

# The Railway Museum of BC Newsletter

**JANUARY - MARCH 2024**

**Day Out with Thomas is coming!**



**RAILWAY MUSEUM**  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## FROM THE EDITOR

We just finished a very successful 'Sea to Sky Model Train & Hobby Show'. Thanks to all the volunteers that made this show happen. Special mention should be made to Gordon Hall who was the show organizer and literally put hundreds of hours into setting it up with the vendors and working with the 'ad gang' in getting the show publicized. And also to Aaron and his mini rail crew who were able to restore the mini rail roadbed after the usual winter weather affecting the rail line. And to Tom Arnott and his crew of volunteers. Our next major event is our annual 'Day Out with Thomas'. Details in this issue.

### Updates from WCRA

Reports from our major department heads for the last quarter.

#### **Bob Philip - President & CEO**

The Model Train show was a big success this year in terms of the number of participants, the quality of the displays, and the activities offered. And this year demonstrated how staff and volunteers, working together, can succeed in putting on an outstanding event. Not only was the setup a huge task, it always is, but an extra effort had to be made to get the mini rail, the Budd car, and the Woss speeder operational. The mini rail, in particular, was a challenge with track rehabilitation, and rolling stock repairs, taking an extra effort from staff and volunteers. Now the focus shifts to opening day which, this year, is Saturday April 20th. The full museum and rail offerings will be available that day and most Saturdays, long weekend Sundays, and summer Thursdays, until Thanksgiving. And our next big event will be **Day Out With Thomas** which will be held May 25/26th and June 1/2nd this year.

Once again this year, the RMBC will be participating in the Tourism Challenge passport program, beginning with opening day. The Museum will be open on select extra days to accommodate those taking part. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Museum this spring!

#### **Gordon Bell - General Manager**

The months of January to March have been spent preparing for another busy season for Blacksheep Event Rentals. The company has expanded its product offerings and is now positioned to begin trying to secure some of the corporate market in the Sea to Sky corridor and beyond.

The Railway Museum is traditionally very quiet at the beginning of the year. In February the Railway Museum of BC hosted Surerus - Murphy for a morning

meeting in the roundhouse for 200 of its employees and contractors. Surerus-Murphy has also booked future meetings at the facility in the spring and fall of this year.

Special thanks to Gordon Hall for all his hard work putting together and promoting the Sea to Sky Model Train and Hobby Show in March, It was another successful venture for Gord and his enthusiastic group of hobbyists.

### **Robert MacBeth - CMO**

Main work this spring is working on the operating train set, servicing and inspecting coaches and locomotives, along with fixing BC-21 and troubleshooting the issues with BC-33. Also focusing on the maintenance equipment being serviced and working on getting a 2nd Golf Cart operational for events

### **Tom Arnott - Museum Manager**

#### **On Site Maintenance**

With the teardown of all the equipment required for the North Pole Express event completed in early February it gave us the opportunity to do some maintenance including staining and painting of the wooden outside seating and steps that we use access the rail cars. A lot of work is on going with a big spring cleaning of the exhibit cars and site tidying.

The window frames in troop carrier 722 were found to be rotten and we were gifted some yellow cedar and the Squamish Men's shed agreed to build the new frames, paint and install the windows free of charge. Unfortunately the station basement flooded in February, as did the Brightbill house crawl- space. The station furnace was damaged and will possibly need replaced. The Brightbill crawl space was used as a storage area but the contents survived and a huge thanks go to Barbara Stover and Tom Bruvall who spent several days cleaning out the area and drying out the contents.

#### **Gift Shop**

We are revamping and reviewing the type of merchandise we sell in the shop. We have a new volunteer, Sara Jane, who recently retired as the main buyer for the Sea to Sky Gondola gift shop and has offered to assist Barbara in the redesign of the Gift Shop retail area. We had a shop fitter look at the best layout for the merchandise and are awaiting his plans and costs. As well as the usual train related merchandise we've also now included First Nations Artwork and local crafts. There is also a much more diverse type of clothing which includes more children items.

### **Mini Rail**

There was some concern that the track infrastructure might not be in a safe condition to allow trains to run for the Model Railway and Hobby show in March. A decision was made to make every effort to have it ready for operation. This required a huge effort and volunteer weekend work parties were organized. The main issue was the condition of many of the wooden ties that were now rotten and needed replacing and levelling and ballasting of the track. The work to replace the ties was also compounded by the usual Squamish heavy March rain and tents had to be erected to protect the volunteers. It was estimated that over 300 ties were replaced and the track was ballasted and levelled. Thanks to the 15 volunteers who came out to help. I calculated that around 75 hours per day were averaged over the weeks preceding the show which equated to more than 300 volunteers hours! Thank you to all of you who helped.

### **Museum Buildings**

I've started to work on a maintenance schedule for the museum buildings. The main focus this year is the PGE Car shop which is now 110 years old! We have submitted an application to the BC Heritage fund for a grant of \$50,000 match funding. We received a donation of \$38,000 last year and would hope to match fund from the BC Heritage grant, if successful. I've had a survey completed on the Car shop, Station and Brightbill roofs. Fortunately the report indicated that the roofs on all three buildings are in good condition and only minor work is required on some areas requiring felt and gutter replacement, particularly with the car shop. All gutters and downpipes will require cleaning this spring.

### **Stanley Park Locomotive**

As you are aware, we have displayed the original Stanley Park steam locomotive exhibited in the Roundhouse. We have had a request from George Game from the 374 Roundhouse Pavilion to loan the locomotive to them as a display item. It will be moved to Yaletown in the near future.

### **Sea to Sky Train and Hobby Show**

Most of the days in March were dedicated to organizing this event. It was the first major event of 2024 and a huge amount of effort has been put into the preparation of the mini-rail track. Additional work has also been put into preparing the Roundhouse and Car Shop for the event. Hosting an event like this large does take a lot of effort including checking food provision and the food truck, ordering supplies, organizing volunteers, creating an event safety plan and booking security staff and car parking staff. Also ensuring our rail cars meet Transport Canada standards, preparing locomotives, cash floats, stocking the gift shop, organizing hotel accommodation for clubs and vendors, and finally advertising the events in local press, social media and on radio.

I would like to thank EVERYONE involved in the event but particularly **Gordon Hall** who was the driving force behind this show and who put in many, many hours to make it happen!

Finally, as we head towards summer, the next event is the Bespoke Market on the weekend of April 12-14th and then the museum finally opens to the public on Saturday April 20th.

## **RAILWAY NEWS**

### **Hope Railway Station Moved**

On Feb. 16, the old Hope railway station was moved to a new home on Water Avenue in Hope, to become the new Info Centre and Museum. While such moves normally take place at night, due to the public interest, a daytime move was arranged. The building, which dates to 1916 and was previously an arts centre, narrowly avoided demolition three years ago. The Tashme Historical Society was key to ensuring it was preserved (see photo on back cover).

### **VIA**

VIA's three Panorama coaches (#1720-22), their single level cars with glass roofs, are still at VIA's Montreal Maintenance Centre. The last of the three to arrive there was VIA #1722 last June. The stated intent is to refurbish all three, then return to service on an unspecified VIA route. Originally, BC Rail had purchased these single-level 'Ultradome' cars from Colorado Railcar, for use on its Vancouver-Prince George 'Whistler Northwind' service in 2001. Built on three ex-CN baggage car underframes, the cars were under construction for the Florida Fun Train when it was shuttered. These cars were purchased by VIA for use on their 'Skeena' Train.

### **York Durham Heritage Railway**

The YDHR announced on their Facebook page on Jan. 23rd that they were ceasing operations immediately and have filed for insolvency protection after almost 30 years of operation. All equipment, parts, and inventory will be available for purchase in the near future through their trustee, Riley Farber of Toronto. The Township of Uxbridge, became increasingly frustrated with building code and safety violations. Finally, late last year, the township said it would not renew YDHR's lease on the train station unless it came into full compliance with numerous conditions, including the removal of four dilapidated passenger cars from the rail yard. It was this announcement that ignited a convoluted chain of events resulting in the YDHR declaring bankruptcy. It'll be interesting to see if any of their equipment finds a new home, especially their two MLW RS-3s and an Alco RS-11.

## CP

A very rare sighting by Ken Storey as KCS 4859 was surprisingly on the point of CPKC train 301 from Calgary to Vancouver on Feb 10.



The unit was decorated with a "Safety Starts Here" message in Spanish on the conductor's side and English on the engineer's side

Photo: Ken Storey

## CPKC Calendar

The 2024 CPKC calendar is now out . . . this calendar is one of the best published by any North American railroad. Link below:

<https://www.cpkc-shops.com/us-store.html#!/business/2024-calendar-136.html>

## CPKC's two derailments in successive days in BC

A coal train rear-ended a stopped grain train 6 miles east of Revelstoke, BC at around 30mph on Feb. 16th. CPKC assignment 805-339 was proceeding Westward at Mile 116.7 on the Mountain sub on the North Main track when it collided with the tail end of assignment 301-230, which was stationary.

As a result, units CP #8910 & CP 8775 (which caught fire), CP 8014 and CP 8776 on train 805 (in addition to 3 loaded covered hopper cars on train 301) derailed. A fourth loaded covered hopper car on train 301 sustained damage. No injuries to the crew on train 301. But both crew members on train 805 were taken to hospital in Revelstoke, one with minor and one with serious injuries. No reported leaks.

On Feb.17th, (only 8 miles away), CPKC assignment 101-14 was proceeding Westward on the siding at Mile 8.2 on the Mountain Sub when 14 loaded intermodal flat cars (26 platforms) derailed. As a result, one top container on intermodal flat car DTTX 732213 made contact with 4 top containers on Westward assignment 105-13 that was stationary on the Main track. No reported derailment on train 105.

No injuries were reported. Four unknown containers of dangerous goods on train 101 were involved which lengthened the clean up.

## CPKC introduces a Rail Integrity Detector Program

After a Transport Canada Safety Board investigation to a derailment in 2021, the railway has subsequently introduced a *Rail Integrity Non-Vital Overlay Detector* on that subdivision, a system for non-signalled territory that informs the CPKC Operations Centre of broken rails, rail gaps, loose joints or joint pull-aparts by sending a low-voltage signal through the rails.

The derailment was a result of an undetected rail flaw that led to a broken rail incident that occurred at 05:02 on Oct. 16, 2021, at mile 32.75 on CP's Lanigan Subdivision, north of Regina, Sask. It involved a 200-car train with a single lead unit, followed by 100 cars of potash, a distributed power unit, another 100 cars of potash, and a trailing distributed power unit. It was 9,625 feet long and weighted 28,525 tons, and was traveling at 38.6 mph when a train-initiated emergency brake application occurred; the train stopped after about 2,100 feet. A total of 27 cars, the 125th through 151st cars in the consist, derailed, with most spilling their contents; there were no injuries and no danger to the public or environment caused by the derailment at Silton, Saskatchewan.



The investigation ultimately determined that the west rail broke, due to a pre-existing fatigue crack in the rail. The rail wear was within CP limits at the time, and rail flaw testing had exceeded regulatory requirements, but limitations of current testing equipment likely rendered the existing cracks difficult to detect, the TSB said.

(TRNS)

## VIA

On March 1st, The Canadian, which departed Vancouver struck some metal debris near Agassiz, BC. Fuel tanks were ruptured. It was reported that passengers were bussed back to Vancouver and offered a refund. Passengers booked on #1 due to depart Toronto on March 6th were notified the train was cancelled. They will be refunded as no alternative transport was offered.

In May and June, VIA will add an eighth Manor sleeper to the consist of the Canadian. This sleeper has not been added for July onwards, but it is expected it will be.

## CN

Among the half dozen Class I railroads in North America, one stands out among them in terms of locomotive variety, *Canadian National*. The contrast of motive power on its roster is unique, with many models only found on CN. There is over six decades' difference between the oldest and newest models on the railway.

CN has bucked the industry trend that has largely shunned new motive power purchases in recent years in favor of rebuild in-kind programs and DC to AC conversion projects. Over the last five years, CN has purchased 120 new locomotives, acquired second-hand locomotives when available, and has been upgrading others already in its fleet.



While CN has some of the newest locomotives in North America, it also has the distinction of operating the oldest locomotives on a Class I, with a number of GP 9's still in service. Called GP9 RM's on CN, these relics from the 1950's were completely remanufactured between 1985 and 1994 and have continued to serve CN well into the 21st century.

Locomotive models not found on other Class I rosters include standard-cab SD-70's, isolated-cab SD70I's, SD40-3 locomotives with the tunnel-motor radiator design, and C40-8M's with a cowl carbody. CN also exclusively rosters EMD GP 38-2's, GP40-2L's, SD40-2's, and GE C44-9WL's equipped with four-window, Canadian-design comfort cabs.

This year, CN will become the second Class I to operate DC-to-AC conversion locomotives from both builders when its first SD75ACC locomotives from Progress Rail are scheduled to arrive.

CN has also dipped into the second-hand market acquiring such models as SD 60's, C40-8's, C40-8W's, C44-9W's, and ES44AC's. While most remain on the roster, the slow elimination of all Dash 8 models on CN's roster will reduce the number of second-hand purchases still operating. (TR)

### **Fort Steele and ex BC Museum Loco #1077**

Concerns over the age and increasing maintenance costs of 2-6-2 No. 1077, built in 1923 by Montreal Locomotive Works for Vancouver Island logging operations, have led Fort Steele Heritage Town, near Cranbrook, B.C., to halt train operations pending an outside review. (VP)

### **Ontario One (formerly Ontario Hydro)**

Due to its upcoming 50-year AAR interchange age limit, the Ontario Hydro old 1974-built Schnabel HEPX 200, and its load-adjustment equipment, its four man crew, and caboose are no longer required. It was used to transport extremely large transformers for Ontario Hydro. (TO)



### **Union Pacific**

UP will send Big Boy No. 4014 on a “Four Corners” tour of its system in 2024, the railroad announced, including stops in Oregon, California, Texas & Illinois. Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena said in a message to UP’s “Steam Club,” which receives first notification of plans for the 4-8-8-4. “When No. 4014 comes to town, we will celebrate with the communities where we operate, our employees and their families. Together, we will marvel at how far technology has brought us.”

Anticipated stops include Chicago; Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston; Salt Lake City; Portland, Ore; Nampa, Idaho; and Roseville, Calif. A schedule and route information will be announced this spring and the railroad plans events for employees and their families in addition to public stops.

### **US Shortline RR's and PTC**

With Positive Train Control fully implemented on a large majority of the nation’s Class I’s, passenger, and commuter lines, many short lines and regional railroads have had to comply with the new rules when they operate over another’s PTC-equipped lines. This includes smaller railroads that serve customers on another railroad’s tracks, have trackage rights to access other parts of a short line or regional railroad’s trackage, or have rights over a Class I to interchange cars at a nearby yard or interchange.

With certain exceptions, these smaller operators have to upgrade motive power in their fleets with PTC equipment if they operate over another operator’s trackage. Federal regulations require a short line or regional to have an operating PTC locomotive if the movement is greater than 20 miles on a Class I railroad or if the quantity of trains exceeds four or more per day. An extension to equip locomotives on short lines that operate distances greater than 20 miles on Class I railroads has been in effect but was to expire on Dec. 31, 2023

Equipping locomotives with a PTC system is easily a six-figure investment per locomotive and for a smaller railroad this can represent a very large investment. One that can potentially be more expensive than a used locomotive itself. To save costs, some smaller railroads elect to only equip a few units from their fleet to upgrade with PTC, keeping them in semi-captive service. Others may justify purchasing newer power that has either been equipped with PTC in the past or negotiate to buy locomotives with PTC still installed. This can save time and money getting locomotives ready for service while spreading out the extra cost of PTC over a longer time since newer locomotives will have a longer service life on the railroad versus equipping existing older power.

### **Stadler Rial's Hydrogen Test Train**

Stadler Rail's hydrogen powered multiple-unit passenger trainset has set a record by traveling more than 1,700 miles without refueling or recharging.



The FLIRT H2 trainset, destined for use on the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority's Arrow service, covered 1,741.7 miles on the test loop at the Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo. The record run — certified by observers from the Guinness World Records team — began on the evening of March 20. With the train operated in shifts by engineers from Stadler, ENSCO and operators of the TTC, it concluded more than 46 hours later, at 5:32 p.m. Mountain time on March 22.

The H2 built for San Bernardino consists of two electrically powered end cars with a power unit in the middle containing the fuel cells and hydrogen tanks. The fuel cells convert the hydrogen into electricity stored in the battery, which also collects energy from braking. The train offers seating for 108 passengers as well as standing room, and can operate at speeds up to 79 mph. The record distance far exceeds the demands the trainset is likely to face in regular service; the Arrow line is a 9-mile route connecting San Bernardino and Redlands, Calif.

(TM)

### **Chehalis-Centralia RR**

The Chehalis-Centralia Railroad and Museum in Washington state will resume excursion train operations April 6th after a lengthy hiatus, the organization has announced. Saturday and Sunday excursions are scheduled through Sept. 29, plus Polar Express trains that will begin Nov. 9.

The heritage operation halted operations in March, 2022 after losing its liability insurance as a result of accident claims over a six-year period, with no other insurer willing to step in and provide coverage.

The decision was based on the railroad's "loss runs," documents used in underwriting that detail losses. The organization's loss run was \$1.064 million over six years because of two crashes involving Chehalis Central trains. One was a fatal accident in July 2017 when a man failed to yield the right of way to a train; the other, in October 2019, involved a man who crashed into a train while it was making a reverse move.

The organization is resuming operations through an agreement reached last year with the operator of the Goose Lake Railway, a short line in Oregon and California. Goose Lake will provide crew members and operate the trains, while Chehalis-Central maintains the track and rolling stock and manages events

Excursions will be powered by former Puget Sound Shipyard GE 65-ton diesel No. 6, as repairs are continuing on the railroad's steam locomotive, a 2-8-2 built by Baldwin in 1916.

### **Port of Montreal**

The Canadian government will fund a \$16.75 million project to improve rail access and add storage at the Port of Montreal, Transportation Minister Pablo Rodriguez announced Monday, March 25.

The project will include rehabilitation of, and adding a fourth track to, the Pie-IX rail bridge, along with adding a storage area, which Transport Canada said will boost the port's commercial value by more than \$1 billion annually.

### **Dreamstar Lines**

Dreamstar, a private company seeking to start an overnight luxury sleeping car train between downtown San Francisco and Los Angeles Union station says it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Union Pacific 'formalizing the parties negotiations toward a comprehensive final agreement' to begin operations by mid 2025.

The memorandum of understanding follows UP's co-operation with another private operator, Rocky Mountaineer, on the Colorado route that also hosts Amtrak's California Zephyr. Like UP's Coast Line that Dreamstar would utilize, it is not a main freight corridor, and thus has extra capacity and scheduling flexibility to handle a passenger train making a leisurely trip. (TM)

### **B.C. Government to re-open Othello Tunnels**

The Othello Tunnels will undergo construction this spring to repair infrastructure damaged by heavy rain and flooding in November 2021. In all, more than 30 sites throughout the park were damaged, as well as all five of the historic train tunnels, which were built in 1914, considered an engineering feat at the time.



The province says restoration work will begin in two phases, with the park slated to partially reopen in early July.

The first phase will focus on restoring facilities and access from the park entrance and parking lot to the end of the second tunnel.

The trail will be resurfaced and elevated to prevent similar damage from flooding. The rest of the park is projected to open in 2025. The province says bridge foundations and the stability of the canyon slopes above the tunnels were also impacted, increasing the risk of falling rocks. Local access roads and trails were also eroded by flooding. The repair work has an estimated cost of \$4.5 million, and funding mostly provided by Ottawa. (VP)

### **Siemens' New Contract with Metrolinx**

Siemens Mobility has been awarded a contract by Ontario transportation agency Metrolinx to handle track, signal, and right-of-way maintenance for the Central Region of Toronto's passenger rail infrastructure system, Siemens has announced. The company already has a similar contract in the West Region and handles signal and communications services at the Metrolinx Network Operations.

It may surprise you of Siemens' amount of business in Canada. Their involvement in Canadian transit includes infrastructure maintenance in Quebec and Ontario; light rail vehicles for Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta; and electrification and system maintenance for the light rail network in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. The company has also built new trainsets for VIA Rail Canada, is building equipment for Ontario Northland (scheduled for delivery in 2026), and is working on locomotives for Montreal-area commuter operator Exo. (MPR)

## The Sea to Sky Model Train Show

The 2024 show was very successful. This year, we added a number of 'extras'. On both days, thanks to CN, we had 'L'il Obie', (their train on wheels) that ran free full loads around our parking lot. On Saturday, we ran 'sold out' departures in our Woss Lake Speeder over to MP2 for a quick glimpse of our projects underway there. On Sunday, we ran our RDC up CN's main line and then over to our MP2 shops. Also on Sunday, Tom Arnott, our museum manager, escorted 'behind the scenes' tours which were very well attended. We also had our mini rail operational and that was a real challenge so early in the year. Thanks to Aaron and his crew, who spent many hours well before the show weekend, re-building parts of the line after the winter storms and wet cold weather. And this show would not have happened if not for the weeks of work put in by **Gordon Hall**. Many thanks Gordon for your efforts that made this show so successful!



Show set up before doors open



Ticket line up on Saturday morning



CN's L'il Obie



Another photo before doors opened



Line up to the Royal Hudson's cab



Obe's Crew: Jaimeson Kessels & Andrew Joseph



Victoria Model RR club's layout



"Can we go now?"



David King & John Sprung from the FVHRS



Greater Vancouver Garden Railway Club's Display



GVGRC Display #2



Gordon Hall family multi Layouts



Model Aeronautics Assoc. Display



Thomas play Tables



Woss Speeder returning from MP2 shops



The Woss Speeder crew:  
Kirby Reid and Devon Perrons



RC Model 'Hill Climb



The WCRA sales table



Victoria Model Railway Club Layout



Roy Crowston



Andy & Aaron Gruber, Gill Arnott & Karen Schreiber



Local chapter of the Canadian Toy Train Association



Cole Lonsdale, David Walmsley & Tom Arnott



HO Scale model of our Royal Hudson

## Park News: In Memory of Vivian Downing

Sad to announce that one of our long time and cherished volunteers passed away recently. Vivian's husband worked for the PGE and she was a passenger car cleaner in the 1950's before the railway changed to Budd cars. She started volunteering at the Heritage Park in 2000. Among many roles she volunteered to do included school tours where she would dress up in period costume at the Brightbill House and welcome the students. And in later years she became Mrs. Claus (shown here with John Jellis as Santa) from 2016-2019.



## Why do Short Line Railroads have to upgrade to PTC?

With Positive Train Control (PTC) fully implemented on a large majority of North America's Class I railroads, passenger, commuter lines, many short lines and regional railroads have had to comply with the new rules when they operate over another's PTC-equipped lines. This includes smaller railroads that serve customers on another railroad's tracks, have trackage rights to access other parts of a short line or regional railroad's trackage, or have rights over a Class I to interchange cars at a nearby yard or interchange. With certain exceptions, these smaller operators have to upgrade motive power in their fleets with PTC equipment if they operate over another operator's trackage.

Federal regulations in the US require a short line or regional to have an operating PTC locomotive if the movement is greater than 20 miles on a Class I railroad. Short lines that operate over passenger railroad trackage must have PTC regardless of length or quantity of movements.

Equipping locomotives with a PTC system is easily a six-figure investment per locomotive and for a smaller railroad this could potentially be more expensive than a used locomotive itself. In the US, the FRA provided \$2.5 million dollar grant to help smaller railroads upgrade motive power to comply with this.

To save costs, some smaller railroads elect to only equip a few units from their fleet to upgrade with PTC. Others may purchase newer power that has been equipped with PTC. This can save time and money getting locomotives ready for service while spreading out the extra cost of PTC over a longer time since newer locomotives will have a longer service life on the railroad versus equipping existing older power.

## A LOOK BACK in our ARCHIVES

### WCRA News - November/December 1977

#### Association News:

Tuesday, January 31st at 19:30 in the Conference Room and the CNR Station. Entertainment will be a Super 8 Sound movie and slide presentation on 'Great Northern & Milwaukee Electrics – the Past Generation' by Roger Burrows and Bob Gevaert. This is also Nomination Night so please make every effort to attend.

#### BC Rail

The McKenzie commission inquiry into BCR affairs continues. The commission commented on the 'breakneck speed' that BCR awarded contracts to build the Dease Lake extension and cited this as a major reason for the project ending in a multi-million disaster. Most of the contracts were awarded less than a week after they were opened, with the MEL Paving contract being awarded a day after it was opened!

Nelson Hepburn, commission engineer advisor, said that a detailed review of the capabilities, financing and available staff and equipment of contract bidders is considered 'good general practice' but BCR failed to observe this rule when awarding the Dease extension contracts.

The McKenzie commission's interim report and recommendation whether the Fort Nelson line should be abandoned was filed with the BC Cabinet on Dec. 30th. Commission Chairman Mr. Justice Lloyd McKenzie called the issue urgent as BCR engineers had previously testified that unless contract grading projects are completed by fall, it will have to be shelved for one year which will cost the BCR \$4 million in extra losses. However Premier Bennett indicated a final decision will not be made until the spring.

BCR's carloadings in 1977 totalled 152,549, the highest in the railway's 65 year history. This high level was due to a sustained demand for lumber, sufficient availability of rail cars and no work stoppages.

The snowstorm which hit the interior on Jan. 4th delayed southbound passenger RDC #2 twelve hours with its arrival in Squamish at 06:50 on Jan. 5th.

The Cariboo Dayliner is now departing the North Van station an hour earlier (07:00) on Sundays for the duration of the Whistler ski season to better accommodate skiers taking the train. This gives them an extra hour on the slopes before the mountain closes at 15:00.

## CP

CP Rail has applied to the CTC for permission to double-track 5.5 miles of its mainline between Lake Louise and Stephen, BC. The work will cost \$12 million and take almost two years to complete. This will provide an easier upgrade for WB trains decreasing it from 1.3 to 1 percent grade. Work is already in progress on double-tracking 4.5 miles between Revelstoke and Clanwilliam and 11 miles between Tappen and Notch Hill.

CP's mainline 20 miles west of Kamloops was closed for 2 days in mid-January due to a derailment. There were no injuries when 18 cars of a 90 car WB freight left the rails. No cause has been determined yet.

## E&N

The E&N Dayliner, which the CTC had given permission to CP to discontinue as of Jan 31st, has been given a five month reprieve until June 30th. Shortly after CP had re-opened the line between Parksville and Courtenay on Dec. 19th, the CTC decision was made public. The BC Government sent a telegram to the CTC in the first week in January protesting the CTC's decision and Premier Bennett blasted CP for "breaking commitments made in return for massive land grants in the last century to keep passenger service operating in perpetuity". Meanwhile, ridership, which was light the first week in January, rose dramatically when the shutdown was announced. Full loads were reported right through the rest of January. The postponement by the CTC was to allow the BC Government to take the case to the Federal Court of Appeal. BC's case will be based on 'that it is the obligation of CP to maintain service in perpetuity, not VIA Rail'.

Work on the initial stage of replacing the Mountain Creek bridge near Roger's Pass has been completed. The towers, piers and girders are completed on the 600 foot long 136 feet high span. A concrete ballasted deck will be poured this spring and the \$3 million bridge will be open this summer.

## CN

The EB Supercontinental was delayed almost 23 hours by an axle failure on one of the diesel units 19 miles west of Kamloops on Jan. 3rd. The two remaining lead units uncoupled and continued to Kamloops and crossed over to the CP mainline and back down to Basque, 58 miles west of Kamloops and crossed over to CN and coupled to the rear of the train and towed it back over to the CP line to Kamloops. There weren't any steam generator units available at Boston Bar, thus the reroute via the CP line.

CN still hasn't made any decision yet on the future of the now un-used engine shed north of Great Northern Way.

Four cars loaded with sulphur derailed near the Lynn Creek yard on Jan. 16th tying up the yard for 24 hours.

A 33 car CN freight hit a single engine plane (yes, a plane!) that attempted to land on the CN right of way between Edmonton and Calgary. The Cessna 150 landed about 20 minutes before the NB freight to Edmonton. The train rounded the bend and hit the tail section of the plane. The Cessna had flipped after hitting a power line and the pilot and passenger were still in the plane. The train pushed the plane 180 metres down the track before able to stop. Both the pilot and passenger were critically injured.

### **VIA**

Via business car #5 was spotted on the Canadian departing Vancouver Station on Dec. 23rd with the train consisting of 13 coaches with three dome cars powered by two FP-7's and a Geep.

### **Amtrak**

Due to the Fraser River swing bridge being left open due to the continuing dispute between the bridge tendermen and the Federal Government, the Pacific International was cancelled again from Dec. 29th to Jan. 6th. It obviously affected CN, BCHR and BN to reroute over CP tracks via Coquitlam and Mission causing big congestion.

Amtrak is again operating 'Reno Fun Trains' from Oakland, departing on Fridays and returning on Sundays. Two new package tours are a Los Angeles to Tijuana (Agua Caliente race track) 'Gambler's Special' and a 'Mardi Gras Fun' train complete with a Dixieland jazz band on both trains, departing from both Chicago and LA to New Orleans on Feb. 7th in time for Mardi Gras.

### **Royal Hudson**

The upcoming 'Captain Cook Bi-centennial' special exhibit train is tentatively scheduled to leave in early March with #2860 and consist being 'dead-headed' to Thunder Bay, ON. The train will then make scheduled stops in Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City and then will cross the border to Chicago, Lansing, Milwaukee and Minneapolis before crossing the border to Canada again with stops in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Banff and a few BC interior towns on the way home.

The tri-sponsored 'Royal Hudson Night' held Jan. 24th at the Planetarium was a huge success. The auditorium was packed with over 50 people turned away! Both 16 mm and 8 mm movies and slides were shown together with a short talk by Bob Swanson (Mr. 'Royal Hudson') and Vic Downward (BC Government's

Department of Tourism). Special thanks to Bob Gevaert who spent many hours assisting Norris Adams setting up this show.

### **ETC.Items**

CZ shay #1, which worked the Elk Falls pulp mill on Vancouver Island as late as 1974 and was subsequently donated to the National Museum of Canada and is presently undergoing a rebuild for service.

### **A Look Back (our F unit #6520)**

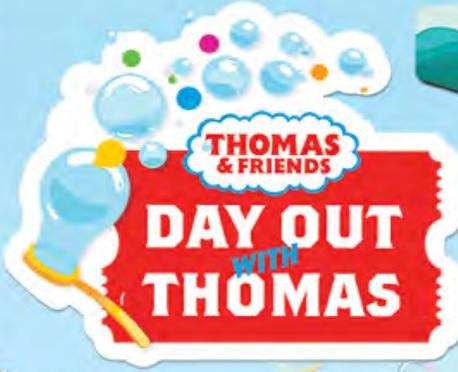
This was posted on trainorders.com on March 24th taken in May, 1998 when the Waterloo-St. Jacobs ran frequent excursions with their two ex CN FP9au's painted in the historic 'gold & green' paint scheme. We were able to acquire both F units (#6520 & #6508) and three of their coaches about 15 years ago. We sold #6508 to Ontario Southland Railway to pay for the transportation costs out west.



Photo Credit: Bill Kalkman



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Note: Don't forget for WCRA members to keep track of your volunteer hours for 2024 and send to [donna@wcra.org](mailto:donna@wcra.org). Deadline is January 31st, 2025.

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**Photo: ex CNR Hope Station Moved  
to New Location in Hope**



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