

Upper Canada Railway Society

NEWSLETTER

BOX 122, TERMINAL "A"
TORONTO, CANADA

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Number 70

The Society meets on the third Friday of each month at 8.30 P.M. in Room 486, Toronto Union Station. The next meeting will be held on November 16th.

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET: As scheduled, the October meeting of the Society was the ten year banquet held at 7.30 P.M. on Friday, October 19th. The affair was very much a success with two well-filled tables in addition to the head table. The Society was pleased and honoured to have as guests at this function, Mr. Leslie Vardon, Traffic Engineer, Toronto Transportation Commission, and Mr. William Whitmore, who renders the Society such a valuable service in handling the mailing of publications. The President read two very nice letters from Presidents of two other railroad fan organizations who sent their regrets at not being able to attend. These were Charles E. Fisher, President of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society of Boston, and Sanborn S. Worthen, President of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association of Montreal.

The Society was also happy to welcome two associate members who travelled a considerable distance for the occasion. These were Arnold Browne (U.C.R.S. No. 3) of Stratford, and Harold McMichael of Waterford, Ont. Also present were Robert S. Browne and Jack T. A. Smith, two members who cannot attend regularly owing to Scout work but who made a special effort to attend the banquet.

After the excellent meal and several brief speeches, the members retired to an adjacent room where William Bailey and John Knowles displayed some of their 35 mm. colour slides taken on a recent trip in Eastern Canada and New England. Great interest was displayed by the members in the shots, most of which were of the two-foot gauge Edaville Railroad at South Carver, Mass. and the Seashore Electric Railway (a railfan project) at Kennebunkport, Maine.

SPECIAL NOTE: Since the appearance of the last notice concerning the list of members with items wanted or for sale or trade, there has been some response. However, in order to make this special service worth while, there should have been a considerably greater number of items received to date than has been the case. Accordingly, any member who wishes to have such an entry published is urged to send it to Mr. Julian Bernard, 656 Oriole Parkway, Toronto, as soon as possible.

YONGE STREET SUBWAY
CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS REPORT, OCTOBER 25, 1951
by John M. Mills

During the last few weeks, construction on the subway passed the half-way mark, still right on schedule. A shortage of steel which threatened to cause lengthy delays in the work has been overcome, and enough of this essential material is now assured to complete the work.

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On the first section to be started, that south of Dundas Street, the concrete tunnel is now completed except for a very short section at the corner of Yonge and Front Streets, and all that now remains to be done in this otherwise completed section is the laying of track, establishing of electrical circuits and the finishing of stations. A portion of the necessary rails have been delivered, and are stored in the completed tubes for the time being. The asphalt street surface with street car tracks should have replaced all wooden decking by the time this is read.

Between Dundas and Alexander Streets excavation is completed and concreting well under way. It is expected that the wooden decking will be removed from this section early next year.

The concrete tube is also complete between Alexander Street and Severn Street, where the line enters open cut. Backfilling is well under way, and the first business to be established on the fill - a used car lot - has come into existence. At Bloor Street is the only break in this section of the tube, made necessary by the magnitude of the task at this station, one of the largest on the line. New fronts have been added to several buildings which were "decapitated" in order to make way for a widened Bloor Street to clear the centre street car loading platforms.

On the open cut sections north to St. Clair Avenue, grading is actively under way, and bridges have been completed over the right-of-way at several cross streets. These bridges are of a singularly attractive design and will greatly enhance the appearance of the completed right-of-way. Experiments have been going on with several low growing shrubs in an effort to find some plants for the sides of the open cut which will not become unsightly as does grass when not kept cut down.

North of St. Clair Avenue, most excavation and grading has been completed as far as Imperial Street, though the Davisville Division yard area is still having mountains of earth moved around to level the site. Several concrete retaining walls have been finished, but as yet are retaining nothing, and these disconnected walls standing starkly alone here and there around the future yard give it a most curious appearance. This section will be of great interest to railfans when completed, for due to the valley through which Yonge Street passes, the line at this point will be elevated above the level of the street, and will be located immediately to the west of the street at the point where it emerges from the tunnel. Farther north, the Chaplin Crescent bridge will be built on the roof of the Davisville Division shops building, which should afford an excellent view of the main line in Davisville Station and also the car storage yards.

Tenders for the last section (S-6) between Imperial Street and Eglinton Terminal have been called, and construction will probably start here early in the new year. Almost all demolition of buildings has been completed, including the north half of Eglinton Carhouse. Other tenders let recently include the station finish contracts for all stations except Eglinton. These were let to a Toronto company which will move into each station as soon as the general contractor has finished the structure. Eglinton Terminal will be finished by the general contractor. Rolling stock has not yet been ordered, but this most necessary step will be taken in the next month or two.

AN EVENT OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Based on material contributed by
Robert S. Duncan

(Editor's Note: Just passed is the hundredth anniversary of the breaking of ground for Toronto's first railway - the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Union. This article recalls a few facts and incidents connected with this pioneer railway, and the ceremony in particular).

While living in a Wellington Street house, Mr. Frederick C. Capreol conceived the idea of carrying a railway through from Toronto to Lake Huron, a project which had been much discussed, but for which no active measures had ever been taken. His first scheme was to raise the necessary funds by means of a lottery, the proceeds of the tickets to be used in the purchase of 100,000 acres of land along the projected line of the road, the idea being that the profit from the land would pay for the whole construction of the road. The plan was viewed with distrust by some, and condemned as immoral by others, and in consequence it fell through. Defeated in his first attempt, Mr. Capreol did not give up in despair, but simply changed his course and set to work to organize a company. A bill granting a charter for the road was drawn up and passed by the legislature, but the Governor-General reserved it for the Queen's assent. When this new difficulty was thrown in his way, people began to call the organizer of the road "Mad Capreol", but nothing daunted he set out for England, laid the bill at the foot of the throne, and in the short space of seven weeks was back with the royal assent.

The energetic founder of the Ontario rail network of to-day lost no time in making arrangements with C. Story & Co., New York contractors, for the construction of the road. On August 29th, 1849 the royal assent to the bill authorizing the construction of the railway was received, and Mr. Capreol ordered a handsome silver spade and an ornamental oak wheelbarrow for the occasion, Lady Elgin having consented to break the first ground.

On his return from England, Mr. Capreol had been appointed manager of the road and styled "father of the undertaking", but in face of the benefit he had thus conferred upon Canada, especially on Toronto, the honour of presenting the spade to Lady Elgin was taken away from him, as the directors, animated by jealousy, dismissed him from the office of manager but a few days before the first sod was turned. At that time, the board which had dismissed him in such cavalier fashion had collectively only £37 10s. at stake in the enterprise, while Mr. Capreol had spent out of his private means £12,350.

A good deal of sympathy was elicited on Mr. Capreol's behalf in consequence of this unhandsome treatment by the directors, but it was all to no purpose.

The weather of the 15th of October 1851, was beautiful. On that day in the presence of a great assemblage on the Esplanade just west of Simcoe Street opposite the Parliament Buildings, Lady Elgin pressed her foot upon the richly ornamental spade, and threw up a little dirt into the handsomely carved oak wheelbarrow, which Mayor Bowes, who assisted in the ceremony, wheeled a short distance and then emptied.

The railroad, which was later known as the Northern Railway, was then called the Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Union Railway Company. Many banners floated in the air about the scene of the first breaking of the sod, conspicuously among them flags with the inscriptions NEVER DESPAIR and PERSEVERANCE CONQUERS.

The first locomotive for the new road was built at Portland, Maine. This was the LADY ELGIN, which weighed about 24 tons, had five foot

drivers and 14 x 20 cylinders. It was an inside connected engine, with all the "works" lying under the boiler and out of sight. This locomotive was too light for anything but construction work, to which use it was put soon after its arrival. The first accident on the road occurred in the afternoon of Sunday, July 16th, 1853. A short distance south of Weston the engine struck a cow, throwing the coach off the rails, and the latter was wrecked totally after rolling down a steep embankment. The baggage car was provided with chairs to do duty as a passenger coach for the rest of the trip, and the train proceeded on its way only to strike a truck and go off the track again at Newmarket.

The second engine was the TORONTO, built at James Good's foundry on the north side of Queen Street between Yonge and Victoria Streets. On completion of the locomotive, it was taken to the railway via Queen and Yonge Streets. A few yards of moveable rails were laid, and these, as the engine was moved over them, were taken up and relaid ahead. The progress made was astonishingly slow, it taking fully a week to get the engine from Queen to Front Street.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of May 16th, 1853, the first train on the new road pulled out, in the presence of a large crowd, from the little wooden shed opposite the Queen's Hotel, which had been dignified by the name of a station. The train was made up of the engine Lady Elgin, a box car and a passenger car. There was no ticket office, and Alderman John Harvie, the conductor, sold tickets on board. The first ticket was bought by a shoemaker named Maher, who objected to paying a dollar to ride 30 miles. The destination of the train was Aurora. All along the route people turned out to see the novel sight; two hours after leaving, the train whistled "down brakes" at the opposite terminus.

Mad Capreol's scheme was a great and immediate success. After his dismissal from the management of the enterprise which he had brought into existence, he spent some time abroad in travel. While on this trip, he was presented in London with a handsome service of plate, a tribute from the citizens of Toronto and a mark of their confidence, esteem and gratitude for the services which he had rendered the city.

VANCOUVER NEWS

by A. Norris Adams

The Pacific Northwest region of the National Model Railroad Association recently held a convention in Vancouver. In connection with this, the Lower Mainland Railroad Club was asked to plan a short fan trip in order that the delegates could make special studies of the prototype for modelling purposes. The N.M.R.A. and Lower Mainland members and friends met at the Drake Street yards of the C.P.R., where they were conducted through the shops.

A special train carrying 248 passengers was composed of equipment loaned by the railways having terminal arrangements in Vancouver. Each railway in its respective car supplied railway travel brochures. On the head end was C.P.R. ten-wheeler 922 (assisted by diesel switcher 7073 from the yards through the tunnel beneath downtown Vancouver to the C.P.R. station). The train had the following consist:

- C.P.R. steel box car
- C.P.R. eight wheel wooden coach 326
- Great Northern 12 wheel steel coach
- C.N.R. eight wheel wooden coach 6292 (a stockmen's car from Edmonton)
- Pacific Great Eastern Business Car BRIDGE RIVER
- two C.P.R. open observation cars, 7909 and 7915.

The train stopped at Coquitlam for pictures, then proceeded to New Westminster where the British Columbia Electric took over with locomotive 962 (ex Oregon Electric 23). The train proceeded thence to Marpole and via Kerrisdale back to Drake Street. For the last quarter-mile C.P.R. diesel switcher 7065 took over, as B.C.E.R. overhead does not reach Drake Street.

B.C.E.R. NOTES

The last street car to operate on the Dunbar line terminated service this past summer. This route was about six miles in length and connected downtown Vancouver with the Dunbar residential district. It was served by two man pay-enter cars, mostly Brills, C.C.& F. cars and B.C.E.R. built cars. The tracks were torn out on Broadway West and Dunbar and the roadway resurfaced for trolley buses. Gas buses served an intermediate changeover period.

Actual street car operation in Vancouver is now limited to four routes:

- (1) OAK STREET - uses DE cars - single track in the outlying sections
- (2) HASTINGS EAST) - use P.C.C.'s and other one man cars
- (3) GRANDVIEW)
- (4) MAIN-FAIRVIEW - uses two man pay enter cars.

Interurban passenger service between Marpole and Steveston is scheduled for abandonment in 1952. The rail operation from Vancouver to Marpole will continue, and buses will be used exclusively beyond the latter point. The line from Marpole to Steveston will be retained for freight operation.

T.T.C. PETER WITT CONVERSION

T.T.C. car 2932 is currently being experimentally converted to one man operation, being the first English Electric-equipped car thus altered. The Dick Kerr Q-2 controller has been replaced by a K-35 deadman control, and a self-lapping brake valve has been installed.

COMING SOON - Bulletin 31, a data sheet on C.N.R. locomotives 902-926, featuring a drawing by G.A. Parker, HO modeller of Lachine, Quebec.