

January, 1950 - Number 48

The Society meets on the third Friday of each month in Room 486 of Toronto Union Station. The meeting of January 20th, as announced in the December Newsletter, will be the annual meeting of the Society. At this important meeting reports of the officers of the Society will be presented and the annual election of the officers for the new year will take place. The members presented elect not more than nine directors. These directors meet at their earliest convenience and select from among themselves the officers for the coming year. The new officers assume their duties seven days after the date of the annual meeting.

After the important business of the January 20th meeting has been transacted, there will follow a programme consisting of a film produced by the International Nickel Company of Copper Cliff, Ontario. This shows the plant transportation facilities of this company, which include an extensive electric railway.

It is hoped that every member in the Toronto vicinity will be in attendance on this important evening.

CHANGE IN POLICY REGARDING NEW MEMBERS

Heretofore, new members of the Society have paid dues which are roughly proportional to the length of time between their date of joining and the end of the year. This has proved a difficult and confusing system; accordingly, the Directors have resolved to abolish this system and replace it with one whereby new members, regardless of their date of joining, pay the full dues for the year in which that date falls. They then receive all publications that have been mailed during that year. This system will prove more simple and satisfactory for all concerned.

NEW C.N.R. LINE IN SCARBOROUGH TOWNSHIP

Construction is proceeding on a new two mile spur track from the main line of the Canadian National Railways in Scarborough Township, just east of Toronto. The track is being built to serve a new industrial nucleus on Eglinton Avenue, east of Dawes Road, which centres about the General Engineering Company's plant which operated during the war without the benefit of rail service.

A shorter spur line was constructed in 1947 from the main line, just east of the bridge over Danforth Avenue, in a northerly direction crossing Danforth Road, and terminating a few hundred feet north of this road. This segment serves a few light industries in this district. The new line is a northerly continuation of this track and runs through considerable rural territory before reaching the industries at Eglinton Avenue.

The most interesting feature of the new line is the fact that it follows for about half a mile the abandoned grade of the Canadian Northern Railway's Toronto-Ottawa line north from the crossing of St. Clair Avenue. After leaving the old right-of-way, from which track was lifted in 1926, the new line veers to the left off of the old grade and continues north to pass along the east side of the General Engineering property. A new SKF plant is being built on the other side of the track. At the date of writing, all of the track has been laid, using 100 pound rail, except for the section which crosses the creek valley at St. Clair Avenue. The Canadian Northern had a trestle bridge at this point, but an earth fill is being constructed across the valley for the new track.

ABANDONMENT

The Canadian National Railways has petitioned the Board of Transport Commissioners for permission to abandon the branch line between Port Hope and Peterborough. The proposal is to cut all service, although only between Millbrook and Port Hope would the rails be torn up. The railway has attempted previously to discontinue this unprofitable branch but without success. Current opinion seems to be that permission will still not be forthcoming. There has been considerable opposition in consequence of the application; the *Peterborough Examiner* editorialised as follows:

"The Canadian National Railways wants to close off the Peterborough-Port Hope line and is petitioning the Board of Transport Commissioners for permission to do so. The primary stage of the closing would be to cut off the line from Millbrook to Port Hope; the rails between Peterborough and Millbrook would not be torn up, not yet at any rate. But half a line is not much more use than no line.

There is a possibility that the CNR may be seriously shortsighted in this policy of retrenchment. In the depression '30's the CPR had a similar spasm of uprailing. It secured permission to abandon, and did abandon, the direct grain route from Port McNicoll through Orillia, Beaverton and Lindsay to Dranoel (between Cavan Station and Pontypool), where it connected with the Toronto - Peterborough - Montreal line. Thereafter grain from the west being shipped east through the Great Lakes to Port McNicoll had to pass over the much longer rail route to Toronto. During the war, when railways were heavily burdened and Great Lakes shipping direct to Montreal at a premium, grain from Port McNicoll had to be routed over the longer line to Toronto, thence along the heavily congested main lakeshore line to Montreal. Even railwaymen have acknowledged that closing of the old Port McNicoll line was a mistake.

Is the CNR setting out on such another unwise course, by attempting to abandon the direct connection between the busy populous counties of Victoria, Peterborough, Durham and Northumberland and the lakeshore?

When the CPR closed the Port McNicoll - Dranoel line, it took up the rails only between Orillia and Lindsay, leaving the ends in operating order. But that amount of closing was enough to destroy the chief usefulness of the whole line. The CNR is now asking permission to abandon only the Millbrook - Port Hope section but that would be enough to put the 'kibosh' on the whole line."

Despite this defence, it must be admitted that the branch has a very small place in the traffic picture of to-day. The railway was built in 1857 for the express purpose of handling lumber from the Lindsay - Peterborough area south to the lake at Port Hope. This traffic long ago disappeared and the section north of Port Hope is famous as one of the poorest, agriculturally, in southern Ontario. Traffic in this section is heavy in an east-west direction but scanty north and south. Thus the old route is "across the grain" in the modern traffic pattern. The Millbrook - Omeme Junction segment (the original line to Lindsay) has previously been abandoned.

On November 14th, the Board of Transport Commissioners authorised the Canadian Pacific Railway to abandon a portion of its Orford Subdivision in the Province of Quebec, extending from a point near Valcourt to the end of track at Kingsbury, a distance of 12.5 miles. The section of track involved was in poor condition and a seventy-four foot bridge would have required rebuilding if operation was to continue. During 1948 the only business consisted of six cars of slate scrap, four of pulpwood, and forty of feed, with no passenger, express or mail service.

T.T.C.,

Slipper trolley operation began on the Bloor route on December 29th, and all of the special electric switch actuators for multiple-unit cars have been installed, although MU operation has still not

begun.

A major conversion job has been completed in Hillcrest shops; differential dump car W-12 has been completely rebuilt as a sand dispensing car. The old dump body was removed and a new body built, upon which were placed two large round bins, each capable of holding 22 tons of dry sand. Sand is dispensed from these pneumatically; the air compressors are located on the car platform. Baldwin trucks (from a scrapped Niles passenger car) replaced the previous Curtis trucks, with a unit braking system added. The whole car is painted bright yellow, with black lettering.

Cars 409-416, the North Yonge cars, are currently being disposed of, and with their removal there will be no double-end passenger cars left on the system. The total stands at 1028 passenger cars, 67 service cars and 5 historical relics, or a grand total of exactly 1100 cars.

OTTAWA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

It appears that the policy of the Ottawa Transportation Commission as recently clarified, is to replace all street cars with buses in time, with the possible introduction of trolley buses in two or three years.

Two Toronto Railway cars have been sold; 959 stands in a lot in Hull at the end of Laurier Street, while 960 is in Rockland, Ontario. Track was recently renewed on Wellington Street (leading to Champagne Carhouse) and two new curves installed: one north to west at Somerset and Bank and one west to north at Somerset and Preston. These make for a shorter route to the carbarn from south Bank Street. Modified rebuilding of 800 series cars is continuing.

Thomas Weston and Henry Mather