

"Art Clowes"

It's time for summer vacation, so the column this month will be short and a bit unorganised. This is getting put together sort on the fly, between packing a few rolls of film and research papers on top of a couple of shirts. I have planned for the last couple of years to get over to Prince Edward Island and to meet long time Island railway watcher, Keith Pratt. So, the column this month is taking second place to my trip.

Stations, Burlington, Ontario

Doug Page of Hamilton has send along a couple of articles concerning proposals to relocate and restore the old Grand Trunk Station at the former junction of the Hamilton & Northwestern (the H&N and the Northern Railway of Canada were operated for a number of years under a joint executive as the North & Northwestern Railway) and the Toronto branch of the Great Western that most of us think of as Burlington West at Mile 32.0 on CN's Oakville Subdivision. This site called Burlington Junction about the turn of century and later Burlington. The Great Western Railway had constructed their branch line to Toronto shortly after opening their main line from Niagara Falls via Hamilton and London to Windsor. The GWR backers knew Hamilton at the western end of Lake Ontario would become the major terminal for their railway, but for various reasons they considered they would have to have a branch to Toronto. My 1907 Grand Trunk Inventory books lists Burlington Junction as mile 7.05 from Stuart Street, Hamilton. The Hamilton & Northwestern built their line from the King Street, Ferguson Avenue area of Hamilton eastward towards Grimsby then looping north past Beach Road depot and then northwest across the so-called beach strip picking up passengers from the Ocean House depot across the draw bridge at the entrance to Hamilton Harbour and then into Burlington with its station 9.83 miles and on to cross the Great Western Railway at Burling Junction, listed as mile 11.33 from Hamilton on its way to Georgetown and Allendale. The H&N crossed the GWR just east of Brant Street with a diamond at about 45 degrees. The H&N had a large wye connection at Burling Junction south of the GWR. The mainline to Georgetown formed the east leg with a connection to the GWR in the south east quadrant of the diamond. The west leg of the wye is

much as it is today swinging west and joining the GWR near what was the west end of their small yard (two siding from the station to near the Plains Road crossing). The early track plan was completed with a tight connecting track in the north west quadrant of the diamond crossing with the GWR.

About 1960, CN with its construction of its Toronto Hump Yard, upgraded the old H&N line from Georgetown to Burlington as its main freight route between Toronto, the American Border and London. The upgrading at Burling was the flattening or reducing the curvature of the this northwest connecting track. The switch for this connecting track was moved from just east of the station to several hundred feet to the west.

The 1907 GTR Inventory shown the Burlington station on the H&N as being a single storey frame building 25 feet by 61 feet, built in 1900 and housing both the station and freight shed. This station was located about 1000 feet south of the Radial Railway crossing.

The present depot (combined station & baggage room) at Burling Junction (Burlington West) was according to the 1907 records built in 1906 as a single storey frame structure 20 feet by 50 feet on a concrete foundation with a granite base (the area under the windows).

The old Burlington Junction depot was used over the years by Grand Trunk, who by 1906, controlled and operated both the GWR & H&N on to Canadian National Railways days after 1923. The station served both long distance and commuter passengers up until the early 1980s when GO Transit constructed their commuter station east of Brant Street. This resulted in the need to add a piece back to the station name board. The old Burlington Junction name board had the word Junction cut off years ago, but with the new GO station, that was to be called Burlington, a piece had to be added at the old junction station to permit adding the word 'West'. VIA Rail moved east in 1989 to join GO at their Burlington station, so with CN not needing the building for their operator, the old Burlington Junction depot was closed. CN construction forces used it for construction offices during the GO Transit plant expansion through Burlington.

A remark in the 1907 GTR Inventory maps one recalls the area as it was in days gone by. The

Inventory lists a 1000 square foot open 'Fruit Platform' that was constructed in 1898 at Burlington Junction as well as a 'Covered Fruit Shelter' 10 feet by 50 feet constructed in 1900. Today, it may be difficult for many to realize this urban area had orchards and farm fields next to the tracks not that many years ago. Back in the 1930's as the Queen Elizabeth Way was constructed and joined Plains Road just west of Burlington Junction, and traffic continued east along Plains Road with its level crossing of the H&N line to Georgetown, and of course the Brant Street crossing of both railways just east of the station was also level with a crossing tower. The Village (formerly Freeman's Corners) at the railway crossing had about a dozen houses and the Railway had a water tower south of the Oakville Subdivision east of the H&N line. The railway also had a freight shed at stock pens at the station, otherwise farms and fruit orchards covered the terrain.

Coming back to 1993, Burlington service clubs are being approached to help raise money and support the city's architectural conservation committee in attempting to obtain government assistance to have the former Burlington Junction depot moved to Spencer Smith Park, near Lake Ontario and be turned into the new home for the Burlington Visitor and Convention Bureau. While the relocation and restoration project will cost in the order of \$135,000, Jane Irwin, of the Burlington Historical Society said, "It's certainly a first-class building and the structure is sound and it seems feasible that it could be moved." A lot of rhetoric to tell you about a simple station relocation.

Speaking of stations and not to let anyone forget about Montréal – a topic from a recent Tuesday luncheon. One of the regulars, Mike Leduc announced that he is presently compiling a list of all the railway stations on the various rail lines in the Canadian National family on Montréal island. He told us he had found 74 stations, then I showed him the list George Horner recently sent me, Mike found one more, the number is now 75. We will let you know what the final total is.

What seems like a few day ago we were complaining about the cold weather. As has been reported on various occasions, the Deux Montagnes commuter line has been closed this summer to permit the upgrading of the roadbed structure including the rails. Without getting into great details, temperature is very critical in laying

continuous welded rail, mainly because of the stresses created as temperatures change. Anyway, I was talking to one of the track construction people and he told me that the rail temperature reached 45° C. the other day. His second comment shows just how far the present concerns over cost controls can go. Some of the outer station platforms had been designed to handle double sets of the new trains. However, since costs have been climbing, the argument continues as the contractors start excavating for these platforms as to whether they should be constructed to the designed length or cut in half until the traffic warrants their expansion.

Abandonments

The National Transportation Agency in a recent decision has turned down CN's long standing application to abandon a portion of what they presently call their Burford Spur coming off of the Dundas Subdivision, at mile 22.18 in the City of Brantford, Ontario. The line in question was constructed by the Brantford, Norfolk and Port Burwell Railway. This line, opened in 1876 was constructed to fill the gap between the Great Western's branch line into Brantford from its main line at Harrisburg and its Air Line (Loop line) at Tillsonburg. A couple of miles at the southern end of the B,N&PB between Tillsonburg North and the Air Line was abandoned in the 1970s due to a weakened bridge. Their Tillsonburg station has been restored as part of the Town's renewal project and is now part of their market square. The portion from Tillsonburg North to Burford (about 20 miles) plus the Norwich Spur (that was part of the Port Dover & Lake Huron Railway) was abandoned in 1887. The 11 mile portion from North Burford to the connection with the Dundas Subdivision had crossed the line of the Brantford and Hamilton interurban as well as criss-crossing and competing with the electric line of the Lake Erie & Northern. CN had relocated some of its trackage through the south end of Brantford to the former TH&B several years ago. CN has been trying to abandon the 7.65 mile portion from West Brantford to the present end of steel at North Burford since 1986. This portion of rail line that the NTA orders CN to continue to serve, had in the days of passenger service, stations at West Brantford, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon and Burford.

INFORMATION NETWORK

CPR DIESEL-HYDRAULIC LOCOMOTIVES

In the 1992 July/August issue of "*Branchline*" on page 13 is a photograph of ex-CPR diesel-hydraulic locomotive No. 22. Now in 1972 the CPR had diesel-hydraulic No. 17 working in Goderich, Ontario yard. The locomotive watchman used this peanut for switching the salt-mine tracks, and for taking the loads, a few cars at a time, up the hill to a siding on the high ground where incoming trains left their empties, and where he made up the outgoing trains while the crews took rest in "the bunkhouse" in the rebuilt freight shed.

It would thus appear that the CPR had a number of these small diesel-hydraulics. However, they do not appear in any of the coffee-table, nostalgia books in our local library.

Can anyone supply further information on this class of locomotive? What was the horsepower? tractive effort? builder? origin? and in what class of service were they commonly worked?

It runs in my mind that I have heard somewhere that they were built in Germany for some special type of work and that the CPR acquired only a very few of them.

J. H. Toop.

J. H. Toop has!

Today we are hearing a good deal about "Road Railer Service" designed to recapture for the railways the intercity or the terminal-to-terminal, movement of semi-trailers. In this operation the semi-trailers are hitched nose-to-tail with link-and-pin couplings. They ride the rails on a pair of railway wheels on an axle which is part of their permanent running gear, or if not so equipped are carried on a light, dummy, 4-wheel railway truck under their rear end. Their braking system I have not examined, nor heard described. It is reported that as many as 80 of these semi-trailers may be hauled on the railway tracks as a proper train by one freight diesel unit.

But who can provide some information about the "AutoRailers" of the early 1930s? The ones I encountered were an experiment by Canadian National to combat early highway competition. These self-propelled railcars, referred to as "AutoRailers" were simply a standard production model of a truck or a bus, modified by the addition of retractable flanged wheels to operate on either railway track or road. They were, both in principle and in method, early versions of today's "hi-railer"

track maintenance vehicle.

Where the bus roadrailers operated I never heard.

But a freight unit operated for a while out of North Battleford, Sask. to service some short loop runs on several small, interconnecting branches. The autorailer could, in principle, be loaded at the shipper's warehouse but, in practice, was apparently loaded at the railway freight shed where the load had been assembled in the same way as for loading into the boxcars of a regular wayfreight service. The autorailer then ran on the railway tracks to a village where it took off at a road crossing and peddled its freight shipments direct to the merchants' doors. The truck then returned to the track and continued to the next station to repeat the process.

The autorailer combined the flexibility of a truck with the reliability of a train since they travelled between stations on the railway tracks in an era when the best highways were only gravel and road travel was always rather chancy during a good part of the year.

The autorailers were lighter and cost far less for fuel than the wayfreight and were thus more suited for handling LCL freight. Moreover they could save the extra handling, and cost, of local cartage at both origin and destination. They were meant to provide daily service at a time when wayfreights were commonly scheduled for one to three trips per week. (The CPR at this time had two branches out of North Battleford upon each of which they operated a mixed train only twice a month, and were said to have operated only once a month at times).

In the event the autorailers were apparently not particularly successful in their overall operation, mainly because the running trades insisted on over-crewing them. Their capacity for LCL freight was also inadequate to serve a run which normally required two or more boxcars on the steam train. Of course, they could not handle carload traffic at all, which the wayfreight could handle along with the LCL traffic.

This freight autorailer ran out of North Battleford for a while but was eventually left to rot on a stub track behind the roundhouse. Its final fate I do not remember having ever heard.

As I was only a lad at the time, I was not interested in how this off-again-on-again operation was handled under the operating rules. But I have

since wondered what kind of a train they were, and how the train dispatcher kept track of them and recorded their activities both on and off the rails. More particularly, how; did they relate to the other trains which kept to the rails and how was another train to identify one of these units if it was off the tracks and out of sight when supposed to meet or pass?

Any information which anyone could supply would be of the greatest interest.

J. H. Toop.

PAT: In the Harry Toop article, please remove reference to McHarg. As I mentioned, I couldn't find it, so I asked your father. Based on his reply I think Toop is confused. Your father like me couldn't find McHarg, but as he says there is a Maharg, BC that was named for a individual (not reversed spelling) – So, I would just remove it.

Future Months:

CP LaSalle station still standing
Newburgh CNOR Station exists in town as
a house – Dan McConnachie.