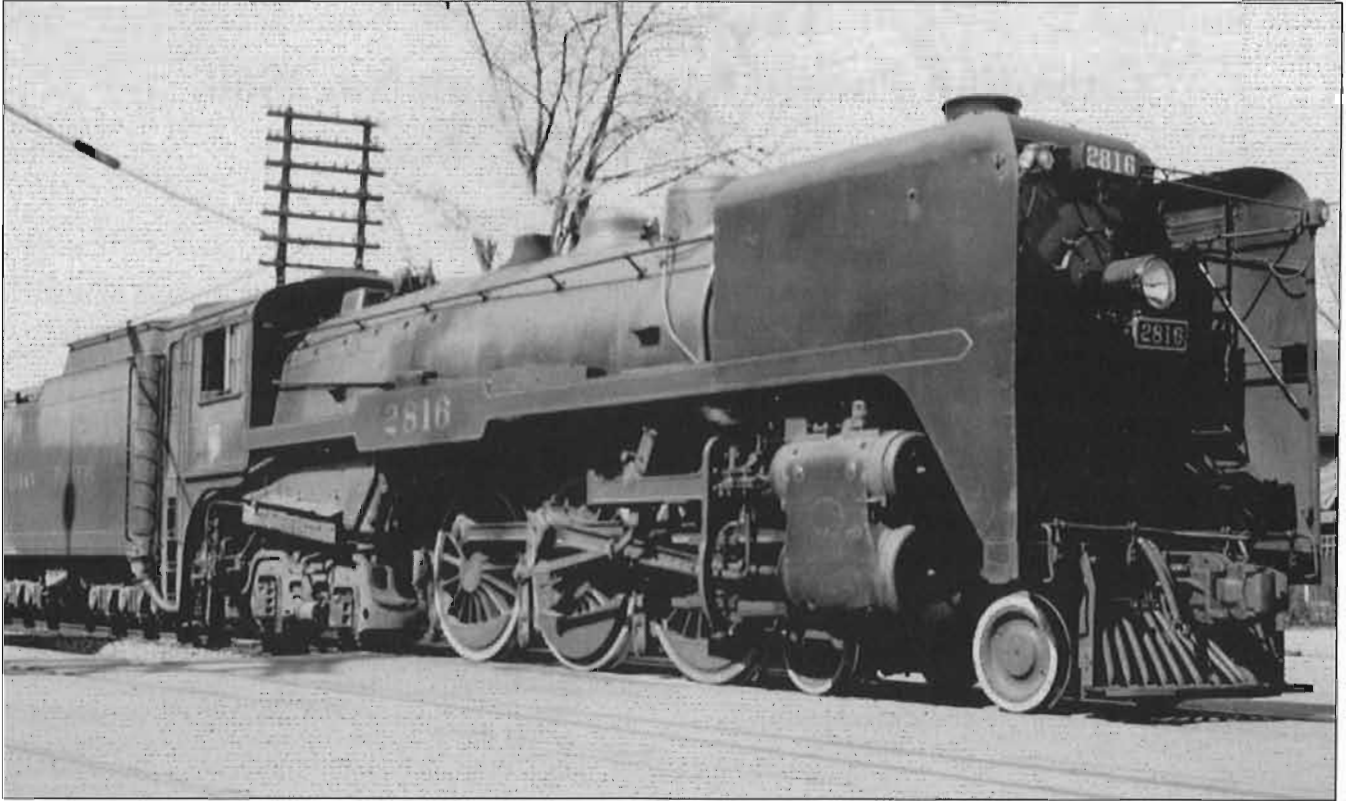
The Canadian Pacific Railway received its first "Hudson class" locomotive in 1929, when builder Montreal Locomotive Works delivered #2800. The big 4-6-4 wheel configuration locomotives were the latest in high-speed passenger mainline locomotives for the railway, and were successful from day one. The class name "Hudson" came from the New York Central Railroad in the US, the first to use the 4-6-4 wheel arrangement, naming the class after the Hudson River. The first 20 CPR Hudsons were conventional in style, and were built in 1929 and 1930, numbers 2800 through 2819.

In 1937, the railway opted for more Hudson class locomotives, an additional 45 locomotives in three subclasses were added to the locomotive roster between the

fall of 1937 and mid 1940. These 45 Hudsons were given the 'Bowen' streamline treatment. Henry Blane Bowen was appointed Chief of Motive Power and Rolling Stock in 1928. British by birth, he was instrumental in the establishment of the CPR's 'streamline motif' for which the railway became famous. The Hudsons were constructed with the same 'rounded and smooth lines' treatment that had been applied to the CPR's class F2a 4-4-4's in 1936. Many have called them the most beautiful steam locomotives in North America. Again the design was successful, and in 1937 the CPR took delivery of 30 units (H1c 2820 –2849), 10 units in 1938 (H1d 2850 – 2859) and 5 units in 1940 (H1e 2860 – 2864).



*CPR Hudson class H1A, road numbers 2800 to 2809, 10 units built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1929. 2803 was photographed on June 28, 1936 and is decorated to celebrate the 50th. anniversary of the first CPR transcontinental train in 1886. Photo CRHA Archives, Fonds Corley.*



*CPR Hudson class H1b, road numbers 2810 to 2819, 20 units built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1930. 2816 was caught by J. R. Lee at Chatham, Ontario on May 6, 1946. Photo CRHA Archives, Fonds Corley.*



*CPR Hudson class H1C, road numbers 2820 to 2849, 30 units built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1937, these were the first Hudsons to be given the 'Bowen treatment'. 2830 was photographed hauling a freight at Winnipeg, Manitoba in July, 1948. Photo CRHA Archives, Fonds Corley.*



*CPR Hudson class H1d, road numbers 2850 to 2859, 10 units built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1938. After pulling the Royal train across Canada, 2850 was exhibited at the New York's World Fair in 1939. Photo CRHA Archives, Fonds Corley.*



*CPR Hudson class H1e, road numbers 2860 to 2864, 5 units built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1940. 2862 was officially photographed at MLW prior to delivery in 1940. Photo CRHA Archives, Fonds Corley.*

In 1939, streamlined CPR Hudson #2850 was assigned to handle the Royal Train from coast to coast, for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother). The Royal Train was impressive, and the Royal couple was impressed that a single steam locomotive could handle the train such a distance without engine changes (as would have been common practice in that era). CN, for example, on the return trip eastward used three different locomotives. The CPR's streamlined Hudson operated flawlessly the entire distance.

Following the Royal tour, Canadian Pacific applied for and was granted permission to designate the entire class of streamlined Hudson locomotives as "Royal", with permission of the Royal family for these magnificent engines to wear the Royal family crown on their running boards. They have been "Royal Hudsons" ever since, the only locomotives outside of Great Britain to be permitted the Royal designation.

#### **Royal Hudson No. 2860 on the CPR (1940 – 1956)**

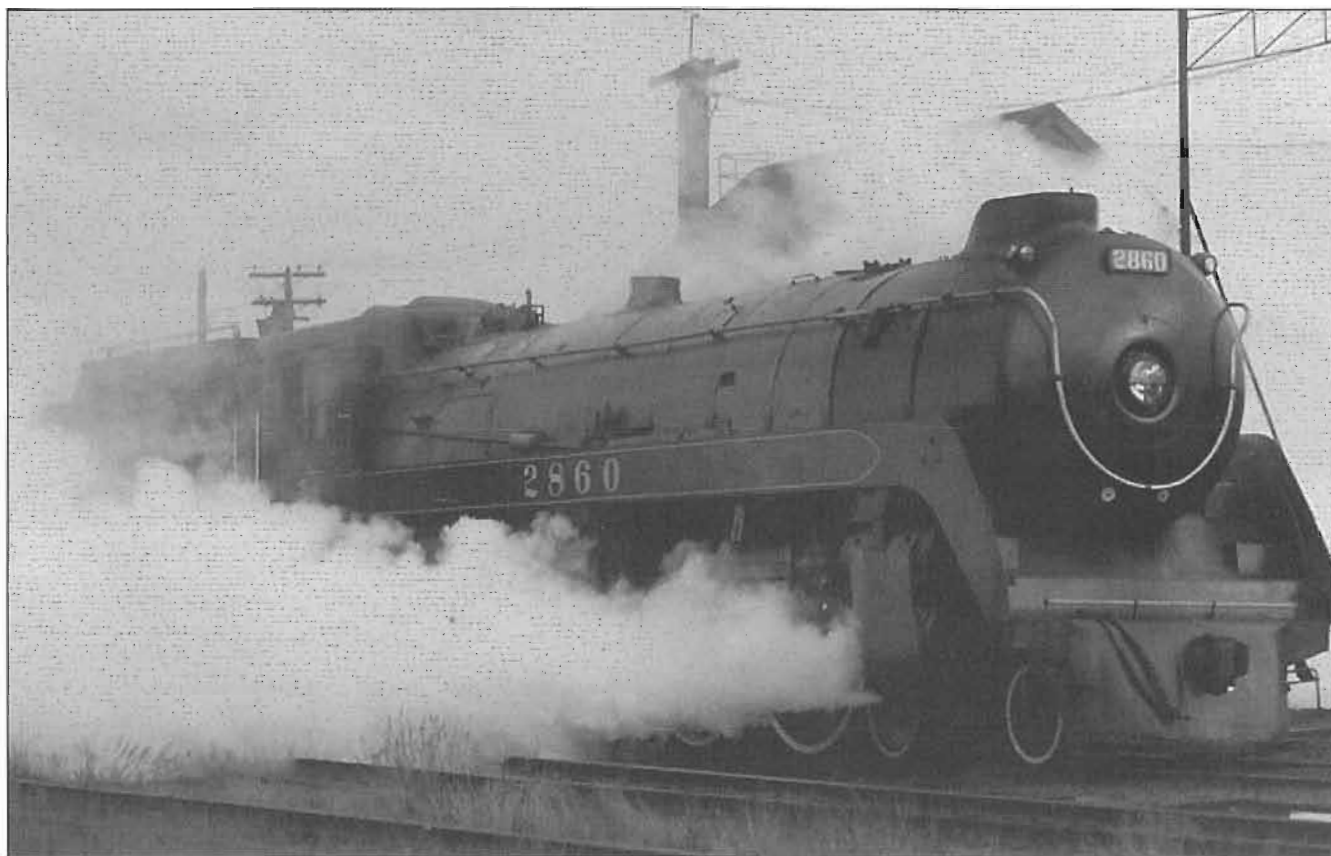
Royal Hudson #2860 was the first of the last group of five Royal Hudson locomotives for the CPR, built in June 1940 by Montreal Locomotive Works. These last five were numbered 2860 through 2864, and incorporated the latest in steam technology. Royal

Hudsons now were operating all across Canada, but the last five were built as oil burners (vs. coal) for use in the mountains and forests of the west. #2860 spent most of its career on the CPR mainline, operating between Revelstoke and Vancouver. Their career on the railway was short-lived, as steam was retired in 1956 and these great engines were relegated to the scrap line, replaced by modern streamlined diesels. They represented, however, the last great modern steam technology on the railway, and were assigned the highest profile passenger service roles, usually on the transcontinental trains.

#### **No. 2860 Is Saved (The First Time – 1964)**

Most steam locomotives were scrapped, and such was the fate of the Royal Hudsons as well. CPR's corporate records showed them all as retired by 1960 and off the company roster by 1966 (the last Hudson to be scrapped by the CPR was 2827, cut up in June 1966). The famous #2850 had been preserved and donated to the Canadian railway Museum (now Exporail) in Saint-Constant, Quebec. This impressive locomotive forms part of the centerpiece of Exporail's new exhibition.

In the early 1960's, a group of railfans visited the scrap line in Winnipeg and discovered – to their amazement – Royal Hudson #2860 sitting forlornly in



*2860 is saved for the first time and after a complete re-build was photographed at CPR's Drake Street facility in Vancouver in 1974. Photo Bob Booth.*

that line, not yet cut up for scrap. Efforts were started to see if the engine could be saved, and a museum group in Vancouver formed with the intent of rescuing the engine. They had to convince the CPR with photographs that it really did still exist, and with the help of the City of Vancouver as well, #2860 was saved from the scrap line and brought to Vancouver.

The locomotive was cosmetically restored and painted, and was displayed on several occasions in Vancouver, but things never went any further, political winds changed, and #2860 once again found itself languishing - this time in CPR's Vancouver roundhouse.

#### **Royal Hudson in Tourism Service (1974 – 1999)**

In the early 1970's, British Columbia Premier Dave Barrett had an idea for a new tourist attraction for the Province, a revival of the steam era with a tourist train run on the provincially owned British Columbia Railway. The Province assembled a team of people, led by Robert E. Swanson, to oversee the project. CPR steam crews at the Vancouver roundhouse carried out restoration work,

and in June 1974, the Royal Hudson steamed back into service on a five day a week round trip excursion between North Vancouver and Squamish, B.C.

The excursion was immediately successful, and for the next 25 years the summer season service operated regularly carrying over 1 million happy passengers and generating an estimated \$300 million in economic benefit. The Royal Hudson became a tourism icon of British Columbia, known around the world, and one of the Vancouver area's top ten attractions.

After a charter trip in 1999, operated by the West Coast Railway Association for a convention, the locomotive was once again put away for the winter. This time, however, her winter inspections were not successful and the beautiful locomotive was deemed unfit for further service until a rebuild could be done. As the BC Rail steam shop was fully engaged on a major steam contract to rebuild CPR's 2816, the Royal Hudson was set aside for a rebuild slated for 2001 / 2002 after the contract work was completed.



*Southbound at Britannia, Don Evans caught 2860 in action along the shore of Howe Sound.*

### No. 2860 Is Saved (The Second Time – 2002)

A change in government in British Columbia again brought a change in plans. The new government took a decision to not continue to support the steam program at BC Rail, and further, as the railway's sole shareholder, changed the railway's course as a business. Suddenly, anything not directly economic was shelved. While the Royal Hudson steam tourist operation could be shown to create positive economic benefit overall, it did not generate direct immediate financial return to the railway.

The "Hudson Excursion" train operated with vintage diesel locomotive #4069 (leased from the West Coast Railway Association) for the 2000 and 2001 seasons, then BC Rail announced that the excursion train would not operate at all in 2002. The Province of British Columbia decided to put the Royal Hudson up for disposition; meanwhile the locomotive sat in storage in North Vancouver.

The West Coast Railway Association got to work and, with partnership from the District of Squamish and strong support from the Vancouver tourism community,

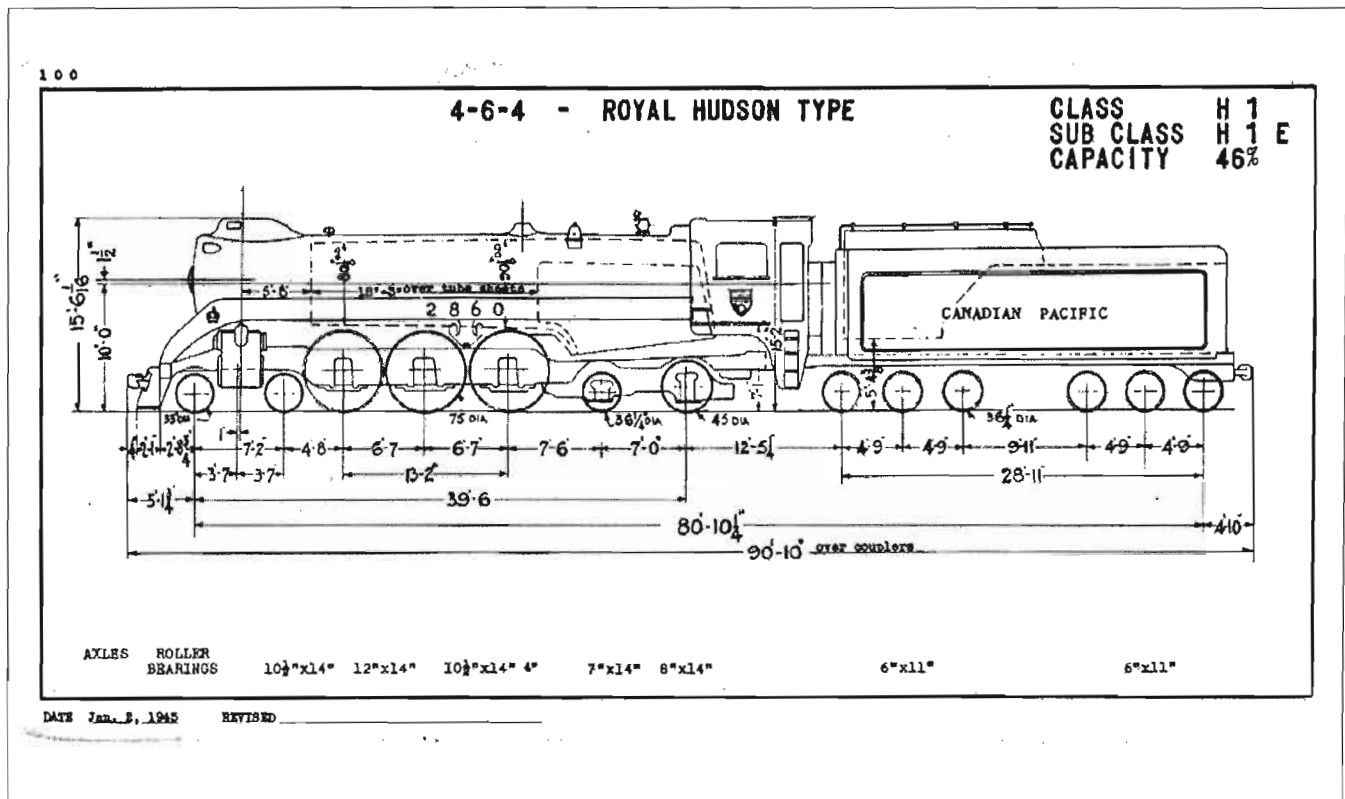
developed a private proposal to acquire and preserve Royal Hudson #2860 for restoration and return to operation. Presentations were made to the Ministers responsible in January 2002, and in March the Province of BC agreed to the proposal. On May 13, 2002, the WCRA's vintage diesel #4069 went to North Vancouver and pulled the Royal Hudson to Squamish, and into the West Coast Railway Heritage Park where it was immediately cleaned up, painted up and preserved from further deterioration, and went on display to the public. The locomotive remains owned by the Province, and is on a long-term (30 years with renewals) lease to Squamish/WCRA.

The Royal Hudson Preservation Fund commenced in July of 2002 accepting donations towards the return to steam of the locomotive. In 2004, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD Canada) kicked in \$110,000 towards the new parts needed, and at present almost \$200,000 has been amassed allowing the needed parts fabrication to get underway. By the end of August 2005 the boiler had been disassembled and parts delivery was underway, with a target to complete boiler rebuild and testing by the end of 2005.



*After 1999, 2860 was stored out of service in Vancouver and finally moved to WCRA's museum in Squamish in 2002. From 2002 until 2005 the locomotive was on display outside the MacNorris station. Photo Greg Chadwick.*





CRHA Archives, Fonds MLW

**Restoration Plans**

While Royal Hudson #2860 enjoyed its new public life as a primary attraction at the Heritage Park, efforts began to assess the work required to return her to steam. After careful review by many steam experts, it has been determined that the current boiler can, in fact, be repaired and the estimated cost for this work plus the re-bricking of the firebox is \$500,000. These first phase repairs should allow the 2860 to return to steam operation for a period of 10-15 years. Corporate sponsorships are being sought in 2005 to further support this work to return our Royal lady of steam to the rails.

Plans are to then generate further funding while the engine operates again under steam, for a future major overhaul project estimated to cost up to \$2 million. This would be anticipated to be done in the 2015 time frame, and would then render the engine operable for at least another 50 years. Royal Hudson #2860 is currently the only operable Royal Hudson (2816 is an unstreamlined Hudson, and 2839, 2850 and 2858 are not in operating condition), and would thus be preserved for future generations as a working icon of the steam era in Canada, and a self supporting tourism generator for British Columbia.

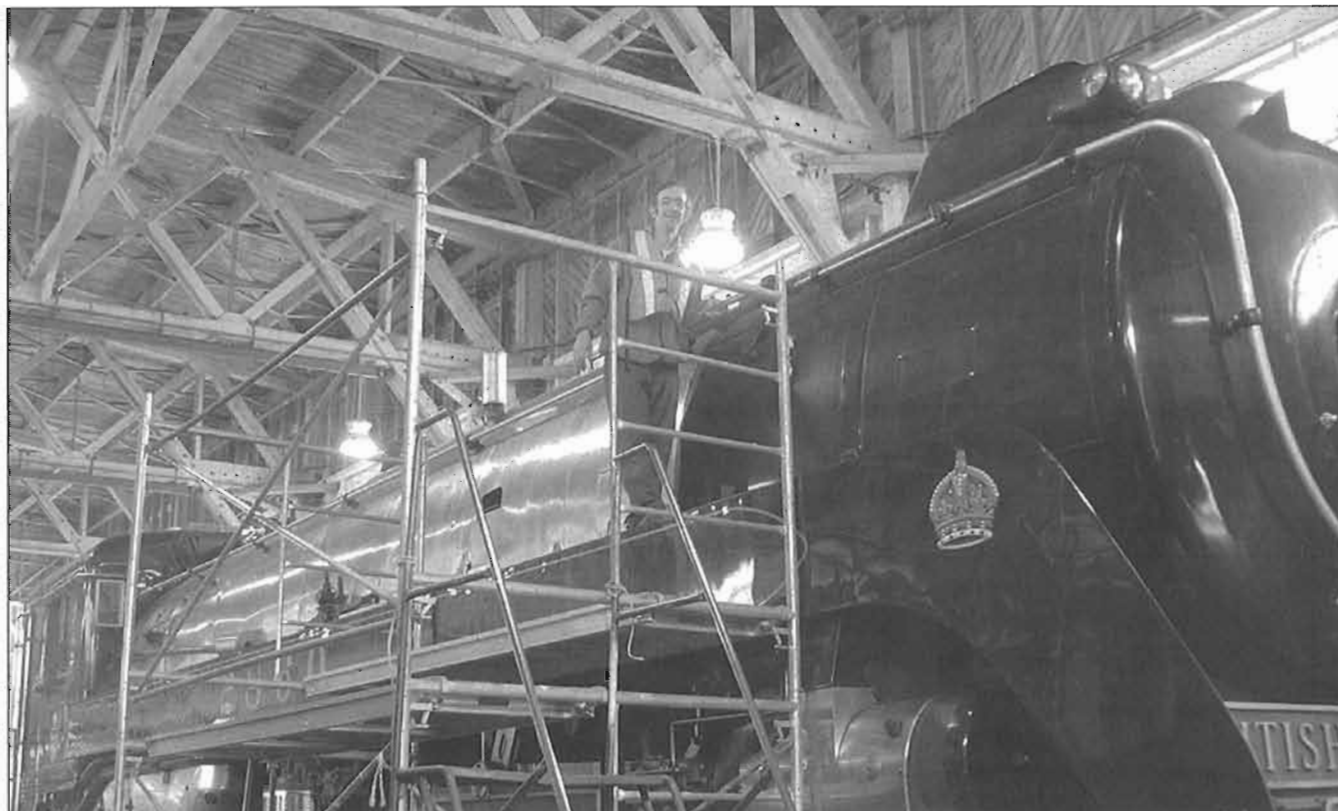
**The Future**

Royal Hudson #2860 is now secure and faces an exciting future. As part of Canada's second largest collection of heritage railway rolling stock, she has a place of prominence at the head of the WCRA's collection. With a full service restoration shop on site, her future looks bright. And, WCRA's self supporting business model assures her preservation for future generations.

Plans are to use the Royal Hudson #2860 on specialty rail tours (something the WCRA has 40 years of experience with) starting in 2006 and also for the classic engine to play a major role in the planned 2010 Winter Olympics as both a promotional vehicle as well as a unique transportation service during the Games themselves.

It is important that the era of steam railroading in Canada be preserved, and an operating steam locomotive is the only way to truly appreciate this era of technology and what it meant to the development of our country. That's the story the West Coast Railway Association tells at its attraction and in its educational programs, and Royal Hudson #2860 is the lead part of that story.

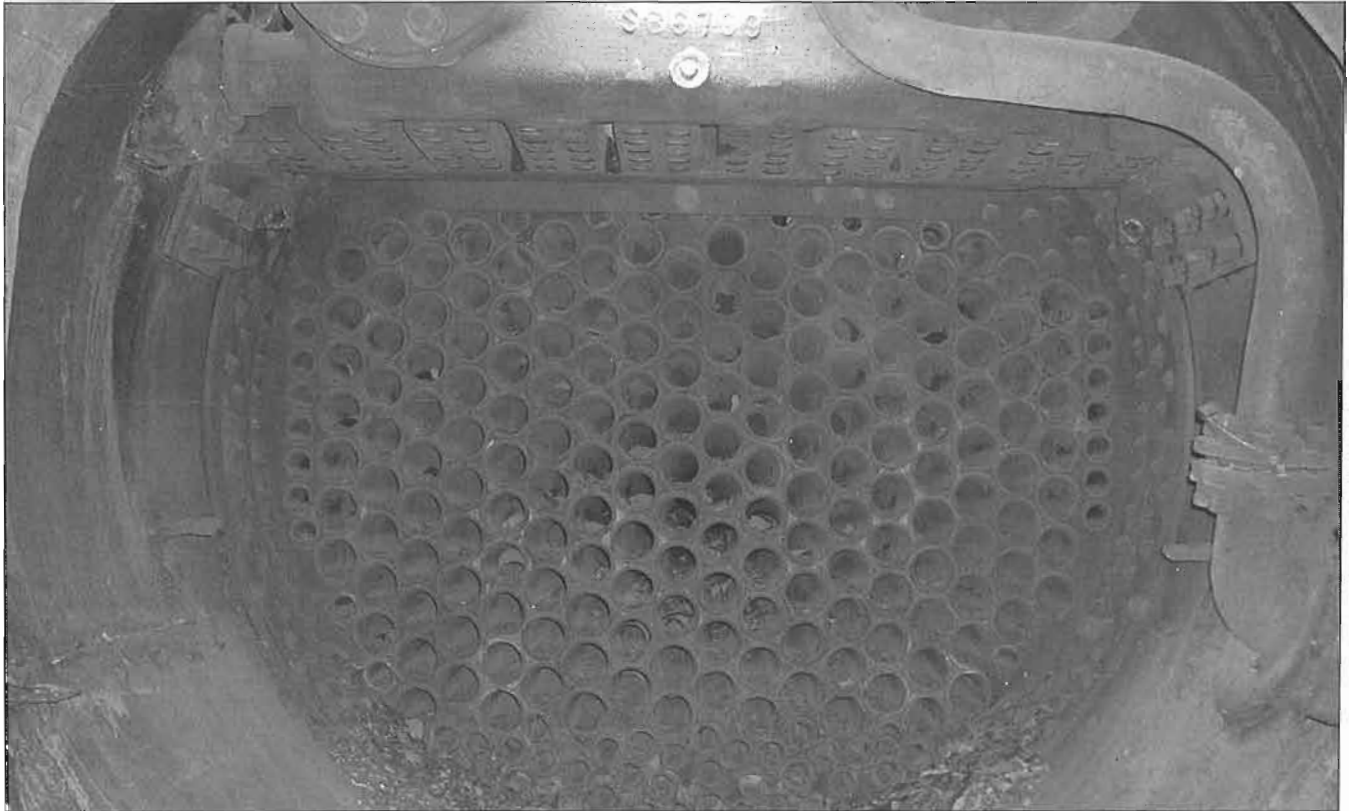
The steam locomotive remains the most fascinating machine ever developed by man, and draws crowds wherever it goes. Royal Hudson #2860 will remain a prime example of this technology for millions to enjoy.



July 7, 2005, 2860 enters the WCRA shop and the dismantling process is about to begin. All dismantling photos courtesy Randy Lucas, WCRA.



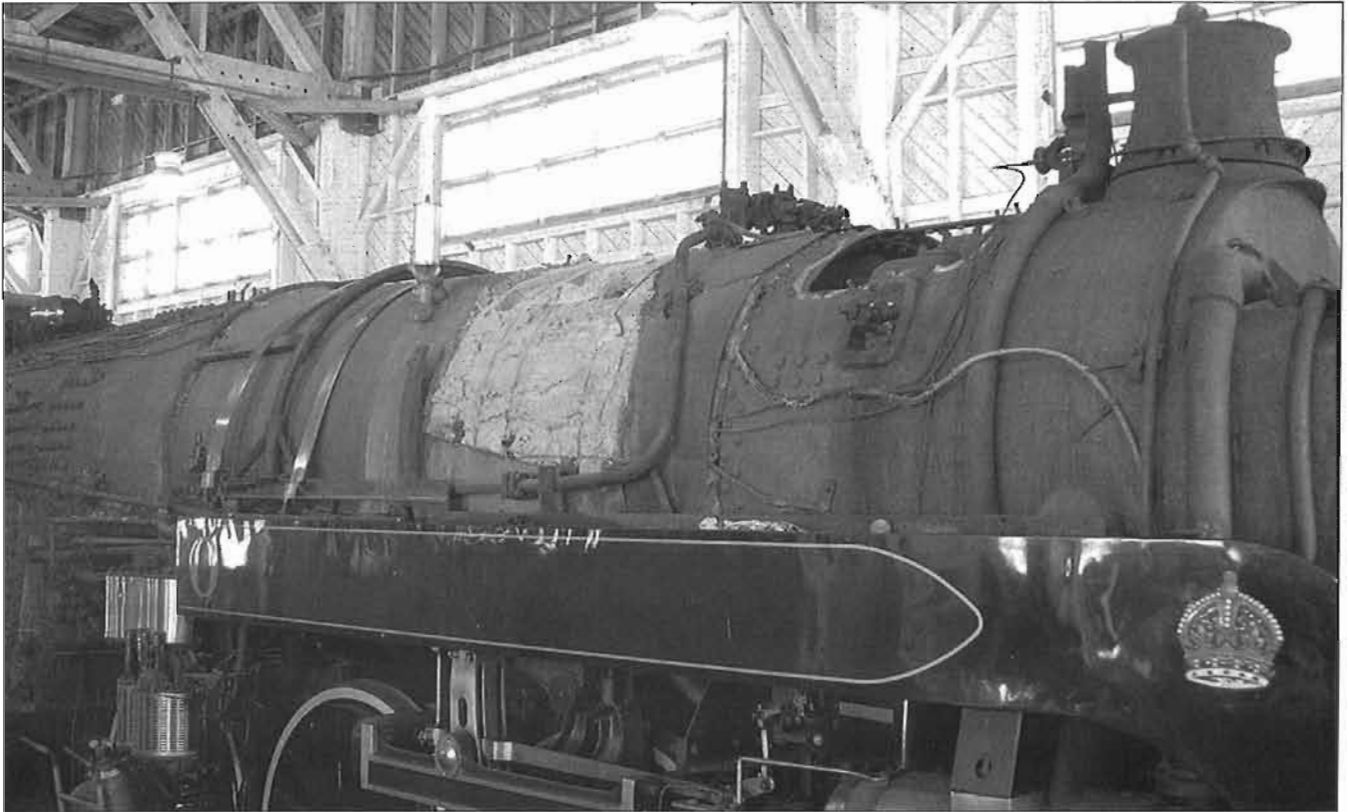
July 12, 2005, the superheater.



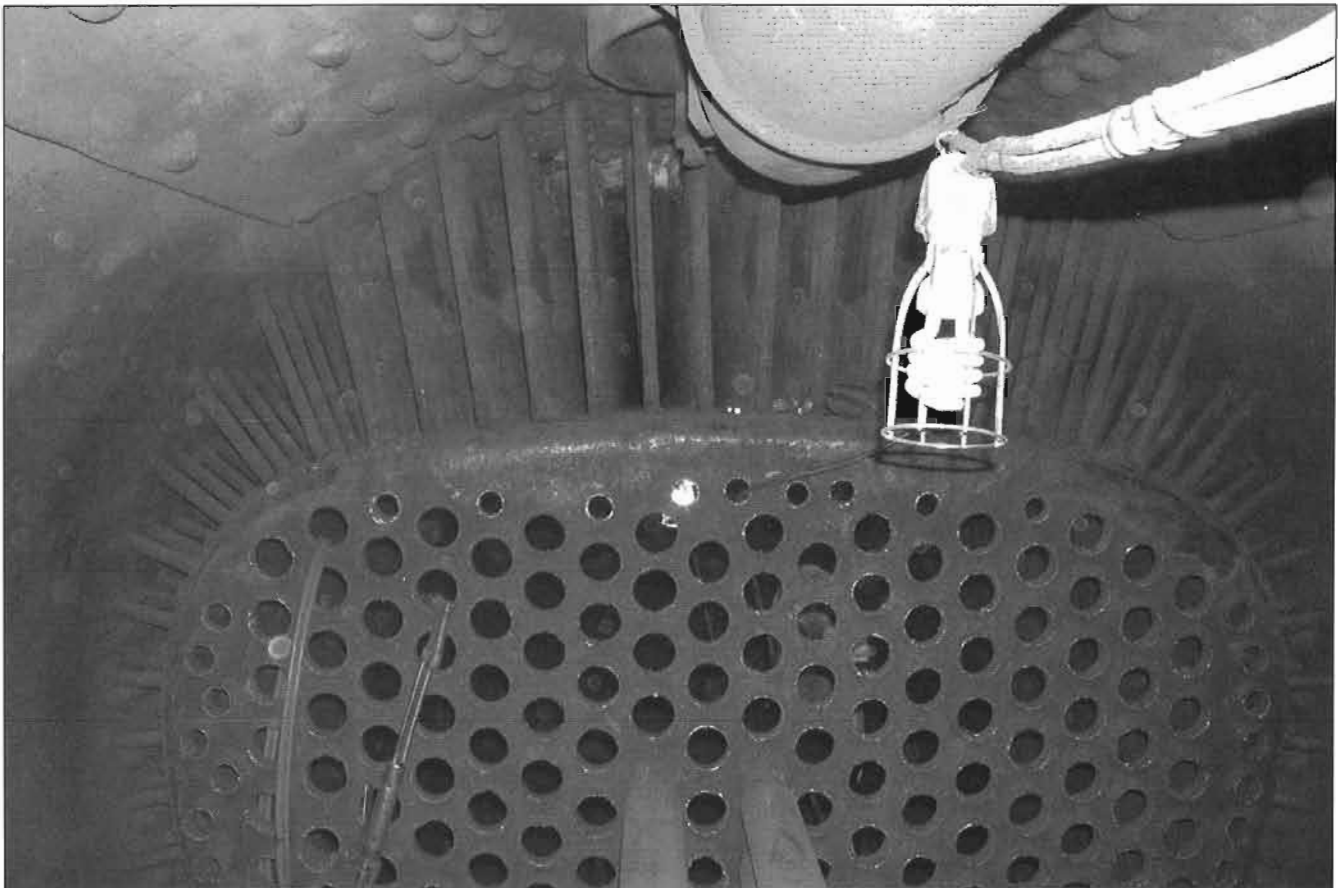
*July 27, superheater out, tubes visible.*



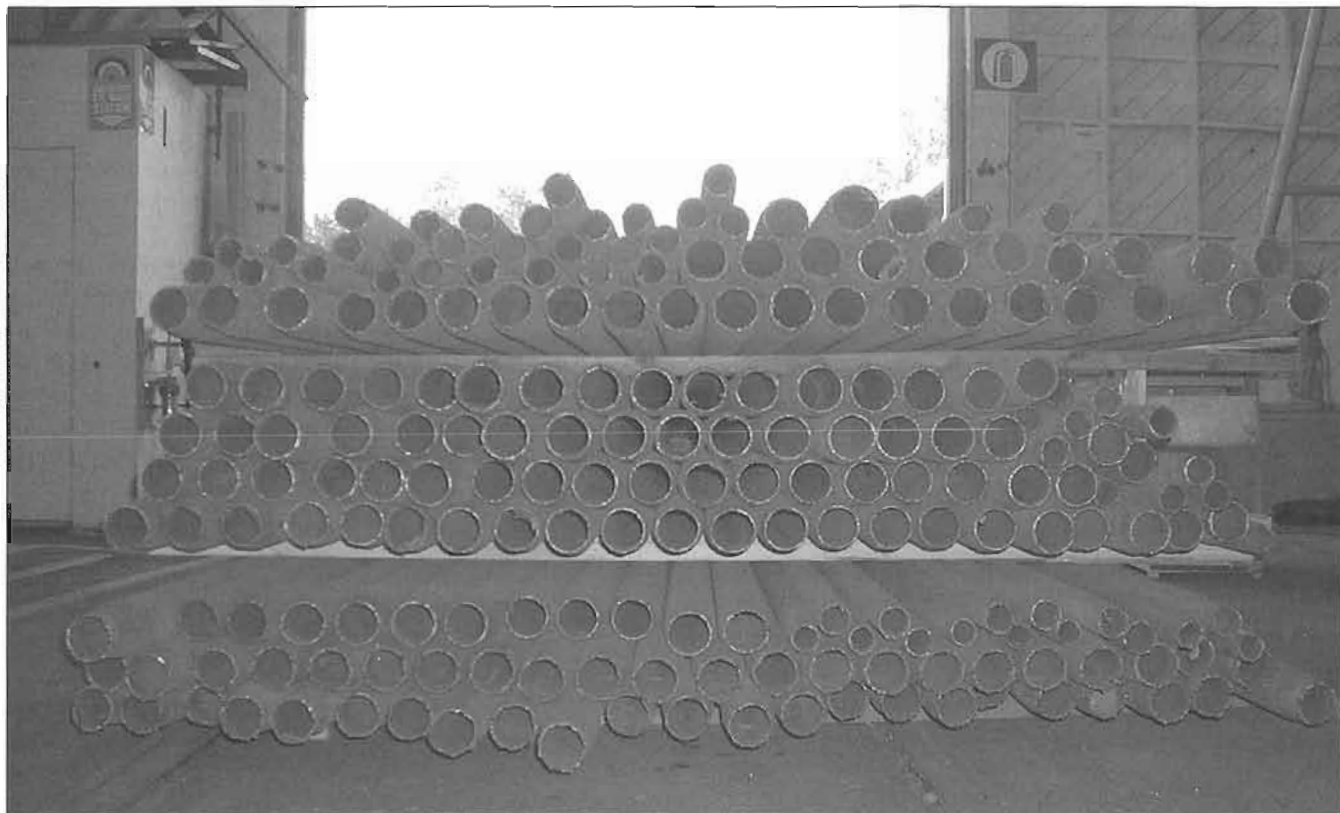
*August 1, 2005, removing the sandbox.*



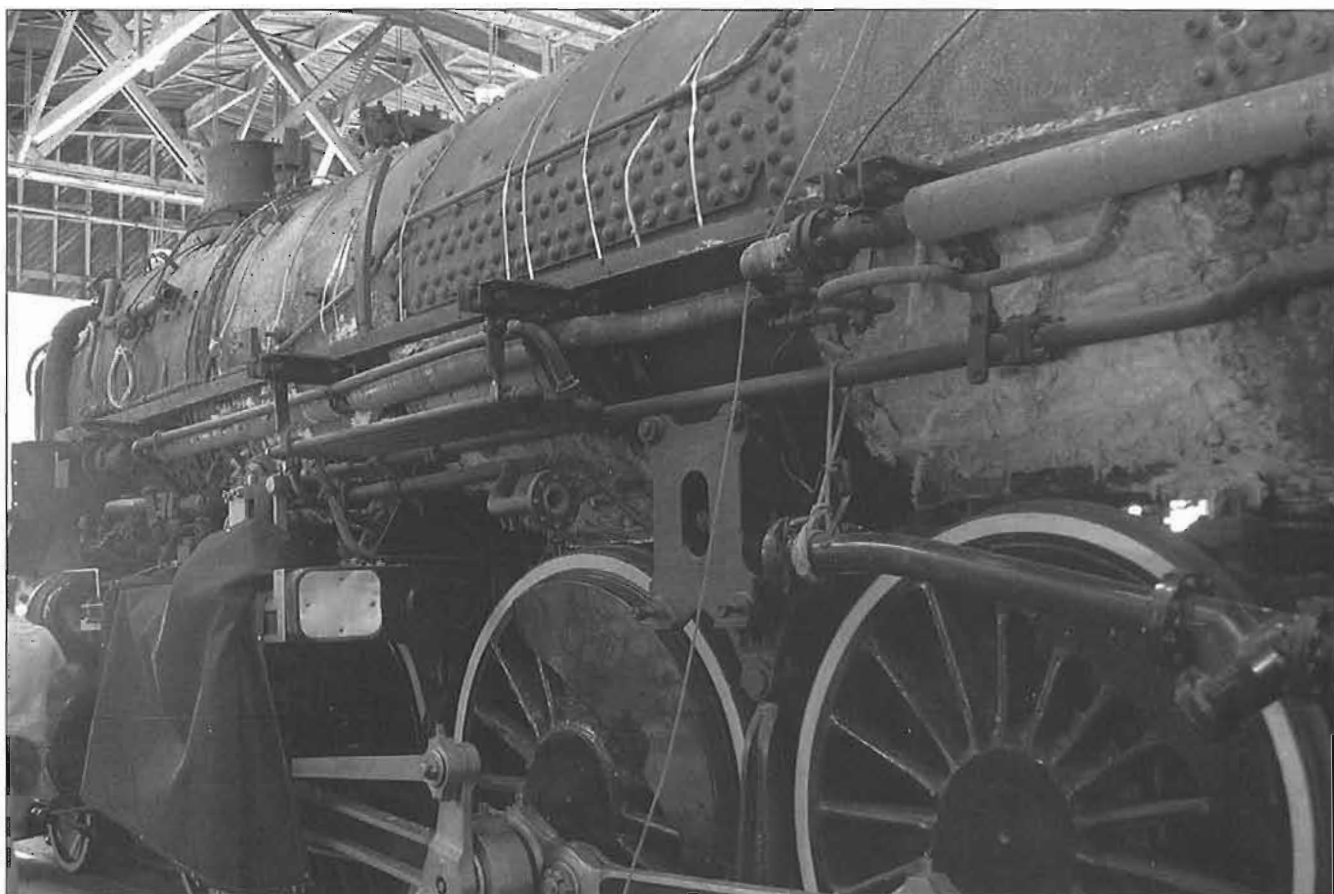
*August 1, 2005, boiler with sandbox removed.*



*August 12, Tubesheet.*



*Old tubes removed, late August, 2005.*



*August 19, 2005, Locomotive dismantled, awaiting restoration.*

### No. 2860 Progress report

Work to make the major repairs to the boiler of Royal Hudson #2860 got underway at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in Squamish, B.C., in July, 2005. The locomotive was moved back into the car shop, the tender disconnected, and the tear down began. By July 10, all of the cosmetic coverings (the boiler jacket, streamlining fascias etc.) had been removed from the locomotive and were stored on two flatcars. The boiler front was opened and inside work began.

Next came removal of the superheaters, a process that took around two weeks to complete. A major part of that was the removal of the flues and the bolts holding the superheaters up to the manifold, once these were clear the superheaters themselves came out in two days. Removal of the boiler tubes then began on July 29, and by August 13, 174 tubes were out with four being left in place to keep the tube sheets from moving or warping. Also completed in August was the removal of the sand box and a complete cleaning of the boiler exterior now that it was completely exposed.

At the end of August, the work to disassemble and clean the boiler has been completed and we are able to take a good look at the staybolts. Next up is a careful examination by our project advisor, Doyle McCormack of Portland, Oregon. Doyle will inspect the work to date and also take a close look at boiler areas that were inaccessible earlier to make sure that the planned project work can continue as planned.

While this work has been going on, the new tubes have been manufactured and are in Portland being swaged, while the new Superheaters are presently in manufacture. New firebox brick has also been ordered, so next up is to start boiler reassembly with the new inside parts. Targets are for boiler completion and testing by the end of 2005, with a plan for steam up in the first half of 2006.

Don Evans is President of the West Coast Railway Association.



*Royal Hudson 2850 which pulled the Royal Train in 1939 is eased into the new Exporail pavilion in the early summer of 2003. This locomotive along with CNR FPA-4 No. 6765 form the centerpiece of the display in the Great Hall. Photo Peter Murphy*

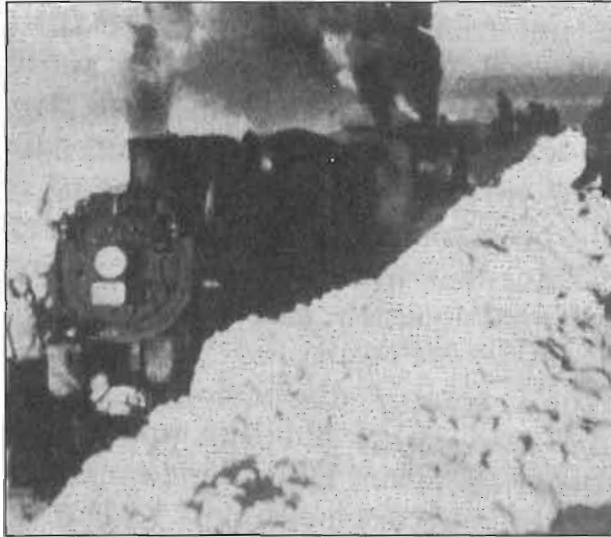
## Winter's Rage

By Douglas N W Smith

February 1947 was one of the most brutal winter months experienced by residents of the Canadian prairies in the twentieth century. From the very first day of the month, the weather tried the patience of man and trainmaster. As the month dawned, a blizzard was whipping the southern prairies as the temperature sunk to a bone chilling 50 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. The CPR was particularly hard hit. The second section of Train No. 8, the westbound Dominion, a Vancouver-Toronto transcontinental passenger train, stuck fast in a cut filled with snow at Secretan, Saskatchewan. Train No. 8, the Vancouver-Montreal section of the Dominion, was marooned behind it. Both trains were supposed to have reached Winnipeg the previous day at 19:05 and 19:45 respectively. They finally struggled into the Manitoba capital over 17 hours late. On the CNR, Train No. 6, running from Edmonton to Winnipeg via Regina, was 12 hours late. However, CNR trains arriving from the Flin Flon and Dauphin were only 4 hours late as Manitoba received the least amount of snow of the three provinces.

The blizzard conditions and cold temperatures continued over the next three days. The railways proved their advantage as an all-weather mode, for all bus and air services to points in Alberta and Saskatchewan were paralysed from February 2nd through the 4th. Eight passengers on the second section of No. 4 were injured in an accident near Gull Lake on February 2nd after that train became stuck in a snow bank. An engine and caboos dispatched to assist the stuck train ran into the observation car as blowing snow obscured the engineer's visibility. Fortunately, the injuries on the train were minor and only the rear wheels of the observation car were derailed. The railways cancelled most passenger trains operating west of Winnipeg through to Alberta on February 3rd. CN ordered all trains tied up at 10:00, but at 18:15 began limited operations on the transcontinental line. In Saskatoon, the streetcars retreated to the carbarn.

With a let up in the storm on February 4th, the beleaguered railway and highway forces started clearing the mounds of snow. CN and CP restored services over



*On CNR western lines, three locomotives, freed by shovel crews, are about to proceed with the work of opening the line with a plough. Canadian Transportation, April 1947.*

most branch lines the following day. The reprieve was short-lived as another major storm struck on February 6th once again blocking rail lines and highways. On February 7th, the Manitoba Free Press quoted a Winnipeg-based CNR official as saying that every section man and snowplow available was at work in Manitoba. The CPR reported ten plows were working to keep the transcontinental line west of Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan border open. The situation was particularly acute in Saskatchewan where the coal situation was described as "dangerous" as supplies were perilously low. As 50 mile an hour winds swept the open

prairie, the CPR transcontinental line became completely plugged as trains were caught in massive drifts between Regina and Moose Jaw. CP officials called the situation unprecedented on that section of double track main line. Tracks at most of the division points across Saskatchewan and Manitoba rapidly filled with stalled consists of CP's transcontinental trains. Trains No. 2, 4 and 8 that should have arrived in Winnipeg that day were held at Moose Jaw, while No. 2, 4 and 8 due to arrive on February 8th were held at Swift Current. The First Section of Train No. 3 that had left Winnipeg for Vancouver on February 6th was held at Regina, while the second section of that train and Train No. 7 were held at Indian Head, Saskatchewan and Train No. 1 was held at Broadview, Saskatchewan. The first and second section of Train No. 3 and Train No. 7, which left Winnipeg on February 7th, were stopped at Brandon, Manitoba while the westbound departure of Train No. 1 from Winnipeg was cancelled.

The situation on the branch lines was even more acute as many were plugged with drifts up to 22 feet high. CP reported four engines and a snowplow were buried beneath drifts at Weyburn, Saskatchewan. The arrival times for the local trains running over the branch lines radiating from Winnipeg could not be determined. A CPR official said, "They will be coming in just as soon as we can get snow plows in operation on the branch lines."

As the storm raged, both CN and CP cancelled all local trains running out of Winnipeg on February 8th. Oddly, the storm had little effect on the transcontinental

trains running east of Winnipeg to Toronto and Montreal. These trains continued to operate with their arrivals being either on time or one to three hours behind schedule.

The storm also threatened to close industries. The February 8th edition of the Manitoba Free Press reported that Winnipeg's flour mills and meat packing plants faced closure as clogged rail yards and lines prevented timely deliveries. The Ogilvie Flour Company, which needed nine cars of wheat a day to operate its mill, told a reporter that over the preceding five days it had only received five carloads. Canada Packers reported that it would have to close if no fresh shipments of meat were received by Monday.

Sporting events were also facing difficulties. The game between the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Manitoba varsity teams had to be cancelled on February 8th as the CNR overnight train from Regina to Winnipeg via Kipling had been cancelled. The executive officers of the Manitoba Curling Association held an emergency meeting to consider cancelling the 59th annual bonspiel, which was scheduled to start on February 10th, as many of the contestants were stranded in their communities since rail and road outlets were blocked.

Fortunately, there was a break in the weather on Sunday, February 9th. All of the stalled CPR transcontinental trains reached Winnipeg on Sunday. The CNR reported the following day that all of its branch lines were operating, with the exception of the lines to Virden and Somerset in the southwestern part of Manitoba. It was expected that the passenger trains would resume running over those lines the following day. Meanwhile, roads, that had been closed since February 7th, were gradually being plowed out by the province. However, the roads in the southwest remained closed until February 12th.

Bill Barr was a young CPR fireman called for the way freight from Winnipeg to La Riviere, Manitoba on February 6th. As he rolled into the heart of the blizzard, little could he foresee that he would not return to Winnipeg for five days and be ordered to assist efforts to plow out the branch lines in southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. While a tuckered Barr rode back to Winnipeg on CPR Train No. 122 on February 10th, I'm sure several men carrying brooms also boarded the train, not to help clear the switches, but to sport in the capital where the provincial curling bonspiel started, on schedule, the next day.

*Scenes like these explain why freight cars were in short supply in February. A car cannot be unloaded at destination and spotted for a new load while it remains buried in a snow-filled cut.*

*TOP: A shovel crew clearing a mile-long drift on the Regina-Yorkton line in Saskatchewan.*

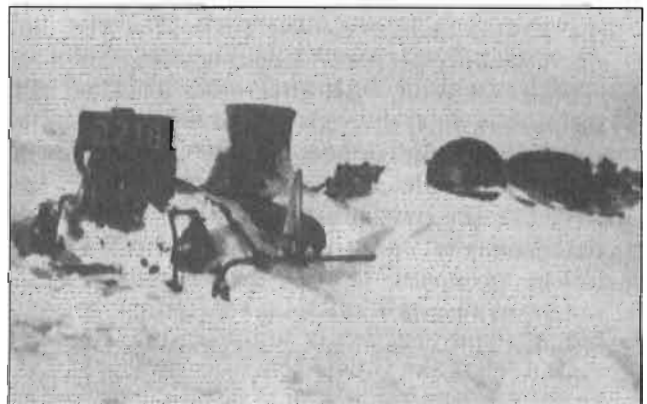
*RIGHT: A small part of a locomotive is all that is visible near Talmadge, Saskatchewan.*

*Canadian Transportation, April 1947.*



### Snow Removal Was Costly

The past winter was one of the worst in the history of Canadian railroading from the point of view of trouble with snow and expense of keeping lines clear. On the Canadian National alone, about \$2,500,000 was spent in this work in January and February, and the Canadian Pacific also was placed at heavy expense. Conditions were very severe from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Rocky Mountains. In the east, where difficult winter operation conditions are expected, the snowfall was not a great deal above normal, but in the central and prairie regions the fall was the heaviest in many years. On the prairies particularly, snow storms were accompanied by high winds which filled the cuts and created drifts extending to 25 feet or more in height. The prairie branch lines presented the greatest problems. On one occasion, after heavy storms and high winds had drifted the lines badly, there was a brief thaw, followed by low temperatures, and the drifts were transformed, into huge ice barriers which in some cases defied the efforts of ploughs powered by three locomotives to break a passage. All railway people were indeed glad to see the end of the 1946-47 winter.

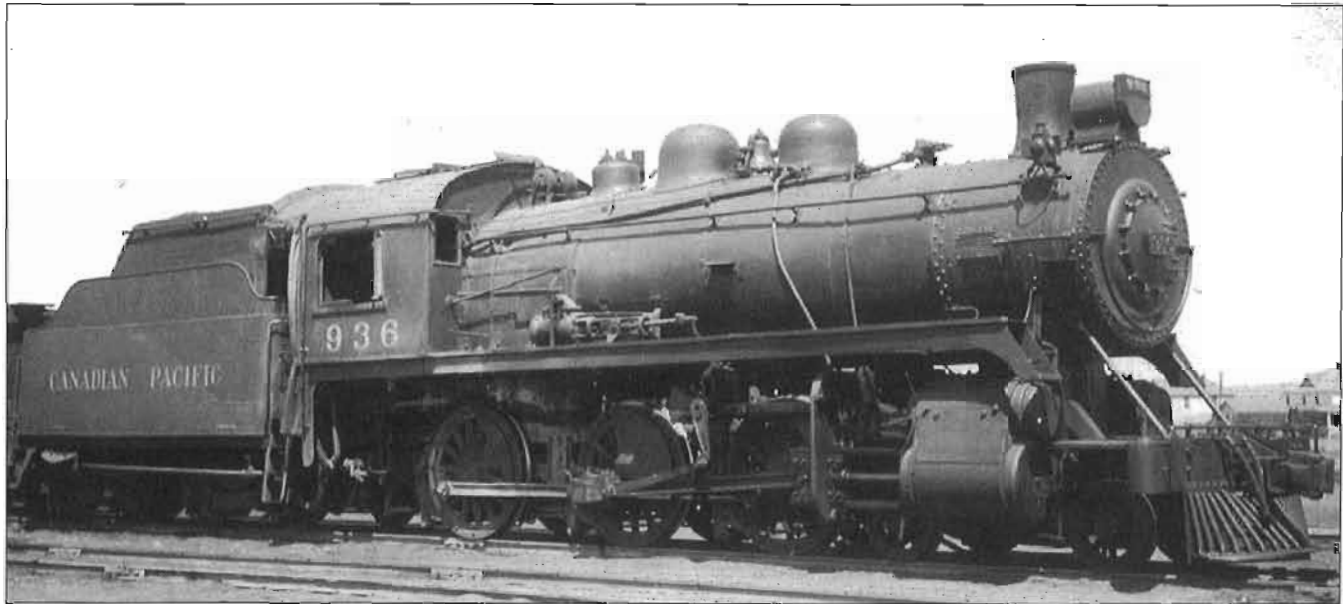




## Snow Plow West or: How We Separated The Men From The Boys

by Bill Barr

This article appeared in serial format in the September 2004, November 2004 and April 2005 issues of the *The Milepost*, a publication of the Midwestern Rail Association. Permission has been secured from the Association for the reprinting of this article.



*CPR D-10 locomotive 936 was identical to No. 937 which figures in this story. Both were built by Montreal Locomotive Works in September 1911, and both were scrapped in 1959, No. 937 in May, and No. 936 in December.*  
*Addison Lake collection*

**The date:** February sixth, 1947. **The time:** 21:15 (9:15 P.M.).

**The place:** La Riviere, Manitoba. **Another place:** Canadian Pacific Railway.

**The players:** the crew of the La Riviere Way-Freight.

**The weather:** winter (What else in February?). **One more place:** Napinka Subdivision.

**The temperature:** cold.

**Did I miss anything?** Oh, yes: blowing snow.

This, of course, is a true story of a trip made by myself and four other members of the crew of the La Riviere way-freight on a snowplow west of La Riviere. We pick up other people and snow-piles as we go along. The winter of 1946-47 was a record year for snow, and the drifts that came with it. The Canadian National Railways had a whole train buried in a snowdrift in southwestern Manitoba that winter.

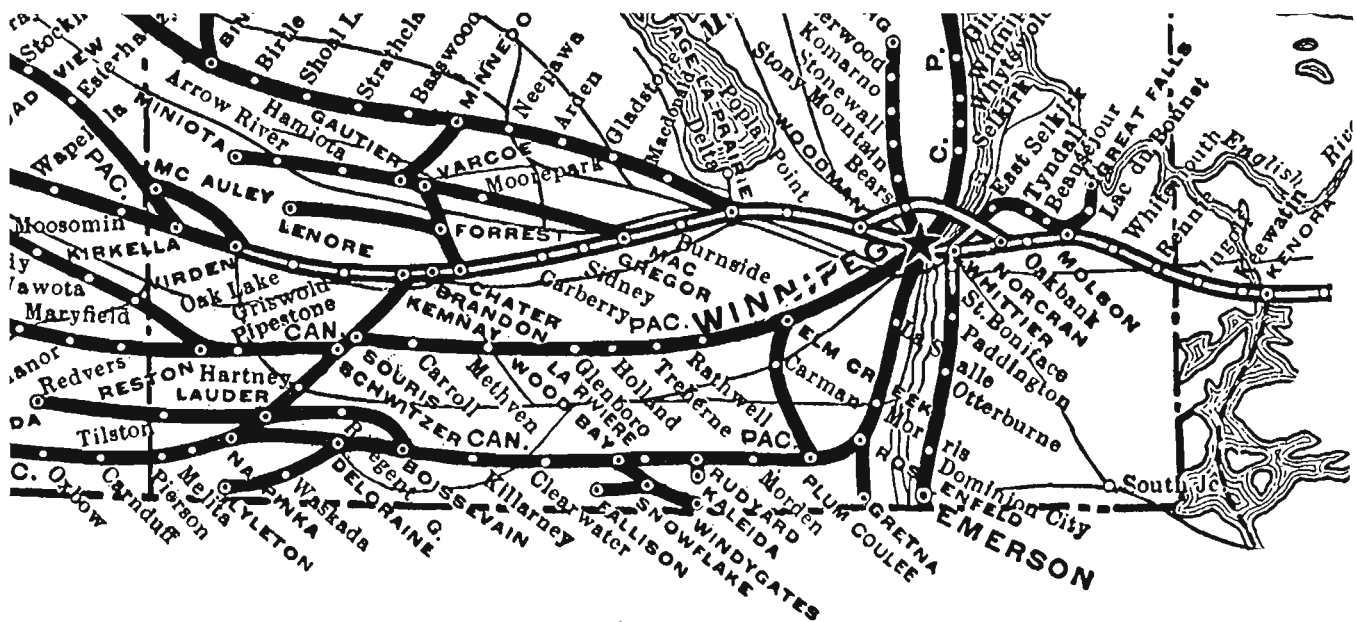
The story actually starts early on the morning of February sixth at seven-thirty A.M., when we came on duty in Winnipeg to work the La Riviere way-freight. Our destination: La Riviere, come hell or high snowdrifts: and there were plenty of those around — snowdrifts, that is.

We were ordered for eight-fifteen off the shop track, with engine number 937, another D-10, one of the many fine hand-fired engines on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Fred Stowell, engineer; Alan Stacey, head end brakeman; William Moffatt, tail end brakeman; Elmer Molton, conductor and myself: William Barr, fireman. A fine crew if I ever saw one. (Meaning “motley”).

I can't remember the exact number of cars we took out that morning, or the track that they were taken out of; but there had to be twenty or more cars or it wasn't worth going. That's the way the Canadian Pacific Railway worked. The train would have been marshalled in 'I' yard.

So we pulled out of 'I' yard, cleared Ruby Junction at 09:35, after getting our clearance and train orders. Up the La Riviere Subdivision and into history, wind, snow banks, whiteouts, the likes of which hadn't been seen since our last trip on Tuesday morning. We are on our way. Little did we know what lay ahead for us! Thank goodness for that.

Portage Avenue; Fort Whyte; La Salle; Domain; Osborne; McTavish roll by slowly on account of the wind and blowing snow. We are very careful to not miss any train-order boards in this weather. All clear, so far. The



Map of CPR lines in southern Manitoba, from CP's system timetable of April 27, 1947. It shows some of the stations mentioned in this article. Appropriately, one station is called "Snowflake"! Collection of Fred Angus

heavy flange doesn't help at all. I don't know why I bothered mentioning it. We are not making very good time at all. I don't know why I'm out on this trip. I must love the punishment. We will be heading in at Morris for the passenger trains — #123 from Winnipeg, then #122 from La Riviere. We are there for both passenger trains. We eat our lunch here.

We slip out and take water after the passenger trains are gone. The wind is so bad it almost blows Al Stacey off the tender, when he is taking water. It's a good thing he has heavy boots. He had a half sole put on the week before. He has at least two pairs of shoes on the go at any one time. These are the facts not fiction; ask Al. I clean the fire and am ready to give it 'shiezen-hiezen'.

We pull out of the siding slowly, hoping to see the signal from the tail end. But the snow is blowing so badly that it is impossible to see the red fusee that they had out. We know that the conductor will pull the air and stop the train if Moffatt can't get the switch lined back and get back on the train. He certainly wouldn't leave all that talent in a snow bank.

We plod along over to Rosenfeld and our meet with #78, the east way-freight. This is going to be a long, long day. Why you ask? Because our meet isn't here yet and it is now 13:15. We have to head in anyway unless our meet is changed. We can't see the order board from the east switch, so we pull into the siding at Rosenfeld and down to the station.

When the smoke clears (meaning: when we finish our switching, and our meet with #78, engine 996 is made) we pull out to take coal, and line the switch back. We clear at 14:55. Highball Horndean.

Next we blast over to Plum Coulee to do our switching. Must be going at least 20 MPH in this blowing

snow and side wind. We arrive there at 15:20 and leave at 15:50, after setting off a car and some way-freight. We may get to La Riviere for supper. We better; for I have been invited over to Stacey's for supper, and Flora is a super cook.

Winkler next; then Morden. We always have switching to do at these towns. The weather isn't easing up at all. We can see our van the odd time on the south side. It's a little better on the north side, because that's where the wind is coming from.

Up the hill we go out of Morden; highball Thornhill; highball Darlingford. We will soon be going down hill and I can almost taste the supper I am going to have at Stacey's. Right now it's all I can do to contain myself from eating the shovel, I'm so hungry.

La Riviere, finally; 19:15 and it only took us ten hours today. An ordinary crew would have been twice as long. We will put the train away, then the caboos, then the engine and finally ourselves. Then we will have supper. You never know when your next meal is going to be. At this time I didn't know how right I was. Any switching to be done is left until morning.

After washing up a bit, just enough to find out where your sleeve ends and your hand begins, I went over to Stacey's to have that home cooked meal and relax before heading to the bunkhouse and a good night's sleep - how wrong could I be?

I get over to Stacey's and get one shoe off, and I'm trying to relax or unwind. Al is showing me where he got scraped by a snow bank at Rosenfeld. His leg that is. A knock on the door, and guess what? We are called S.A.P. (meaning soon as possible.) "Snowplow West". We had gone off duty at 20:35 and it is now 21:15. We are on duty as soon as we are called, like now. This must be an emergency

WINNIPEG—GRETNA—WINDYGATES—LYLETON—NAPINKA

| READ DOWN           |                     |                             |       | READ UP          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 233<br>Tue.<br>Fri. | 235<br>Mon.<br>Thu. | 121<br>Mon.<br>Thu.<br>Sat. | Miles | TABLE 99         | 122<br>Mon.<br>Wed.<br>Fri. | 124<br>Tue.<br>Thu.<br>Sat. | 234<br>Tue.<br>Fri. | 236<br>Mon.<br>Thu. |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Central Time     |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Lv. WINNIPEG 1   |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Portage Ave      |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Fort Whyte       |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Fortress         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | La Salle         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Domain           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Osborne          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | McTavish         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Trump            |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Morris           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Sewell           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Rosenfeld        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Rosenfeld        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Altona           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | GRETNA           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Rosenfeld        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Hornhead         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Plum Coulee 98   |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Winkler          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Morden           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Thornhill        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Darlingford      |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Manitou          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Binney           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | LA RIVIERE 1     |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | LA RIVIERE 1     |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Wood Bay         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Harbor           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Purvis           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Snowflake        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Mowbray          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | WINDYGATES       |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | LA RIVIERE 1     |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Wood Bay         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Pilot Mound      |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Crystal City     |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Clearwater       |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Mather           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Cartwright       |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Holmfild         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Killarney        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Rhodes           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Ninga            |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Jolisseville 106 |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Cadcow           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Whitewater       |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Napies           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | DELOIRINE 106    |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | DELOIRINE        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Goodlands        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Cranmer          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Waskada          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Dalry            |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Couler           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Cameron          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Lyleton          |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | DELOIRINE        |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Leighton         |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | Medora           |                             |                             |                     |                     |
|                     |                     |                             |       | NAPINKA 106      |                             |                             |                     |                     |

WINNIPEG—BRANDON—SOURIS—ALIDA—LYLETON—ESTEVAN

| 123  |       | 251  |       | 252  |      | 137 |      | Miles |  | TABLE 106          |          | 48        |           | 252 |  | 254 |  | 124 |  |  |
|------|-------|------|-------|------|------|-----|------|-------|--|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|--|
| Fri. | Thur. | Mon. | Thur. | Tue. | Fri. | Ex. | Sun. |       |  | Central Time       | Ex. Sun. | Tue. Fri. | Wed. Sat. |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | WINNIPEG           |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | BRANDON            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | BRANDON 5          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Kennady            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Beresford          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Souris 98          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Souris 98          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Schwitzer          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Mentelth           |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Hartney            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Emblem             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Lauder             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Lauder             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Dand               |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Regent             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Croll              |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Orthex             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Schaffner          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Bolsevain          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Bolsevain          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Cadcow             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Whitewater         |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Napies             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Deloraine          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Lauder             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Bernice            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Bede               |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Broomhill          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Tilton, Man        |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Fortile, Sask      |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Stortloaks         |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Nottingham         |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Alida              |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Lauder             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Napinka            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Deloraine          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Goodlands          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Cranmer            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Waskada            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Alameda            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Couler             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Cameron            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Lyleton            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Napinka            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Melita 1           |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Elva               |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Pierson, Man       |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Gainsborough, Sask |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Carlevalle         |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Carnduff           |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Glen Ewen          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Oxbow 1            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Alameda            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Frobisher          |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Hirsho             |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Estevan            |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |
|      |       |      |       |      |      |     |      |       |  | Estevan C.T.       |          |           |           |     |  |     |  |     |  |  |

EXPLANATION OF SIGNS—THIS PAGE  
 † Meal Station. \* Daily. † Daily ex. Sun. ‡ Stop on signal. d Stops to detain.

These timetables show the CPR passenger trains that were scheduled to operate in Manitoba and Saskatchewan at the time of the great storms of February 1947. They are from CP's system timetable effective February 23, 1947. Collection of Douglas N W Smith

to call an assigned crew for a snowplow. That relaxed leisurely meal went out the window. We ate hastily, not doing justice to that homemade meal that Flora prepared.

La Riviere has a snowplow stationed there winter and summer. It is in the stub track by the bunkhouse. I have passed it many times, and never taken notice of it. The next few days it is to be our dancing partner, and then some. It will dance in front of us wherever we go. This is not our headache; it's up to the section gang to get this machine in shape. We will have enough to do getting the engine ready.

Getting the engine ready is something else. After we bring the engine out of the shop track and take water, the shop foreman and his helper bring out a roll of canvas almost the size of a house. It weighs a ton. We struggle with it till we get it on top of the cab of the engine. It is to be unrolled over the coal tender and protect the coal from the snow we are to plow. It is attached with rope to the handrails above the windows on both sides of the cab, and just clear of the vent in the middle of the cab. This is our escape hatch! We won't be opening the vent on this expedition. No way. Wrong again!

When we backed the engine out of the roundhouse on a normal day, it was headed east. Not this time. We will have to turn the turntable around, so the engine is headed west. I might add here, this is a man-powered turntable. When the engine is properly balanced, you can push it around by manpower, you and whoever else you can con into thinking that it's fun. So far so good.

Next we will have to pull the snowplow out of the stub track, so we can run around it and get it ahead of us if we want to plough snow. It is already headed west. The snowplow first; then the engine; then the caboose. How clever, you say.

The engine that we put into the shop a little over an hour ago hasn't had time to thaw out and drain properly. That's when our trouble starts. By not having time for it to thaw and dry out properly, we have done more harm than good. Our air pump, which supplies air to operate the air brakes and also the snowplow's flanges, has been sucking in snow and moisture. It has now befouled our air system. In other words, moisture in the pipes and reservoirs freezes up in cold weather and restricts the flow of air.



*Little is visible of CPR 5144, stuck and derailed in a huge snowdrift. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

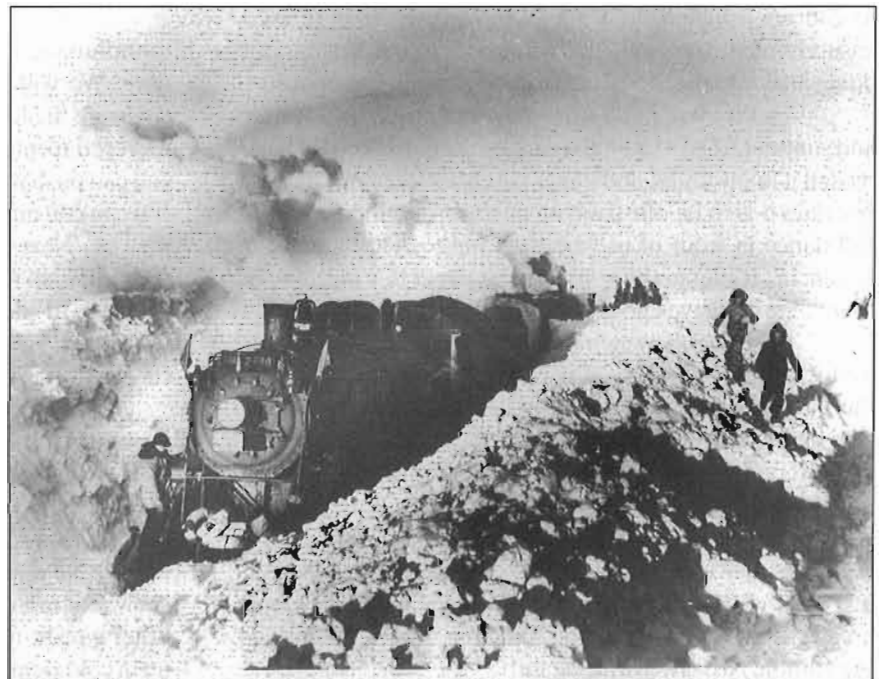
So after thawing and draining and thawing a few more times, we get close to departing. We put a piece of canvas around the air pump intake strainer in hopes it will help in keeping out the snow. The large lumps, anyway.

There is a long strong piece of rope that has to be connected to the whistle lever and then into the plow, which will be in the hands of the Road master, Sven Benson. He will be blowing for all road crossings and telling us by the whistle what he wants us to do. When we are standing: two blasts to go. When we are moving: one whistle-blast to stop and two blasts of the whistle to increase speed. We will be traveling fast; like say 40 to 50 M.P.H. Sven told us he wanted the snow drifts off the property and over the other side of the snow fence some fifty feet or more away.

The conductor has the orders and also information on where we are off to and why. We now know that there is a mixed train, with passengers, stuck behind one long snow bank up the Boissevain Sub. They were holed up at a section man's house at a place called Schaffner, which is a point nine miles off the main line from a place called Sanger, which is just a wye, where you can turn your engine or train. Sanger is one-point-four miles west of Boissevain.

Our orders read; rights over all trains; which means we own the track, rails, and even the track-spikes that hold the rails down. No time limit. We are Snow Plow Extra, West. Anyone getting in the way will be dealt with severely. We'll plow them under. Put them in the clear. We sometimes get carried away when we get this much power.

We leave La Riviere at 23:55: that's five minutes to midnight, Pilgrim. Up the west hill like a scared rabbit with only gravity, the snowplow and the little red caboose holding us back.



*A visitor to CPR lines, CNR 2-8-0 No. 2814 was diverted because of a snow blockage on CN. However it seems to be just as badly blocked on CP as the section men contemplate how to free it. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

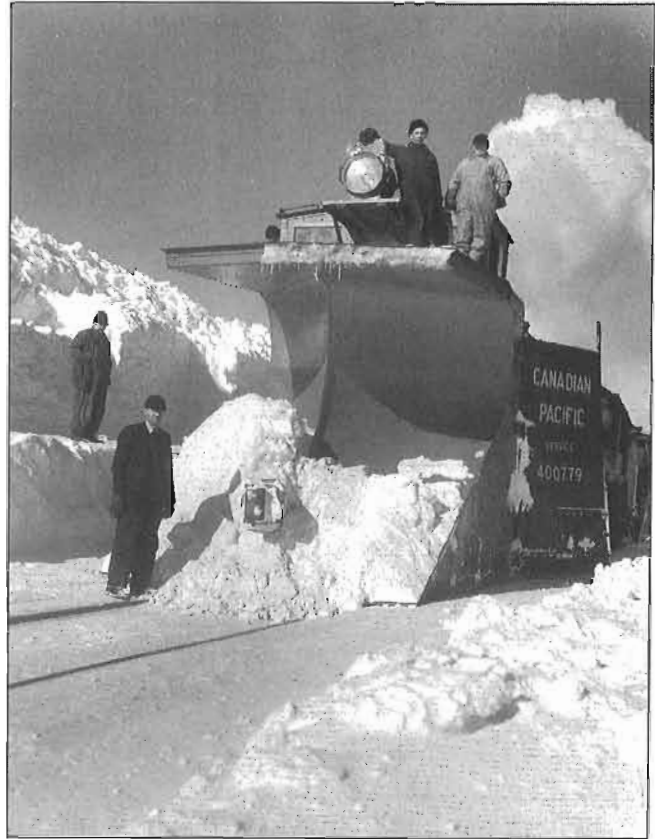
The Road master, Sven Benson, is in the plow. He sure likes to blow that whistle, and my ears will be ringing for a month or more after this trip. In fact that strong rope we had breaks before the trip is over. We knew something was wrong when he missed a couple of whistle crossings. This being our only means of communication, Sven pulls the air - meaning - applies the brakes - with the emergency valve, and we stop. We repair the cord, only to have the lights go out in the cab. Which means there isn't any headlight. The dynamo, which supplies electricity for the headlight, and - most importantly, the bulb behind the water glass - has shorted out, on account of the blowing snow. In our haste to get away, we overlooked the covering of the dynamo with canvas. We clear the dynamo of snow, and continue on hoping it will dry out as we sail along; and it does eventually. We travel a long way in the blowing snow without the headlight. It wasn't the first time this crew of ours was in the dark. (Fireman included.)

We still have to make sure all order boards are clear when we pass through every town. Although there isn't any operator on at this time in the morning, the dispatcher can still wake him up and put him on duty. Then the dispatcher can stop us and give us new orders that could change things. In this storm there is no one moving except us and I don't think he wants us to be delayed in our mission. Of course if the truth was known, all of us wish we were in bed. Anybody out in this weather has to be out of his or her gourd.

Although it is dark out, and we can't see where we are going, we can tell however when we are plowing heavy snow by the way the engine shudders and lurches. I think at times it's going to leave the track but then it settles down and runs smoothly. They sure knew what they were doing when they made these D10s (whoever "they" are).

Anytime when you were putting in a fire and plowing snow, which was most of the time, you would get a shower of snow down your neck - or on your head; or your shoulders; or on the seat; or on the hot pipes, which turned the locomotive cab into a sauna. It wasn't the most pleasant of places to work. So you delayed putting in a fire as long as possible. The snow coming from over the top of the engine would be sucked in through the top vent, even though it is closed, and up from around the ladders, around the windows into the cab, then into the firebox. You would be the only obstacle in its way on its way to the firebox; therefore you suffered the most. It kind of kept you awake, like you have been for the last 48 hours.

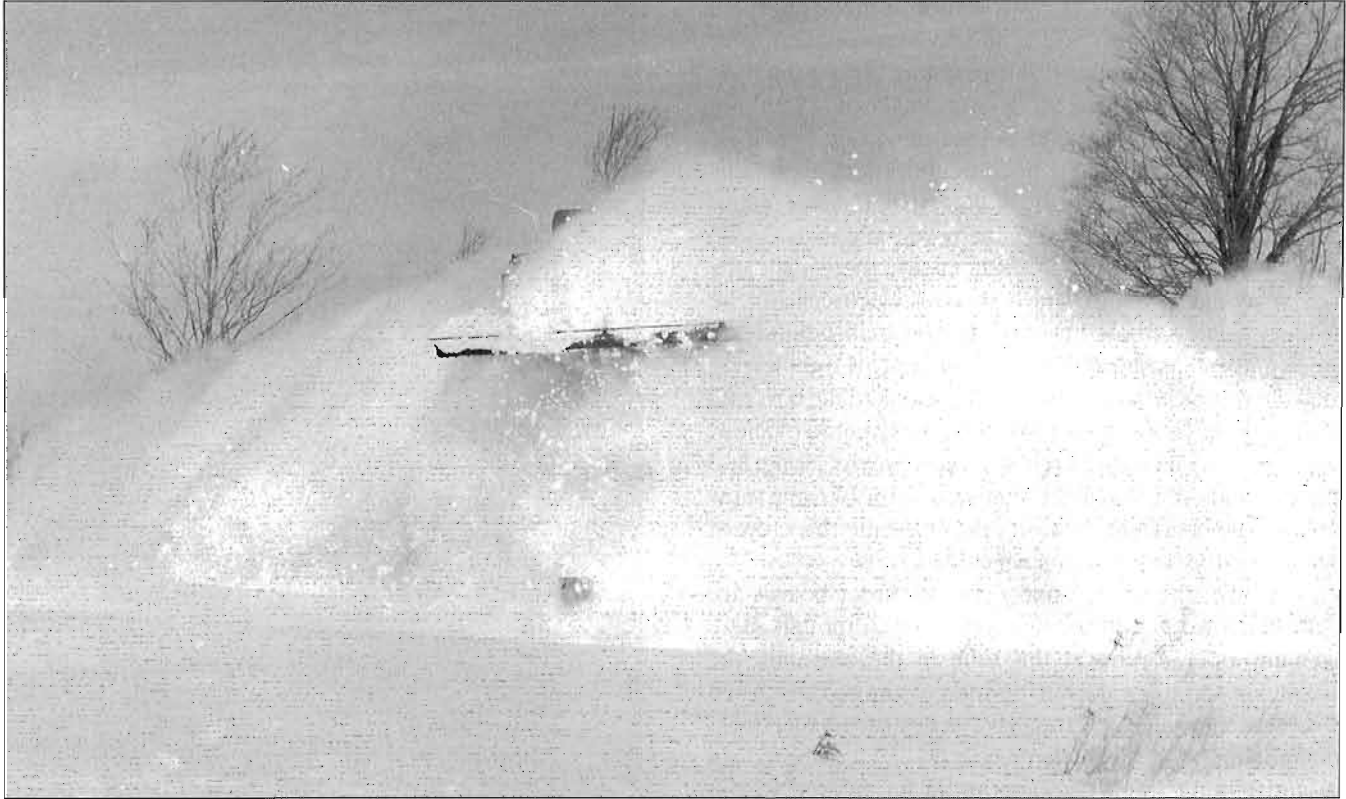
It's 69.8 miles from La Riviere to Boissevain. At 40 miles per hour it should only take us a little under two hours running time, but not on a snow plow. Everything that can go wrong will go wrong. Whistle cord breaking; dynamo shorting out; ash pans freezing up; air pump freezing up; wings on the plow not opening nor closing properly; and even the lid to the water tank freezing shut. We have to take water at Holmfield, 42.8 miles out of La Riviere, because there isn't a water tower at Boissevain.



*CPR plow 400779, built in 1924, about to make another attempt to push its way through a huge snowdrift. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

Coal dock yes, water tank no. We aren't using that much water; but even so you don't know how long you are going to be digging this train out. Take water at Holmfield and coal at Boissevain, and do not overflow the water tank as the water in the winter time has a tendency to freeze. It freezes the air hoses (the coupling between engine and caboose) together, and makes a real mess of the grab irons and steps. Take water carefully and fill it to the brim. Before the day is out the section men are shoveling snow into the water tank, and I have to blow steam back into the tank to melt it, as we are getting low on water. By pulling the steam injector handle back quickly, you allow steam to come from the top main steam valve; through the injector and hose bag into the tender. But don't put too much steam back, or the water will get too hot and then you won't be able to lift it (meaning lifting the water out of the tender with the injector and into the boiler and through the top check). And too much pressure going back to the tank can blow a hose bag (the connection between engine and tender). Now you're in "big" trouble, I mean 'BIG' trouble. It's not serious, it's worse than serious. It is the end of your short career.

I don't know when the sun came up that day (if it ever did), as we couldn't tell, with all that snow blowing and the exhaust from the engine. But if it did, it didn't matter



*Travelling blind through the snow, the plough, though almost completely hidden, makes a superb action scene as it attacks the drifts and makes the snow fly. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

that much, because we were on a mission. Sounds pretty dramatic don't it? You know the mailman's creed: well, the railway's creed is just a wee bit larger and longer to do.

When we finally get to Boissevain, we get more information on what has happened. A snow plow with engine and caboose are stuck in the snowdrift up the Boissevain branch line. The drift being more than a half mile long holds it easily. The thing was: they went into the drift at full tilt; and when they tried to pull back and take another run at it, the caboose went on the ground on account of snow falling in behind them. With the drifting snow it doesn't take too long until you're really snowbound. Game over. That is, unless you can lift a caboose. If it had been daylight, they could have seen how long the drift was, they might never had taken the caboose with them. At this point it's hard to second guess. There weren't any section men out to clean the tracks and maybe avoid this. We learn by our mistakes, hopefully. When it is snowing and blowing it doesn't take long for everything thing to get "snowed in" and that is exactly what happened. A train and engine crew's worst fears: "snowed in".

Before we can tackle that snowdrift, we have to wait until more section men arrive, as they are an important part of our strategy. One thing that is for certain and that is we are all getting pretty hungry, as it has been over 12 hours since our last meal. So the whole crew goes over to the restaurant for a big feed of bacon and eggs. We eat like it is our last meal. Five bedraggled men that haven't

seen a bed for over 24 hours. I get my coffee bottle filled and pick up some chocolate bars. That should last me for a couple of hours.

Now we finally find out what we had thought all along that the engine with the plow is dead - that's the engine, not the crew. The engine, a D-10, ran out of water and had to be drained. If it hadn't been drained, some of the pipes would have frozen and burst. The engine crew could hole up in the caboose, along with the train crew for a while, or until they ran out of food. How long can you play rummy? They would have access to the coal on the engine, so least they could keep warm in the caboose. The train that is trapped on the other side of the snowdrift is getting pretty low on coal and water.

We sit out in front of the station at Boissevain waiting, waiting and have a little nod-off, now and then, dreaming of a nice warm bed and thinking that there is more to life than snowdrifts and coal piles.

It is still blowing snow something fierce. I can't tell if it has stopped snowing or not. Nor can I tell if the snow is coming down or going up. They say every snowflake is different - which leads me to believe I'm seeing the same snowflake passing my window every two or three minutes. I do believe, however, that this is what you would call a blizzard; but of course we are snug in our engine close to the boiler (joke). We go into the station periodically to warm up. Did I say warm up? It's just as cold in the station as it is in the engine. We go into the station just for a change



*The equipment was a bit different but the conditions much the same in the early days. Here we see a wooden CPR plough paused for a photograph in the mountains, probably in the 1890s. Note the oil headlight in a rather vulnerable position atop the plough. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

of scenery and to see if anything is happening. The only warm place is in the caboose, where they have a good fire going in the stove. And where else would you put a fire? But even the caboose is a little drafty and some conductors don't like you coming in and bringing in cold air and snow. So we cling to the boiler and pray for an early spring.

It is now 11:00 a.m. in the morning. When you have been up this long, and on duty this long, you are not sure if 11:00 a.m. is morning or 11:00 a.m. is at night.

Also, when you have been up all day and all night and half the next day, things seem to become unreal. I think it's a sign of your brain numbing up, or becoming unglued - if a brain can numb up and or become unglued. We were in bad shape. I'm talking about the Engineer, Freddy Stowell, and me. The train crew, the Conductor and Brakemen, could rest in the caboose, even though it was bouncing off the track three to four feet. We must get horizontal soon, or dire consequences may occur. Did I say may occur? They were occurring. Like falling asleep, standing up while trying to put the injector on (putting water into the boiler). I would prime the injector, then doze off until Freddy would call out my name, which would bring me around to half awake, where I would automatically shut off the injector, and then I would become fully awake, only to realize my mistake, when I looked at the amount of water in the water glass, then put the injector on once again, hoping to complete my task and not fall asleep and overfill the boiler. That was a trick we used when we were watching

engines in the west-end with the yard power. Fill the boiler until the gun (injector) broke. We used the term "Fill her to the nuts" (the top nut of the water glass) and then we could get a couple of hours in the hay (sleep.)

If you remember from the last episode we did a lot of sitting at Boissevain before leaving for the action in the snow pile. Trying to get more Section men and making sure that all previous orders belonging to the snow plow, stuck in the drift, had been cancelled; all regular trains that day are cancelled. We didn't have the communication system we have now. It was the old Morse code. That was the Dispatcher's way of communicating with the Operator at that station. The Dispatcher would send the orders over the wire to the Operator, who would then copy the orders down, repeat the order, date, time completed, then give them to the train crew, but keep a copy for his records. And although some operators were very fast with the operating key, it was still very time consuming. I might add here that some operators had beautiful penmanship. They took pride in writing out their orders.

We needed orders that gave us rights over everything from passenger trains to handcars. We had to be able to go ahead or back up anytime or anywhere, over any part of the subdivision we are working on. In other words, we have to have rights over everybody. I know it sounds "absolute", like the signal at a diamond, and it is, but when you are plowing snow you don't have the time to be looking out for any other trains. Plowing snow and staying on the



*Digging out a passenger train on a CPR line on the prairies on January 31, 1909. Conditions had scarcely changed at all by 1947!  
Photo, Canadian Pacific*

rails is a full-time occupation. It doesn't matter if you can't see or don't know where you are, as long as you stay on the rails and plow snow.

The westbound passenger train #121 that left Winnipeg yesterday (the same day as we did) is sitting up at Napinka. They should be on their way home on train #122, but it is cancelled and the crew is sitting there twiddling their thumbs, or playing Rummy. They were annulled sometime during the night, maybe even before we left La Riviere. But we didn't have to worry about them until we got close to the station they were due at. Does that make sense to you? They won't see any action until we get this snowplow unstuck and the track cleared, and of course the blizzard stops. The same goes for the passenger train #123, which was supposed to leave Winnipeg today (Friday) and go to Lyleton. That train is annulled. I don't know what is happening to the rest of the trains on the Canadian Pacific Railway, but this little branch line of ours is out of service until we straighten things out. Boy, does that ever sound important.

Meanwhile back at the ranch the Lone Ranger, disguised as a Baggage man - hold on there, the brain has become unglued. This isn't the same story. See what I mean?

Well, we are finally off to plow snow. So down the mainline we go to Sanger, and the switch that will take us up the Boissevain Subdivision and the big snowdrift, the dead engine, and finally the mixed train, which is standing, waiting patiently at Schaffer. Apparently the passengers

are holed up at a section man's house, and the train crew and engine crew are on the train. How long they can last is anyone's guess. How long will their water last on the engine? The coal supply should last for quite awhile.

We plow snow all the way down the mainline to Sanger and run by the switch, because of the poor visibility. The Roadmaster could not see the switch until we had passed it. Now we have to back up, and then dig the switch out. I say we, meaning the Section men we have brought along with us just for this occasion. To my way of thinking, we cannot get enough of these Section men: the backbone of the railway. They are the first men to be called out in time of an emergency (like now); then they are the first men to be laid off when the traffic is slow. The call has gone out for more men, but it's hard to move in this weather and it will be a while before we can get enough of them.

So out of the plow they come with their shovels, picks and brooms. (We got a good supply of these before leaving La Riviere). When I mention picks, I mean it. The snow is packed in so hard between the switch points that it's just like concrete. To unlock and throw a switch only takes less than a minute, tops - in the summertime, that is. To clean out a switch in a fierce windstorm could take, ten, twenty or even thirty minutes. Believe me, I've been there. And if we came back in fifteen minutes, we would have to do it all over again. It is not only the switch-points that have to be cleaned, but under the switch and four to five feet from the switch, where the bars are that move both switch-points at once. There is not much sense in moving one rail -



you need both of them.

We don't hit any big drifts for the first little while, but then the drifts become a little harder. It's a good thing, because we want to get up to a good speed, so we put the drifts over the snow fence. The wind has packed the snow down real hard, and the engine has to be worked harder - meaning heavy exhaust, meaning more steam, meaning more coal, meaning more shoveling for - meaning me. And of course with more draft, more snow comes into the cab making more moisture when the snow hits the hot pipes and boiler. Some people spend good money for these saunas.

At this time I don't seem to care, as I am doing these things automatically. I can feel my body shutting down, starting at the brain and working down. I don't know how Freddy Stowell, the Engineer, takes this. He will be retiring in another five years. That's almost 40 years older than I am.

Here is where the Engineer and Fireman have to put their heads together and do some thinking. OUCH! We took water at Holmfield around four or five o'clock this morning. It is now sixteen o'clock - that is eleven hours; and although it is only ten miles to a water tank, we still have to go over there to get it, which takes time and steam. In other words, how much time can we afford to plow before we have to run for water? We measured the water once at Boissevain, but that was earlier in the day. You don't go out and measure it every hour. Not in a blizzard, and certainly not when the back of the tank is covered with snow and ice.

I get a chance to measure it when we almost get stuck in one of the snow banks we are plowing on our way over to Schaffner and the "Big Drift". The Section men are out once again with their shovels, clearing the snow from

under the engine and caboose. I think it's about time we uncoupled that caboose and just went on with the plow and engine, but nobody asks for my advice. We have less than half a tank, which isn't that much when you are working the engine fairly hard in this deep snow. I say "deep" because I can walk off the engine, through the gangway onto the snowdrift, but I don't. I go out the window onto the snow bank, which saves me untying and then re-tying the frozen canvas curtains. We now know the snow is over six feet deep, or high, it doesn't matter which way you look at it, there is plenty of it here.

This may be a good time to put some snow in the tank and increase our water supply. We get the Section men to put as much snow as possible into the water tank. The snow starts to melt as soon as it hits the water, but then the snow begins to turn the water cold. Now there is a possibility of the water freezing. Are you with me so far? Next comes the tricky part, to unfreeze the water, or in plain English, to melt the snow. We could light a fire under the tender and heat up the tank. Too time-consuming; and in this weather who would have a match that big to light a fire of that size? We will use the steam available to melt the snow by means of the water injector. We will blow steam back into the tank and melt the snow. What a clever idea! But not very original - this trick has been going on for a long time and more often than not in situations just like this.

To get the steam back in the tank to melt the snow we must put the injector heater on, which allows steam to flow from the boiler through the main valve, and pass through the injector, through the feed pipe, through the hose-bag into the tank, thereby melting the snow. However - here lies the weak link in this chain - the hose-bag. (The flexible hose between engine and tender). You



*"The first train through" when the line was cleared on January 31, 1909. Thirty-eight years later the crews were doing almost exactly the same work. Photo, Canadian Pacific*



*In mountainous regions, the big rotary ploughs were called into service. 400811 was the newest of ten rotaries on the CPR roster in 1938. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

must regulate the steam going into the tender very carefully. It wouldn't take much to blow the hose-bag clear back to Winnipeg. There is 160 pounds pressure per square inch in the boiler and if that ever got down to the hose-bag - good-bye hose-bag. The shut-off valve on the tender, right above the hose-bag opening, could be used to shut the water off before it completely drains the tank; but in this situation, I wouldn't want to count on it. So we are extra careful in executing this procedure.

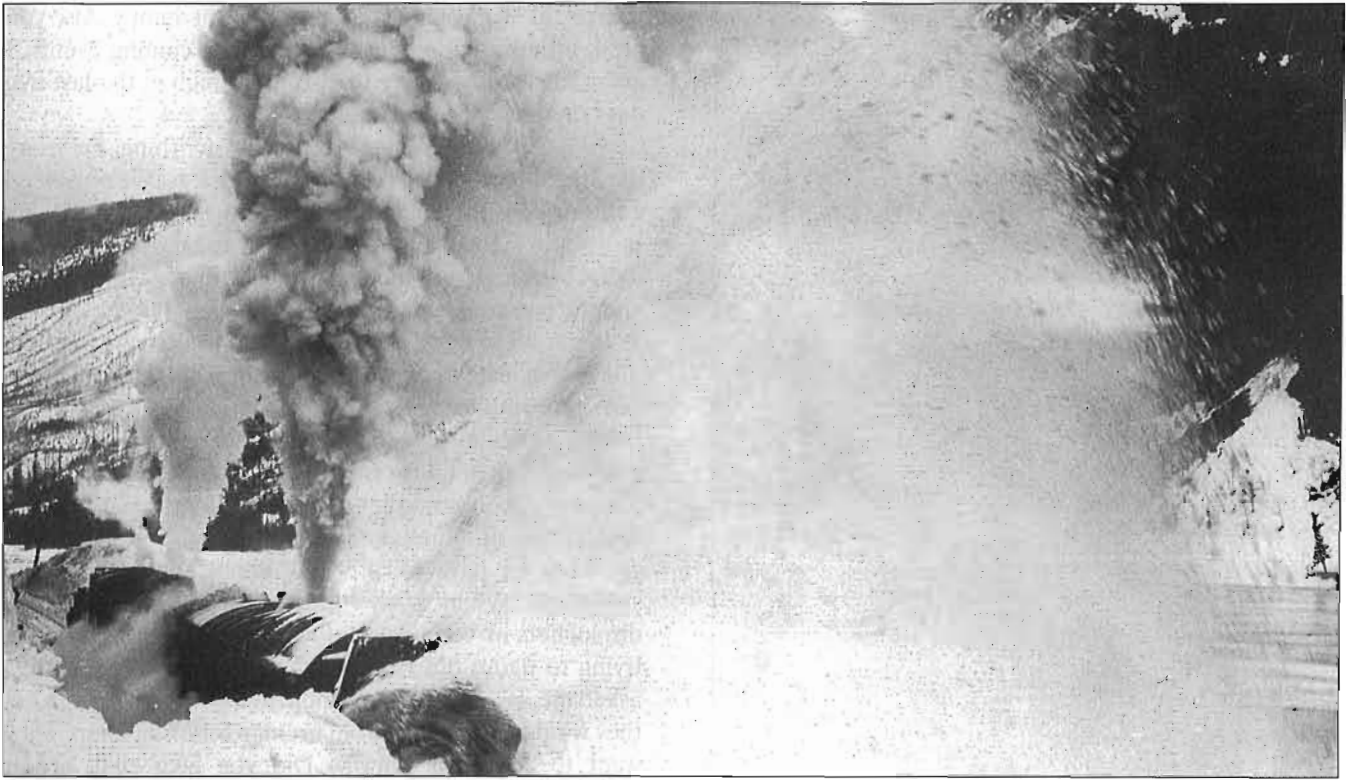
The snow melts very slowly and you are tempted to increase the amount of steam entering the tank to make it melt faster, but considering the risks involved, I shake that one out of my head. To have one engine, caboos and plow stuck in the snow is one disaster, but to have two engines, two caboos and two plows stuck - that's a calamity, a debacle with an uncertain ending. We get a little more water to work with, but I don't think it was worth the effort. Time will tell.

We now have a meeting of the big three: the Engineer, the Conductor and the Roadmaster. Brakemen and Firemen need not attend, but we do. We meet in the caboos, where there is a hot cup of coffee of sorts. Water low, men tired and hungry, snow deep, darkness here. Running out of energy, food, water, light, and we might just go on the ground, if we aren't real careful. So the consensus is; we must abandon our mission and high tail it out of here

for water, food and rest, hopefully in that order, or any other order. To me, rest is on top of my list. But a hot meal would also be nice.

The wind has died down quite a bit, which does help somewhat, but it is dark and we have to back up a couple of miles pushing the caboos, which is very light and can be derailed anytime if it encounters too much snow. We back up slow and easy, if that is possible, when you are pushing a caboos in the dark, without a light. We do have a few section men with us, in case the snow gets too deep, or we go off the track. We have re-railers to put the caboos back on the track, but at this time, we will be slow and cautious. There is not too much energy left in this young body, and what is left in Fred's body could be measured on a micrometer. A red fusee on the back of the caboos and the conductor's hand on the emergency valve, at the ready, to be used in case the caboos gets too far from the tracks, helps and guides us to get back to Sanger and the mainline of the Napinka Sub. Freddy keeps looking out the window and the temperature drops down to a hundred and fifty below zero in the cab and that's in the warmest spot. It's slow work, but we make it back safely.

We back up the east leg of the wye to the mainline switch, which now has to be cleaned out once more. Tempus fugit. Out on the mainline we go and are now heading west towards Whitewater and a water tower,



*A rotary hard at work in the mountains. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

which is ten miles away, unless, of course the wind has blown it closer. Stranger things have happened.

We go the ten miles over to Whitewater and I get out of the cab, through the window, making sure I close the window behind me. I don't want to come back into the cab and find Freddy frozen to the throttle. But someone has already beaten me to the watering spout. Al Stacey, the Head end Brakeman has already navigated up the back ladder on the tank which is a tricky manoeuver, as the ladder is all covered in snow and ice. The tank lid will be frozen over and will have to be persuaded to open up with a couple of smacks from the spare shovel we keep there for just such occasions. Al fills the water tank and gets back in the caboose safely, frozen stiff and he won't be fully thawed out until the middle of July. Thanks, Al.

We highball out of Whitewater after checking at the station to see if there is any change in plans. At this time I don't care what happens as I'm going by instinct. That's survival instinct. All I want to do is to live long enough to have a meal and a sleep, about three days would be just right.

It's five miles to Naples, then 4.6 miles to Deloraine and we are still plowing lots of snow. From Deloraine to Napinka it's about twenty miles, going through Leighton and Medora, but we wouldn't know that, as it is dark and the snow is still flying.

We arrive at the wye switch at 21:55, that's twenty-four hours and forty minutes since we came on duty at La Riviere and thirty-eight hours and twenty-five minutes

since we were on duty in Winnipeg. We will be another two hours before we are off duty here. We won't be taking any coal tonight. There is no way I'll be peeling that frozen piece of canvas that is covering that coal pile. If the Watchman runs out of coal, he has my permission to burn the canvas.

We shove the plow into a track so it will be handy in the morning; and the caboose goes on top of the west way-freight caboose, which has been held up here unable to go anywhere in this weather. The west way-freight has been sitting here all day waiting for us to plow out the line and dig out the dead engine and plow. Little did they know that they are now part of the solution in our next attempt to free the mixed train up the Boissevain Sub. Both Freddy and I fallout of the cab and drag our weary bodies over to the bunkhouse and are met by the west way-freight and the passenger crews, each wanting to know what happened to us. They rustle up some grub for us and we tell them what all went wrong this last couple of days and what lies ahead for us tomorrow.

I can't remember what we ate, but I know Freddy had to wake me up every couple of minutes until I finished the meal, as the days had finally caught up to me. We had booked eight hours rest, knowing full well it was hardly enough; but that was the most rest we could book.

Off duty 23:50. That's a 26 hour and 35 minute day. If you add the 13 hours and five minutes we were on duty coming from Winnipeg to La Riviere (with a half an hour off duty at La Riviere) that's 39 hours and 40 minutes



*A rotary attempting to clear the line after a snowslide in 1910. Debris mixed with the snow could cause damage to the plough's blades and other equipment.  
Photo, Canadian Pacific*

on duty in the last 48. And what did we accomplish? We can sure plow a lot of snow. We sure are suckers for punishment. And one more thing - we get to do it all over again tomorrow.

#### **Napinka bunkhouse - Midnight February 7th.**

When you are tired, you sleep. When you are dead tired, you are just that, dead. You sleep in a trance, without dreams, without moving, without feeling. For eight hours I did just that, lay there inside my body oblivious to every ache and tired bone. You are not resting; it's more like being in a state of suspension. Time means nothing; in fact I didn't think eight hours had gone by as I had just laid my head down on the pillow to have a sleep when they called me. If they had left me there for a month I wouldn't have protested one bit. No such luck, they had to get that train out of the snowdrift and the line cleared and start running a railway, rest or no rest. So, you guessed it. They broke our rest and said, you've had enough and we got to start running a railroad again. Get to work, you slackers. After spending almost 27 hours on a dirty, drafty, cold, coal-burning steam engine, built in the early part of the 20th century by a person, or persons, unknown, who had no idea of what the word comfort meant, with the exception of the seat box padding and an arm rest, that you won't see or

lean on till spring, things can get a little bit dumpy. Also you are a little bit apprehensive of the next coming events. I guess so! After what we had gone through in the last two days anything is liable to happen.

They called us, this Saturday morning, February the 8th, at 08:15 for 09:15 Snow Plow East. (We only need an hour call; the engine is practically sitting outside the front door). I can't remember what breakfast was as we didn't have any food with us. I believe the way-freight crew and the passenger crew fed us, or we might have gone over to the hotel to eat. Now we're ready to do some work, I think, or at least we have a strong belief that our bodies can take it for another day.

The 'west way' (that's the regular way-freight crew, west out of La Riviere) is also called at the same time. They have been sitting here in Napinka for the last two days twiddling their thumbs and chomping at the bit wanting to get back on pay. We are now double heading on the snowplow. When I say "they" called us, I mean the dispatchers in Winnipeg, sitting in their nice warm office, trying to figure out what we should do next. If they had asked me, I would have told them to wait 'till spring, but no, they wouldn't ask a lowly old fireman for his opinion. They want to run their railway. Did you hear that, 'Their Railway'.

I would have many differences of opinion with the dispatchers over the next 40 years. They had their way of operating a railway; I had, like many other engineers, another way, one that would look kindly on the running crews. Howsoever, this was their show today, come what may.

Putting together a double-header snowplow is no problem, if you know what you're doing and it's summer time. Of course who needs a snow plow in the summer? As you have two engines and two cabooses, you also have two complete crews. Two engineers, two firemen, two conductors, two tail end men and last but not least, two head end men. That's ten men of the running crew altogether. Here lies a problem; if they can't see eye to eye the two conductors may be at loggerheads. Two bosses on a train isn't the ideal way to operate either a train or a snowplow, so there has to be a lot of co-operation all around. The engineers have no problem. The engineer on the lead engine controls the brakes and determines the speed of the train. Of course the engineer on the second engine can always cut in the air brake and stop the train for any reason, reasonable. As far as the conductors are concerned, in this instance they are fine and very co-operative as long as they stay in their caboose. Just bring us the orders and we'll do the rest. So away we go.

Now, remember it is still winter out and cold as ever it could be in February. So, every movement is in slow motion. Every piece of equipment is frozen solid. The air hoses, made of reinforced rubber, which have to be connected between each of the engines and the cabooses plus the plow, are not very flexible. It takes time and muscle

power on the part of the brakemen to assemble our train, but with four good men on the job plus the brains of the engine crew, we get it done.

We have the west-way crew on the lead engine, with engineer Dave Smith at the controls, along with his fireman; then Freddy Stowell and myself on the second engine, number 937. This is the same engine we spent two days on before getting barely eight measly hours of rest and some questionable food. Then we have our two cabooses and the three trainmen in each one. The plow, on the point is loaded with section men, shovels, brooms and picks and lunch-buckets. Some of the section men will ride in the cabooses, as it is a bit more comfortable to ride in. Nobody wants to ride the engine. I wonder why?

At this point I might add an interesting point, probably not as interesting as it is puzzling. No matter how much snow you plow, at the end of the day, there is always some snow stuck to the front of the plow. Therefore at the end of the day, or, the beginning of the next day, the section men have to clear the snow from the front of the plow. Why this occurs has never been explained to me. Could it be that rubbing the steel plow against a snowdrift creates the heat that makes the snow stick? Howsoever we start the day off with a clean snowplow. The caboose gets its share of snow, I might add. Every time the train crew wants to come out of the caboose they have to shovel and sweep snow. At one point in the trip they have to be dug out, as they couldn't open the door on account of the packed snow. And we thought they were all asleep. These cabooses will carry this snow until the spring thaw.

We come out onto the mainline at Napinka to load up with coal, and you know what is involved here; the pulling back of the heavy, snow-laden canvas; which protects the coal from the snow that is being plowed; which would make the coal wet and hard to ignite. The fireman on the lead locomotive gets help from his train crew as I do from mine. It's no easy task as the canvas is frozen and unyielding. You need at least two men, three is better. Untying the ropes is a real jolly time, especially when you have to take off your mittens in three hundred degrees below zero weather. The footing is precarious (always wanted to use that word) on top of the coal hopper, as the little footing we do have is covered in frozen coal and snow. A slow process that eats up time, muscles, energy and patience.

Now we have a tender full of water and a hopper full of coal. Are we ready to boil water or aren't we? No. The body is still in need of more horizontal rest, but we must go onward in spite of what the body says. There is still a train or two that we have to free from their icy tomb. Sounds dramatic, doesn't it, but it's all in a day's work in the 'Good Old Days' of 1947.

After loading up with coal we back down the main line to the station and await train orders. Oh boy, another one of these days where we sit around and wait and wait



*In the diesel era snow still blocks the lines and buries trains. However, bulldozers and front loaders are now frequently used to remove snow, as we see in this scene taken in 1979. As a result, the use of the traditional snow plough is diminishing. Photo, Canadian Pacific*

and wait. Of course we wait for orders from 222 miles away, in Winnipeg, that's where the dispatchers hibernate.

I get a very helpful tip from Dave Smith the engineer on the lead engine, which I kept in my bonnet (head bone) for future use. That was; instead of struggling to open your frozen ash pans and dump your ashes after cleaning your fire, leave them open. Any live coals or ashes do not last very long on snow and in 119 degrees below zero weather. So I keep the ash pans open and whenever the firebox got too full or the fire was not burning properly I would give the grates a little shake. The ashes would drop down to the ash pan and out into the cruel, cold world. I made sure when I shook them that we were out on the prairies, not going through a town or on bare ties. There weren't any reports of barns burning down in that area at that time of year, thankfully.

The weather has eased somewhat; meaning the wind has died down and the switches aren't filling up with snow immediately after you clean them. A good sign that we are going to win this battle over the elements, for now anyway.

Orders are here and we have rights over everything on the Napinka subdivision, including trains, planes and automobiles, and of course snowdrifts, jackrabbits and small herds of buffalo. They are not running any passenger or freight trains today, just snow plows. At least not in this neck of the woods, which is all that concerns us at this moment. The highways are still plugged with snow, so there aren't any cars or trucks running. No delivery of fuel or produce. It's as if time is standing still, with the exception of the snowplows. The kids are enjoying this, as all the schools are closed. They could stay in and watch T.V., but the only trouble with that

is, there isn't any (remember this is 1947), but they could listen to the radio. There weren't any stats. kept in those days on births nine months later.

We clear the Napinka mainline switch at 11:25, which means more than half the daylight is shot, and it's almost noon and I'm hungry. So what else is new? Maybe I'll just chew on the handle of the shovel for a while. I dream of the crusts of bread mother told me eat. I wish I had a few of those in my lunch bucket now. I don't know what keeps old Freddy going, he's almost 40 years older than I am, he hardly eats a thing but he's very wiry. He did live till he was 93 years old, as I kept in touch with him after he retired. He went to Vancouver where a lot of his old cronies were and, of course the more moderate temperature to live. I guess he had had enough of the wild prairies and wild snowplow rides.

Meanwhile back on the cold, snowy plains of Manitoba; we are running as snowplow east and flying along with the two engines. We blast over to Medora, eight point five miles: then Leighton, another five miles. The snow is flying in all directions as we plow along. The snowdrifts don't know what hit them. I do believe we are getting a little more snow being sucked into the cab when I open the firebox door to put in a fire in, more so with the two engines then with just the one. But at least we are a little further away from the blasted whistle. Five miles to Deloraine (a registry and junction point for all trains) where we have to stop and register on account of any trains coming off the Lyleton Subdivision. All trains off the Lyleton Subdivision are annulled. Naples four point six miles, Whitewater five miles. We take on water here and take as much as the tender will hold, as we don't know when we will be back here for more. The brakeman again takes water for me and the message is fill it to the lid. Now would be a good time to eat if we had something to eat. We do, as one of the members of the train crew on the west-way had got hold of a huge amount of sausages. The invitation of sausages and sausages is too great to turn down; we stop, and it's time to eat; like now, or if not, when?

Freddy and I go to the caboose and fill up on sausages, bread and coffee, courtesy of the west-way crew. To this day, and for the life of me, I can't remember where the tail end crew got those sausages, but I can still see them cooking in the frying pan on the stove. I believe they gave us strength to carry on in our quest to free the snowed-in plow. It's a nice change being in the caboose instead of the dirty dank cab. I think the dankness comes from the snow sifting through the cracks and holes in the engine and hitting the hot boiler and turning it into dank.

We still have a long day ahead of us, but you can't live on coal dust alone. It doesn't matter if it's light or dark out, when you're on a plow you can't see anything on account of the blowing snow and of course that big red plow out front doesn't help much. So when the sun sets or rises it doesn't mean anything but the watch tells us the length of time on duty. So we keep our watches wound.

We arrive at the west switch at Sanger and the biggest snowdrift in western Canada. Well not really western Canada, but western Manitoba. Well maybe not really western Manitoba, but; let's put it this way, I wouldn't want it in my backyard.

The section men are out in a jiffy, with brooms, picks and shovels - all the implements needed to clear the switch of snow, which has accumulated since we left it yesterday.

Although it is sunny, it is still frigid weather outside; the canvas curtain we have in the back of the engine and around the ladders on each side leading up to the cab is frozen stiff and bound tight with rope. We use the cab windows to exit and enter the cab. That canvas is not much protection and the sun on the snow makes it hard to see anything. There isn't too much to see anyway. The highways are blocked and what hasn't moved for the last few days is covered with snow. It's called a whiteout. (Not to be confused with the solution you put on a typing error.)

We plow up the Boissevain Sub. at a good clip pushing the snow as far away from the tracks as possible without the train leaving the rails. With these two locomotives you can get up speed pretty quick. The tricky part is to be able to stop before hitting and damaging something that is hard to put together in a snow pile. But there is no problem here, because we have plenty of snow to plow before we get anywhere near that caboose, engine and plow. The wind has blown in fresh snow and covered the entire track we had plowed out yesterday. This snow was packed and blown in from central Saskatchewan I'm told. (This information was obtained from a northwest wind, believe it or not.)

It's a little over a mile to the big drift containing the snow plow components (plow, dead engine and caboose), which we are trying to free from their icy tomb. But we must be careful when we hit this drift, for as you are well aware, the caboose is made of wood and you know how wood splinters. And of course it being on the ground doesn't help the situation very much either. All in favor of waiting till spring raise your hand. Carried!

There isn't much fear of a collision because we are slowed right down to a crawl as we hit the real heavy snow. We have to get up more speed but still stay on the track.

The road master has whistled us to stop, so he can assess the situation. I can tell you what's going through old Sven's mind. He doesn't want two more engines and two more cabooses stuck in the snow. Bad for the reputation you know.

So he is employing a new strategy. As we are about a quarter of a mile from the tail end of the snowed-in caboose and the drift is getting real high, we will back up a quarter mile, uncouple the engines, then the lead engine and plow will take one hell of a run at the snowdrift. The reason for this is: when the plow gets as far as it can, it will try to back up to take another run at it. If it can't back up, this is where we come to the rescue. We go in and pull him

out. But first the section men have to clear some of the snow away so when we pull him back we don't go on the ground. A little tricky, wouldn't you say, and it is all done in the dark, without smoke or mirrors.

Old Dave Smith, his fireman, plow and engine take off; hit the snow at a goodly rate of speed while we sit there and listen to the exhaust of their engine. One exhaust means one-quarter turn of the driving wheel. Now if you want to measure the circumference of the wheel then multiply it by the number of exhausts you hear, be my guest. You can tell by the exhaust as it slows down that he is hitting lots of snow. Finally, no more exhaust, he is stopped. Now can he back up? He whistles back after the section men have cleared some of the snow away. He can't back up, so he whistles to us for help. Now remember - no radios. To the rescue!

Freddy whistles ahead and we go in with our headlight on to pull him out. Now for the first time we get a better view of the depth of the snow. It is even with the arm rest at the bottom of our window when we tie on, (approximately ten feet deep) and I'm sure that it will be higher, much higher.

We ease back out of the drift with both engines working and go back about a quarter mile so Dave can have another go. Again we listen to the exhaust. Freddy counts the exhausts and announces to me; three pole lengths. Now remember what I just told you - one exhaust is one-quarter revolution of the engine's driving wheel, so if you measure the circumference of the wheel you'll get the distance traveled in one exhaust. When the exhausts start to slow down he is again hitting heavy, deep snow. Once again he whistles for help and once again we go to the rescue. This time the snow is almost higher than the window. We weren't going anywhere, anyways.

So it is pull back, have a run at it; go in, pull it out; take another run at it, go in pull it out. You get the drift of it (no pun intended), don't you? Now the snow is as high as the cab of the engine. That's it - I quit! We work like this for a couple of hours, and then finally, finally, I must emphasize this, we are at the caboose. It is now up to the train crew and section men to clear the snow away so we can re-rail the caboose. There goes another couple of hours. Some section men have been out here all day digging the snow away from the caboose, engine and plow. Now finally we tie on to the caboose and nudge it forward as it is frozen to the rail. We pull the caboose slowly back over the re-railers and it is back on the track. Yahoo! Remove the re-railers, then tie onto the engine, nudge it forward as it too is frozen to the track. The engine has been dead and drained for a couple of days now. Next it's the plow's turn to be broken free. It looks like we are going to win. Hey, it's only three-thirty in the morning!

It was a struggle to get them out, but we did it. We back down the Boissevain Sub to Sanger and push the plow, engine and caboose onto the mainline. We haven't finished plowing all the way to Schaffner, so we head down

the Boissevain Sub. to get the last of the big drift. We plow all the way like we were possessed, for now we are tired, hungry, miserable and also running low on water. Our job will be complete when we finish plowing to Schaffner and let the mixed train go on to Boissevain. They have had a tiring time sitting there for two days twiddling their thumbs and waiting for us to come to the rescue. They would be running out of food also. Apparently they ran out of coal and had to borrow some from a boxcar that was being unloaded for the farmers and folks around that district. All that was needed was a pregnant woman to be rescued and then that would cap this story. No luck this time.

Mission accomplished. Oh yeah. It's just so far so good. We still have to get this conglomeration back to Napinka in one piece. That's 40 miles away. And we have to take water at Whitewater. We should get something to eat, but let's not get carried away.

After the mixed train goes by us at Sanger (it's the wye on the Napinka Sub.) we switch out our train. We put the two plows in the lead, then our two engines; then the dead engine; then the three cabooses behind us. Now we are a train again and running as, wait for it, "Snow Plow West".

It's almost 4:30 in the morning, which means we have been on duty for over 19 hours. My, how time flies when you're having fun. And I was wondering why I was falling asleep standing up.

Over to Cadzow: highball Cadzow; Whitewater: we take water here, mainly because we need it in the operation of this steam engine; Naples: highball; Deloraine: highball; Leighton: highball; and finally Medora: highball. Eight point five miles to Napinka and we will be home free.

We sail up to the wye switch at Napinka and stop. We stop - that is, the two live engines, the dead engine and the three cabooses stop, but the two plows keep on going. The switch is lined for the south leg of the wye, which leads to the mainline switch at Napinka, which isn't lined, but that doesn't stop the plows. They run through the switch and continue on to the station where they finally lose momentum and stop.

What caused them to separate from the engines, we don't know? Why didn't they stop when the air hoses parted, we don't know? All we know is when we stopped; they took off, ran through a mainline switch and ended up at the station. The good news is that the whistle cord, which leads from the plow to the engine, which Sven Benson just loves to blow, breaks, of course, and I put up a silent cheer on behalf of my ears and all the other ears around. Besides who cares, we are finished. We have accomplished what we set out to do. It's five-fifty in the morning and we are tired. Tired doesn't fully explain the condition you are in. It's more like numb. The poor section men will have to repair the switch before they can get a rest, numb or not.

It doesn't take us long to put the train away. (Plows, engines and cabooses). We have been on duty for

22 hours. Actually 22 hours and five minutes to be exact, but who's counting? That's it - I'm booking rest until noon of July first.

Hey, this story isn't over yet, so keep reading. There is talk of ordering the plow to go down the Lyleton Sub. as there's a passenger train heading down that way tomorrow (Monday, February 10, 1947), and they need a clear track. Good luck! They are not getting this fireman.

Again we drag our weary bodies into the Napinka bunkhouse, looking for food and a place to go horizontal. We book eight hours rest then have a bite to eat and flop into bed. Now, we don't go to bed like an ordinary person does, between nice clean flannel sheets and flannel pajamas, after a nice warm shower. No, we go to bed with our long underwear and socks on and between the rough wool blankets. (The wool holds the heat better, the sheets go on top) The underwear and socks have been on for the last four days and it will be almost two days more before these feet see the light of day and we take them off (The socks, that is). That's a long time between baths I know, but these are "The Good Old Days".

Well, they call for a plow to go down the Lyleton Sub. That is a branch line out of Deloraine and is about 37 miles long. Its only 30 miles from Napinka to Deloraine, 134 miles round trip. I don't care if it was only two and a half miles round trip, I'm not going. So they get the Souris fireman. (The one that was stuck in the snow drift) and then they get all my crew; Freddy Stowell, the engineer, Al Stacey, head end brakeman, Bink Moffatt, tail end brakeman and Elmer Moulton the conductor. My guess is they didn't get enough miles or they didn't have much choice. They were the obvious crew; the passenger crew has their regular assignment, as were the west way freight crew, Monday morning. Why they didn't get the Souris crew, I don't know. So much for being tired and numb.

Snowplow East left without me, I'm glad to say. They were 18 hours on duty and didn't get back until the wee hours on Monday morning. Meanwhile I had 12 hours sleep and if it weren't for the fact that my stomach started to growl I would have gone another 12 hours. I took a bit of nourishment and went back to bed, as I knew that we were going to deadhead home on the passenger train in the A.M.

They gave our engine, the 937, to the Souris crew, as theirs was nowhere near being thawed out. Hey, when you have been sitting in a snow bank for two or three days you do take a while to thaw out. It would have to go into the shops for a thorough inspection. They'll check for any frozen or broken pipes. If the engine crew did a thorough job of draining the engine, they'll have it back boiling water in no time.

Monday morning and called for 6:15 to deadhead on passenger train #122 Napinka to Winnipeg. Yahoo! 222 miles on pay with nothing to do but sit there and look out the window. As the caboose is deadheading too, we will

ride there. We can always put our feet up and make a pot of tea even though there is nothing to eat. I may get a chance to slip over to Barclay House in La Riviere and grab a sandwich for Freddy and myself.

Somewhere between Napinka and La Riviere our train crew are called upon to assist the passenger crew to help with the flood of people that are entraining on account of the aftermath of the blizzard. With highways blocked there aren't any cars or buses moving, so anyone going anywhere is going by train, the only transportation moving.

We travel over the rails that we had plowed just the day before, making this trip possible. We fought the battle and won. And you think this is the end, not quite.

Both Moffatt and Stacey live in La Riviere and we pass through there on the way to Winnipeg, but they are working and getting paid to go there. So when we stop at La Riviere I get out on the platform and find Mrs. Moffatt and Mrs. Stacey looking for their husbands, their arms loaded with food. They had been notified that both Al and Bink would be working through to Winnipeg. The food was for them. When I told them that they had both got off the other side of the train and were waiting for the train to go before they made an appearance, they were happy to say the least. They handed me the goodies and I hopped on the caboose with sandwiches cake and cookies. Enough for Freddy, Elmer and me to last a week. Fred put on the tea and I went and got Elmer to tell him the good news. So we sailed along from La Riviere to Winnipeg with big smiles on our faces and gorging ourselves on homemade goodies and tea.

Along about Plum Coulee, halfway to Winnipeg, they started to put passengers in the caboose as the coaches were all filled, so Freddy and I headed for the cupola with our goodies. We meet #123 the passenger train going west to Lyleton and he is loaded down with passengers. Both passenger trains are running late on account of the heavy traffic so we arrive two hours late into Winnipeg at 15 o'clock instead of 13 o'clock. Go home to a hot bath, a hot meal and a sleep in a warm clean bed. But wait, there's more.

The next day was Tuesday our regular day out and I'm ready to boil water, but all the regular crew book off, the cowards. We have a spare engineer along with the entire train crew, which means a long day both going and coming. No, not coming and going. Like I said, coming to La Riviere and going home to Winnipeg.

But there is a method in my madness, for when I come in on Wednesday I go on holidays for two weeks. My mother and I go out to the West Coast (by train of course) and visit relatives in Vancouver, where the grass is green not white. Then we head down to Seattle to do some deep sea fishing and forget all about that huge pile of snow we left behind back on the prairies and that train, 'Snow Plow West'.



## The History Behind the William G. Cole Fond

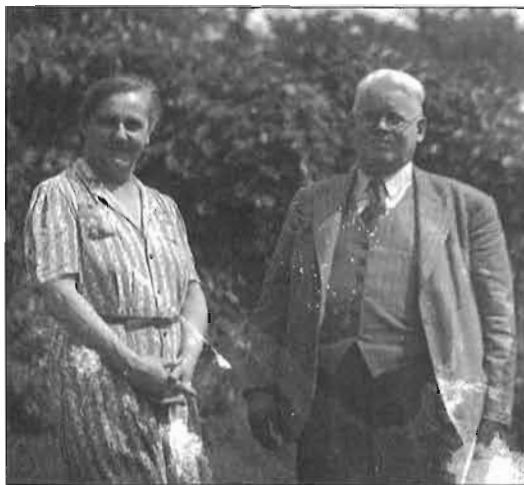
## La petite histoire du fonds William G. Cole.

By/Par Josée Vallerand, archivist/archiviste

William Cole became a CRHA member in 1932. A true railway enthusiast, he seldom travelled without his camera. Upon his death in 1962, his family transferred to the CRHA a major collection of his pictures and documents related to the railway world, between about 1890 and 1962.

William Graham Cole was born in Montreal on August 27th 1880. His father was, among other duties, an engineer for the Quebec Montreal Ottawa & Occidental Railway. As a teen-ager, William G. Cole made his entry into the railway world at Coteau Station.

He then became an engineer for the Canada Atlantic Railway Company. Later he had to give up working on the trains, on account of diminishing eyesight, but didn't leave the domain entirely. He worked as a machinist for various Canadian and American railway companies, including the Canadian Pacific Railway (at the De



*William Cole with friend circa 1945  
William Cole accompagné, vers 1945*

William Cole devient membre de l'Association canadienne d'histoire ferroviaire (ACHF) en 1932. Fervent amateur ferroviaire, il ne se promène jamais sans son appareil photo. A sa mort en 1962, sa famille transmettra ainsi une importante collection de photographies et documents qui se rattachent au monde ferroviaire entre 1890 et 1962.

William Graham Cole est né à Montréal le 27 août 1880. Son père fut, entre autres, ingénieur pour la compagnie Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway. C'est à l'adolescence que William G. Cole entame sa carrière

dans le monde ferroviaire, à la gare de Coteau. Il devient chauffeur puis ingénieur pour la Compagnie Canada Atlantic Railway. Par la suite, il doit délaissé les trains à cause d'une vue baissante, mais ne quitte pas entièrement le domaine. Il travaille comme machiniste pour différentes compagnies ferroviaires américaines et



*One of the dwellings where William Cole grew up, from 1893 to 1901, near Coteau Junction. A train headed by CNR locomotive 6138, circa 1935  
Une des maisons où a grandi Willaim Cole de 1893 à 1901, près de Coteau Junction. Passage d'un train tiré par la locomotive CNR 6138, vers 1935*



*Caboose #3 of the Thurso & Nation Valley at thurso QC, 1935*

*Wagon de queue du Thurso & Nation Valley Railway no3 à Thurso, Québec, 1935*

Lorimier workshops). Many years later, he associated with his father in a family foundry which was in business until 1952. A great fan of the Canada Atlantic Railway, he joined the Canada Atlantic Old Boys Association, initiated by William G. Ross, where he remained active until its termination in 1960. He published pictures in railway magazines, including *Railroad Stories* (now *Railroad and Railfan*) and proceeded into numerous exchanges and sales with other fans and historians.

The fond attests the career of William G. Cole jr. at the Canada Atlantic Railway, within railway shops and his activities with the CRHA, between 1890 and 1960. It also briefly covers the professional life of his father for the Northern Railroad of New Jersey and the Canada Atlantic Railway, from 1867 through the twenties.

This fond covers many specific areas of railroading: steam locomotives, diesel-electric locomotives and industrial locomotives as well. Companies mentioned include: Canadian National Railways, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Grand Trunk Railway, the Delaware & Hudson Railway, the Rutland, Boston & Maine and a few other companies, both Canadian and American ones. Locomotives are mostly pictured in the railway yards of Montreal (Turcot, Glen, Longue-Pointe and Outremont): workers are also

canadiennes, dont le chemin de fer Canadien Pacifique (aux ateliers De Lorimier). Plusieurs années plus tard, il s'associe à son père dans un atelier de fonderie familiale jusqu'en 1952. Grand amateur de la compagnie Canada Atlantic, William G. Cole fonde l'association Canada Atlantic Old Boys où il est actif jusqu'à sa dissolution en 1960. Il publie des clichés dans des revues ferroviaires dont *Railroad Stories* et procède à de nombreux échanges de photos et à des ventes avec d'autres amateurs et historiens.

Le fonds témoigne de la carrière de William G. Cole fils à la compagnie Canada Atlantic Railway, dans les ateliers ferroviaires et de ses activités au sein de l'Association canadienne d'histoire ferroviaire entre 1890 et 1960. Il relate également brièvement la vie professionnelle de son père à la Northern Railroad de New Jersey et à la Canada Atlantic Railway entre 1867 et les années 1920.

Ce fonds traite de plusieurs thématiques ferroviaires : la locomotive à vapeur, la locomotive diesel-électrique et les locomotives des industries. Les compagnies représentées sont les suivantes: les Chemins de fer nationaux du Canada, le chemin de fer Canadien Pacifique, la Canada Atlantic Railway, la Grand Trunk Railway, la Delaware & Hudson, la Rutland, la Boston &

pictured. In order to take pictures of industrial locomotives and other traces of railroading, Mr. Cole naturally had to go off the beaten paths.

Architecture is also taken into account, with stations and associated structures, as well as bridges. Stations are mostly those of the CNR and are located in the Ottawa region and those within Quebec (from 1930 to 1940): Whitney, Douglas, Galetta, Arnprior, Sprucedale, Eganville, Barrington, Valleyfield, Rockland, Viger, Coteau and Sainte-Justine among others. Pictures were taken on excursions with friends or CRHA members.

One can also find pictures of track construction, mostly in the Montreal area, pictures of passenger trains, freight trains and other items: freight cars, accidents, people, etc. Some pictures concern CRHA excursions, mostly between years 1932 to 1945.

The Cole fond is made of negatives and pictures, transfers, rule books, pamphlets, press clippings and railway passes.

Maine et quelques autres compagnies canadiennes et américaines. Les locomotives sont photographiées surtout dans des cours de triages de Montréal (Turcot, Glen, Longue-Pointe et Outremont); on y voit les cheminots. Pour photographier les locomotives industrielles et les vestiges, Monsieur Cole a dû se déplacer hors des sentiers battus, évidemment.

L'architecture y est également présentée, avec les gares et les installations attenantes ainsi que les ponts. Les gares sont surtout celles des Chemins de fer nationaux du Canada et elles se situent pour la plupart dans la région d'Ottawa et dans celle de Québec (entre 1930 et 1940) : Whitney, Douglas, Galetta, Arnprior, Sprucedale, Eganville, Barrington, Valeyfield, Rockland, Viger, Coteau et Sainte-Justine, entre autres. Les clichés ont été pris lors d'excursions avec des amis ou des membres de l'ACHF.

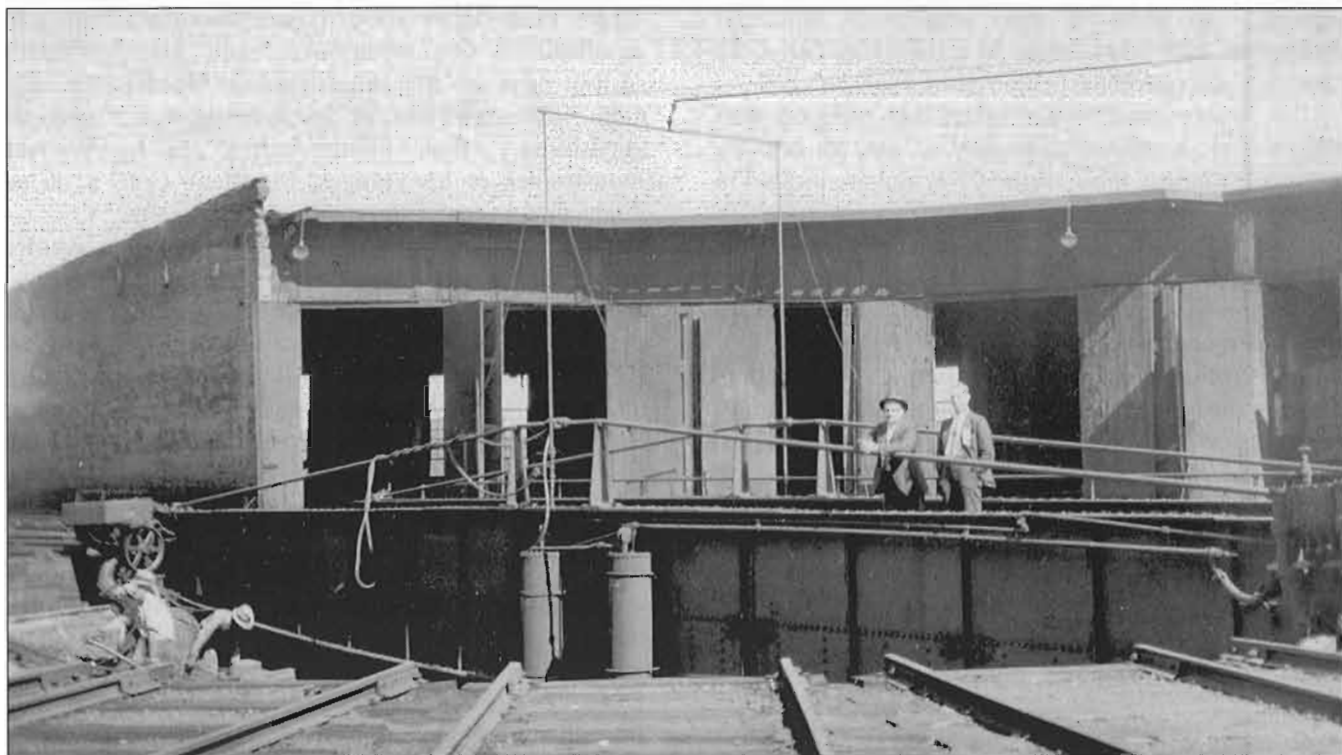
On retrouve aussi des illustrations de la construction de voies, surtout dans la région de Montréal, des photos de trains de passagers, de marchandises et de jardin ainsi que d'autres sujets : wagons de marchandises, accidents et les personnages, etc. Quelques photos portent sur les expéditions de ACHF surtout durant les années 1930 à 1945.

Le fonds Cole est constitué de négatifs et de photographies, de correspondances, de livrets de règlements, de brochures, de coupures de presse et de laissez-passer de compagnies de chemin de fer.



*Group photographed in front of steam locomotive CNR 5251, 1944*

*Groupe photographié devant la locomotive à vapeur CNR 5251, 1944*



*Men pictured on the turntable of the former Canada Atlantic Railway in Ottawa, August 1935*

*Hommes photographiés sur l'ancien pont tournant de l'atelier du Canada Atlantic Railway à Ottawa, août 1935*



*MTC Employees welding rails on Notre-Dame Street in Montreal, August 1939*

*Hommes qui soudent des rails rue Notre-Dame, à Montreal, pour le MTC, août 1939*



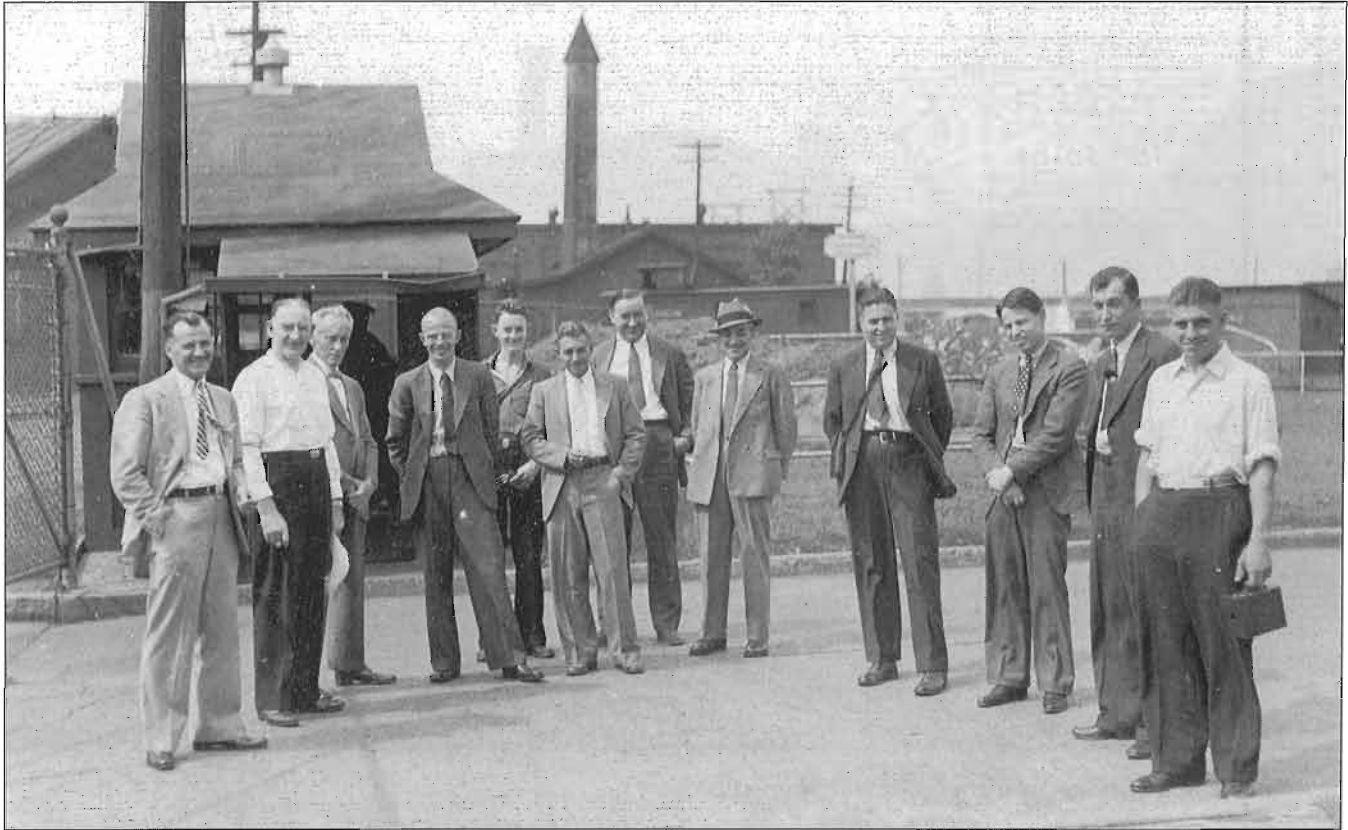
*CPR Snow plow #1 at Côte-Saint-Paul, Montreal, May 1939*

*Chasse-neige no1 du chemin de fer Canadien Pacifique à Côte-Saint-Paul, Montréal, mai 1939*



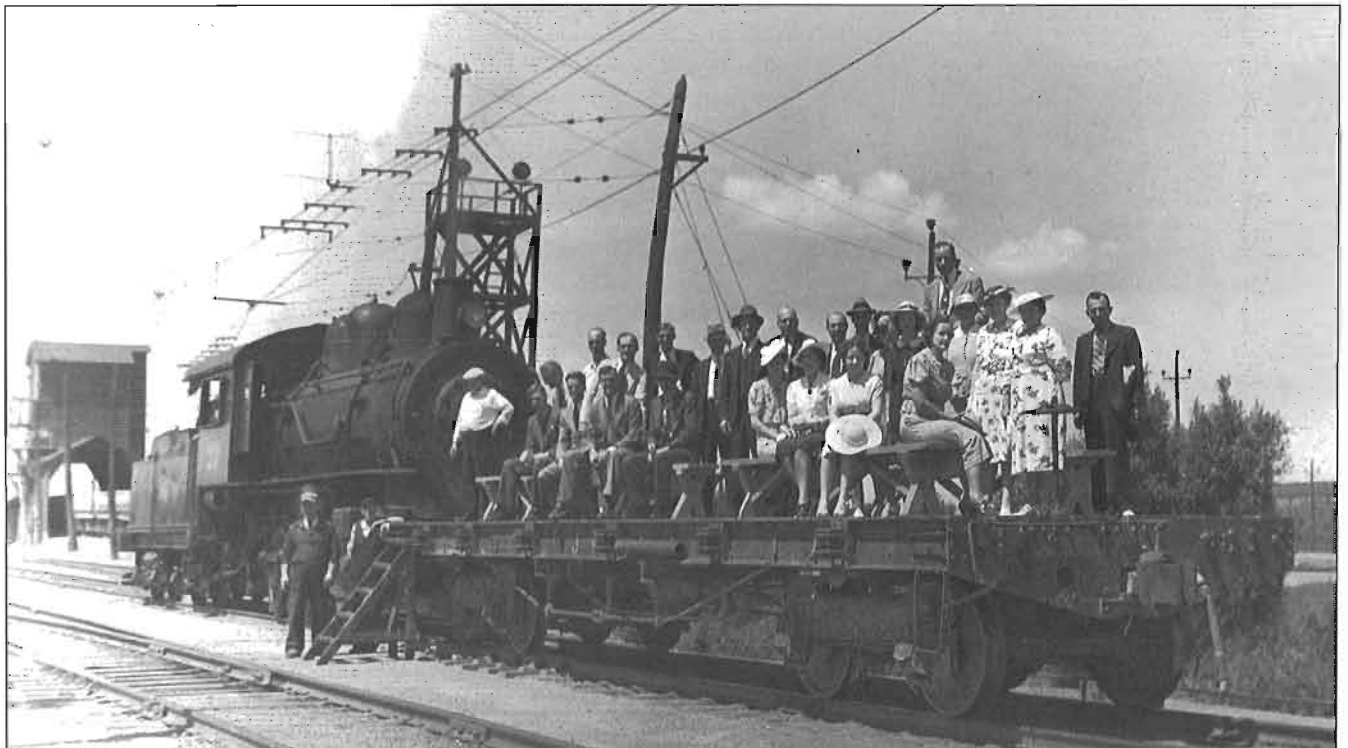
*CRHA members on an excursion to Saint-Albans VT, July 1939. From left to right: Messrs Trudeau, Fred Sankoff?, T.C.H. Smith, Terroux and Dr. R.V.V. Nicholls*

*Membres de l'ACHF en excursion à Saint-Albans au Vermont, juillet 1939. De gauche à droite : MM. Trudeau, Fred Sankoff (?), M. T.C.H. Smith, Terroux et Dr. V.V. Nicholls.*

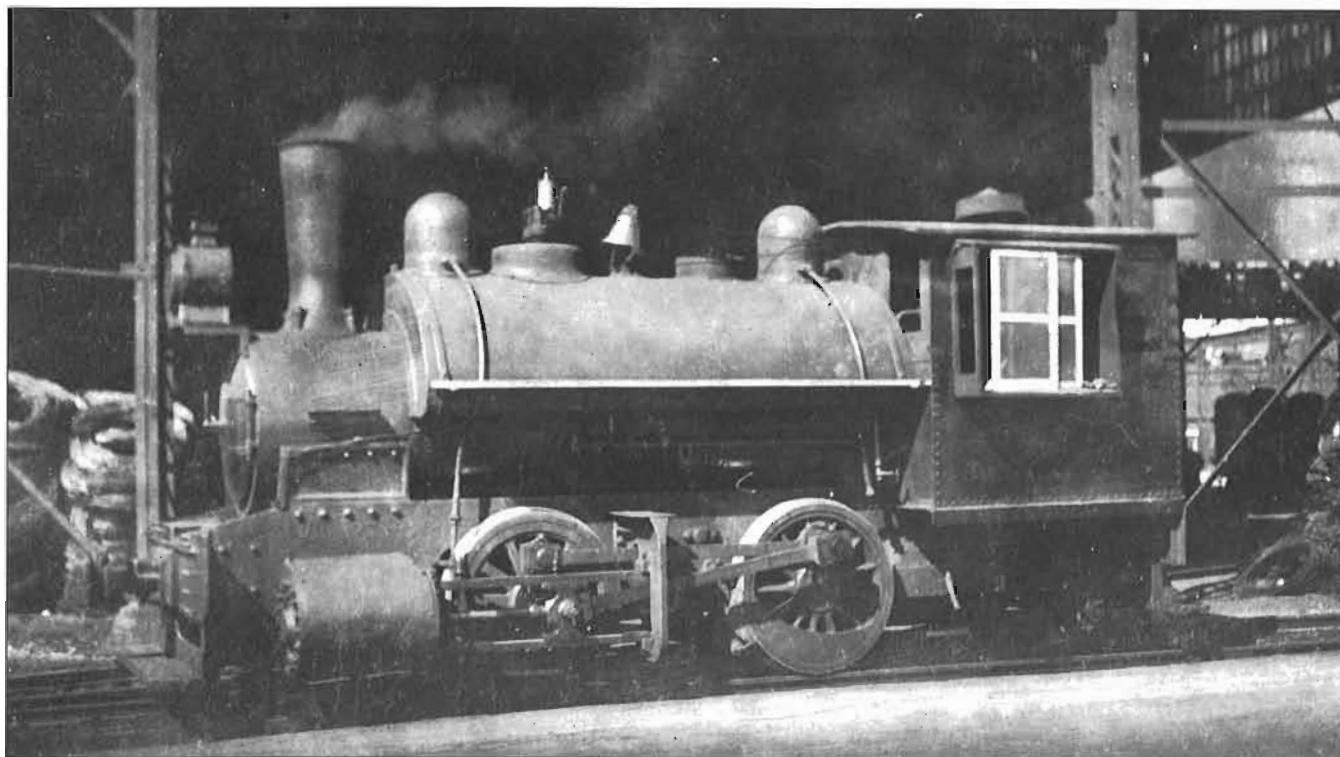


*CRHA members and their guests at the Pointe-Saint-Charles workshop entrance, on August 8, 1937*

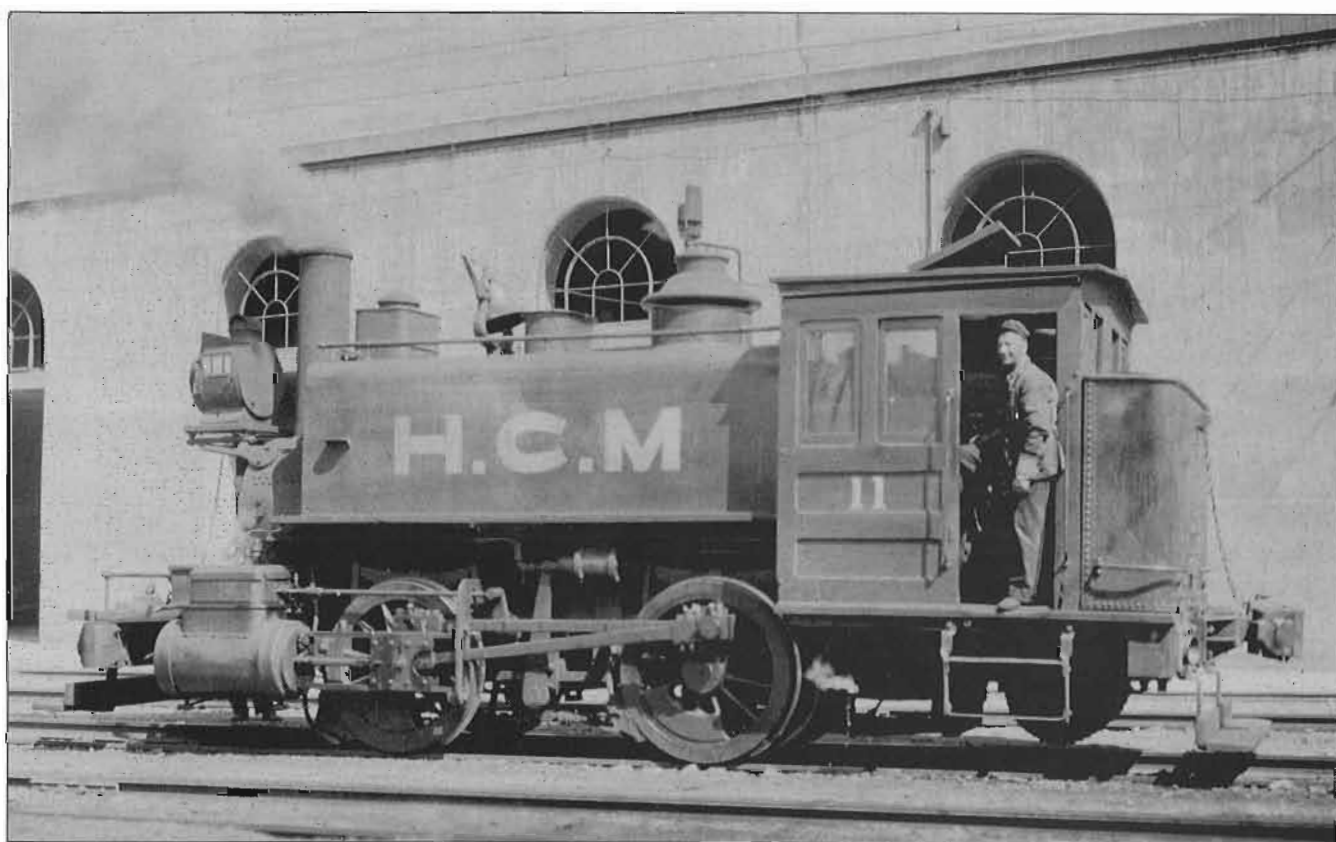
*Membres de l'ACHF et leurs invités à l'entrée des ateliers de Pointe-Saint-Charles à Montréal, le 8 août 1937*



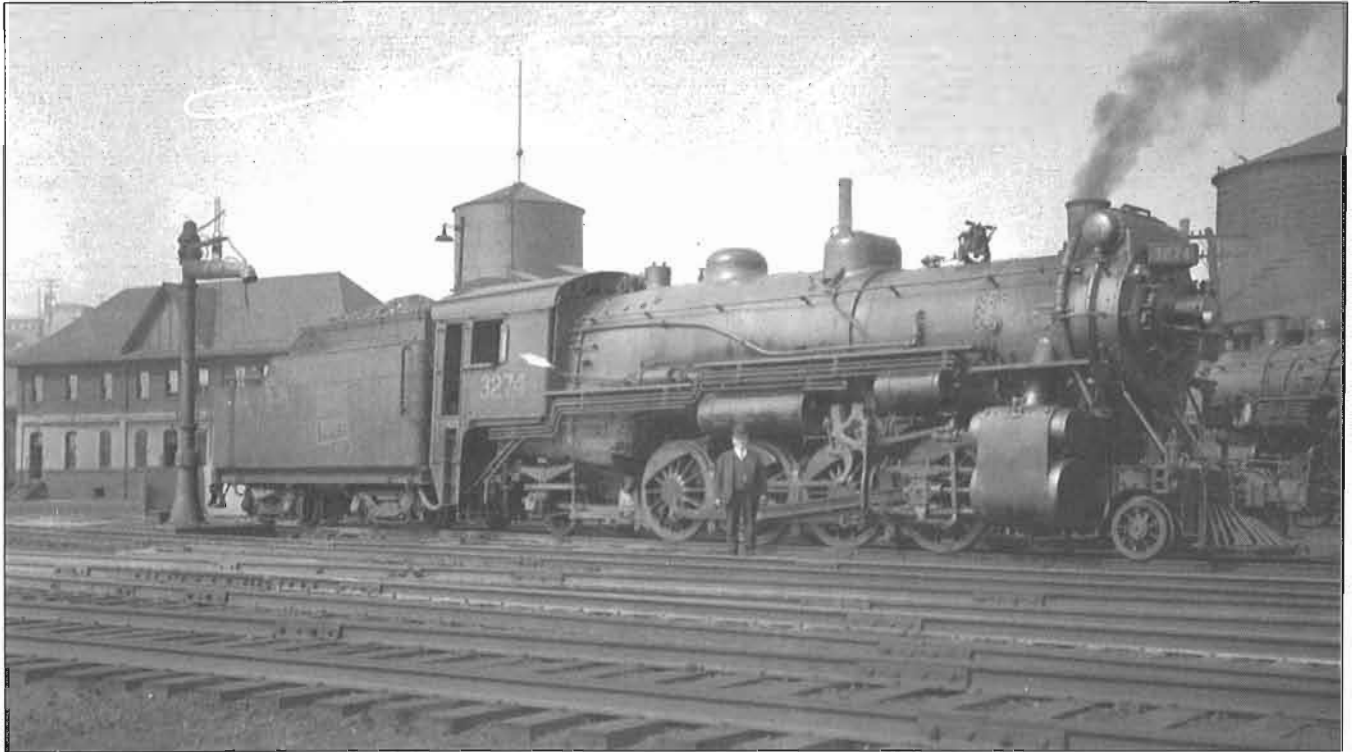
*CRHA members and their spouses on a flatcar, on an excursion to the Johns-Manville Company in Asbestos QC, on July 9, 1939*  
*Membres de l'ACHF et leurs invités sur un wagon plat lors d'une excursion à la compagnie Johns-Manville à Asbestos, au Québec le 9 juillet 1939*



*Industrial steam locomotive in operation, Steel Company of Canada n.d.  
Locomotive industrielle à vapeur en action, Steel Company of Canada, n.d.*

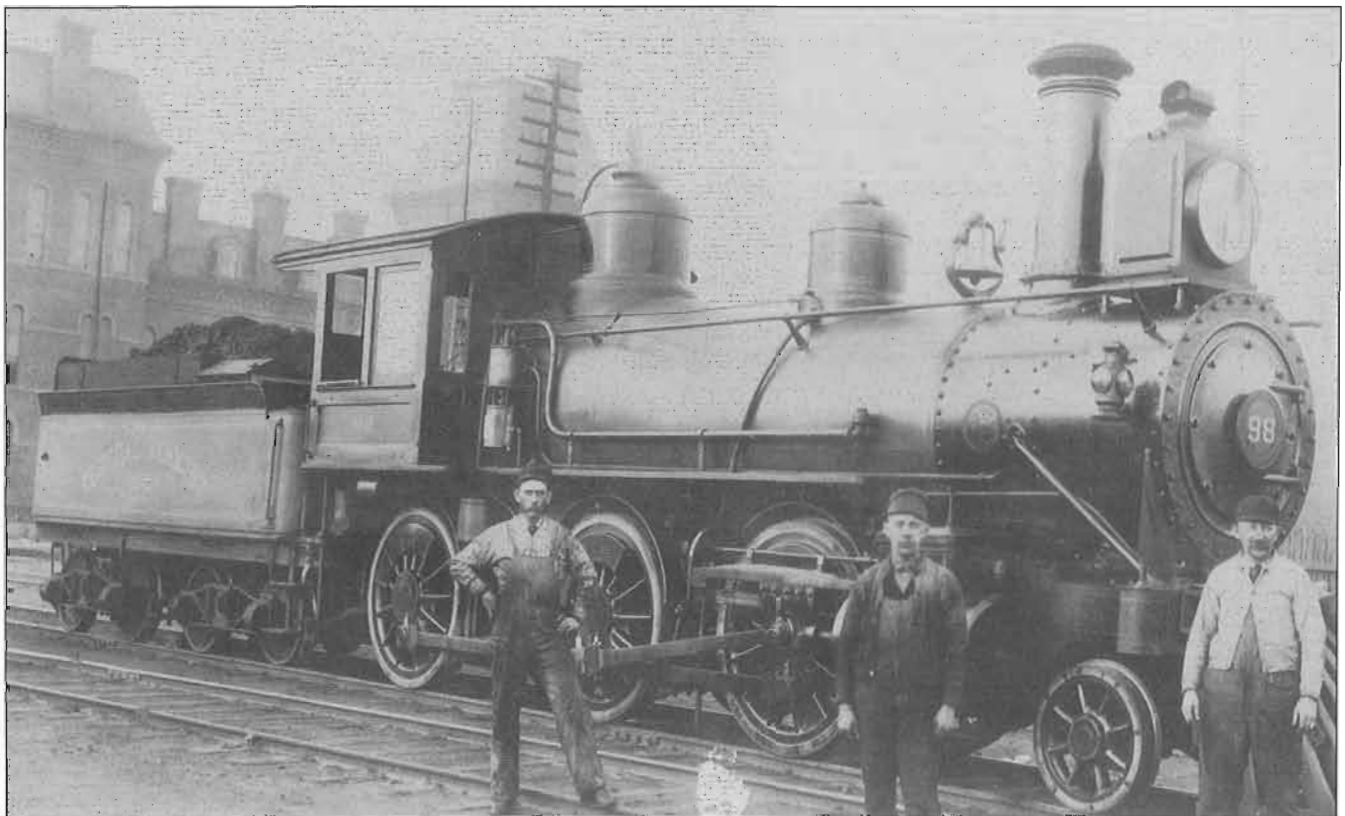


*Industrial Steam locomotive #11 of the Harbour Board Commission in Montreal, circa 1932  
Locomotive industrielle à vapeur no11 de la Commission du port de Montréal, vers 1932*



*Mr. Cole photographed in front of CNR Steam locomotive #3274 at Turcot yard, Montreal, circa 1940*

*Monsieur Cole photographié devant la locomotive à vapeur CNR 3274 à Turcot, Montréal, vers 1940*



*Railway employees in front of steam locomotive #98, circa 1900*

*Cheminots photographiés devant la locomotive à vapeur no 98 du Central Vermont, vers 1900*





*Remains of industrial steam locomotive #10 of the Gorman construction company, 1936*  
*Vestige de la locomotive industrielle à vapeur no10 de la compagnie Gorman Construction, 1936*

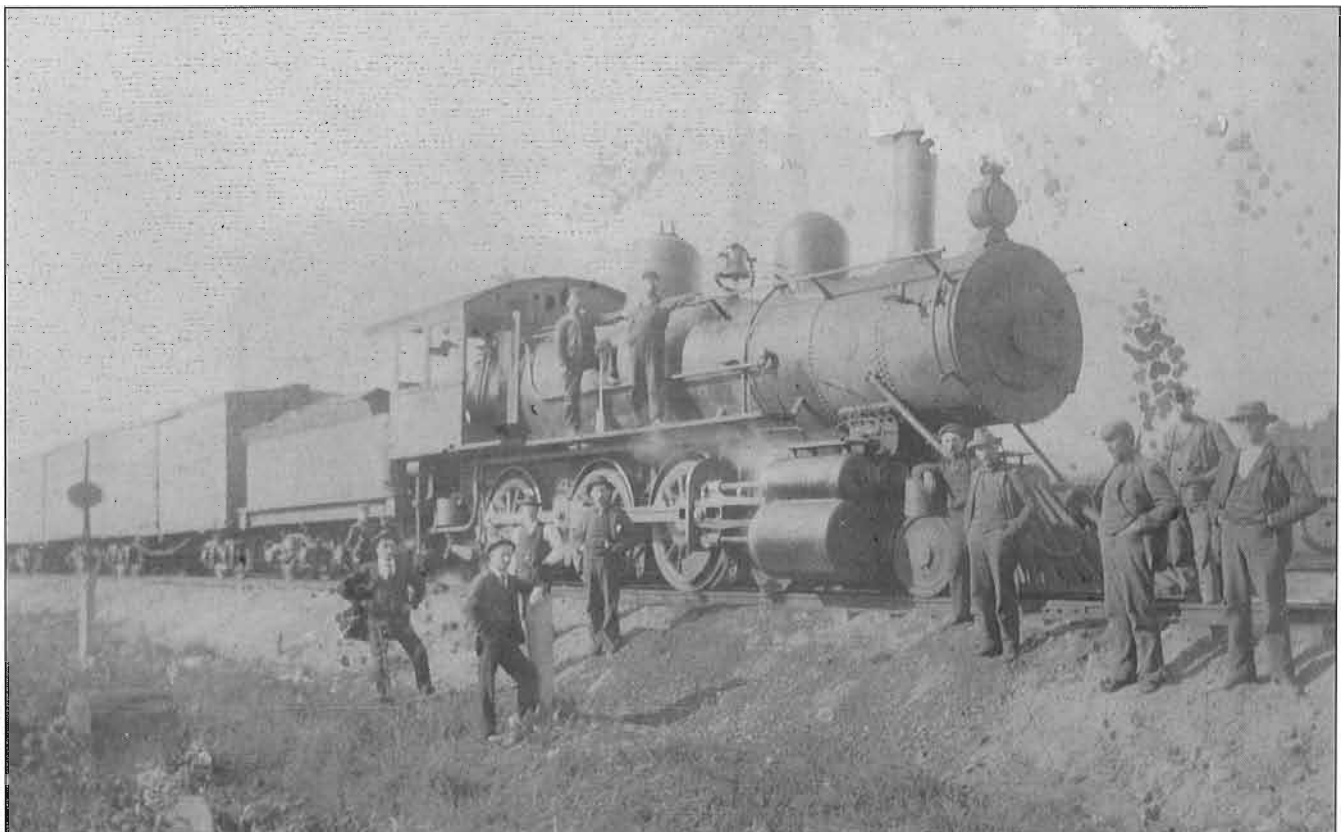


*Diesel-Electric locomotive #7700 (now #77) at Turcot yard, Montreal, circa 1940*  
*Locomotive diesel-électrique 7700 du CNR à Turcot, Montréal vers 1940*



*Garden train in action, circa 1949*

*Train de jardin en action, vers 1940*



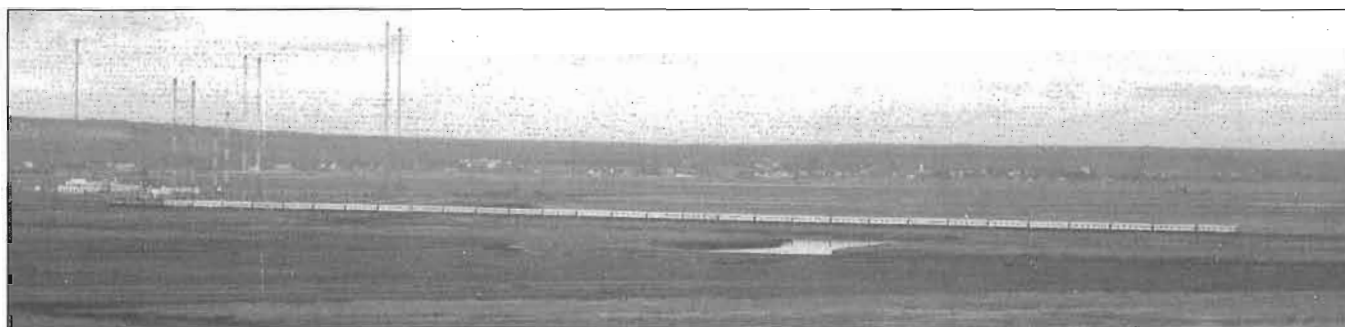
*Employees photographed in front of a freight train pulled by steam locomotive #630 (GTR or CAR?), circa 1900*

*Cheminots photographiés devant un train de marchandises tiré par la locomotive à vapeur no 630 (GTR ou CAR ?), vers 1900*



*Employees in front of flanger #2 of the Canada Atlantic Railway, circa 1900*

*Cheminots qui posent devant le déblayeur d'entre-rails no 2 du chemin de fer Canada Atlantic, vers 1900*



*The Canadian Broadcasting transmission towers at Sackville New Brunswick form the backdrop, as all-stainless-steel train No. 15, the "Ocean", crosses the Tantamar marshes at Aulac N.B, en route to Montreal on November 9, 2005. This 30-car train, one of the longest passenger trains ever to leave Halifax, was carrying a large group of veterans en route to Ottawa for the Remembrance Day commemorations on November 11. This year the occasion was of special significance as it is sixty years since the end of the Second World War:*

*The train consisted of three locomotives, one baggage car, three coaches, twenty-one sleepers, three diners, one "Skyline" dome car, and one "Park" dome car. The actual consist was as follows: Locomotives 6420, 6409, 6431. Cars 8622, 8113, 8138, 8117, 8506, Chateau Dollard, Chateau Richelieu, Chateau Salaberry, Acadian, Chateau Argenson, Chateau Iberville, Chateau Bienville, Chateau Levis, Chateau Crosse, Chateau Maisonneuve, Fairholme, Chateau Jolliet, Dawson Manor; Hunter Manor; Stuart Manor; Macdonald Manor; Chateau Lauzon, Louise, Chateau Marquette, Osler Manor; Grant Manor; Thompson Manor; Allan Manor; Chateau Laval, Glacier Park.*

*By next summer it is expected that all three consists of train 15 will be made up of "Renaissance" equipment, so such a long stainless-steel train may not be seen again in eastern Canada.*

*Photo by David Morris*

*BACK COVER TOP: A view along the line of BC Rail showing the magnificent scenery by Howe Sound that was enjoyed by thousands of passengers aboard the steam excursions out of North Vancouver with locomotive 2860. Photo by Peter Murphy, 1986.*

*BACK COVER BOTTOM: CPR Hudson locomotive 2822 at Ottawa West in May 1959. Photo by Thomas L. Hughes, and submitted by his son Harold Hughes.*

# Canadian Rail

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