

## UCRS NEWSLETTER - 1955

---

July, 1955 - Number 114

The July meeting of the Society will be an informal station gathering - members will meet at the CPR Parkdale Station, (Queen and Dufferin) at 8:00 P.M. for an evening of train observation. This meeting will be held on Friday, July 15<sup>th</sup>.

### N. S. & T. TO RECEIVE CARS FROM M. & S. C.

The Montreal and Southern Counties Railway discontinued service across the Victoria Bridge during June, as a preliminary step in the plan to abandon all electric operation. Certain cars have already been retired from service, including the ex-Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Rapid Railway 500 series, now M&SC 620-623, and the lone matching trailer, 220. The plan is to move these cars back to their native province, this time to operate on the Welland Subdivision of the Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto Railway. Trailer 220 will be scrapped at St. Catharines to supply body parts for the motors.

Also to arrive on the NS&T is M&SC 504, which will be a replacement for express car 40, which is to be retired. M&SC 305 and 306, both former Toronto Suburban cars, will be sent to the CNR's Quebec - St. Joachim interurban line.

### MOTIVE POWER NOTES

New York Central steam locomotives assigned to the Canada Southern Division as of May 31, 1955: 1130-1132, 1134, 1142, 1194, 1196-1199, 1290, 1291, 2003, 2007, 2013, 2016-2018, 2022, 2030, 2032, 2034, 2042, 2043, 2046, 2049, 2050, 2053, 2058, 5374, 7504-7508, 7511, 7522, 7539, 7550-7553.  
- Wm. Reddy

➤ Within the past month, 0-4-0 saddle tanks Nos. 5 and 7 of the Electro-Metallurgical Company of Canada were moved from the company's plant in Welland to the yard of the Dwor Metals Company in Port Colborne. These engines were built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1936 and 1928 respectively.

### THE FUTURE OF THE RAILFAN HOBBY

By the Editor

The *Newsletter* departs somewhat this month from its usual policy of factual reporting to dwell upon a problem that is beginning to be of concern to rail fan organizations throughout this continent. The problem is that, as the years go by, there is continually less and less of current interest to the rail fan. It seems that those aspects of railroads which have greatest appeal for the majority of enthusiasts are those very things which are now regarded as obsolete (by those other than the fans!), viz., steam power, short lines, narrow gauge lines, street cars and interurban lines. This obsolescence is reflected by the number of these things in existence now as compared with, say, thirty years ago. In 1925, there were nearly 70,000 steam locomotives in Canada and the U.S.A., whereas now one would do well to total 10,000. And the future for most of the remaining 10,000 units is bleak indeed. Similarly, there were well over 60,000 electric railway cars in the two countries 30 years ago, and again a pitiful remnant of less than 10,000 is to be found in 1955.

It is true that we in Toronto are thus far fortunate in that the steam locomotive and electric car have persisted in this area to a greater extent than in many other areas, but this happy condition cannot be expected to remain for very many more years. The steam locomotive

probably cannot persist on the CNR and CPR beyond ten more years and dieselization may well gather momentum and spell the end of steam in five years. As for the long range future of the electric railways in Southern Ontario, dieselization seems an almost certain fate for the interurbans, while the PCC car in Toronto, probably good for another 15 to 20 years, may not last that long if TTC officials suddenly discover that theirs are the only street cars left in operation on the North American Continent.

The rail fan movement though dating back to the early twenties, really got underway in the middle of the depression, as the sun was setting on the electric car, the narrow gauge railway, many short lines and other items reminiscent of turn-of-the-century railroading. The movement gathered speed at the end of World War II, when the death knell of steam was sounded. This is not to suggest that the fan movement prospers in inverse proportion to the objects of its admiration; it is mentioned merely to emphasize that, so far, the scope of the hobby and the number of its adherents has continued to increase right up to the present time, and may continue to do so for some years yet, despite the abandonment of many railways, and the increasing standardization of those remaining.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that a point may soon be reached where the number of fans losing interest in the hobby, purely because of the total disappearance of what they were most interested by, will overbalance the number of new recruits. Then - the movement will become essentially decedent if it continues as presently constituted, and gradually things will become more difficult for those still maintaining an interest in the hobby; they will find that large scale fan trips or visits to railway properties are impractical because of the small numbers available to support them - the extensive rail fan publications we know to-day will drop one by one because of the lack of readership and contributors (could the new bi-monthly publication schedule of Railroad Magazine be an advance sign of this situation?)

This it seems to the writer, is the ultimate fate of the rail enthusiast movement induced by conditions wholly beyond its control, unless a fundamental change in attitude and activity on the part of a large sector of the fan body takes place. Although most rail fans tend to look somewhat askance at model railroading, this branch of the hobby offers the opportunity for enthusiasts to re-create and preserve in miniature that which is now being lost to them in the prototype. Modelling will thus probably have a rather wider appeal to the true rail fan in the future, and will in all likelihood win at least a few recruits from those who to-day devote all of their time to the prototype. However, the bulk of to-day's fan body will undoubtedly desire to keep its interest in the same channels as at present. This definitely dictates one fundamental policy - the railfan of the future will be much more of an historian than is his brother of to-day.

The average present-day rail fan probably devotes less than 20% of his time to a study of what happened more than ten years in the past. This is because excursions, current picture taking and trading, etc. occupy the great bulk of his hobby time. In the future, the time proportions will probably be reversed - 80% of the average fan's time will be spent delving into the departed glory years of steam and electric traction, while the remaining 20% will be devoted to keeping an interested but not overly enthusiastic eye on what is happening in the current railroading world.

There would seem to be three big things for the fan movement to do in the future (1) go more heavily into exhaustive publications on now existing or already abandoned railways and equipment, as more club money becomes available with the decreasing number of excursions being operated (due to abandonments and dieselization); (2) take even greater care to keep meeting programs of high calibre and wide interest to compensate for the decreasing desire of the members to "get out on the line", (3) increase the support of and activity in museum projects set up to preserve and operate railway equipment which would otherwise no longer be in existence. This

in itself can be a full time hobby and can do much to allow participants to forget the wounds inflicted by abandonments and scrappings elsewhere, as they work to create something they know cannot be dieselized or bussed. The Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association already provides an excellent outlet for this type of activity in Southern Ontario; it may be too much to hope for, but a Canadian fan-sponsored museum of steam locomotives and old railway rolling stock would be a wonderful development. Unlike the traction museums, which unfortunately must stand alone, such a project could be located adjacent to an operating line, and the equipment, if operable, moved out occasionally for excursions, keeping the tradition of steam alive on Canadian railways indefinitely.

There may be some readers who disagree with what has been said in this article; it is realized that some fans are in no wise antiquarians, and are convinced that railroading will hold the same interest 20 years in the future as it does now (and they may well be right). However, it is believed that most fans will be generally in accord with what has been stated here, and will realize that a major effort to keep the rail fan movement in the flourishing condition that it enjoys to-day is going to be required from those who have charge of the affairs of the many groups in North America.

Comments on this article from members and the editors of other rail fan papers will be welcomed.

➤ In late June, the TTC took delivery of the last two aluminum subway cars at Davisville shops, these being Nos. 5104 and 5105. The 34 cars on which tenders were recently asked have now been ordered and will also come from Gloucester.

#### A VISIT TO THE ELECTRIFIED SUBURBAN RAILWAY OPERATING FROM QUEBEC CITY

By J. R. Oakley

The electrified suburban service of the Canadian National Railways (formerly the Quebec Railway, Light & Power Company) from Quebec City to St. Joachim, 25.1 miles distant, is reminiscent of the suburban and interurban services so numerous in the United States and Canada thirty five years ago.

There are 34 daily-except-Sunday return trips, with 19 operating from Quebec only to Montmorency Falls, 6.3 miles distant, and the balance operating to St. Anne de Beaupre or St. Joachim. Single cars operate in off-peak periods; one or two trailers are added for peak periods.

There is one motor passenger car of wood construction which was first observed in the yards displaying "Special" on the destination sign. This, with its apparent age, led the reporter to believe this was a service car, but, during the evening rush, it was observed operating in revenue service with a trailer. All other motor passenger cars are of steel and all trailers of wood. Multiple-unit operation is not employed although the motor car control is of the multiple-unit type. The motor cars are single-ended; a turntable is employed in the Quebec City terminal and wyes at other points. The turntable operation is, by comparison with turntable operation on steam roads, effected rapidly. Some of the trailers are of the open-platform type and some have slat seats. The large quantity of equipment stored in the terminal after the morning rush is an imposing sight.

The train used for the return trip to Montmorency Falls consisted of a steel motor car and a wooden combination car carrying a considerable quantity of express. Trailers are not equipped with controllers.

Except for a short distance from the Quebec Terminal, the line is double-tracked to Montmorency Falls. The trolley wire over this portion is supported by span wires between wooden poles canted at five degrees from the vertical. Catenary suspension was observed over single

track portions beyond the Falls.

The equipment is very clean; washing was being performed following the morning rush period. The roadbed is in good condition.

Much of the patronage of the line is accredited to the existence of the Basilica at St. Anne de Beaupre, where there is a large station for the railway. A number of trains run express to and from this station.

The general traffic situation at the exit of the Quebec Terminal of the railway is extremely severe: two main automobile routes from the city converge at this point and one entrance to the Quebec Union Station is also at this point. Terminal movements on the electric line block one of the automobile routes and the main line railway and movements of the main line railway block movements on the electric line and on both automobile routes.

Rail fans should plan a visit to this unique operation; accommodation is available in cabins and motels commanding a view of the right-of-way.

➤ The Western Iron and Metal Company purchased the Toronto Transit Commission street cars recently offered for sale (June *Newsletter*, Page 2). Scrapping operations commenced with the moving of cars 2450 and 2452 to George Street rail yard on July 11<sup>th</sup>.