

QUEBEC CENTRAL  
RAILWAY  
NEWINGTON  
SHOPS

C H RIFF

## NEWINGTON

MP 1.1

Station: 1927-1939

The railway built a brick station at Newington, in the summer of 1927, that housed the Quebec Central dispatching offices and used by Dining Car Department. The QC moved out of the CPR Upper Town station. Some of the materials used in the station came from the Dudswell Junction station recently closed. In 1936 the dispatching offices were moved to the Quebec Central office building on Wellington Street North Sherbrooke. It remained a station until 1939. The station was used as a chicken hatchery until it was demolished in July 1967.

### Facilities:

The first roundhouse used by the Quebec Central at Sherbrooke was the large circular brick enclosed roundhouse built by the St Lawrence and Atlantic (Grand Trunk) in 1853. The QCR, along with the Passumpsic and the International shared space with GTR engines in this building. When the facility burnt down in July 1882, all the railways were forced to seek shelter elsewhere. Quebec Central contractors and operators, Woodward & Bowen, had acquired a parcel of land in East Sherbrooke from the city formerly the site of the Canadian Meat Company. The Canadian Meat Company acquired land adjacent to the S.E.T&K rail line in 1874. It was only one mile from the Grand Trunk Station just past where the QC crosses the St. Francis River and the grade north begins. In the fall of 1874, a contract was awarded to J. Reilly for the construction of a large slaughterhouse. The principal backer of the venture was a J. Lawson Johnston of Scotland. "Johnston Liquid Beef" saw a new opportunity to provide food to Europe, whose agricultural industry was in peril during the Franco-Prussian War. Mr Johnston, along with his Canadian associate William Clark had the buildings completed by the summer of 1875. The French government became the largest customer. The *Stanstead Journal* noted that in one day the factory received six car loads of cattle from Chicago. Unfortunately in the last months of 1876 a fire ravaged their buildings. The City of Sherbrooke had provided the firm a bonus of \$7,000 to cover the reconstruction of the building and work soon started in earnest to rebuild the factory, with hope the work should be completed by May 21th, 1877. Unfortunately the company never did reopen its door; and in August 1880 the city bid \$14,000 for the property at auction. In passing, one cannot fail to mention that Johnston made his fortune with this 'liquid beef' or as it's known today 'Bovril', while his associate achieved success with his own canning company, W. Clark Ltd.

In the early part of 1882 QC contractors Woodward & Bowen purchased the property from the city of Sherbrooke for \$13,000. It was their intention to build rolling stock not only for the QCR, but for export probably to South America. When fire struck the GTR roundhouse, the GTR had terminals both at Richmond and Island Pond, Vermont. It felt that to duplicate the facilities was a waste of capital so the roundhouse was not rebuilt. The Passumpsic built an engine terminal near the Grand Trunk yards. The Quebec Central converted the old Canadian Meat Factory into extensive workshops by November 1882.

The Quebec Central was in the midst of financial difficulties in 1884, when a Mr. Mowry, a somewhat shadowy figure in the QCR story had the railway evicted from the property over a claim for past rent. The company secured shelter for its equipment at the Passumpsic facilities. A number of workers were laid off, and a small car repair shed was built at Beauce Jct. The buildings were reacquired five years later when Grundy arrived on the scene.

Mr. Grundy did go to the City of Sherbrooke in 1897 with a proposal that in return, for a \$15,000 bonus, the railway would enlarge its shops. In the process, the company planned spending \$70,000 in improvements. The railway built a seventy-foot extension to its machine shops so that the company could conveniently repair locomotives and passenger rolling stock. The six stall roundhouse was enlarged to accommodate ten locomotives. Paint shops and carriage sheds (for storing cars through the winter) were built. During this same period the company played host to Canadian Pacific engines, for in December 1897 the CPR replaced its turntable and CPR engines were sent down the hill and across the river to Newington to be turned on the QC turntable. A fire broke out at the foundry in November 1899 that did some damage not only to the building but to old engine No. 1 which was standing alongside the building. The damage was found to be a scorched cab to the engine. The work to the shops took several years to complete with contractor Hawkins putting the foundations for the new roundhouse in 1902.

The new shops by the end of 1902 had turned out the first twenty-five boxcars. While both the Quebec Central and Levis & Kennebec in their early days had talked about building their own cars, it was the financially weaker L&K that actually built a few cars. It took a quarter of a century for the QCR to build its first cars.

Further orders of freight cars were built at Newington over the course of the next few years but it was not until 1907 the first passenger cars were built, these were a number of baggage and baggage-mail cars for the new vestibuled train to Boston.

1913 saw the Quebec Central leased by the Canadian Pacific and one would have expected that the QC shops would have been closed out. The CP had closed its own Farnham shops only a few years earlier. Instead Walsh had plans to expand the shops and Canadian Railway and Marine World in 1914 presented the detailed plans, one and a half years after the CPR control. It explained that the Quebec Central had extensive traffic in lumber and mineral products that operated in solid trains and that besides the need to repair cars and to keep shop output uniform the railway built its own rolling stock. The QC continued this policy. The increase in traffic also necessitated an increase in both the number and size of locomotives. The Quebec Central decided to increase both its shops and its locomotive facilities, even though, only a few years earlier the Canadian Pacific had expanded its own engine terminal and yards in Sherbrooke. The company decided to replace many of its small buildings and to expand the larger buildings. The carpenter, paint shops and stores house were slated for demolition and were to be replaced by larger brick structures. The new layout included a five-stall addition on the east end of the locomotive house, which necessitated the removal of the old paint shops. It stood in the way of this extension. An additional depth of five feet was given the new stalls, making them seventy-five feet deep. The former locomotive roundhouse of eleven stalls, was rather unique, from the viewpoint then modern practice, the radii to which the inner and outer walls have been struck being, much smaller than usual practice dictates. The inner wall radius is forty-five feet and the outer 115 feet, giving a stall depth of seventy feet. In the centre is a sixty-six foot turntable steel turntable which provides a distance of twelve feet from the edge of the turntable pit to the inner wall of the locomotive house, which in consequence, does not provide sufficient room for locomotives between the turntable and locomotive house. The small diameter of the locomotive house makes the stall width at the outer wall very roomy, with lots of working space. The roundhouse was a wooden structure sheathed in iron. There were two inspection pits in the new structure at the rear of the roundhouse was a locomotive storage shed that housed surplus engines. The Quebec Central seldom scrapped any equipment. Instead its old locomotives and rolling stock were stored here with the probable

intention of selling them to the Temiscouata and the various lumber and mineral firms that dotted its line. When one talks to old-timers who remember the shops; the most significant memory always is the small old engines lined in rows .

The boiler and machine shop built by the packing house remained the nucleus of the shop buildings. It was a very distinctive structure with an elaborate facade. It had an iron roof and steel trusses. A brick wall divided the structure into a boiler and machine shops. In the former was a twenty tonne travelling crane, while in the machine shop a ten tonne trolley was overhead.

Next to the machine shop was the foundry building that was retained in the new scheme. The blacksmith shop was moved from the boiler shop to a new building next to the foundry. In 1914, saw the completion of a new three track paint shop made of brick, concrete and steel. It replaced the two track paint shop built in 1899. The old building could accommodate four passenger cars. The old paint shop had to be removed to make room for the extension to the roundhouse.

While the improvements mentioned had been completed in 1915 the company had plans to construct a new carpenter shop, an oil house and stores building. War conditions precluded the completion of these projects until 1920. In 1919, (20) the company let a contract to the Sherbrooke Construction Company, for the masonry work, and MacKinnon Steel Company for the steel construction for the new carpenter shops and oil house. The three track carpenter shop was built adjacent to the paint shop. A new stores building was built in 1920. It was a frame building covered with asbestos shingles. It was built on the site of the old carpenter shop. A number of other buildings completed the terminal. Close to the yard was an ice house built in 1906, when the Quebec Central acquired a number of refrigerator cars. Coal and water facilities were located in the mainline. The water tank was a small square enclosed tank fed from a nearby spring. This spring also provided drinking water for Canadian Pacific passengers. The CPR sent a car down every few days for water.

The shops built new passenger cars and freight stock for the railway. It rebuilt a couple old engines and rebuilt second hand passenger cars. During the twenties the shops rebuilt a number of cars acquired second hand in the United States. The shops put steel underframes and steel sheathing on most of the railway passenger fleet.

The Newington repair shops were closed August 12 1932 and 125 men were laid off. Engines requiring repairs were in the meantime placed in storage and the QC loaned or leased five engines and eight passenger cars from the CPR until such time the QC's equipment could be repaired.

October 1, 1932 the freight office and yard operations were consolidated with the CPR at Sherbrooke. December 1, 1932, the running repair staff, the coal, water and roundhouse facilities at Newington were consolidated with those of the Canadian Pacific in the latter's yard in upper town Sherbrooke.

The Newington shops reopened April 10 1934 with a staff of 40-55 men on a temporary basis to allow repairs to be made to some locomotives and cars. The shops were open only 14 days a month. Some repairs to both locomotives and cars were being made at CPR Angus Shops. Still conversions were made to the three passenger cars including the conversion of a dining car into a parlour car.

The Great Depression of the nineteen thirties brought problems to the Newington facility. Car loadings were down, many of the QCR's own cars sat empty of sidings all along the railway. This and the fact that railroads across North America were switching to all equipped to build, doomed the jobs of the four hundred men that worked building new rolling stock. The shops were closed in 1932, except for the repair and maintenance of Quebec Central cars. A few cars were rebuilt for work train service. More and more it was used to maintain QC passenger cars for most of heavy repairs made to Locomotives were made at the CPR Angus shops in Montreal.

Newington shops were closed finally May 1, 1939. They sat vacant for over one year when the buildings were sold to the Quebec Department of Roads October 5, 1940. The Military Authorities occupied the building the same day.

Many of the engines were stored about the shop tracks in their last days. It was for this reason it was the distinction of one of the first excursions by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association in 1938.

The turntable was a very short 65 feet. It was impractical to extend the bridge without tearing down the roundhouse Canadian Pacific was rebuilding the G-2 class engines with larger tenders. The Newington facility was now outdated and on April 30, 1939, the Quebec Central closed Newington and moved to the Canadian Pacific yards in upper Sherbrooke. The engines in the "boneyard" were sent off for scrapping.

Some of the shop buildings were demolished immediately. The station Boiler-Machine Shop, carpenter, paint-shop and stores were leased to the Quebec Department of Highways. In 1940 they in turn leased the buildings to the Department of National Defence for use as an internment camp, for German-speaking refugees and then later prisoners of war. After the war the Department of Highway rebuilt all the buildings and occupies them to this day. A number of light industrial buildings were built on the site of the freight yards, and for a number of years a local mine trucked copper from Mouton Hill to a ramp built on the site of the coal chute.

#### *Operations:*

The freight trains terminated at the yards, loaded cars were sent down to the GTR-CNR yards. Prior to 1927 the CPR ran transfer freights down the hill to Newington. The QCR lugged freight to the CPR after 1927. With the acquisition of the Massawippi Valley in 1926, and the QC ran trains over the CNR, Newport trains backed up the grade to Newington. When the QCR moved to the CPR Uppertown station, one year later, the empty passenger trains of the QC backed down the hill to the Newington yards. All the trains from the Newport line were forced down that grade. In some cases the engines were turned at the CPR roundhouse prior to descending the hill with this move it now meant that Newington was a base for helpers engines going in both directions. Helpers were assigned north to Moulton Hill Siding and St Gerard, and south up the massive grade to the CPR station. Engine 50 was regularly assigned as the Newington helper and switcher.

Prior to the replacement of the wood trestle in 1967, the CPR yard switches came down to act as helpers for Quebec Central trains, up the hill, to the upper town CPR yard. Canadian Pacific 2-8-0s backed down the hill from the station to pick up QC trains. If the incoming train was a doubleheader the helpers were put on after the train had crossed the wooden trestle, the engines would then all start in unison, to pull and tug the train up the severe grade. It was not unusual to charge the hill two or three times. Once past the Belvedere Street bridge the pace of the train quickened, one car at a time, as it crested the summit, then negotiated the CPR turnouts and finally entered the yards. In the fifties CPR S-2 diesels were assigned the job of assisting the steam trains of the QCR and on more than one occasion two S-2s have come down to assist a double-headed freight.

THE CANADIAN MEAT AND PRODUCE COMPANY.—On Tuesday night, a large number of the residents of Sherbrooke assembled in the Town Hall to meet Mr. Johnson of Edinburgh, Scotland, the Managing Director of this Company. The object of Mr. Johnson's visit is to ascertain what amount of encouragement he could secure here, should he select this locality as the site for operations. He entered into a very lucid account of the Company, its constitution, the mode of preparing the meat for exportation, and the prospects of an assured large profit. At the close Messrs. Morkill, the Mayor, Heneker, Hall, Paton, E. T. Brooks, M. P., and Archambault were appointed a committee to ascertain what bonus could be secured for the company, on condition of establishing an agency or branch here. We learn that Mr. Johnson visited Richmond for the same purpose, but he would not disclose what offers of aid or subsidy he received there. On Monday next, he will visit Sherbrooke again to meet the committee and ascertain the terms they are prepared to offer. A vote was passed complimentary of Mr. Whyte, for his efforts to establish the company in the Townships.

Sherbrooke News

September 7

1874

THE CANADIAN MEAT COMPANY.—  
The contract for the erection of the  
extensive buildings of the Canadian  
Meat and Produce Company, has been  
awarded to J. Reilly, contractor, of this  
town. The building will be the largest  
we believe in the Eastern Townships,  
being 335x80 feet two stories and one-  
half high. The buildings are designed  
and the plans made by Mr. Reilly.

Sherbrooke News  
October 22, 1874

**IMMENSE CONFLAGRATION.** — On Friday night, about 10 o'clock, the extensive building of the Canadian Meat and produce Company, took fire, and in a brief time, was totally consumed. As the building was of wood, and filled with highly inflammable material, all effort to arrest the flames was abortive. Of 47 carcasses of beef slaughtered that day, two were saved. The live cattle were saved. All the preserved meats, of which there was an immense quantity ready for shipment, was destroyed, and of the expensive machinery, only the large boilers escaped destruction. The flames from the burning building were seen for several miles around, whilst in Sherbrooke, it was almost as light as in daytime. The loss to the Company is variously estimated, but it is thought to be not less than \$150,000. Much sympathy is felt, for those employees, who are by the fire, thrown out of employment. It is also regarded as a great loss to the city and district. The property was insured to the extent of \$80,000, but the loss sustained is not covered by any part of that sum. While the Hook and Ladder Company were hurrying down King street, to the fire, a portion of the vehicle gave way, by which Mr. Ed. Gauthier and Mr. R. Brown were thrown out, the former receiving an ugly gash on the head, the latter escaped with slight injury. Mr. A. Grindrod received some slight hurt, the king-bolt of the carriage in which he was driving having broken and the occupants being thrown out.

Sherbrooke  
News

November 16

1876



# Canadian Railway and Marine World

September, 1914.

## The Quebec Central Railway Shops at Sherbrooke.

During the past year, extensive alterations and additions have been made to the Quebec Central Ry. shops at Newington, a suburb of Sherbrooke, Que. A plan of the old and new arrangements is given herewith, the former buildings being shown in dotted lines, while the remaining buildings of the old arrangement, and the recently, or to be, constructed buildings, are shown in full lines. The arrangement now will involve a quite complete layout, such as is seldom to be seen on such a short line.

The Quebec Central Ry. is a subsidiary unit of the C.P.R., retaining its entire organ-

ter and other farm products are made. It also opens up rich spruce forests. Consequently, most of the company's traffic is produced on its own line, and the various commodities are handled almost entirely in car load lots, most of the trains operating in solid from the loading point to the transfer point, for distribution to various markets in Canada and the United States. To handle this traffic, the company has 35 locomotives, 1,067 freight cars, and 46 cars of passenger equipment of all kinds. All the repairs to this equipment are handled at the Newington shops, and the majority

being much smaller than usual practice dictates. The inner wall radius is 45 ft. and the outer 115 ft., giving a stall depth of 70 ft. In the centre is a 66 ft. steel turntable, which only provides a distance of 12 ft. from the edge of the turntable pit to the inner wall of the locomotive house, which, in consequence, does not provide sufficient room for locomotives between the turntable and locomotive house. The small diameter of the locomotive house makes the stall width at the outer wall very roomy, with lots of working space.

The new layout has included a 5 stall ad-

#### Old and New Layouts in the Quebec Central Railway Shops.

ization, with complete operating staff, with headquarters at Sherbrooke, from which point the line runs northerly to Lévis, opposite the City of Quebec, with two branch lines, one of which leaves the main line at Tring Jet, connecting with the C.P.R. Montreal-St. John, N.B., line at Mégantic, Jct., and running northeasterly to St. Sabre, from which point the line is being extended gradually towards the New Brunswick boundary. This gives a total mileage of 263.

It is claimed that nearly 85% of the world's asbestos supply comes from the section of Quebec traversed by this line, and practically all this tonnage is handled by the Q.C.R., other lines only touching the fringe of the asbestos field. Valuable copper mines, producing a high grade of copper ore, extensive granite and lime works, and pulp and paper manufacturing industries are located on the Q.C.R., and in addition the northern section passes through a rich agricultural country, from which extensive shipments of cheese, but-

of the passenger and freight cars on the line have been built in these shops, a policy which has been found advantageous in keeping the shop output uniform through all the seasons.

From the fact that a large part of the freight traffic can be handled in train loads of full capacity, from time to time the company has had to add to the motive power by large capacity freight locomotives, for the maintenance of which the old shops were taxed to the limit. In consequence of this, it was decided to remodel the old shops, retaining such parts of the old layout as could be profitably utilized in the new scheme, and building a number of new ones to replace the removed ones and to extend the shop capacity. From the accommodation plan it will be seen that of the old layout the only larger buildings to be retained are the locomotive house, machine and boiler shop, and foundry. The locomotive house, formerly of 11 stalls, is rather unique from the viewpoint of modern practice, the radii to which the inner and outer walls have been struck

dition on the east end of the locomotive house, necessitating the removal of the old paint shop, which stood in the way of this extension. An additional depth of 5 ft. was given the new stalls, making them 75 ft. deep, so as to handle the larger new locomotives. The locomotive house is a wooden frame structure, sheathed in iron, on concrete foundations, with three rows of wooden columns, supporting a galvanized iron roof. The flooring is concrete, as are also the pits. There are driving wheel and engine and trailing drop pits, with jacks, and in the new addition there are two inspection pits. The old building was heated by stoves, but the new layout provides for steam heating of the whole building. The smoke jacks are of wood. To the rear of the locomotive house there is a locomotive shed, 125 by 40 ft., which existed in the old layout.

The boiler and machine shop, which remains as before, was the nucleus of the shop area, formerly being a packing factory, which was bought by the railway, and the main building of the plant converted

into the machine and boiler shop. It was not exactly suited for a locomotive shop, as it was very high roofed, but it has been altered so as to make it suitable to meet all requirements. The machine shop occupies the southerly end, and the boiler shop the northerly end, the two being divided by a central wall, in which there is a large brick chimney, remaining from the old packing days, which has been found useful for handling the blacksmith shop smoke, the blacksmith shop heretofore occupying the west side of the machine shop. The dimensions of the machine and boiler shop are 185 by 85 ft.

To the west of the machine shop is the old foundry building, retained in the new layout, and which is 50 by 70 ft., with a cleaning room annex, 50 by 20 ft. A coal and iron building adjoins the foundry. The new blacksmith shop is located in the L of the foundry building, and is of brick, 70 by 50 ft. This department, being removed from the west side of the machine shop, provides needed room in that shop for expansion.

The old stores building, to the east of the machine shop, which contains the Master Mechanic's office, will be removed, and another larger brick building, 185 by 45 ft., erected to the south, to house this department. The Master Mechanic's office will also be in the new building. To make way for this building, the carpenter shop, where most of the passenger equipment used on the line was built, will be removed. A new power house, 50 by 40 ft., will also be erected on the site of the old carpenter shop, to the west of the new store house. To the south of the new stores building were three lumber storage sheds, one of which has been removed. The new carpenter shop, 220 by 70 ft., will be located on a new piece of ground to the southwest of the old shop area, and will contain three shop tracks. It will be of brick, on concrete subwalls, spanned by steel roof trusses, and with a monitor roof. It will contain all the machinery now housed in the old carpenter shop.

The new paint shop, already built, is 175 by 60 ft. of brick, concrete and steel construction, and contains three tracks. It replaces the two track paint shop removed to make room for the locomotive house extension, the old oil and waste house is to be removed and replaced by a more modern structure, the details for which have not been decided on. It is expected that it will be about 40 by 30 ft., and it will contain a good oil handling system.

The shops are in charge of G. M. Robins, Master Mechanic. E. M. Green is General Foreman, Machine Shop, and R. G. Price, Car Foreman. We are indebted to J. H. Walsh, General Manager, for permission to secure the information on which this article is based, and to G. M. Robins for the detailed information obtained.

















































