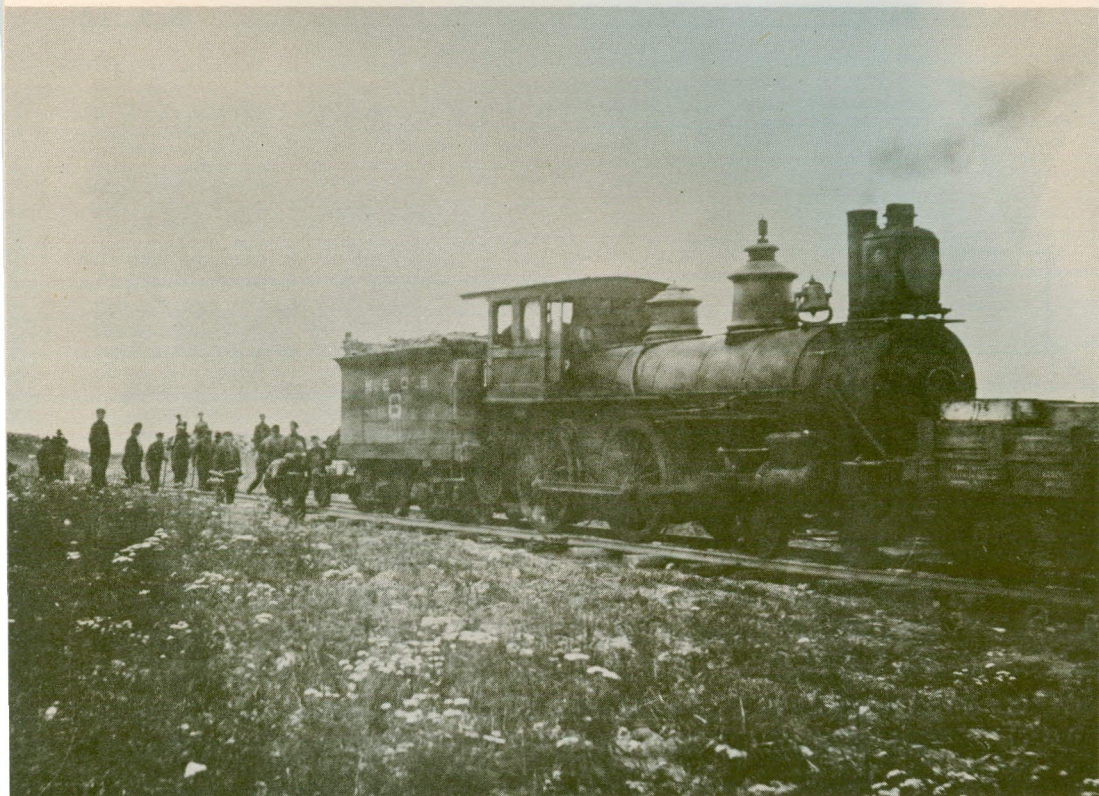


Canadian Rail



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The Canada & Gulf Terminal Railway.

-- Fred Angus



The Lower St. Lawrence Region of the Province of Quebec was first served by a railway line in 1860, when the Grand Trunk Railway completed its line from Montreal to Riviere du Loup. For many years there had been discussion of a rail connection with the Maritime Provinces, and, eventually, in 1876, the Intercolonial Railway was completed, and the Eastern provinces directly connected with the rest of Canada. However, the I.C.R. route between Levis and New Brunswick turned inland near what is now Mont Joli, and headed in a southerly direction through the Matapedia Valley, eventually connecting with the existing Maritime systems near Moncton. Thus the Gaspé region was not served by any track.

The first concrete step towards building a line to Gaspé was taken in 1883 when a charter was granted to the Gaspesian Railway Co. This railway was to be built from a connection with the Intercolonial to the end of the Gaspé peninsula, a distance of more than 210 miles. However, nothing was done for the next 19 years due to lack of capital.

In 1902 the name of the company was changed to the Matane and Gaspé Railway Co. and a new charter was obtained. The connection with the I.C.R. was to be St. Octave de Metis. During the next few years more definite plans were drawn up and with the increased prosperity of Canada in the early 20th century, the scheme for a seaport on the Gulf of St. Lawrence became very attractive. With such a port, the province of Quebec could handle ocean ships all year round, instead of only when the river was open. However, the success of the plan depended on a railway to connect this

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Pages 161 and 160 - taken in 1909 during construction of the Canada & Gulf Terminal Railway.

Page 163 - Steam locomotive 350, in service on C> until 1949.

Page 165 - Gasoline car #501 at Mont Joli Station, June 1947.

- Locomotive 352 with freight train near Price, Que., May 1949.

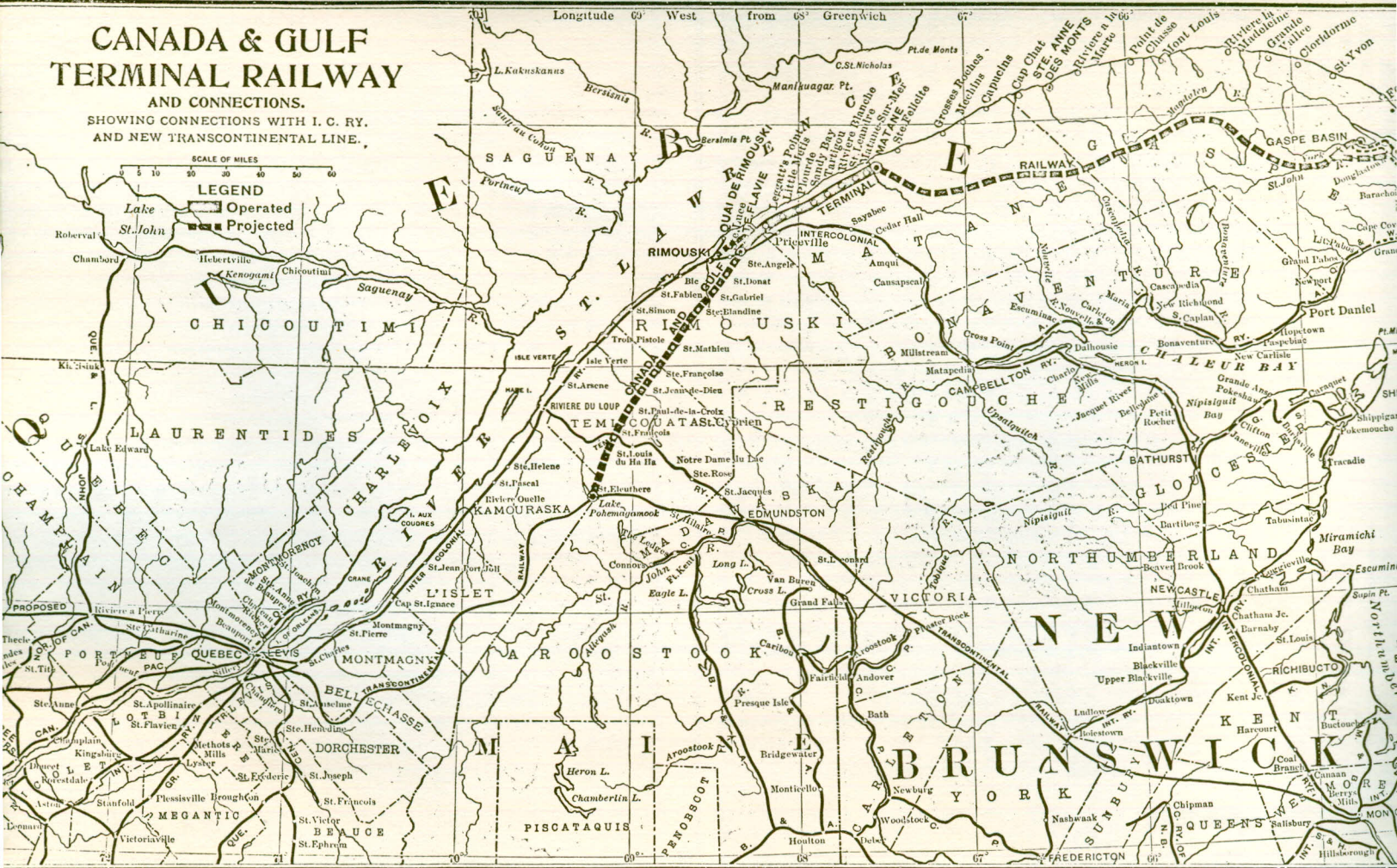
Page 168 - Gasoline car #501 at Mont Joli Station, June 1947.

Page 169 - Diesel-electric car #405 beside C> Shops, Mont Joli, Quebec, March 1964.



CANADA & GULF TERMINAL RAILWAY

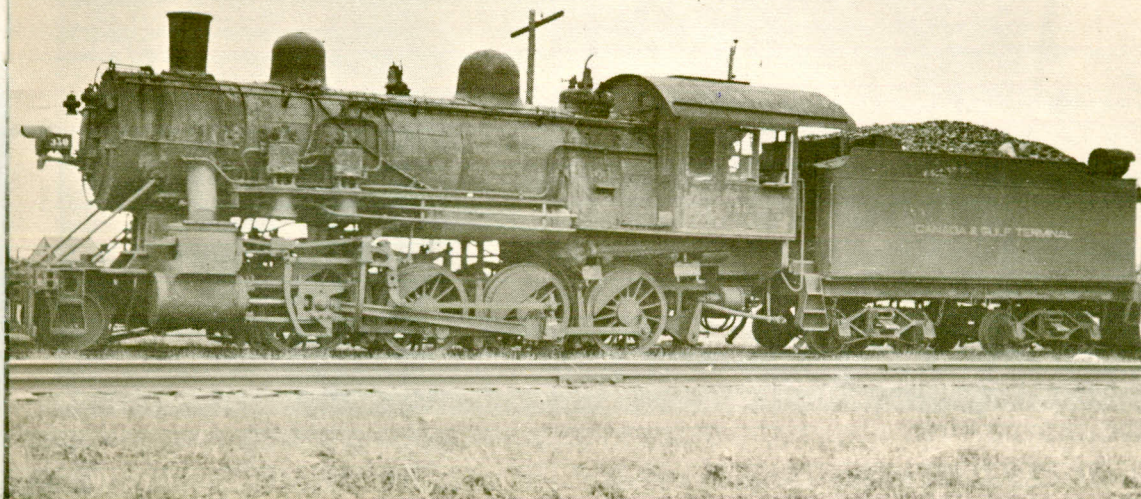
AND CONNECTIONS.
SHOWING CONNECTIONS WITH I. C. RY.
AND NEW TRANSCONTINENTAL LINE.



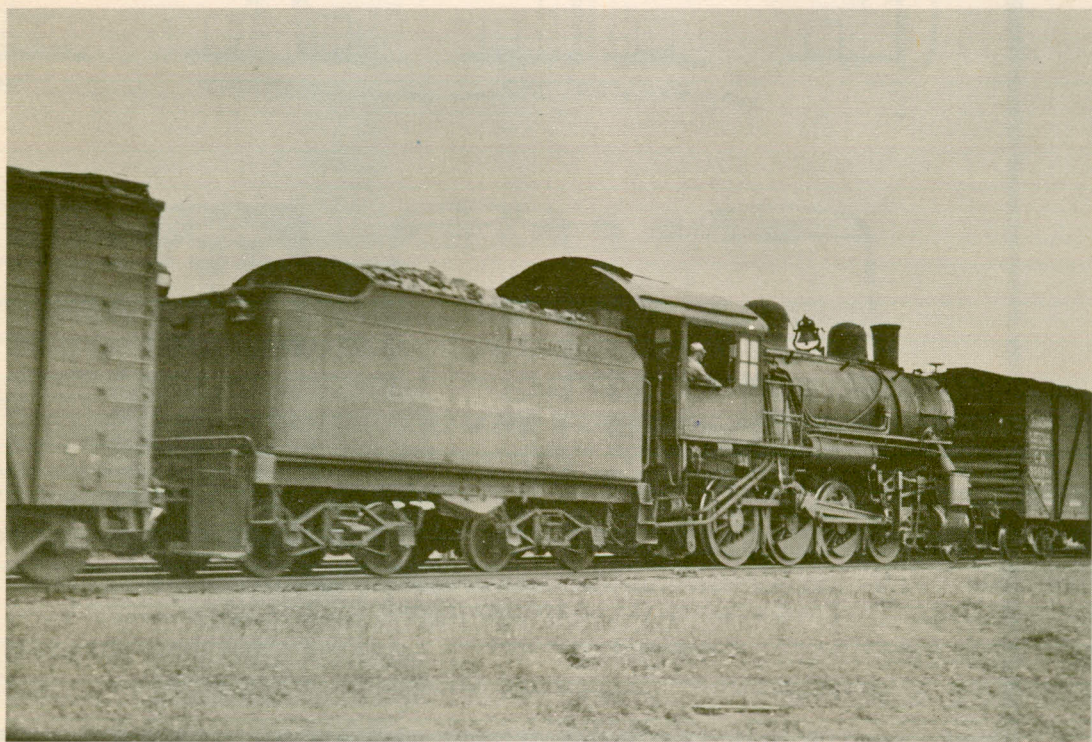
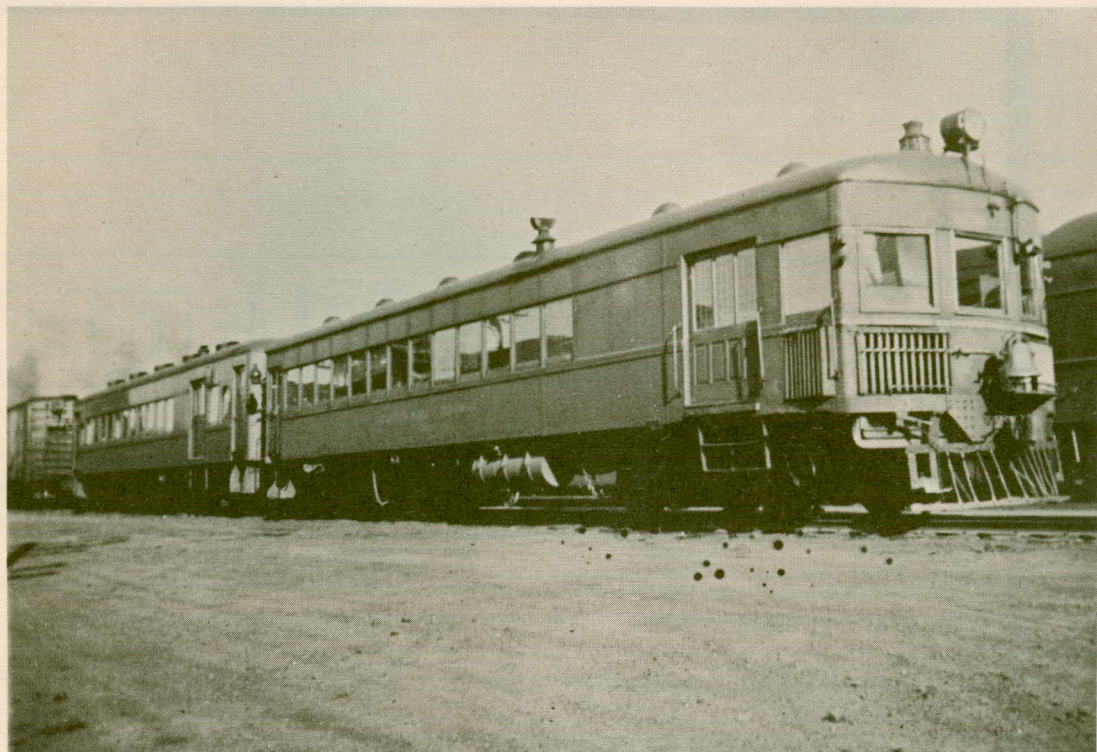
terminal on the gulf with the rest of Canada. Accordingly, in 1909, the Matane and Gaspé Railway Company was reorganized, its name changed to the Canada and Gulf Terminal Railway Co., and the charter was amended. Under the new provisions, Ste. Flavie (now Mont Joli) was designated the connection with the Intercolonial. The railway was to follow the St. Lawrence to Matane, then turn inland along the Matane river, and thence to Mont Louis Village, and on to Gaspé Basin. An extension, westward from St. Flavie for about 100 miles, was planned to connect with the National Transcontinental Railway at St. Eleuthère. The whole railway would have a length of 315 miles.

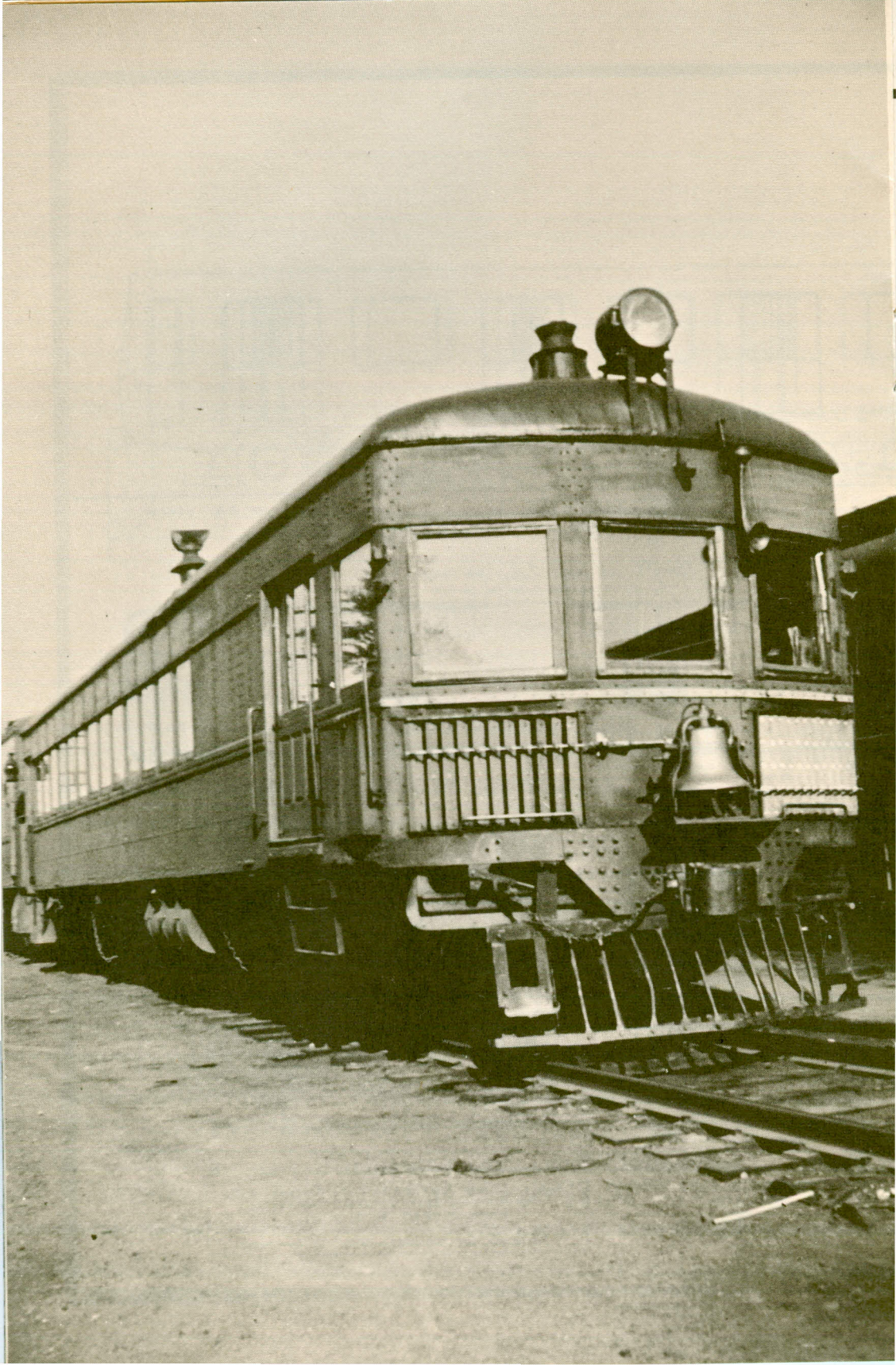
Soon after this, the contract for the first section, i.e. Ste. Flavie to Matane, was let to H. Doherty of Montreal. Grading began in the autumn of 1909, and before the year was over, the grade and bridges were nearly complete on the first 10 miles. Work continued in the Spring, and the first rail was laid on May 7th, 1910. 80 lb. rail was used, and all major bridges were of steel. By October 31st, the track had passed beyond Metis, and on December 7th, 1910, the entire section from Ste. Flavie (Mont Joli) to Matane was handed over to the company for operation, a distance of 36 miles. The company at this time had 3 steam locomotives, 2 passenger coaches, 15 box cars, and 30 flat cars, the latter apparently being used mostly in construction, as their numbers declined greatly soon after. During the winter of 1910-1911, surveys were successfully conducted on the extension from Matane to Gaspé, a route being found which would insure a maximum grade of 0.6%, over a line passing mostly through virgin forest.

However, there was no new construction in 1911, and in fact not for the next 10 years. Further survey was carried out on the Gaspé extension, and preliminary surveys on the westward line to St. Eleuthère indicated that a successful route would be located. Rolling stock in 1914 consisted of 2 locomotives, 2 passenger cars, 1 combine, 1 baggage car, 3 box cars, 4 flat cars, and a caboose. 28,033 passengers were carried. Mixed trains operated 23,248 miles while passenger trains ran only 22 miles!



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Continued from Page 163

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 brought a suspension of the great plans of 1909, and the C. & G.T. continued running over its 36-mile line, deriving much passenger traffic in the summer serving resorts such as Metis Beach. In 1921 the company built an extension from Matane to Hammermill, 2.4 miles, and this was destined to be the last new line built by the C. & G.T.

By the mid 1920's it was realized that passenger service with conventional steam-hauled trains would not pay, and the mixed train service was too infrequent. Accordingly, in 1926, the company ordered a Brill model 75 gasoline car from the Ottawa Car Manufacturing Co. This unit was 55 feet long, carried 50 seated passengers, had a 5 speed mechanical transmission, and was capable of a speed of 50 miles an hour. This car was tested on a round trip from Ottawa to Renfrew (116 miles), then was shipped to Mont Joli on its own wheels, the night of June 9-10, 1926. It was assigned No. 501, and placed in service early in July. No. 501 was converted to a trailer about 1949, and is still used, having recently been greatly renovated and improved.

With the arrival of the gas car, the daily except Sunday mixed was discontinued, and replaced with a twice daily except Sunday passenger service, with freight and mixed trains operated as traffic demanded. Once again, about this time, the company applied to conduct further surveys on the line to Gaspe, but nothing more was done, and the dream was never realized. The use of the gasoline car, and the shortening of the time of a one way trip to 1 hour and 12 minutes, caused an increase in the number of passengers from 30,406 in 1924, to 54,677 in 1927. The company still retained its 3 passenger cars, 2 combines, and 2 baggage cars, as well as 4 flat cars and a caboose. Three locomotives provided the power for freight and mixed trains.

In this form, the C. & G.T. continued until after World War II. By then it was realized that changes would have to be made in the interests of economy. Car 501 was becoming old, so, in 1947, a Brill gas-electric car No. 405 was purchased from the New York Central, fitted with a new Cummins diesel engine, and used to carry passengers and baggage. About this time, the remaining steam engines were disposed of, and a small diesel engine acquired to replace them. Later, a larger unit was obtained, and the former one sold to the Thurso and Nation Valley Ry., where it is still in use. Since then, the C. & G.T. has obtained 1 more diesel locomotive, has remodeled some of its equipment, and is presently building a snowplow in its own shops. The road now runs a mixed train daily except Sunday, diesel-electric car 405 being infrequently used.

The Canada and Gulf Terminal Ry. is one of the few remaining independent small railways in Canada which still runs passenger accommodation, and it is hoped that it will continue to function for many years to come.

Photographs and illustrations courtesy of Messrs. E.J. Quimper R.V. Nicholls, B. Biglow, A. Clegg and the Canada & Gulf Terminal Railway.

