

UCRS NEWSLETTER - 1953

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The Society meets on the third Friday of each month in Room 486, Toronto Union Station at 8:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held on January 16th and will be the annual meeting of the Society.

At this meeting, the reports of the officers of the Society for 1952 will be presented, and the election of Directors for 1953 will take place. The members presented elect not more than nine directors, who meet at their earliest convenience and select from among themselves the officers for the coming year. Every Toronto area member should make an effort to attend this important meeting.

FURTHER P.C.C. CAR EXCURSIONS PLANNED — The Society plans to charter Pullman-built ex-Cleveland Transit System P.C.C. car 4232, as soon as this car is released from Hillcrest as T.T.C. 4657; it will be the first Pullman-built car ever to have transversed Toronto streets. The excursion will be four hours in length and will cost one dollar. It is expected that the car will be ready some time in early February, and a special notification of final details will be mailed to Ontario members.

HISTORY OF THE T.T.C. ASHBRIDGES CAR LINE

One of the curiosities of street railway history in Toronto is the little-known Ashbridges route.

Although one of the shortest and shortest-lived lines ever to operate in the Toronto vicinity, its span of life covered two ownerships: that of the privately-owned Toronto Railway Company (operating the line for the city), followed by the city's own Toronto Transportation Commission.

When a large area of land was reclaimed from the old Ashbridges Bay marsh at the mouth of the Don River during the First World War, a number of industries were established in the Cherry-Villiers-Commissioners area. As this new industrial complex was rather remote from any existing street railway line, the City of Toronto laid track for a new street car route to serve the district directly. It was not convenient to operate this line as another detached segment of the Toronto Civic Railways, and the city induced the Toronto Railway Company to take over operation and provide rolling stock.

The line was double tracked, with short lengths of single track at each terminus, where cars changed ends. Mileage between termini was 1.17 miles. The track was constructed essentially to temporary standards, using 80 lb. T-rail on wood ties; almost all track was open. As subsidence was likely to occur on the newly reclaimed Eastern Harbour Terminal lands, paved permanent trackage would have proved to be expensive to repair, whereas light open track was easily kept in good horizontal alignment. The overhead system had centre suspension wood poles, with bracket arms.

The north end terminus was alongside the two C.P.R. sidings which parallel the Don's east bank, and was on their level, below the Queen Street bridge. A single connecting spur ran up the grade on East Don Roadway to join Queen Street trackage by means of a trailing switch on the eastbound line, with a facing crossover east of this switch.

Double tracks of the Ashbridges line ran south from the Queen Street terminus parallel to the C.P.R. sidings, continued beyond the end of these sidings across Eastern Avenue, and then rose to cross the Grand Trunk main line by means of a shaky timber trestle. Beyond this trestle, the route continued across Keating Street and traversed the barren flats to Commissioners Street, where a 90 degree turn to the right was made. Level crossings took the street car tracks across two or three steam road industrial spurs in this vicinity. The rails continued westerly along

Commissioners Street to the end of the line at Cherry Street; on Commissioners, they were laid in an open boulevard strip in the middle of the street.

The Toronto Railway Company began operation of the route on November 5th, 1917. The regular car on the line was No. 350, which was one of a handful of old home-built double end double truck cars constructed during the 1890's by splicing together two single truck car bodies. Number 350 was peculiar in that it had doors on one side only, but this proved no particular handicap on a line such as Ashbridges. The route was operated from Russell Division.

After the T.T.C. took over the physical property and operations of the Toronto Railway Company after the expiration of the latter's franchise in 1921, single truck Toronto Railway cars of class D (504-654-772) were assigned to operate the Ashbridges service. From mid-1923 until the end of the route's existence, former Civic Railway wood single truck cars of series 2200-2214 were used. One car was operated on a 15-minute headway during basic hours, with a second car added during rush hours to give a 7½ minute service. Car stops on the route were located at Cherry Street (terminus), Munition Street, A.B.C. Briquette Co., Commissioners and Don Roadway, Keating Street, Eastern Avenue and Queen Street (terminus).

Early in 1924, serious consideration was given to laying a single track branch of the line easterly on Commissioners Street, and southerly to Simcoe Beach east of the turning basin. The extension was to have been constructed to very light standards, and to have been used for summer traffic only. A through run of two miles from Queen Street to Simcoe Beach at times of heavy traffic was contemplated, while at certain other times the whole T-shaped route would have been served by each car.

However, the unexpected structural failure in September of 1924, of the trestle over the Grand Trunk (by then C.N.R.) tracks permanently shelved plans for the beach extension and indeed caused the permanent abandonment of the whole route.

Car service ceased on September 19th, 1924, and a replacement bus service on Cherry Street began operation the following day. The entire operating history thus embraces a period of less than seven years.

Eventual provision of a street car line on Cherry Street, which would probably have replaced the Ashbridges Line, was contemplated at the time that development of the Eastern Harbour Terminals began. Cherry Street was laid with an unpaved "soft centre" south of Fleet Street, and rails were laid on the two bascule bridges which carry this street across navigable ship channels. Although the boulevard strips have been paved over in recent years, these rails are still to be seen on the bridges. However, by 1924, when the Ashbridges route was necessarily abandoned, it was realized that the volume of traffic from this area was such that it could easily be handled by buses, and all thought of a Cherry car line ceased.

The C.N.R.'s Toronto Viaduct project would have condemned the trestle bridge by 1926 in any event, and it is doubtful that the Ashbridges car line would have survived beyond this date.

Some of the trackage on the route was removed immediately following abandonment, while other portions remained in place for several years. The rails were lifted from Commissioners Street in 1930, from the portion north of Eastern Avenue in 1932, and from the crossing of Eastern Avenue near Lever Brothers' plant in 1935; the open track allowance in Commissioners Street was paved in 1949. To-day not a trace remains of this interesting old line, which was certainly unique among those in the Toronto district.

MISCELLANY

In contrast to the rather optimistic note in last month's issue regarding the C.N.R.'s abandoned Lyn Junction - Westport, ON, branch the temporary halt called last month to the process of track removal by certain local Members of Parliament has been waived. It is now definite that the entire

subdivision will be dismantled, the work probably will not be completed until sometime in the spring.

The C.N.R. has received new diesel locomotives as follows:

9124, 9126	G.M.D.	November 25, 1952
9128, 9130	G.M.D.	December 3, 1952
8706, 8608, 8710	C.L.C. - F.M.	December 2, 1952
8020 - 8023	M.L.W.	October 1, 15, 21 & 24

The 1000 H.P. switchers 8020-8023 have been sent to the Western Region.

9048 and 9049 were the diesels involved in the disastrous wreck at Hydro Glen, ON, in December, 1952.

The U-3-b Northerns returned to the Grand Trunk Western in November were Nos. 6315, 6316, 6323 and 6331.

C.N.R. locomotives stored as unserviceable are 3725 at Limoilou and 7202 at Joffré. Removed from service are 1208 at Lindsay, 2535, 3465 and 3713 at Joffré, and 2541 at Allandale. 0-9-a switcher 7233 (old 7144) is in use as a stationary boiler.

C.P.R. locomotives scrapped during the first seven months of 1952 were Nos. 447, 468, 471, 478, 560, 644, 653, 686, 706, 723, 725, 810, 906, 932, 3051, 3412, 3450, 5773, 5774, 6247, and 6252.

Wabash Mikado 2273 is in dead storage at Windsor, its disposal probably awaiting only the delivery of two 1500 H.P. "A" units which were recently ordered from G.M.D.

The C.N.R.'s subsidiary Grand Trunk Western recently ordered an Alco 1000 H.P. switcher (# 8026) and two E.M.D. 1000 H.P. switchers (# 7015 and 7016). Central Vermont ordered a 1000 H.P. switch (# 8027) from Alco.

6300 series Northerns on the C.N.R. have had their haulage ratings dropped from 60% to 59%.

The Canadian National Railways has bought back its old 0-8-a, 0-6-0 type No. 7105 from Standard Paving Company. The railway intends to restore it to its original condition as Grand Trunk Railway 2598, and to have it form one unit in a series of locomotive historical relics.

This locomotive was built in 1894 by the Grand Trunk Railway, became C.N.R. 7005 in 1923, was sold to the Standard Paving Company as 7105 in 1938, who used it in a plant near Paris, ON. After being overhauled by the C.N.R. during the war and renumbered 101, it was used for a time in Western Canada, and later returned to Paris. In 1946 it was transferred to Fuller, ON; in 1950 it was placed in storage.

The London Labour Council has successfully challenged the planned December 1992 vote on the discontinuance of passenger service on the London and Port Stanley Railway. The by-law authorising the vote was quashed by Justice H. A. Aylen. He said that the question to be put to the voters included "vague considerations apparently intended to guide the electorate". City council had decided that only ratepayers would be allowed to vote, while the L.L.C. contends that the future of the railway's passenger service affects all Londoners.

The L&PS is seeking refunds on part of the 1952 taxes paid to the municipalities of St. Thomas and Port Stanley.

A metropolitan transportation commission for the greater Winnipeg area is being considered by that city and its several satellites. This commission would buy the transit system, (which now includes only the Portage-North Main route as a rail operation), from the Winnipeg Electric Company.

Former Cleveland cars of the series 4250-4274 (now TTC 4675-4699) are being released from Hillcrest at the rate of two or three per week to Russell Division for use on the Kingston Road route where they are being used as rush hour extras only thus far; they are replacing the Kingston

Road trailers, which are going for scrap to the Western Iron and Metal Company. To time of writing, 19 trailers have been retired. Also junked at the end of December was Peter Witt 2538 (one of the cars partially converted for one man operation) which suffered a broken under frame.

All of the series 4675-4699 are now in Toronto, and Cleveland have begun delivery of the Pullman cars. 4238 and 4212 followed 4270 (4695), which was the last of the St. Louis cars to arrive.

Seventeen tank cars were recently built to 3'-6" gauge for use on the CNR's Newfoundland lines. They were shipped to Imperial Oil Company by Canadian Car and Foundry in October.

The last spike on the Pacific Great Eastern's Quesnel-Prince George extension was driven on November 1, 1952 at Ahbu Canyon (22 miles north of Quesnel). A seventeen car train ran through to Prince George following the spike ceremony, pulled by road-switcher 567 and 568, to open the extension for the long awaited regular service.

NEXT MONTH: Details on the new truck trailer-on flat car service inaugurated by both major railways in December 1952 between Toronto and Montreal.