

Just A. Ferronut's *June 1995*

## **Railway Archaeology**

Art Clowes

Another year is reaching the halfway point. With a spring vacation behind me, it was time to watch the final shutdown of Canada's Oldest Operating Railway Museum - Montréal's Deux-Montagnes Commuter Service on June 2, 1995. I don't propose to dwell much on the line or its operations - your Editors are developing that for next month. While arrangements were made in April to have a matched set of CN's black and white coaches pulled by CN 6710 & 6711 make a run for the benefit of a group of enthusiasts, it was June 1 and 2, that saw the major influx of enthusiasts. I joked that this closing probably drew enough people to show a blip in Montréal's tourist figures.

I took the opportunity to ride a morning train from Cote Vertu into Central Station and a round trip on the last train early in the evening of June 2. A reasonable number of enthusiasts were on these trains. However, I made the comment to several, that hopefully someone videoed the right-of-way from the train on the last day to record the multitude of enthusiasts with all types of devices, recording the trains. While station platforms, and road crossings were the most crowded, overhead bridges and about any open space along the line had someone or a group photographing, videoing, or just doing sound recording of the passing trains.

While work on upgrading this 19 mile line was started two summers ago, this summer probably has the heaviest and tightest schedule of work to get ready for the new service in the fall. This year's work had started between trains as soon as the weather would permit and included removing the catenary south of Central Station on the viaduct and the removal and replacement of the rails, ties and ballast. However, the full shut down of commuter service on June 2, has permitted things to go into high gear.

A critical spot in this year's work is the area around Val-Royal. This station, rail plant and catenary mounted on over track bridges supported by steel towers at the junction of the Mont-Royal and Montfort Subdivisions and the old Carierville Spur had not had any work done over the past two summers. However, within a couple of working days of the closing, the Val-Royal station had been demolished, all track and the overhead in the area removed. An inspection a week after shutdown revealed a single track through the area with the foundations for new catenary towers in place and the area all graded ready for work on the new Bois-Franc station and the Boulevard Marcel Laurin (formerly Laurentien Boulevard) grade separation that will be below this new station just west of the old Val-Royal site.

### **Montréal's Central Station**

A year ago, in our June 1994 Column, I mentioned about Montréal's Central Station's concourse getting a sprucing-up. Over the early part of the 1994-1995 winter the walkway from the concourse southward towards CN's Headquarters building and LaGauchetière Street was totally redone. For the last several months, CN Real Estate has been cancelling the leases for most of the shops in the various passageways connected to Central Station, and these areas are now in the process of being remodelled.

Now another change, a restoration is underway at the

south-west end of the concourse. For more years than I want to count, the window and the fairly narrow bas relief mural under it have been hidden by giant billboard expounding the virtues of commercial products. This billboard and its frame is being removed with the original window and the bas relief murals being exposed. One can expect that with a few weeks they like the rest of the murals around the concourse will have their figures highlighted in buff on a blue background.

A second change presently being made at Central Station relates to changes for the Deux-Montagnes Commuter Service. Work is underway to close the stairway from the main concourse to Tracks 7 and 8 below. The railing around this stairwell has been removed and a new slab of concrete poured over the stairwell opening to form a sub-floor to permit a refinishing to match the surrounding floor.

### **Montréal's Victoria Bridge**

Back in our column of March, 1995 we mentioned that the Victoria Bridge was in for a major face lift. We mentioned that to ensure that this work could be done with as little interference with rail operation as possible, crane runways and overhead crane would be installed on the grand old lady of the St. Lawrence. Well this work has started from the Montréal end. Hopefully, some interesting photo opportunities.

### **Other Station News**

CN is presently attempting to obtain federal approval to permit them to sell their Newmarket Station to the Town of Newmarket, Ontario.

CN is also attempting to get similar approval to sell their station at Sayabec, Québec. This station is on the former Intercolonial Railway line in the Matapedia valley about 30 miles south of Mont Joli, Québec.

### **Dalhousie Mills Water Tank**

A couple of times last summer, while out pacing trains on CP's Winchester Subdivision near the Québec-Ontario border, I noted what looked like a railway water tank down the track. The other day I finally got a chance to check it out. CP Rail define the location as Dalhousie Mills, Mile 41.6 on their Winchester Subdivision. Various road maps show a Dalhousie Station and Dalhousie Mills. Most of these road maps show Dalhousie Mills as being about 2 miles north of Dalhousie Station. These maps show Dalhousie Station on the rail line and in Québec while Dalhousie Mills is shown in Ontario. A check of a 1941 CP Timetable doesn't help, as it defines the station as Dalhousie Mills. Without making guesses, we will leave this confusion as a question.

The water tower is a circular wooden tank on a stone and concrete base, on the north side of the track. The area is open enough to permit the inclusion of the water tower in afternoon photos of westbounds.

What generation the wooden tank may be would be a guess. The first storey foundation is made of very large cut stones. The top of this stone foundation has during some rebuilding been redone with a concrete cap. The wooden tank is made of vertical timber with heavy metal bars forming hoops or bands around the tank. Indications are that this tank is presently used for the village's water supply. If you are in the area, it

worth the short side trip. Dalhousie is only a stone throw's west of Highway 325, northwest of Coteau Station, QC.

#### **Kamloops Restaurant**

While details are sketchy, I had a note passed to me that a young couple will be opening a new cafe in Kamloops, BC, with a railway theme. This new restaurant will be called the Victoria Street Station, and operated by a Mr. & Mrs. Bremner.

#### **Equipment Questions**

A couple of questions relating to railway equipment have been forwarded my way. The first question is from our member Bill Reddy concerning some US Army 0-6-0 locomotives. According to Bill there were three surplus locomotives involved in a deal that took place in the second half of the 1940's following World War II. Two of these three locomotives were sold to the Pacific Coast Terminals Railway. Bill's question relates to the third one, that some people consider may have been sold here in Québec to perhaps a lumber company. The group of roster collectors that Bill associates with have discussed this locomotive, but have not been able to exactly determine its final owners. So the question is, does anyone know anything about this US Army surplus that was built by either Schenectady or Lima and may of headed for Canada for its golden years.

The second question was raised by Keith Pratt, another of our members and a former P.E.I. railroader. Keith raised the point that a number of narrow gauge locomotives from the Prince Edward Island Railway went to Newfoundland following the standard gauging of PIER in the 1920s. He was wondering if anyone knew any details, such as numbers of these engines, since, as he went on to say, he had not been able to locate any of these details.

So, should anyone be able to shed any light on either of these equipment questions, I am certain it would be appreciated.

#### **CN's Paddockwood Subdivision**

Canadian National Railway constructed their 23.94 mile Paddockwood Subdivision from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, northward to Paddockwood, Saskatchewan, following being authorized by the Dominion Parliament under Bill 18, assented to on July 19, 1924. This line cost approximately \$1,445,000 to build and was opened for traffic on January 22, 1925.

This was one of the western grain rail lines that had been protected from abandonment by federal Order in Councils starting in 1974. This protection from abandonment was lifted effected March 31, 1995 for the 15.5 miles between White Star (CN Mile 8.4) and Paddockwood.

CN has now applied to the National Transportation Agency for permission to abandon the operations over the 15.5 miles north of White Star, Saskatchewan.

#### **LaSalette, Ontario**

Several years ago, Ross Gray from Lindsay forwarded me a photo he had taken from a early post card of the railway junction and associated buildings at LaSalette, Ontario. I knew I had copies of a couple of track layouts, etc., for this railway junction, but as you can see it often takes me considerable time to get things married together.

The first rail line through what we now know as LaSalette, was the Canada Southern Railway. The Canada Southern had started construction on their line east of St. Thomas in the fall of 1870. By July 31, 1872, the Canada

Southern had their first locomotive operating on limited trackage through St. Thomas. The completion of a number of large bridges, mostly east of St. Thomas slowed the completion of the line. While there are reports that trains were operating in Waterford during the latter part of 1872, indications are that June 23, 1873 was the date for the start of through Canada Southern rail service between St. Thomas and Fort Erie. Canada Southern's original line was a single track line.

The Port Dover to Stratford rail line that eventually became part of the Canadian National system was originally constructed by the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway. The 40.25 miles of track between Port Dover and Woodstock that crossed the Canada Southern at LaSalette was opened on October 7, 1875, three months before the line was completed into Stratford. In 1881, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway and two other companies were amalgamated into the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway. Effective April 1, 1893, the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway was one of the fifteen companies that were amalgamated into the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada.

#### **Village History**

The name LaSalette comes from the Alpine village of LaSalette in France. The original village in France became a well known within the Roman Catholic church following a Apparition on September 19, 1846. The railways first called their crossing, Port Dover Junction. The church parish was called Our Lady of LaSalette for the above mentioned Apparition. In 1877, the church petitioned Ottawa for the establishment of a Post Office at the railway junction. The government granted this petition and the LaSalette Post Office was established in 1877. In 1879, the first Roman Catholic church was built in the village. A small history of LaSalette published in 1949 by the church stated that the village .... "always boasted one general store, one blacksmith shop and one school and one church but unfortunately two hotels." The Foley Hotel, just east of the railway tower and burned about 1908 was known as .... "the happy meeting grounds for the boys."

This 1949 booklet also stated that .... "It was a real thrill for a visitor to be in the (railway) tower, when one of the fast-moving New York Central passenger trains passed, from its vibration due to the concussion of the air between the train and tower."

#### **Tower and Interlocking**

What the original crossing looked like or exactly how it operated, would be a guess. However, my records show that a 33 lever Canadian Switch Company built interlocking was put in service on July 22, 1893. The plan for the Port Dover Junction interlocker shows a single track Grand Trunk crossing a single track (north track) Canada Southern with a interconnecting track in the north-east and south-west quadrants. This plan shows a second track on the Canada Southern starting about 100 metres west of the diamond and the extension of a second track eastward as proposed. This second track would be south of the first Canada Southern track. The breakdown of the levers was 12 for the Grand Trunk and 16 for the Canada Southern and 5 spares.

The 1906 plan that I used for our sketch shows that all of the above mentioned 33 levers were in service, 18 by the Michigan Central and 15 by the Grand Trunk Railway. Another interesting feature on the 1906 plan was the approach circuits. The distance between the approach signals and the home signals

on the double track Michigan Central was slightly over a half mile. On the Grand Trunk, the distance between these signals was slightly less than a quarter mile. This indicates the faster train speeds on the MCR as compared to those on the GTR.

During the 1920's the New York Central expended large amounts of money on upgrading the Canada Southern to permit fast trains, especially passenger expresses. Part of this upgrading was the construction of "track pans" at several locations along the Canada Southern that permitted locomotives to take water without stopping. By 1927, electric locks had been added to a number of the key levers. Comments in 1931 show that the approach circuits on the Canada Southern had been approved to be extended to provide about a mile and quarter between the outer approaches and the home signals. The distances on the Grand Trunk were still the same as in 1906.

Formal approval was given by the Board of Railway Commissioners on September 26, 1934 for the two railways (Canadian National Railway and New York Central) to remove the diamond crossing and dismantle the interlocking plant. This piece of paper officially ended the railways' tower operation that had been carried on for 59 years in the village of LaSalette. While the diamond and interlocker were removed, no doubt to help the NYC run its crack trains across the Canada Southern at top speed, Canadian National's line remained through LaSalette for another 21 years. The 13.96 miles between Simcoe Junction through LaSalette to Otterville was abandoned on August 10, 1955.

Today, the remaining Canada Southern line sees very limited traffic that may become even less now that the Canadian National Railways have their new tunnel at Sarnia opened for traffic.

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*Caption for Photo:*

Eastbound New York Central train passes the LaSalette joint station and approaches the GTR track and the interlocking tower in the early part of the 1900s. The two storey building to the left of the tower would be the McElhone Hotel. Photo from postcard in Ross Gray's collection.

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**Old Transit Tidbit**

An article in the December 1925, *Canadian Railway & Marine World*, states that the Woodstock – Ingersoll Bus Line's barn at Woodstock, Ontario, was broken into on the night of November 3, 1925, and one of its new 20 passenger buses was stolen, apparently by escaping burglars. The bus was found undamaged near Paris, early the next morning. The bus line only began operating on November 1, 1925 following the closing of the Woodstock, Thames Valley and Ingersoll Railway.