

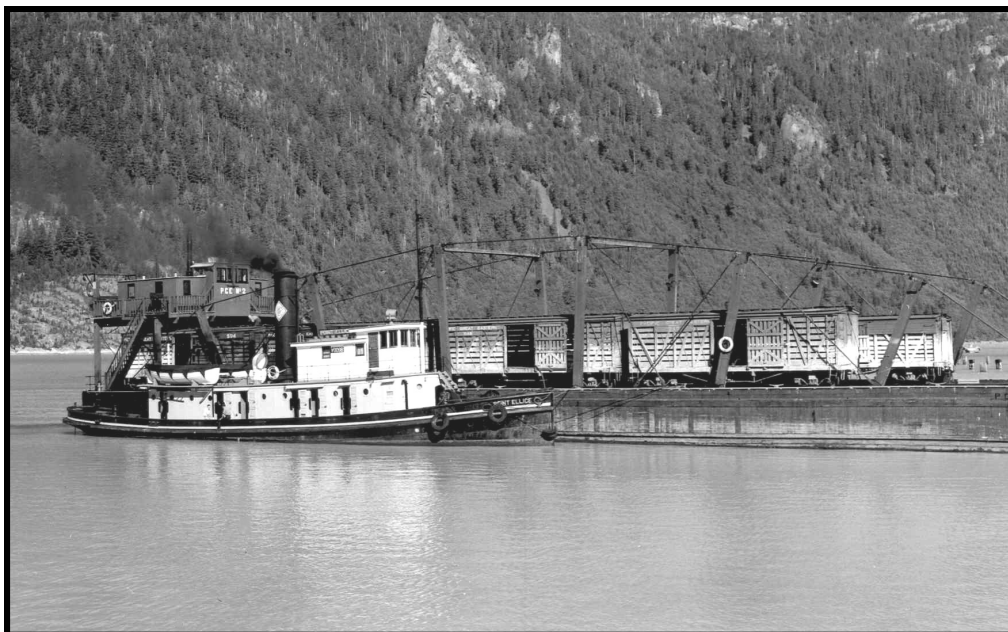
# THE SANDHOUSE

JOURNAL OF THE C.R.H.A. PACIFIC COAST DIVISION

Vol. 31, No. 1, Issue 121

ISSN 18188-1755

Spring 2006



## *In This Issue*

- ◆ Shipping Livestock by Rail in B.C.
- ◆ The Work of an Agent/Operator
- ◆ New Life for the E&N
- ◆ Canada Line Work Advances



# THE SANDHOUSE

THIS JOURNAL IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

CANADIAN RAILROAD  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

PACIFIC COAST DIVISION

P.O. Box 1006, Station A, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2P1



## Table of Contents

To Our Readers	Page 3	Short Hauls	Page 32
Dates to Remember	Page 3	Canadian National	Page 32
Division News	Page 4	Canadian Pacific	Page 36
Years Ago in <b>THE SANDHOUSE</b>	Page 5	BNSF	Page 37
Moving Livestock by Rail: an Inquiry into an Extinct Traffic	Page 6	VIA	Page 38
		Rocky Mountaineer	Page 38
		Other Passenger	Page 41
Agent/Operators Linked the Railway to the Public	Page 23	Rail Industry	Page 41
		Rail Education	Page 42
New Life Dawns for the E&N as Foundation Takes Over	Page 28	TransLink	Page 42
		Port News	Page 43
Canada Line Work Advances on Many Fronts	Page 30	Preservation	Page 44

**Press Date — April 29, 2006**

**Front cover:** *In 1947, PGE tugboat "Point Ellice" arrives at Squamish with PGE barge No. 2, carrying a load of empty stock cars en route to the railheads for livestock shipments in the Cariboo region of British Columbia. (Image # I-29042 Used by Permission of British Columbia Archives)*

**Back cover:** *At Palmer, just outside Victoria on CPR's Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway, a stock car is switched on the fly into a track serving a small meat-packing firm, in February 1971. CP 278187 was converted into a stock car in 1966 from a 1936-built steel boxcar. (Photo by Robert D. Turner)*

# To Our Readers

With this issue, *The Sandhouse* embarks on its 31st year of publication. It was 30 years ago, in April 1976, that the first edition rolled off the mimeograph machine, under the editorship of Mike Green.

It was a simple sheet, consisting of five typed legal-sized pages stapled to a cover of coloured stock that bore the only illustration — a large line drawing of a steam-era sandhouse. The very same artwork can be seen in miniature in the top left-hand corner of the opposite page.

Mike was to soldier on as editor through Issue 36, while two others — first Scott Austin and then John Picur — handled the editorship over the next few years. Then Mike was back in the saddle for Issues 52 through 70.

With Issue 71, Lorne Nicklason assumed the reins. This period saw *The Sandhouse* benefit from electronic desktop publishing, which refreshed the design and modernized the format. Lorne stayed at the helm through to Issue 100, which marked a first with its use of colour photography on the covers.

I took on the mantle of Managing Editor with Issue 101, with Bill White serving as Design and

Production Editor to handle the layout tasks.

Using modern scanning technology, Bill brought a new standard of photo quality to the pages of *The Sandhouse*, which truly allowed pictures to help tell the story.

Bill had to step aside for health reasons after five issues, and was succeeded by Burc Cander, who has looked after design up to Issue 120.

From Burc, I have picked up enough basic skills with our publishing software to merge both roles, and will now wear the hat of Editor, starting with this edition. Thanks, Burc, for your efforts with the past 15 issues.

As I carry the editorial torch forward, I hope that others will one day emerge to continue the tradition that started 30 years ago. Long live *The Sandhouse*!

Ian Smith  
Editor

## Dates to Remember

**May 18** — PCD Meeting, Place des Arts, Coquitlam. 19:00 (Entertainment: The West Coast Railway Heritage Park — Past, Present and Future, presentation by Don Evans)

**May 21** — Locomotive 374 Anniversary Celebration, Roundhouse Pavilion, Vancouver, 12:00

**June 15** — PCD Meeting, Place des Arts, Coquitlam, 19:00. (Entertainment TBA)

**July 8-9** — Fair in the Square, Heritage Square, Coquitlam, 11:00-16:00

# Division News

As 2006 unfolds, PCD members have been treated to some interesting entertainment at monthly meetings. On February 16, members gathered for a showing of slides taken over the years by the late Mike Green, covering a range of subjects, including many views of CPR scenes.

That was followed by a screening on March 16 of slides by member Bill Johnston, who took us back to his days as an civil engineering student, working on various construction projects on Canadian National in the western provinces.

After the formal Annual General Meeting on April 20, President Doug Battrum showed slides covering many years of PGE and British Columbia Railway operations, both passenger and freight.

At the AGM itself, members elected the 2006/07 Board of Directors, by acclamation. Returning to the Board are President Doug Battrum, Vice-President Chris Wasney, Treasurer Alan Shaw and Secretary Ian Smith. Joining the Board as Directors-at-Large are Burc Cander and Ron Keillor. It is heartening that Burc and Ron have stepped forward to help the Division, but there will have to be similar commitments by other members in the years ahead if PCD is to continue for the longer term.

During the AGM, it was announced that Don Evans, Executive Director of the West Coast Railway Association, has been selected as the recipient of the 2006 Norris Adams Memorial Award, in recognition of his steadfast efforts over many years in creating, developing and promoting the West Coast Railway Heritage Park. Don will accept the award at our May 18 meeting, and will give a presentation on the Park — past, present and future.

Aside from meetings, PCD has been active in various local events.

On March 12, Doug Battrum, Alan Shaw and Ian Smith manned PCD's table at the annual Western Rails show at the Cameron Centre in Burnaby. Doug and Ian are also helping the Port Coquitlam Heritage Society to stage a railway-oriented presentation at the Wilson Centre on May 13, as PoCo celebrates its anniversary.

Before the next issue of *The Sandhouse* appears, Heritage Square will have held its annual Fair in the Square community event, on the weekend of July 8-9. This occasion always calls for full participation by PCD, with Fraser Mills Museum and our CP Rail caboose on public display. Please consider helping out on either day, and contact Doug Battrum if you are willing to do so.

In the meantime, take note that the Locomotive 374 anniversary celebrations will be held on Sunday, May 21, at the Roundhouse pavilion in Vancouver. Official ceremonies start at 12:00, featuring speeches of commemoration, entertainment and cake and coffee.

# YEARS AGO IN THE SANDHOUSE

## **30 Years Ago** (April 1976 issue)

- The first issue of *The Sandhouse* is published.

## **25 Years Ago** (April 1981 issue)

- Northern Alberta Railways becomes CN's Peace River Division.

## **20 Years Ago** (April 1986 issue)

- Engine 374 is moved on to the turntable at the Expo 86 site on Feb. 12.
- A head-on collision near Hinton, Alta., kills 23 people.

## **15 Years Ago** (March 1991 issue)

- CP Rail tests three General Electric C40-8W locomotives from Union Pacific.

## **10 Years Ago** (March 1996 issue)

- CP begins the move of its headquarters from Montreal to Calgary.
- E&N Railfreight is the new name for CP's Vancouver Island operation.
- VIA Rail's Skeena will adopt a two-day schedule, stopping overnight in Prince George.

## **5 Years Ago** (March 2001 issue)

- The elevated guideway for SkyTrain's Millennium Line is completed.
- BC Rail promotes its new Whistler Northwind luxury tourist train.
- The rebuilt boiler for CPR Hudson 2816 is delivered by rail from Portland.
- Canadian Pacific Ltd. plans to spin off its five divisions into separate public companies.

# Moving Livestock by Rail: An Inquiry into an Extinct Traffic

by David Ll. Davies

*Author's Introduction: Kamloops considers itself the heartbeat of British Columbia's beef-raising industry and since I have resided there for 30 years and am fascinated by railway history, it was only natural that at some point livestock and trains would become a matter for study. This is an attempt to summarize what is known in 2006 before it becomes further eroded by time.*

*Published sources are minimal, so I have collected scores of fragmentary clues and then tried to connect the dots. The results are probably fairly reliable but there will certainly be errors and unknown gaps -- so reader beware! And this is the moment to thank the many people who over a 15-year period supplied information, pointers and anecdotes, making this article a possibility.*

To begin, "Man and his Meat" needs to be put into context and its relationship to railways defined. Humans are partly carnivorous and to satisfy these instincts, today's 32 million Canadians require the annual slaughter of four million cattle, 23 million hogs, half a million sheep and 600 million chickens. This stupendous national appetite requires the services of three interlocking industries -- ranching, meat processing and food retailing.

It is an enormous activity, but two centuries ago when there were no railways, things were much simpler. Livestock were driven to the point of consumption such as a house, village/town butchery or encampment. There the animal was slaughtered and dressed. Some of it was eaten immediately, while the remainder was preserved by salting or other processes. About 60% of the carcase was edible and every effort was made to use other parts, such as hides for conversion to leather.

The arrival of railways caused shifts and increases in the population, with many people moving from a rural existence to an urban life. That was certainly the case in B.C. Vancouver

was created by the arrival of the railway and is still growing. This meant that the railways had an immediate role to play in helping to feed these newly created urban centres. For B.C., this meant delivering livestock to Vancouver and New Westminster. So this is where our story begins.

The first recorded shipment of livestock by rail in B.C. was in February 1884, when a wealthy Interior rancher sent 83 beef steers in five make-shift cars from Yale to Port Moody on Onderdonk's "under construction" segment of the CPR.

When Spences Bridge became head-of-steel, the same rancher sent more cattle to the coast. Small-time ranchers were unable to follow his lead because of the cost, and so they still drove their cattle to Hope via the Coquihalla Pass and there had them loaded on a steamer for New Westminster.

When the CPR opened its transcontinental line in mid-1886, it immediately searched for any kind of freight to carry, and this included livestock.

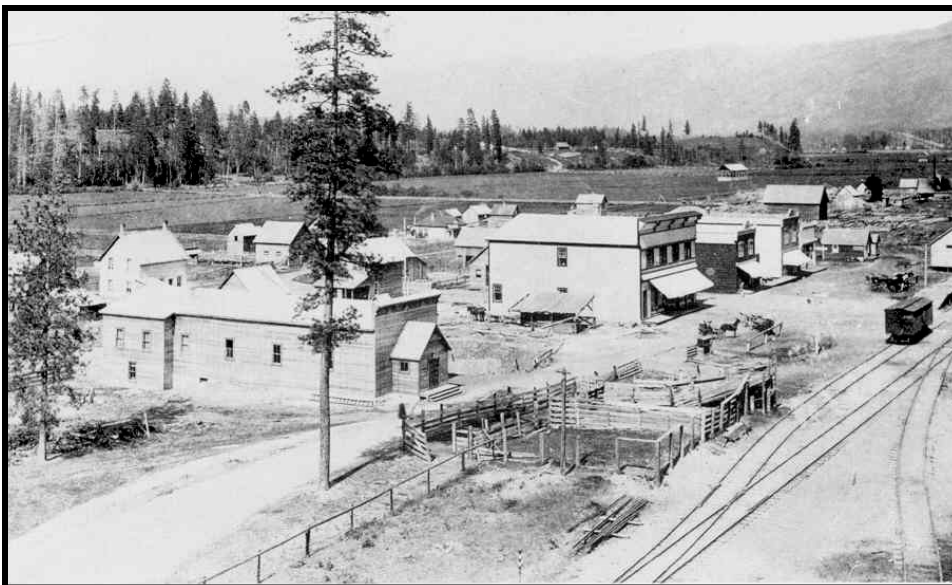
It is thought that the Douglas Lake Ranch, 25 miles east of Merritt, sent its first shipment of steers to Vancouver in 1887, which began with a three-day drive to Kamloops, where they were loaded on to rail cars. An incoming delivery by rail to this ranch is documented in 1888, when four stud Clydesdale stallions were purchased in Scotland to start a horse-ranching operation.

We read in 1893 that a Mr. Pat Burns arrived in Kamloops from Calgary, with 10 carloads of southern Alberta cattle and a mixed car of sheep and hogs, so as to create more herds in the region. This 37-year-old livestock dealer was not widely known then, but within 30 years he had created one of the largest meat-packing businesses in the world.

A respected Interior rancher named Greaves estimated in 1890 that there were about 90,000 beef cattle in the province and that 25,000 were

needed annually to feed the 100,000 inhabitants; these ratios made the province self-sufficient. As we slip into the 20th century, it was found that the B.C. ranching industry could not keep pace with the influx of people (populations of 393,000 in 1911, 694,000 in 1931 and over a million in 1951) and so the importation of slaughter livestock from Alberta began. From about 1910 onward, the ratio between home-grown B.C. beef and Prairie imports stood fairly consistently at about 40% versus 60%.

By 1970, when the majority of cattle shipments by rail had ceased in B.C., a rough estimate is that the human population of 2.2 million needed 280,000-300,000 head per year to sustain itself. This figure must be treated with reserve, but has been included to show the growing magnitude of livestock transportation. At the same time, it must be remembered that as the 20th century advanced, the consumption of meat per person slowly declined. The meagre diet and heavy



*This 1898 scene at Armstrong, B.C., with stock pens in the foreground, shows an example of an early-day railway stockyard on CPR's Okanagan branchline. (Vernon Museum photograph, Pioneer Historical Postcards, Kelowna, card WP 138)*

manual labour of 1910 placed emphasis on meat, but the use of retail and household refrigeration in the 1960s had extended food variety to levels previously unknown, thus displacing meat somewhat.

Turning now to the nub of the subject, what livestock was carried by rail and from where to where?

The vast majority were two-year-old beef steers, with a smaller quantity of swine, and a mere fraction of lambs. Statistical ratios seem hard to come by, but a CNR national report for 1945 showed *tonnage* percentages as follows: cattle -- 58%, hogs -- 32%, horses -- 6%, sheep -- 4%.

Between 1886 and 1900, the CPR mainline was the only route corridor for this livestock traffic but, with the opening of CPR's Crows Nest Pass line in 1900 to Nelson, Pat Burns saw to it that Alberta stock was shipped live by rail to his butcheries and retail stores in Fernie, Moyie, Kaslo and Nelson. It should be remembered that in 1911, Nelson and Fernie were ranked as the fifth and sixth largest cities in B.C. With the extension of the line west to Midway, Burns pushed his services westward to all the mining and smelting towns, such as Rossland, Trail, Grand Forks, Phoenix and Greenwood.

In 1907, the CPR built a south-easterly branch-line of 46 miles from its mainline at Spences Bridge that abruptly stopped in the middle of nowhere, but conveniently in cattle country. This temporary terminal was called Nicola, and was close to many cattle ranches, including the famed Douglas Lake Ranch, which became about the biggest ranch in the province. As a result, the Nicola railhead became the prime site for loading cattle in B.C. and held this prominence until its closure in 1964.

The opening of the Canadian Northern Railway between Edmonton and Vancouver in 1915 created a new outlet for the ever-growing number of cattle ranchers in northern Alberta. However,

the longer journey of 120 extra miles between the two terminals, compared to CPR's run between Calgary and Vancouver, was to its disadvantage, and it took time to work up traffic.

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway's line between Prince George and Prince Rupert ran through virgin country, but over time ranching was established at small centres such as Smithers, Burns Lake, Vanderhoof and Prince George. Loaded cattle from these points went east to Edmonton for slaughter, not to Vancouver.

Finally, in 1923, the Province's own line, the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, reached Quesnel, some 350 miles north of its tidewater terminal at Squamish. This penetration was very much welcomed by the ranchers of Clinton, Williams Lake, the Chilcotin district and Quesnel. They could claim to be descendents of B.C.'s pioneer ranchers, who had met the needs of travellers on the Cariboo wagon road to Barkerville to work gold claims in the 1860s. With the gold rush over, things became tough because the ranchers could only sell their stock by very long droves to the CPR at Ashcroft. That caused the animals to lose weight and "condition" and thus net a poorer selling price.

Though this new railway was a useful artery, it came with a physical disadvantage, especially to ranchers. The freight connection between Squamish and Vancouver was by the company's rail barge and tug (see cover photo), which in the most immediate and favourable conditions would take 6-7 hours to cover the 40-mile gap. Loading could not take place at tidal extremes, so the wait and the trip could extend to some 12-14 hours. In rough weather, it is said, the cattle got seasick, which made for difficult unloading and poorer selling condition.

This problem was only resolved by the extension of the line from Squamish to North Vancouver in 1956, but by that time less than 20 years of livestock hauling remained. As historians, we are grateful that PGE was under provin-



cial jurisdiction because annual reports have come down to us that disclose a few statistics about its livestock traffic. With the federally supervised CPR and CNR, it is impossible to isolate B.C. statistics from the national figures.

Finally, in 1931, the ranchers of the Peace River country were able to ship out their hogs and steers by rail, when Northern Alberta Railways reached Dawson Creek. Their animals were carried 490 rail miles to Edmonton. In its early days, NAR placed great emphasis on livestock traffic and must have been the only railway in Canada that owned 30 livestock cars while leasing all its other freight vehicles.

It appears the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway and the CNR on Vancouver Island carried very little livestock. The Island has relatively little agricultural land and so it was used for dairy farming and not raising beef. The author does have one E&N waybill dated 23/9/25 and ad-

dressed to Western Fuel [Coal] Corporation, Nanaimo, for carrying 12 mules and one horse from Victoria, weight 10 tons, for a charge of \$48. The photo on the back cover shows a 1971 delivery of a single car of stock to a small meat-packing plant on the outskirts of Victoria.

Review articles of this kind usually lack precise quantitative dimensions, but by good fortune we have a 1949 snapshot of cattle shipments. In 1950, a Thomas R. Weir produced what is believed to be a university thesis, titled "Ranching in the Southern Interior Plateau of B.C.", which was published in Ottawa in 1953 by the Department of Mines & Technical Surveys (see Sources, page 22). Weir's survey covered the areas that produced two-thirds of all beef cattle in the province, so it is representative of the whole.

Weir was able to list the number of steers loaded



*Wooden stock car PGE 990572 is seen at North Vancouver, B.C., in 1972, near the very end of livestock shipments by rail on that line. PGE shipped only 83 cars of livestock that year.*  
(Photo by Robert D. Turner)

by rail, totalling 40,711 head, dividing the territory into two parts, as follows.

From the Cariboo-Chilcotin region, shipments by PGE consisted of 9,331 head loaded at Williams Lake, 2,623 at Chasm, 1,941 at Clinton, and 4,698 at other points, for a total of 18,593.

From the Thompson-Nicola region, shipments by CPR and CNR consisted of 8,194 head loaded at Nicola, 5,495 at Kamloops, 2,464 at Ashcroft, and 5,965 at other points, for a total of 22,118.

These traffic flows are depicted in the map on the opposite page.

If we take Weir's total of 18,593 stock carried by the PGE in 1949, and divide by 20 or 25 head placed in each car, we get a range of 743 to 929 stock car loadings for the year. This is at variance with PGE's own figures of 7,809 animals carried in 617 carloads, which produces an unrealistic low count of 12.6 animals per car, thus highlighting the age-old problem of the reliability of statistics; here the preference is for Weir's figures.

It will be noted that Williams Lake eclipsed Nicola in the number of head shipped. For several reasons, there are annual fluctuations in the number of cattle produced in a given area, so it is not known if the 1949 dominance of Williams Lake was unusual or not. Nicola was the long-term winner as it had a 16-year head-start. Since Chasm is an insignificant place from a railway perspective, it is interesting to see its fourth place position in the figures above. This was because it was the nearest railway point to several big ranches that lay between it and the Fraser River and beyond, including the huge Gang Ranch.

Weir noted that the 41,000 head quoted above represented 68% of all rail shipments made *within* the province in 1949, thus allowing us to compute a grand total of 60,000 head for all of

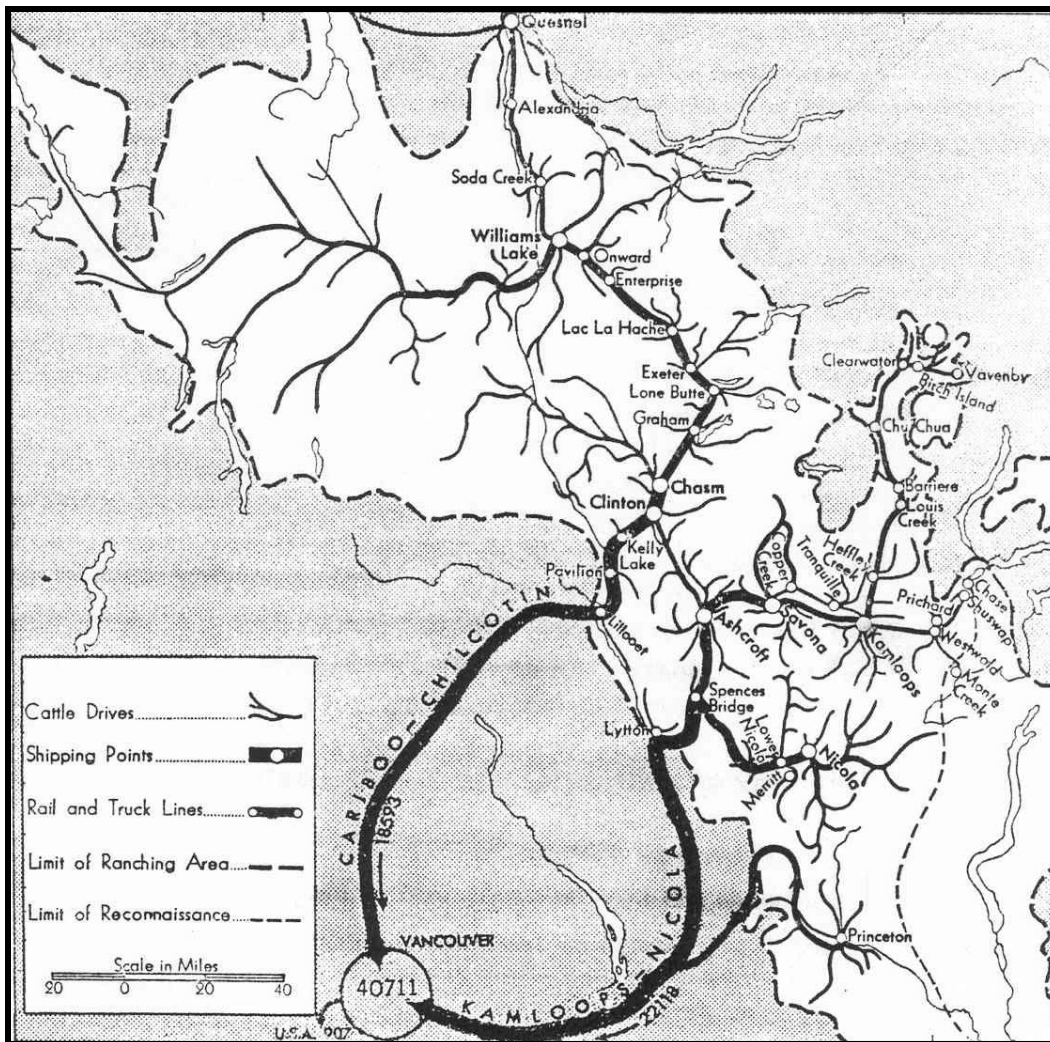
B.C. He did not use the term "rail shipments", but at that time rail was the only way to get livestock to Vancouver.

He also mentioned that livestock went to one of six meat-packers in the Greater Vancouver area for slaughter and processing. This author has only been able to identify three of them: Burns Meats Ltd. on CPR the foreshore of Burrard Inlet and about 1.5 miles east of the CPR terminal; Swift Canadian Ltd. at Sapperton, east of New Westminster, which was serviced by CNR and CPR; and Pacific Meat Co. Ltd. at Marpole on the North Arm of the Fraser River, serviced by B.C. Electric Railway. PGE could deliver to any of these packers but its most direct route was to Burns, which was likely favoured.

It will be noted that all the above plants were sited close to free water, which was needed in copious amounts to keep the processes sanitary.

We now turn to the hardware -- the stock cars themselves -- and how it was utilized. Few of these cars started life as brand new in that configuration, excepting those owned by CPR prior to 1913. Because stock cars were under-used at 12 to 20 weeks per year, it was inevitable that they were hand-me-downs. All railways took their obsolescent wooden boxcars and made them into stock cars by removing every other side plank, fitting slatted doors, and perhaps updating the brake-gear.

The most popular sized boxcars for conversion were those of 36-ft. internal length and about 8 ft. high and wide internally. Side-sliding central doors were either 5-ft. or 6-ft. wide, depending upon their boxcar origins. These cars proved very serviceable, as many remained in traffic until the mandatory retirement age of 50 years was reached. In the final two or three decades of livestock haulage, CPR and CNR updated their fleets by converting some 40-ft. internal length steel boxcars and withdrawing many of their old wooden stock cars.



*This map from a monograph by Thomas R. Weir depicts the relative flows of livestock traffic on the different railway routes of B.C. in 1949. It can be seen that the flow of 18,593 cars on the PGE mainline south of Lillooet is not much less than the combined traffic of 22,118 cars on CPR and CNR through the Fraser canyon. The various tentacles extending from the railway lines indicate the routes of the numerous cattle drives that brought stock to the various railheads.*

*(from Thomas R. Weir, *Ranching in the Southern Interior Plateau of British Columbia*, Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1955)*

Most stock cars carried mature cattle on a single deck, but an unknown minority were fitted with a second deck to carry calves, hogs or sheep, although headroom was minimal. Some of these "two-deckers" were permanently fitted, while others had removable decks to suit the traffic of the moment.

Stock cars were always very visible because the lower sides were painted white and were repeatedly stained with a white quick-lime wash, used as a disinfectant. They represented about 5% of all freight cars in Canada when at their peak of usage, but slowly fell to 2%-3% in later years.

National inventory levels at selected dates were as follows: 1912 -- 6,322 cars; 1921 -- 12,585 (peak); 1933 -- 8,522; 1945 -- 6,437 (CNR owned 3,037 of these); and 1957 -- 5,141. Decline became rapid in the 1960s and in 1970 the total stood at 2,827 cars.

In the 1960s, CPR both diminished and upgraded its aging stock car fleet by withdrawing its all-wood cars and replacing some of them with WWII steel boxcar conversions of 44- and 50-ft. internal length and 10-ft. headroom. The steel cars proved less durable than the wooden ones, as it was later discovered that the animals' urine attacked the metal and weakened the framing (a CPR steel stock car is depicted on the back cover). By 1979, CPR possessed only 953 stock cars.

PGE started out with five newly built stock cars in 1914, created another 30 by converting boxcars at Squamish in 1918/9 and added about another 40 by 1955, making a theoretical total of nearly 80 cars over time. They were numbered in the 500-599 series; there were rapid withdrawals in the 1970s, cars either being scrapped or downgraded to non-revenue work service.

Livestock were loaded so that they stood comfortably against one another for support against the uneven movement of the train. Just like humans, animals come in different sizes according

to their ages, so one could have different loading figures for different sized cars; this explains the minor differences encountered in written and oral references.

The following details relate to cars with an internal length of 36 ft. Mature three-to-five-year-old steers were likely loaded 20 to a car, but two-year-olds were usually fitted 25-26 per car. Calves and yearlings could be loaded into a double deck car at 30-35 per deck, while 250-lb. hogs could go 40 to a deck. Lambs always went double-decked if such a car was available, at the rate of 100 per deck.

Typical car loading weights were 11 tons for cattle on a single deck, and 11 and 8 tons, respectively, for hogs and lambs on a double deck. It took about 20 minutes to load cattle on a single-decker and 30 minutes for calves, hogs and sheep on a double-decker, but five to 10 minutes could be shaved off these times when in a rush.

Horns were a real problem at the beginning of the 20th century, making car loading difficult and causing injuries to animals that sometimes led to death. At the very least, it could deface hides which reduced their value as future leather. Sometime after WWI, the Dominion Government introduced a levy of \$1 per head (perhaps \$25 at today's rate) on ranchers who loaded cattle with horns. The practice of dehorning at birth slowly took hold and the problem was eliminated.

Stock trains were subject to special rules that made their handling somewhat unique. In the United States, a federal law dating back to 1873 required that livestock not be confined in a car for more than 28 hours. After that period, stock had to be "grounded" for food, water and rest for four to five hours. For the first 30 years, this law was rather loosely applied.

Canada introduced similar regulations, but because of the country's more moderate climate, "grounding" was not required until 36 hours had

passed, and the minimum rest period was set at four hours. These rules were followed because volunteer SPCA inspectors randomly monitored conditions at most major rail centres.

Unit stock trains were classified by all Canadian railways as having a priority immediately below passenger trains, so that when they met on-coming freights they held the mainline and did not stop.

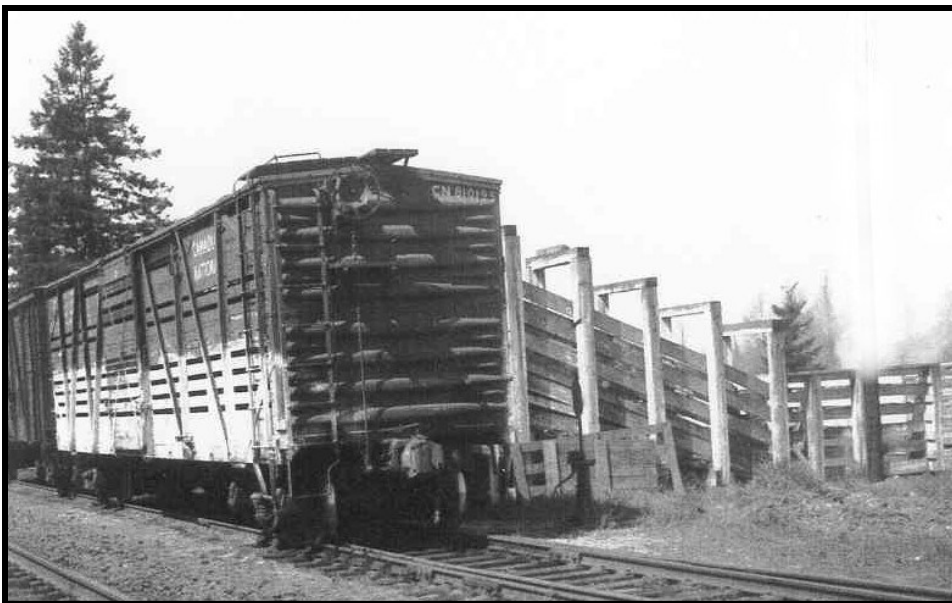
CPR could run a stock train from Calgary to Vancouver in about 30 hours, unless track blockages caused delays, requiring groundings to be made, usually at Kamloops.

When the CNR started running a weekly stock train between Edmonton and Vancouver, it found it was incapable of making the trip within

36 hours, so a mandatory grounding stop of five hours was inserted at Kamloops Junction. A variety of improvements after WWII ensured that the trip could be safely made in 30 hours or less, thus eliminating the grounding.

These unit stock trains played a major and critical role in that they supplied Vancouver with three-quarters of its "live" meat. They were usually about 30 cars long and would carry 600-750 head. A caption to a July 1949 photo of a CPR stock train running beside Shuswap Lake noted the number of cars at precisely 33.

CPR launched a weekly train before WWI that ran at weekends until the start of WWII, when it was converted to twice-weekly. In 1948, it was upgraded to daily "if required". CNR introduced a "weekender" at a date unknown, with a "mid-



*CNR stock car 810195 is seen spotted at a two-tier loading dock at Fort Langley, B.C., in April 1971. This was originally a boxcar of 40-ft. internal length, built in 1931 and converted in 1965. In the 1970s and 1980s, the railways dedicated many of their cars to specific customers; this car was marked "Return to Eckville", which is on CNR trackage in central Alberta.*

*(Photo by David Ll. Davies)*

weaker" added during or after WWII. Curiously, withdrawal dates of these important trains have escaped notice, but most probably happened between 1964 and 1968.

The movement of stock wholly within B.C. had an entirely different character and was more conspicuous because it was usually done in daylight hours at a wide variety of locations. Over 70 stations in B.C. (see table on page 20) have been identified as having stock corrals and loading platforms. From these points, at random months excepting high winter, livestock would be loaded in one or up to possibly six cars, for their Vancouver destination.

Loaded stock cars were picked up from a siding or spur by a passing freight with a minimum of delay, and were placed at the head-end of the train. This positioning would be a natural consequence of such switching, but it had the added advantage of producing less sway for the stock cars.

Such trains would be listed as a "fast freight", but on the byways of railways within B.C. this was sometimes an elastic term, so it comes as no surprise that, in the earlier days of the Kettle Valley Railway and the PGE, one to three stockcars could be seen at the front of a passenger train to ensure speedy passage (see photo, opposite page). Summertime passengers on the PGE complained about the odours continuously wafting back into the coaches, and rated sheep smells more offensive than cattle smells!

The 36-hour rule also applied to these loaded stock cars, but in practice almost all transits were made in fewer hours. The PGE could run from Quesnel to Squamish in favourable circumstances in some 20 hours, and even if waiting and sea passage time to Vancouver consumed another 12 hours, the company was still within the prescribed 36 hours. For any abnormalities, there was a Squamish stockyard at old Mile 2.95 with pens, a hay shed, and a dedicated car cleaning and disinfecting area.

It should be mentioned that the predecessor of Agriculture Canada applied strict rules as to how and where cars were cleaned after use, to ensure that any possible disease was contained and not spread around the railway system. Empty clean cars being prepared for their next run had sand or sawdust and straw spread on the floors.

Railways stood well clear of actually handling livestock, declaring that this was the responsibility of the shipper. Wary of being sprayed with urine, train crews particularly disliked having to make running adjustments under the cars. Railways provided the small whitewashed stock yards at country stations and the larger grounding facilities at strategic points, but that was the extent of their involvement in loading and unloading.

Ranchers and stockmen loaded the cars and usually a Brands Inspector checked each animal to see that it belonged to the shipper. Not many small stations had a weigh-scale, so it was more usual for the packing house to do the weighing, to which 3% was added to compensate for weight lost in transit.

In the last part of the 19th century in North America, there had grown a tradition of allowing one stockman to manage up to two stock cars, giving him free travel en route. This also became the policy with CPR, CNR and PGE, except that CNR said a stockman must pay half the return fare since he was occupying a revenue seat in a passenger train!

Stockmen usually travelled in the caboose and always checked their livestock cars at sub-divisional points when locomotives and crews were being switched, and sometimes more frequently if there had been irregular stops. Their prime job was to ensure that there were no "downers". This involved an animal that had lost its footing, or become ill, lying down on the deck and being trampled on. The stockman would attempt to get it to its feet and nurse it back to normality in a corner. In the rare case of

death, the animal would be removed from the car to prevent further pile-ups.

Up to 1920, almost all stockcars were fitted with a trap door or "man hole" at a high level at one end only, to allow stockmen to enter cars without having to open the central loading door, but this facility started to taper off in the 1920s and later was only seen in less than a third of the cars.

With the longer travelling distances in the United States, it was common to attach a stockmen's

coach to the rear of stock trains to allow stockmen to sit, sleep rough, and prepare food. Such coaches were always ones that were no longer fit for paying passengers. It may come as a surprise to learn that CNR had such a coach on its stock trains that ran between Edmonton and Vancouver. It was an old Colonist coach and certainly ran in the 1930s, 1940s and maybe the 1950s, and was marshalled between the last stock car and the caboose.

As one stockman who travelled in it recalled: "It was used by the many so-called stockmen and



*On some routes, faster transit of stock cars could be achieved by adding them to passenger trains. Here an empty car is seen on a northbound train at Squamish, B.C., on May 15, 1949, marshalled directly behind PGE 2-8-2 locomotive No. 162, the penultimate steam engine built for that railway (A tree behind the locomotive has been edited out of the photo to give a better view of its outline). Handling of stock cars in such trains produced malodorous results for passengers with the windows open in summer.*

*(Patterson-George photograph, Patrick O. Hind collection)*

others to get a free trip to Vancouver. This got to be a racket. Almost anyone with a little 'pull' could get his name put on a waybill as caretaker of a carload of cattle or hogs. A few railroaders with passes also used it."

After its westward trip, this coach was dead-headed back to Edmonton the next day. NAR put three stockmen's coaches into service between 1942 and 1944 to work the branches radiating northward out of Edmonton, and these would have been seen at the terminal at Dawson Creek.

Having no fur to protect them from cold and heat, hogs had to be treated slightly differently from cattle and sheep. In winter, the open slats had to be covered with felt-paper or sacking, and in hot weather gunny sacks of sawdust were hung from the ceilings and sprayed periodically with cold water, which would drip on to the animals to cool them down.

Horses also featured as livestock traffic from 1886 until the mid-1930s, when "motors" took the lead. In the Interior there used to be many horse ranches, which produced all the horses needed for transportation and agriculture. Roughly broken-in horses were sent by rail from Nicola or Kamloops to auctions in the Prairies or to finishing schools in Richmond and Ladner, where they were trained to pull vehicles such as brewers' drays, steam fire engines or laundry vans.

Instead of being packed tightly, horses were shipped eight to a car, which might be fitted with temporary dividers. Many horses were shipped to Halifax for the Western Front for the four years of WWI. Racehorses and valuable breeding stock were carried in a pampered state in what looked like baggage cars, which were attached to passenger trains.

It was a firm policy that railways hauled only their own stock-filled cars on their own trackage and only interchanged them for short distances

at the destination -- if needed.

Fifty years after a stock car's original construction as a boxcar, it would be withdrawn from service and either scrapped or reduced to work service. Utilization of stock cars was poor, so the railways made every effort to find loads for them when they were standing or moving empty. In days when coal was an industrial and domestic necessity, cars were boarded to a height of 4 ft. and then loaded with loose coal for specific customers. Stock cars were also used for lumber, ties, bagged fertilizer, petroleum drums and, in the summer, for fruit such as apples, tomatoes and melons.

All this activity suddenly came to an end -- unthinkable in 1950, apparent in 1960, and largely over by 1970. It was all about transportation and the railways were largely excluded.

The meat processing industry in Western Canada had come to the conclusion that exporting ever-increasing numbers of livestock to Vancouver did not make sense, what with the chilling and refrigeration technologies then available. So the packers built new plants in cattle country in Alberta, and shipped packaged meat in all directions by truck and intermodal containers.

Part of this change in direction was made possible by the improved highways network of the 1960s, including the new Trans-Canada Highway through the Rockies. Within B.C., droving became a thing of the past and cattle were now moved swiftly from ranches to Alberta stockyards at lower cost and less stress.

A sign of the times was the closure in 1964 of Nicola, which went out with a bang in the form of a large export order. The Chilean government purchased 527 breeding cattle from Douglas Lake Ranch and these went in 23 stock cars to Vancouver docks to be loaded on a freighter for Chile.

It has been said that in the very early days of the



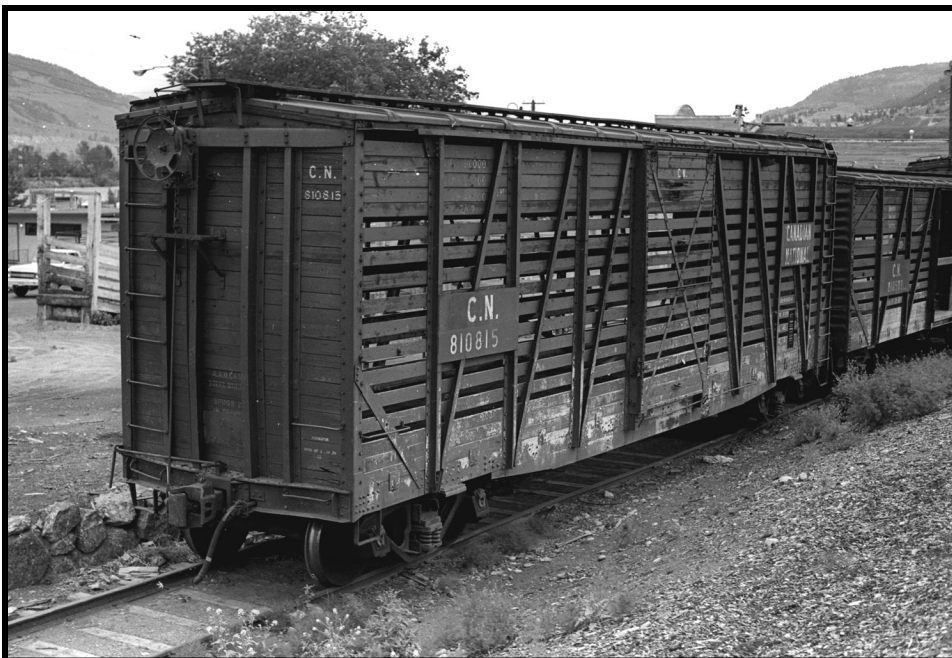
PGE, livestock traffic provided a significant proportion of freight revenues and that the company owned almost as many stock cars as it did boxcars. By 1949, however, annual stock loadings represented only 8% of all car loadings, and by 1960 accounted for only 1.4%, which amounted to 718 cars, incidentally the peak of such traffic. The last stock car movement on the PGE/BCR, possibly ex-Graham, occurred in November 1976.

A swan song is supposedly sung by that bird just before it dies, and in Canada railways had their swan song when it came to livestock traffic. There may have been government inducements to kick-start a cattle trade between Western Canada and Ontario in the 1970s and early 1980s. The concept was to take yearlings and calves

that had grazed on natural herbage in the west and transport them to Ontario farms to be fattened on a grain diet that produced better-tasting meat.

Fall shipments in B.C. were made from the Okanagan and Kamloops -- rough guesses range from 15,000 to 50,000 head per year. At Kamloops, the animals were shipped from a new auction centre, stockyard, and CNR spur, all built in 1977, and were loaded in double-deck cars at about 35 head per deck. In the fall, six cars on average were filled on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and sent east via CNR. The biggest single shipment comprised 23 cars.

The very last rail shipment of livestock from any



*CN stock car 810815 is seen at Kamloops in the summer of 1973, with a livestock loading chute visible in the background at left. It was converted from a boxcar circa 1961/62.*  
(Photo by Robert D. Turner)

place in B.C. left east Kamloops in October 1985, running via Edmonton and Winnipeg. CPR ran its last unit stock train in the fall of 1983 from Winnipeg to Ontario, and the very last loaded stock car movement in Canada took the same CPR route in the fall of 1988.

By that date, CNR possessed 65 stock cars and CPR had fewer than 200. A hundred-year-old specialized traffic had come to an end.

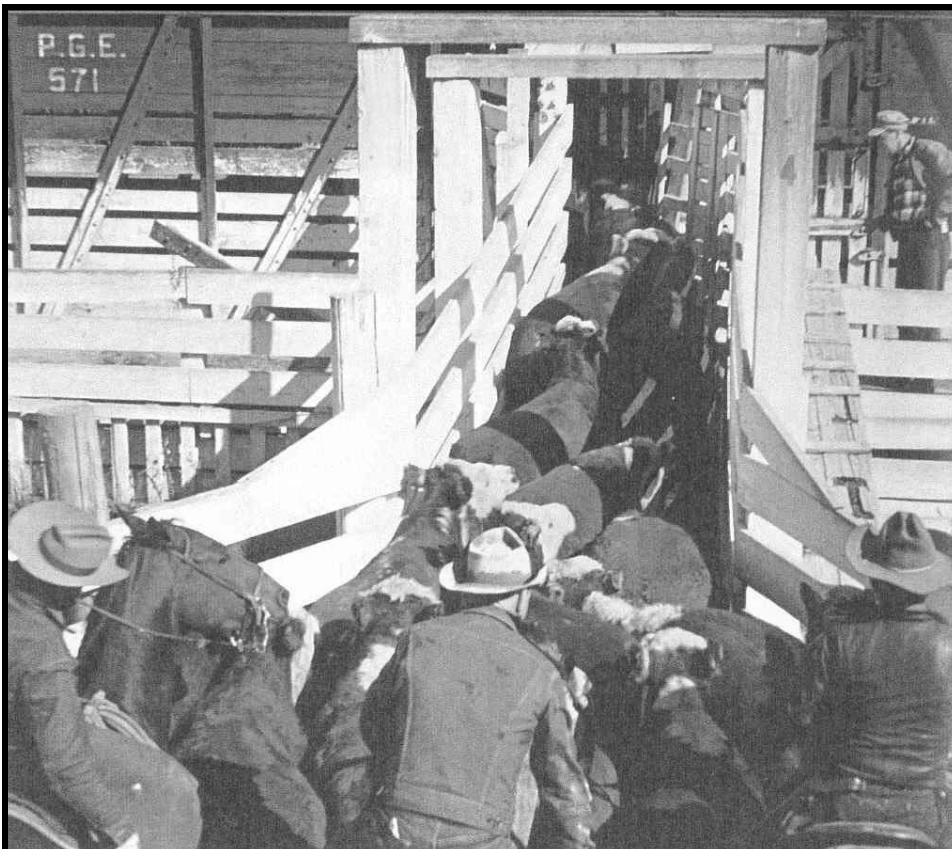
*The author welcomes corrections, additions and observations. In particular, livestock loading spots between Midway and Fernie need to be identified. Please send any comments to the Editor for forwarding to the author.*

Opposite page: *Loading and unloading were not handled by railway crews. At Williams Lake, B.C., in the early 1960s, cattlemen load stock into PGE car 571. (PGE publicity photo)*

## **PGE Annual Stock Car Loadings**

(from Annual Reports, 1949-1974;  
reporting discontinued as of 1975)

1949 -- 617	1958 -- 317	1967 -- 161
1950 -- 490	1959 -- 927	1968 -- 193
1951 -- 418	1960 -- 718 (true peak)	1969 -- 122
1952 -- 434	1961 -- 633	1970 -- 41
1953 -- 429	1962 -- 496	1971 -- 49
1954 -- 485	1963 -- 399	1972 -- 83
1955 -- 351	1964 -- 374	1973 -- 70
1956 -- 510	1965 -- 356	1974 -- 19
1957 -- 421	1966 -- 268	





*CPR wooden stock car 277815, seen at Kamloops, B.C., in October 1972, is one in a series of 500 boxcars built in 1943 and converted in 1959-64. (Photo by Bob Webster)*

### B.C. Stations with Livestock Docks

Derived from various sources, cannot be considered complete. The two prime loading points in B.C. are in boldface.

**CPR** (total 25): Anglesey, Armstrong, Ashcroft, Canford, Chase, Cherry Creek, Dot, Ducks/Monte Creek, Ellis, Haney, Kamloops, Kingsvale, Lower Nicola, Lytton, Merritt, Midway, **Nicola**, Notch Hill, Okanagan Falls, Princeton, Pritchard, Savona, Spences Bridge, Thirsk, Walhachin.

**CNR** (total 29): Ashcroft, Barriere, Birch Island, Burns Lake, Chu Chua, Clearwater, Copper Creek, Engin, Falkland, Fort Fraser, Fort Langley, Halston, Heffley Creek, Houston, Kamloops Jct., Kamloops wool spur, Kamloops new stockyard [1977-85], Louis Creek, Lytton, Postill, Prince George, Savona, Spences Bridge, Smithers, Telkwa, Topley, Vanderhoof, Vavenby, Westwold.

**PGE** (total 19): Alexandria, Australian, Chasm, Clinton, Enterprise, Exeter, Graham, Kelly Lake, Lac La Hache, Lillooet, Lone Butte, North Vancouver [1956-76], Onward, Pavilion, Pemberton, Quesnel, Soda Creek, Squamish, **Williams Lake**.

**NAR** (total 4): Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe, Tomslake, Tupper.

## Preserved Stock Cars in B.C.

**CN 810049** -- Owned and exhibited by West Coast Railway Association, Squamish. Built as a boxcar in April 1930 by National Steel Car and originally numbered 510007. Converted to a stock car in 1965 and renumbered 810049. Internal dimensions: length — 40 ft., 6 in.; width — 8 ft., 6 in.; height — 8 ft., 7 in.

**CN 172473** -- Owned by Kamloops Heritage Railway Society, Red Bridge, Kamloops. Built for Grand Trunk Railway as a boxcar in 1912/13 and converted by subsequent owner, CNR, in 1935 at Transcona Shops, Winnipeg, to stock car 172473. Internal dimensions: length — 36 ft.; width — 8 ft., 6 in.; height — 8 ft.; door width -- 6 ft. Withdrawn in 1962 and presented to City of Kamloops in 1970 in recognition of it being one of the major centres of livestock rail shipments.



*Mixed freight Train M841 running between Nelson and Slocan City on CPR's Slocan Subdivision, on May 21, 1951, has stock cars marshalled first and fifth behind class M4g 2-8-0 locomotive CP 3480. At Slocan City, the train will be barged to Rosebery, en route to Nakusp. (Philip R. Hastings photo, Robert D. Turner collection)*

## Stock Car Totals in Canada at 5-Year Intervals

(Dominion Statistics)

1907 -- 4,817	1925 -- 12,025 (near peak)	1945 -- 6,437
1910 -- 5,528	1930 -- 9,479	1950 -- 6,655
1915 -- 7,553	1935 -- 7,467	1955 -- 5,776
1920 -- 11,164	1940 -- 5,866	1960 -- 4,917

## *Sources*

*Ranching in the Southern Interior Plateau of British Columbia*; Thomas R. Weir, Memoir 4, Geographical Branch, Dept. of Mines & Technical Surveys, Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1953, 124 pages.

*Railway Recollections of a B.C. Sheep Rancher*; John Moilliet, CRHA *Canadian Rail*, to appear between now and December 2006, about 12 pages.

*Fowler Stock Cars* (covering four Canadian railways); Al Westerfield, CN Lines Special Interest Group, *CN Lines* magazine, Vol. 5, No.1, January 1993, 10 pages.

*Canadian National Box Car*; Stafford Swain, *Railroad Model Craftsman* magazine, January 1986 issue, 4 pages. Title is partly misleading as much of article deals with box-to-stock conversions. Eight of ten illustrations show stock cars. Also has detailed drawings of 36-ft. stock car.

Photo booklets in "Canadian Rail Car Pictorial" series, Trains Canada, Calgary, 2000, each 42 pages: *Vol. 5: Canadian Pacific Stock & Refrigerator Cars*; *Vol. 6: Canadian National Refrigerator & Stock Cars*.

*CPR's Meat & Livestock Business*, Paul Clegg, CPR Special Interest Group, *CP Tracks* magazine, Part 1-Vol. 7, No. 2, Fall 1999 and Part 2- Vol. 7, No. 3, Spring 2000, total 14 pages.

*Kamloops: 100 Years of Community, 1893-1993*, edited by Wayne Norton and Wilf Schmidt, Sonotek Publishing, Merritt, 1992, 148 pages. See Chapter 8 for details of local livestock shipments.

*Working the CPR's Westminster Branch: Memories of a 1940's Trainman*, article in *The Sandhouse*, CRHA Pacific Coast Division, Vancouver, Vol. 30, No. 4, Issue 120, Winter 2005/06, 10 pages. Includes details of switching at Swift Canada Ltd.'s meat-packing plant at Sapperton, near New Westminster.

# Agent/Operators Linked the Railway to the Public

by Helmut Wisinger

What was an Agent/Operator? Another railway trade/occupation that has gone the way of the dodo bird, but one that played a very key role in its time.

Agents were the public face and representative of the railway, back when it was often the only means of transportation to the rest of the country, or the world for that matter.

Once an important link between the railways and the public, agent/operators started being phased out in the 1950s, but were still common until about the mid-70s along most rail-lines in North America, performing very similar duties in both the U.S. and Canada.

They started being phased out with the advent of -- in no particular order -- CTC (Centralized Traffic Control), reliable telephone communication, fax machines, early computers, car identification readers, centralization, dieselization, road construction into previously inaccessible locations and other factors.

My own career as an agent and operator took place during this period of transition.

So what did the agent/operator do? As the name implies he (or she) performed two entirely different sets of duties. I will address the operator role first.

Depending upon the station location, the operator tasks could be a very important part of the overall duties, such as copying train orders at a station somewhere near the midpoint of a subdivision or at the first station out from a main terminal. But there were other locations where just

one order a week was copied, often in emergency situations only. The operator role invariably took precedence over other duties, since it involved in keeping trains running fluidly.

Most stations had red/yellow/green train order boards (some red/green only), which were mostly hand-operated.

A few stations had train order delivery devices, used in locations where trains passed at higher speeds or where the operator was very busy. This differed from holding up hoops by hand as trains passed by. Instead, the hoops were placed into pipe shafts on a raised platform right next to the track, which was accessed by steps.

CP and CN used different devices for hand-delivering ("hooping up") orders. I preferred the CN method (with the order tied into a string, rather than clipped to a wooden loop). Both companies used two lengths, long ones for delivery to the engine crew and short ones for delivery to the caboose crew.

Another important duty was copying line-ups for local section forces and others who required them from the dispatcher, up to five times a day. One needs to remember that the operator often was the only person able to communicate with the dispatcher, even more so when there was only the telegraph.

Other tasks including OS'ing trains (reporting arrival and departure times of trains on the train sheet, hence On Sheet), maintaining proper blocks for trains via train order signal, keeping a standard clock with a time comparison at 10:00 a.m. daily, and keeping a register book where

required. In some instances where crew layovers occurred, the operator was responsible for calling crews, which sometimes even required firing up the wood stove in the caboose (called the conductor's crummy).

The operator wrote up journals for originating trains, and made switch lists.

All the above duties were performed by an agent if there was no operator present during the day or on another shift.

The agent's role was much more complex and varied even more widely than the operator part. Basically, an agent was the representative of the railway in that community, and was often quite involved in community affairs.

In no particular order, his duties were included the following, but weren't limited to this:

- Ordering empty cars for whatever industry at that location, then billing them out as loads, including custom papers and special tariffs if applicable.

- Attending incoming loads to industry and private customers (household goods in carloads, for instance), which could include whole express cars or LCL (less than carload), for example, half a carload of refrigerators for one customer and half a carload of dog-food for another one.

- Looking after express shipments, which varied according to the number of passenger trains calling and stopping at a station. Express business was a very lucrative part of the job at some stations, as all incoming and outgoing shipments paid the agent a commission of between 5% and 10% of total shipping costs.

Again this varied widely, with one agency receiving two or three items a week and others hundreds of items a day. Some locations had their own draying (delivery and pick-up service; I worked two stations where this was still done

with horse and buggy) companies to deliver the items to the customer's door. In one instance I am aware of, the amount of express was so huge (as were the accompanying commissions) that the agent hired his own employees out of his commissions to help with the express work.

I remember unloading four baggage cars of express off No. 4, "The Continental", at Savant Lake, Ont., during a forest fire, causing the train to be delayed two hours just for this purpose, and this with all the local section forces and others helping. After this experience, on the ensuing days the express cars were set off from the train, but this had its own complications, because the cars had steam and communication lines running through them. I digress.

- Selling passenger tickets, including interline, which could consist of steamship tickets overseas and later even airline tickets. Baggage also had to be included in this category. Interline tickets also paid a commission, similarly to the payments to travel agents nowadays.

- Telegram and telegraph, both local and international, including Western Union money transfers, press releases and coded messages for government agencies. Commissions were also paid on these duties.

- Preparing the month-end balance sheet, a major job that could involve more than 50 supporting documents, again depending on location. It often took days to prepare this and it had to be accurate to the penny. An agent had to be almost a fully qualified accountant.

- Selling and cashing in money orders, another job that paid commissions.

- Receiving and dispensing company paycheques (including those for officials, which was often tricky).

- Wiring in the car service report on a daily basis and weather reports when required.





*This view, taken at CN's station at Valora, Ontario, in the summer of 1969, shows various tools of the operator's trade. To the right of the front window are the controls for the train order boards. To their right is the repeat bell for the dispatcher phone and the fuse box (carbon) for the train-phone. Beneath the desk at bottom right are the batteries for the train-phone, and a white bottle containing sulphuric acid for the batteries.*

*At left is an old-style fold-out phone, with a very new typewriter on the desk behind. Against the main window is the employee timetable page for that subdivision. Hanging from the lower window sill are two separate train orders. (Photo by Helmut Wisinger)*

"Checking the yard" was a daily early morning routine, so the agent (and by extension the company) knew what was in the yard. This often was also the agent's only indication that something had arrived (been set out) overnight, which just as often as not was accompanied by a proper waybill. Car Service reporting was done via telegraph almost to the end. I remember doing it by telegraph on CN as late as 1964.

-- Keeping all the tariff books up-to-date. This was a major paper chore, often passed on to the night operator, when there was one, along with other duties. You cannot imagine the massive amounts of paper that were thrown away by this action alone.

-- Doing basic station maintenance, for both the company's premises and the agent's personal living quarters. Major repairs were handled by the B&B department. Many agents, encouraged by the company, kept some marvelous yards, almost botanical showpieces. Elma, east of Winnipeg, comes to mind.

Agents had their own dwelling, namely the station. Positions were advertised by telegrapher's bulletins twice a month, which included the notation "HFL". This stood for House, Fuel and Light, paid for by a deduction of about \$1.50 per month from the agent's salary. (Cheap living, eh?)

Agencies differed widely. Some were in highly urban areas. Take New Westminster, for instance, where there were no operator duties and the agent had a staff of seven. Port Moody station had one agent, one operator and one assistant agent. Then there were agencies far removed from civilization, with no road access, no electricity, no water, and no sewage. It was challenging even to obtain basics such as groceries, medical care, and so on.

Let me give you one instance from my own career. I was relief agent/operator during the win-

ter in a place called Graham, in northwestern Ontario. There was road access, albeit difficult, and this was before the advent of four-wheel-drive vehicles. My routine was drive in from the Lakehead in the middle of night for the Monday morning shift. At Graham, the temperature frequently dropped to minus 60 degrees F, and "warmed up" to minus 40 during the day.

I would remove the battery and "cooling" fluid from my car, a 1951 Ford. Then on Fridays, starting at noon, I would really warm up the fluid on top of the Coleman stove in the waiting room, and warm up the 6-volt battery beside the stove. I would get a real good fire going in my wood kitchen stove, creating a lot of ashes. I poured the hot fluid into the radiator, installed the warm (and fully charged, I hoped) battery, spread plenty of hot ashes under the oil-pan and hoped like heck the car would start.

There was no indoor plumbing, just an outhouse, which was interesting in the middle of the night at 60 below. Picture it.

Working at remote and isolated agencies, far removed from civilization was not easy for a testosterone-loaded young man at the time. Many of these places were strictly male-oriented.

In the days of telegraph, the agent/operator was the only one able to communicate with "The Outside World", making him quite important in the scheme of things at some locations.

I remember doing all the income tax forms for many employees at various locations (at \$5.00 a pop). The tax forms have become so difficult since that time, I am hard pressed to do my own today.

Shipping fish to the U.S. via express earned me an extra 50 cents per custom form. I recall most of them being iced and going on to the Milwaukee Road and on to Chicago.

Commissions began to disappear, starting with the telegraph commissions about 1965. This was followed by the end of express commissions, and then interline commissions. On top of that, we lost our railway passes. In compensation, we got about a buck a month more for every one of these lost streams of income. No wonder there were a couple of major uprisings in the ranks of agent/operators, who felt that they were not well looked after by their U.S.-based union, the Order of Railroad Telegraphers (ORT). This led to raiding attempts by a Canadian union, the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) in (in 1964 and 1974, methinks).

All travel and expenses incurred were covered personally by the individual relief person. In 1963, the companies started paying \$2 a day for expenses to relief agents only; this was upped to \$6 a day for both operators and agents in 1964. I literally travelled thousands of miles on company business with no compensation whatsoever, often for a single shift at some god-forsaken location. My wages were \$160 a month when I started as assistant agent on CN in 1959.

From then until 1965, I worked as an assistant agent, operator, relief agent/operator for CN in the Lakehead Area (Winnipeg to Longlac, Ont., including the Rainy River, Fort Frances, Kashabowie, Kinghorn, Redditt and Graham Subdivisions), with stints on the CN-owned Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific, and jobs on loan to the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range. Altogether, I worked at well over 40 locations.

Later in my railway career, I was an operator, relief agent/operator, and dispatcher on CP from 1972 to 1996, working in the Vancouver Division, including the Cascade, Thompson and Princeton Subdivisions and all of the E&N. I was more or less the last agent at Agassiz and the second to last at Port Hammond. As a dispatcher, my initials were HW, which was translated by the crews as Hot Wheels, Hard Work, Horse Whip, Hot Water and others best forgotten.

Besides my varied career on the railways, I also worked at various times as a salesman, teacher, manager, proprietor and computer programmer.

In retirement, I'm still very much interested in railways. See for yourself by visiting my web-sites: <http://www.railvids.com> (videos of cab rides in locomotives on the CPR) and <http://webhome.idirect.com/~helmutw/milwrld> (all about the Milwaukee Road's Lines West).

# A New Life Dawns for the E&N as Foundation Takes Over

by Ian Smith

A non-profit foundation hopes to breathe new life into the struggling Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway, after seven-and-a-half years of operation by an American shortline operator.

The Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) has struck separate deals with Canadian Pacific Railway and RailAmerica Ltd. to acquire the entire line and the associated operating rights.

ICF's members consist of five regional districts along the line, together with 13 aboriginal groups based in the same territory. ICF received charitable status from the federal government in December 2004 and has been in protracted negotiations with the two railway companies.

ICF's formation came in the wake of RailAmerica's announcement in December 2001 that it intended to cease operations on the Island, following the loss of its principal freight traffic, comprising shipments of pulp and paper products from the mill at Port Alberni to Nanaimo (see December 2001 issue, pages 28-29, and Spring 2002 issue, pages 6-8).

In the four ensuing years, the line's main traffic has been the daily VIA Rail service between Victoria and Courtenay, augmented by sporadic freight movements between Nanaimo and Duncan to the south and Parksville to the north.

In that time, ICF's work went on mainly behind closed doors.

On February 27 this year, ICF announced it had completed a deal to acquire the CPR portion of the E&N. In return for a receipt enabling a deduction from its corporate income tax of \$236

million, CPR turned over the right of way and made a cash contribution of \$2.3 million as seed funding for the ICF, to be followed by further annual contributions of some \$250,000, and up to \$3.6 million from the eventual sale of the Wellcox Yard lands on the Nanaimo waterfront (presumably to a property developer). The cash value to CPR of the tax deduction will be about \$38 million.

The agreement with CPR includes the E&N right of way from Victoria to Nanaimo and Parksville to Courtenay, and also the abandoned Cowichan Subdivision to Lake Cowichan from Hayward (near Duncan).

Six railway stations are included -- Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum and Courtenay. But the deal does not include the Victoria roundhouse property.

ICF completed the take-over when it reached a separate deal with RailAmerica for the lines between Nanaimo, Parksville and Port Alberni. The transfer took place on March 24.

In compensation, ICF paid RailAmerica \$1 million in cash immediately and will pay it \$350,000 in future proceeds from the sale of the operating rights to a contract rail operator. ICF will also provide a tax receipt for the remaining value of the transaction, which is considered to be a donation. This will save RailAmerica some \$5 million in corporate income taxes.

The combined tax impact of the two deals means that federal and provincial taxpayers will have subsidized the ICF take-over to the tune of some \$43 million in forgone tax revenue.

An interesting side-note to the prolonged negotiations was the revelation of an obscure provincial property transfer tax that applies specifically to the E&N. The E&N Railway Belt Tax was instituted in 1946 to recover 25% of the value of any sale of the remaining lands from the E&N land grant (which once covered 20% of the Island), or of any leases of logging rights. It is not known whether this tax was applied to the recent ICF transactions, although it can only be waived by cabinet order, and there has been no public record of such a waiver.

RailAmerica had purchased its portions of the line from CPR in 1998 for \$15.5 million (US), in a deal that included operating rights over the whole line. It began operations in January 1999. By late 2004, it had written off the remaining book value of its E&N assets, some \$12.6 million (US), which allowed it to recover \$3.9 million (US) in income tax, for a net loss of \$8.7 million (US). The proceeds of the sale to ICF will reduce that loss further.

RailAmerica will continue to operate the line

until June 30 or an earlier date on which ICF's selected operator will take over. It is widely rumoured that this will be the Southern Railway of B.C. or perhaps a newly-created sister company owned by the same Montana-based parent, the Washington Companies.

Thus the E&N appears to be looking forward to a new chapter in a life. It began operating in 1886 between its namesake cities, under the ownership of Sir Robert Dunsmuir, the Island coal baron, whose family sold it to CPR in 1905. Having clung tenaciously to life for 120 years, the E&N's future as a working railway cannot be ruled out. (CPR/ICF/RailAmerica/Victoria Times-Colonist/ENRailway@yahoo.com)



*RailAmerica's seven-year presence on Vancouver Island, symbolized by GP38 3809 at Nanaimo's Wellcox yard, on April 14, 2002, is set to disappear. (Photo by Ian Smith)*

# Canada Line Work Advances on Many Fronts

by Ian Smith

Work on the Canada Line project has become highly visible at various points along the route in Vancouver and Richmond in recent months.

The controversial cut-and-cover tunnelling began in the northbound lanes of Cambie Street, where the road curves around the western slope of Little Mountain. In early March, the trench had been completed in the vicinity of West 29th Avenue, and the first concrete sections of tunnel walls and roofs had been poured.

Trenching work continues in that area, with seven weeks of rock blasting slated to begin in the first week of May near West 33rd.

March also saw the completion of the first pre-cast concrete guideway segment at a plant in south Vancouver. This is one of 1,300 double-track segments that will be needed for the elevated guideway, along with more than 900 single-track segments. Several hundred more segments will be cast for the line's two bridges over the North and Middle Arms of the Fraser River.

The double-track segments measure 2.7 metres high, 8.4 metres wide and three metres long, and closely resemble those used for SkyTrain's Millennium Line.

About 40% of the line will be on elevated guideway, running south from 64th Avenue and Cambie in Vancouver to Vancouver International Airport and Richmond Town Centre.

Installation of the segments will begin in the autumn as guideway columns are completed, and continue through to mid-2008.

The first guideway columns were poured in mid-March in Richmond, situated between the site of Bridgeport Station and the Operations and Maintenance Centre (OMC) yard, which is straddled by the Oak Street bridge.

The route westward to the airport will be completed first, followed by the line running southward from the junction at Bridgeport Station into Richmond Town Centre.

Also underway in Richmond is site-clearing for the OMC. This has included relocating the east leg of CPR's Van Horne Spur along the southern edge of the site.

Work continued on the entry pit for the tunnel boring machine (TBM), described in the previous issue (page 35). This included creating the portals for the running lines southward underneath West Second Avenue, at the point where the cut-and-cover tunnel along Cambie will join the bored tunnel. That was necessary to accommodate the tail-end of the 80-metre TBM when it is assembled in the pit, even though it will be working in the opposite direction.

Assembly of the TBM will take place in May. After testing, it will start working northward, boring the first of two single-track tunnels. When it reaches its northern limit under Granville near Pender Street, it will be removed via an exit pit and returned to the entry pit to bore a parallel tunnel, again working northward. (The description in the previous issue erroneously stated that the TBM would be turned around in downtown Vancouver to work southward, but there will be no room to do so.)

Within the tunnels, Vancouver will have its newest railway -- a narrow-gauge line for transporting the slurry of crushed rock bored out by the TBM.

In downtown Vancouver, work is focusing on relocating underground utilities in preparation for tunnel boring and station site excavation, particularly along Granville between Robson and Cordova streets. This has led to all trolley-buses that used Granville Mall being rerouted along Seymour Street northbound and Howe Street southbound, as of April 24, until mid-2008. The only route that will use part of Granville Mall (south of Robson) will be the diesel-operated 50.

For its publicity and signs, the project has bor-

rowed and updated the slogan used for the Millennium Line -- "First departure 2009, then about every five minutes after that." With the Millennium Line, the date cited was 2001, but that line actually did not open until 2002. Considering how much emphasis is being put on completing the Canada Line before the Winter Olympics in February 2010, the slogan writer apparently did not consider this irony.



*Looking south from 29th Avenue, this view shows cut-and-cover tunnel work on the alignment of the northbound lanes of Cambie Street. (Canada Line project photo)*

# SHORT HAULS

The Events of Today are the History of Tomorrow



**Transport Canada has allowed CN** to lengthen its northbound trains between Squamish and Kelly Lake to 114 cars, provided remote-control slave locomotives are used. This follows a 60-day trial that began on December 14, in which trains with slave units were limited to 99 cars (see previous issue, page 37).

The new arrangement is also subject to a 60-day trial period, which began on March 7.

During the new trial, various measures imposed for the original trial period will be continued. These consist of restrictions on how empty cars are handled, tests throughout the route to verify the remote slave units are working properly, having a CN supervisor on board to augment and train any new crew member on the route, a reduction of the number of stops en route, and special stall and emergency stop procedures.

Conventional trains (i.e., with locomotives at the head-end only) operating northbound in the same territory will still be restricted to 80 cars. (Transport Canada)

**The ex-BC Rail fleet** has been reduced by a further six locomotives, bringing the total fleet reduction since the CN takeover to 24.

Three more of BC Rail's unique Caterpillar-powered CRS-20 switchers have been withdrawn: BCOL 614 (on January 11), BCOL 608 (February 3) and 627 (February 3).

BCOL 3624, the last of six C36-8 units, was

retired on February 3.

Also retired were B36-7 BCOL 3604 on January 30 and RS-3 slug BCOL S-409 on January 17.

Meanwhile, 13 locomotives retired earlier and stored in Prince George have been sold to the U.S. firm Progress Rail Services, as follows: CRS-20 units 602, 603, 623 and 626; B36-7 units 3601, 3608, 3613 and 3616, and C36-8 units 3621, 3622, 3623, 3625 and 3626. (*Branchline*)

**The first coal train** from the Trend Small Mine near Tumbler Ridge to Prince Rupert operated in early February, according to the mine's operator, Northern Energy and Mining Inc. (NEMI). The train carried about 10,000 tonnes of metallurgical coal.

NEMI had paid \$12 million to have 10 miles of lifted track on the Tumbler Subdivision reinstated, along with a new loading loop at the former Quintette mine loadout (see Autumn 2005 issue, page 35). (NEMI)

**Three fired government aides** accused of criminal activity in the sale of BC Rail will go on trial on June 5 in B.C. Supreme Court. Two are charged with fraud, soliciting or accepting bribes, influence peddling, and breach of trust, while a third man is charged with money laundering (see Winter 2004/05 issue, pages 32-33).

Police search warrants from 2003 made public on April 3 allege that payments of \$24,000 in cash were made by a Canadian lobbying firm working on behalf of one of the short-listed bidders for BC Rail, Denver-based shortline operator OmniTrax Ltd.



The warrants also allege that two of the men were reimbursed \$3,000 by the lobbying firm for expenses incurred in a visit to Denver, where they and their wives were hosted by an OmniTrax executive at an NFL football game.

It is alleged that a lobbyist was given confidential information and documents about the BC Rail bidding process. (*The Province/Vancouver Sun*)

**The Cheakamus River derailment** last August will affect fish stocks for 50 years or more, according to government environmental reports obtained by *The Vancouver Sun*. The reports say that more than 500,000 fish were killed by the 41,000 litres of caustic soda that leaked from a single tank car that derailed on the bridge at MP 56.6 (see Summer 2005 issue, pages 34-35).

In February, CN announced a donation of \$1.25 million over five years to the Pacific Salmon Foundation for a long-term recovery plan for the Squamish River Watershed, which includes the Cheakamus. CN's news release announcing the donation made no reference at all to the derailment. (*Vancouver Sun/CN*)

**Multi-billionaire Bill Gates** has become CN's single largest shareholder. His holdings exceed even those of institutional investors such as pension funds and mutual funds, and would make him a billionaire even if he owned nothing else.

Gates became one of CN's biggest shareholders in October 2000, through his private investment vehicle, Cascade Investment LLC, when he bought 29.7 million shares for \$475 million (see the December 2000 issue, page 40). He was also a major shareholder in Wisconsin Central, and would have received more CN shares in payment when CN bought WC in October 2001.

It has proved to be a wise investment, more than tripling in value. His holdings have grown to

30.91 million shares, valued at about \$1.6 billion. Also, through their family's foundation (the world's wealthiest charitable trust), Gates and his wife own a further 4.42 million CN shares, valued at \$234 million.

Gates' total shareholdings thus amount to 35.33 million shares, worth \$1.87 billion. This represents ownership of 6.6% of the whole company. (*Globe & Mail*)

**Hunter Harrison has outdone** his personal financial results of 2004, when the CN chief executive made headlines for his income of \$16.2 million (US).

That impressive amount was dwarfed by his 2005 income, which came to \$46.4 million (US), consisting of nearly \$1.4 million in salary, a bonus of \$3.85 million, long-term incentive payments of \$17.2 million, gains on stock options of \$22.5 million, and various perquisites of office valued at \$536,456, such as club memberships and personal use of the company aircraft. In 2004, Harrison made no gains on stock options, which accounts for much of the difference in the two years.

By comparison, Harrison's counterpart at CPR, Rob Ritchie, earned slightly more than \$2 million (Cdn) in 2005, consisting of \$851,000 in salary, a bonus of \$1.1 million, and perks of \$90,349. He was awarded some \$2 million in stock options, but did not exercise them. (*Globe & Mail/CN/CPR*)

**The high-flying CEO's compensation** included personal use of the CN corporate jet to the tune of \$388,675 (US) in 2005. This amount was added to Hunter Harrison's taxable salary for 2005 to reflect his personal use of the CN jet, and he would have to pay taxes on this as though it had been paid to him in cash.

CN policy requires that Harrison use the company jet for personal as well as business travel. Presumably, this is based on the notion

that travel in a corporate jet is safer than travelling in a commercial airliner, and there is thus less risk to the company of the CEO being killed in an accident.

(railsnorthwest@yahoogroups.com)

CN's corporate jet is a Canadair CL-600-2B16 Challenger 604, which wears the appropriate registration mark C-GCNR. (CN/M.J. Scanlon)

### **The CN-CPR co-production**

arrangement for trains to and from the Port of Vancouver went into effect at 00:01 on March 13.

This affects operations from the crew change points of North Bend and Boston Bar in the Fraser Canyon through to the port, as described in the previous issue (pages 39-40).



*CN's corporate jet C-GCNR is seen at Memphis International Airport on March 16 this year. The Canadian-made aircraft has a white fuselage with black underbelly and tail-fin tip, set off with two red stripes.*  
(Photo by M.J. Scanlon)



**CANADIAN  
PACIFIC  
RAILWAY**

**The City of Vancouver has won** the court battle over its right to limit the future uses of CPR's Arbutus line through the west side of the city.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the city's favour on February 23, upholding Vancouver's right to pass a bylaw restricting the privately-owned Arbutus corridor to specific public uses, without compensating the owner.

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin wrote: "Despite considerable sympathy for CPR's position, I conclude that under the Vancouver Charter, the city was entitled to refuse compensation and to pass the bylaw."

Environmental groups applauded the outcome, which was denounced by business groups.

The B.C. Chamber of Commerce said it would lobby the provincial government to amend the Vancouver Charter. The Business Council of B.C. noted that the law in some other provinces forbids municipalities from designating private land as public without compensation.

Since the last train ran in June 2001, CPR has wanted to sell parts of the 5.5-mile corridor between MP 0.32 at West Second Avenue and MP 5.53 in Marpole for housing development. The city wants the land used for public transport or a green belt, and in July 2000 passed a bylaw designating it as a public thoroughfare.

CPR argued that the city's bylaw limiting the future uses of the privately-owned land amounted to confiscation without compensation (see Winter 2004/05 issue, page 36, for background and earlier references).

"The Court decision does not affect the ownership of the land, nor does it resolve the impasse over its future use," said CPR. "Any change from freight rail use will require purchase of the land from CPR."

The railway noted that it had recently sold a right-of-way to the City of Richmond at a mutually agreed price (see previous issue, page 41). At roughly \$20 million for 1.3 miles of line, the compensation in the Richmond deal would equate to about \$100 million on a pro-rated basis for the Arbutus corridor. (*Vancouver Sun/Globe & Mail/CPR*)

**CPR is 125 years old this year**, and celebrated the anniversary of its incorporation on February 16 by putting the charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company on public display for the first time ever.

On a long-term loan to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, the charter will eventually become part of a permanent gallery titled "Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta." When it opens in 2007, the gallery will feature CPR builder William Van Horne as of the maverick characters. (CPR)

**Fred Green will be the new supremo**, following the retirement of Rob Ritchie as CPR's chief executive officer as of the annual general meeting on May 5.

Green's succession as CEO comes as no surprise, as he had been groomed as Ritchie's successor over the past several years. He was named president on November 1 last year (a title ceded by Ritchie), and had been executive vice-president and chief operating officer since October 2004. Green, 49, joined CPR in 1978.

Ritchie had been president since 1990 and chief executive since 1995. His retirement comes at 61, after a 36-year career with CPR and its parent, Canadian Pacific Ltd. (CPR/*Globe & Mail*)

**Record profit of \$543 million** marked a successful year for CPR in 2005, reflecting a 32% increase from the \$413 million earned in 2004.

Total revenue rose nearly 13% to \$4.4 billion from \$3.9 billion, while operating expenses were up just 9% to 3.4 billion. The result was a 27% gain in operating income to \$1.0 billion, the first time this figure has topped the billion-dollar mark.

Freight revenues rose in six of seven categories, the exception being sulphur and fertilizer, which dropped by 2.8%. Coal, in particular, saw a 37% surge in revenue worth \$200 million, even though coal traffic declined by 5.6%, as CPR extracted significantly higher rates from shippers.

With these results, CPR's operating ratio dropped from 79.8% to 77.2% (a lower number is better), meaning that the railway had to spend 77.2 cents to earn one dollar. While this is comparable with the ratios for most other Class 1 North American railways, it trails far behind the industry-leading 63.8% set by "lean and mean" CN (see previous issue, page 39).

Analysts said closing the gap in operating ratio with CN will be a challenge for new CEO Fred Green. He has already responded with a strategy to decentralize operational decision-making to the field from head office.

In announcing the 2005 results, CPR confirmed that it was cutting 400 office jobs, as widely rumoured (see previous issue, pages 40-41). About 170 employees left in December and January, with the balance to be gone by the end of March. Among those leaving was Jonathan Hanna, CPR's corporate historian. (CPR/*Globe & Mail*/CPR@yahoogroups.com)

**The Royal Canadian Pacific** luxury train service will have a new office in downtown Calgary that reflects its classic heritage. The new

9,000-sq-ft premises will be adjacent to the historic Fairmont Palliser Hotel and will be joined to the Canadian Pacific Pavilion, where the train's fleet of vintage business cars is housed. The building will open by the end of this summer.

A feature of the new building will be a large, pedestal-mounted public clock, based on the design of a CPR clock at Windsor Station in Montreal. (CPR)

**A steam-hauled excursion** with Hudson 2816 hauling the Royal Canadian Pacific fleet will run from Calgary to Vancouver on June 26 to 29. This will commemorate the launch of CPR's first transcontinental train, the Pacific Express, on June 28, 1886. That train arrived in Vancouver on July 4. (CPR)

**CPR Hudson 2816** will also make a foray into B.C. in the autumn. A charter organized by British firm GW Travel will run from Calgary to Vancouver via Banff on October 9-12 and make the return trip via Cranbrook and Lethbridge on October 16-19. Three similar trips are planned for the spring of 2007.

Over the winter, 2816 has had all of its superheater tubes repaired or replaced. Those installed during its rebuilding had proven to be defective. (WCRA Tours/Ken Storey)

**Canadian Pacific Railway** is now the only intact survivor of the break-up of Canadian Pacific Ltd. on October 1, 2001, into five separate companies.

Recent transactions have seen the former CP Ships acquired by the parent company of German shipping firm Hapag-Lloyd, and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts taken over jointly by Saudi-based Kingdom Hotels International and an American investment firm, Colony Capital, which owns Singapore-based Raffles Hotels & Resorts.

Earlier, Fording Coal was transformed into an

investment trust called the Fording Canadian Coal Trust, and its mines have been pooled with those of Teck Cominco and Luscar Ltd. into the Elk Valley Coal Partnership. The fifth element of Canadian Pacific Ltd. was PanCanadian Petroleum, which had been 86% owned by CP. It has become part of Alberta-based EnCana Corp. in a merger with Alberta Energy Co.

Those who held shares in the old Canadian Pacific Ltd. at the time of the break-up received proportional shareholdings in the five newly independent constituent companies (see September 2001 issue, pages 34-37). And those who have retained their new shares will have enjoyed across-the-board gains, some quite spectacular, as of January 30 this year, with Fairmont Hotels up 41%, CP Ships up 49%, CPR up 85%, EnCana up 214%, and Fording up 490%.

Put another way, that equates to each share of CP Ltd. valued at \$51.55 on the day before the break-up was announced growing to a value of \$142.41 as of February 3 this year, a gain of 176%. (*Globe & Mail/Canadian Business*)



**BNSF's Vancouver trackage** north of the Fraser River bridge at New Westminster has been under the day-to-day management of CN since mid-January, when a long-term lease arrangement was announced (see previous issue, page 36).

However, full control will not be transferred until BNSF completes a new lead track between its Old Yard and New Yard at New Westminster. This will enable BNSF switching operations between the two yards to be carried out without these movements having to use the mainlines controlled by CN dispatchers.

The work includes construction of a bridge across the Brunette River, and is estimated to cost about \$5 million, with completion expected late this year. This will see the disappearance of "North" Braid and CP Junction as controlled points in the Centralized Traffic Control system. (railsnorthwest@yahoo.com)

**Realignment of BNSF track** through White Rock, Ocean Park and Crescent Beach "won't happen", says B.C. Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon.

He was reacting to lobbying by a citizen's group that wants the BNSF shoreline route, built in 1909, to be diverted inland, running along 176th Street from the border to a point where it would join the BC Rail Port Subdivision, east of the present junction at Colebrook.

The Semiahmoo Peninsula Citizens for Public Safety claims the new line could be built for about \$103 million, but earlier estimates put the cost in the \$400-million range. The group fears derailments of hazardous cargoes on the shoreline route, which it claims has seen nine derailments in the area in its 97-year history.

A BNSF spokesman said that landslides in the cliffs above the line "have not resulted in any life-threatening incidents." (*Vancouver Sun*)



**The schedule for VIA's Malahat** between Victoria and Courtenay has been revised, as of April 30. With the change, all journeys have a standard overall running time of four hours, 30 minutes.

The weekday and Saturday northbound train now leaves Victoria 15 minutes earlier, at 08:00. Dwell time at Nanaimo has been reduced by five minutes, producing an arrival time at Courtenay of 12:30, some 20 minutes earlier.

Turnaround time at Courtenay has been cut to 30 minutes from 40, with departure at 13:00 and arrival at Victoria at 17:30, some 30 minutes earlier than before.

The Sunday train departs Victoria at 10:00 (rather than 12:00) and arrives at Courtenay at 14:30 (rather than 16:25). Departure from Courtenay is at 15:00, with arrival at Victoria at 19:30.

In all trips, the dwell time at Nanaimo has been standardized at 15 minutes, which involves a five-minute increase on the Sunday trips. (Rob Scrimgeour)

**VIA has added a fourth set** of stainless steel cars for use in the transcontinental Canadi-

an, which runs between Toronto and Vancouver three times a week.

Beforehand, the train had operated with just three sets of cars, and the westbound train was scheduled to turn around to head eastward at 17:30 on the same day it arrived in Vancouver, at 07:50 if on time. Thus, if a westbound train was significantly delayed, it would be turned back at Kamloops or even Jasper, with passengers bused to and from Vancouver as necessary.

With the fourth set, VIA will always have a train at the ready in Vancouver for the scheduled eastbound departure, even if the westbound is severely delayed. Rather than the same equipment departing the same day, the cars in a westbound train will be held over upon arrival at Vancouver, with the same day's eastbound train using the cars from the previous westbound arrival in the cycle.

The extra set of at least 21 cars became available when the Ocean service between Montreal and Halifax was fully converted to using the Renaissance stock imported from Britain. (VIA)

**ROCKY MOUNTAINEER**  
*Vacations*<sup>TM</sup>

**A special deal for B.C. residents** is being offered to promote the Whistler Mountaineer during its first season.

B.C. residents booking before June 30 can make a round-trip between North Vancouver and Whistler for the regular price of a one-way trip. With this deal, return trips will cost \$99 for standard Coast Classic service and \$169 for premium Glacier Dome service. A mixed trip tak-

ing a different class each way will cost \$134. Passengers can also opt to ride a Gray Line coach in one direction.

These discount trips can be taken anytime up the end of the season on October 16. Bookings must be made online at the train's website, [www.whistlermountaineer.com](http://www.whistlermountaineer.com). (RMV)

**The locomotive fleet has expanded** to nine units, with the leasing of four rebuilt ex-Union Pacific GP40 units from National Railroad Equipment.

Numbered RMR 8016-8019, the four were rebuilt to GP40-2 specifications at the NRE-Alco facility in North Bend, Ont., during the winter. They share a common ancestry, having started life on the Penn Central in 1968, passing into the Conrail fleet, and then being acquired by the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, which was later absorbed by UP.

RMR 8016-8017 (ex-UP 675 and 9956) will be used on the new two-day run between Whistler and Jasper via Prince George, starting May 2.

RMR 8018-8019 (ex-UP 9960 and 9963) are specially painted in a "Whistler Mountaineer" livery for the day service between North Vancouver and Whistler, starting May 1. (Their acquisition was reported in the Autumn 2005 issue, page 39).

The four join Rocky Mountaineer's existing roster of five ex-CN wide-cab models, consisting of GP40-2L(W) units 8011-8013 and GP40-2(W) units 8014-8015. (Wilco van Schoonhoven)

**The ownership structure** of Peter Armstrong's travel industry ventures has been realigned, following the acquisition of the Gray Line franchises in Banff, Vancouver and Victoria last year.

Armstrong Hospitality Group Ltd. was created as the parent company in May 2005. Rocky



*The former Union Pacific 9963 has been upgraded to GP40-2 specifications, numbered RMR 8019 and painted in white, blue and green Whistler Mountaineer livery. It's seen here in the Rocky Mountaineer yard at Kamloops on March 16, 2006.*

*(Photo by Helmut Wisinger)*

Mountaineer Vacations and Gray Line West (as it is now called) are separate companies held by AHG. (BC Business)

### **The opposition to VIA's subsidies**

voiced in the past by Rocky Mountaineer president Peter Armstrong was vociferously stated in an address to the Western Transportation Advisory Council (WESTAC) in Calgary on August 23 last year.

The meeting, attended by then Transport Minis-

ter Jean Lapierre, was focused on Bill C-44, which included a wide range of amendments to federal legislation covering various forms of transport. In the case of VIA, the bill included provisions to enable VIA to raise capital by issuing its own debt instruments. Bill C-44 died on the order paper when the federal election was called for January 23 this year.

Seizing the opportunity to criticize VIA in front of the Minister, Armstrong stated:

"Minister, the success of my company is a clear demonstration that growth in tourism travel is best left to private-sector operators focused on business models that work. Subsidizing the travel of our tourists simply is not necessary, yet that is what we continue to do through the ongoing subsidization of VIA Rail.

"The federal government believes in the private sector's ability to harness the potential of any business. You have unleashed the ingenuity of the private sector on Air Canada, Petro-Canada and CN Rail. Why continue subsidizing the travel of our foreign guests who are more than willing to pay the price of a competitively priced service?

"It is time to innovate and to motivate the private sector to invest its money. Instead of spending millions of dollars each month to keep VIA Rail going, your government will reap the benefits through increased employment and taxes. Why assume all the risks and problems when you don't have to?

"In 54 other countries, the private sector is investing in all forms of passenger rail, from commuter to tourism services. Governments should focus on regulatory regimes to ensure safety, not the management of businesses. Now is the time for this government to sell off VIA Rail.

"Bill C-44 enshrines the status quo and it adds new elements of risk with VIA Rail's ability to take on debt. The experience of Amtrak should

be enough to convince you that this will not work. In the end, the U.S. government is on the hook for billions of dollars wasted on projects that didn't work.

"Instead of the Bill C-44 section of the VIA Rail Act, you should instruct your ministry's staff to sell off every route. Review each route on its merits before deciding on the need to subsidize any of them. The final analysis will show that most do not warrant the investment of taxpayer dollars." (WESTAC)



**A new spare locomotive** for West Coast Express will be built by Wabtec Corp.'s Motive Power division at its plant in Boise, Idaho. The MP36PH-3C locomotive will be built on the same production line as an order of 27 units of the same model for GO Transit, and will be delivered late this year.

Units of this kind are used in commuter service in San Francisco, Chicago and Albuquerque.

The WCE unit will be numbered 906, the next number in the existing series of 901-905 used by the General Motors F59PHI locomotives that WCE has owned since start-up in 1995. (Ken Storey/*Branchline*)



## Other Passenger

**Five ex-BC Rail Budd cars** are on the market, after serving their initial purposes since being sold by the provincial railway.

The former BC-10, BC-11 and BC-31 are for sale by the Oregon Department of Transportation, which used them on a special service between Linnwood and Astoria from 2003 to 2005, as part of the Lewis and Clark bicentenary celebrations. The asking price is \$600,000 U.S. for all three.

Across the continent, BC-15 and BC-30 are available, following the death of their owner, Stuart Draper. He acquired them in 2002 for his fledgling Wilton Scenic Railroad in New Hampshire, which is up for sale. (Billingsgazette.com /WCRA News)

**North Vancouver's BC Rail station** will not be sold to TransLink, after all.

Plans to sell the station and surrounding site to TransLink to serve as a garage for 125 Coast Mountain Bus Co. vehicles serving North Vancouver routes were announced last year (see the Summer 2005 issue, page 34).

Rezoning to allow the sale was approved in a 4-3 vote by North Vancouver District Council on February 6. But one of the councillors was challenged over a conflict of interest relating to his employment in the real estate business, and the matter came up for a second vote on February 20. The bylaw then failed in a 3-3 tie.

District staff were directed to come up with a new bylaw for the BC Rail lands that favours light industries and businesses that "are safe and do not pollute."

Whatever the outcome, the station's use for rail passenger service is over. The new Whistler Mountaineer service uses a simple paved plat-

form that extends west from the original platform, along with a small shelter close to the now-gated crossing of Philip Avenue across the yard tracks. Most passengers will be bused to and from downtown Vancouver hotels, and won't need the comforts of an enclosed, heated station. (District of North Vancouver website/Whistler Mountaineer)

## Rail Industry

**Derailments spiked upward** last year, with CN's incidents accounting for more than half the industry's total.

There were 195 main-track derailments in Canada -- 103 on CN, 66 on CPR and 36 on other railways. That's up from 152 in 2004 and some 50% above the average of 133 in the previous five years.

However, main-track derailments involving dangerous goods dropped from 37 in 2004 to 34.

CN's derailments were up 35% from the 76 recorded in 2004, and well above the 56 in 1999. On CPR, derailments rose by 5% from 63 in 2004, and were far higher than the 37 in 1999.

Since 1999, CN's main-track derailment rate has risen from 1.55 per million train-miles (MTM) to 2.65 last year. On CPR, the rate has increased from 1.28 per MTM in 1999 to 1.98 last year. (*Globe & Mail/The Province*)

**The Railway Association of Canada** (RAC) has appointed Cliff Mackay as president and chief executive officer, effective May 1.

Most recently president of the Air Transport Association of Canada and a board member of NAV Canada, Mackay previously held a senior

executive position in the aerospace industry and various positions with the Canadian federal government during the past 20 years.

He succeeds Bruce Burrows, who had been acting president and CEO since July 2004, when former President and CEO Bill Rowat retired.

The RAC represents the interests of 58 freight and passenger railways in Canada. (RAC)

## Rail Education

**CN has donated a locomotive** to the B.C. Institute of Technology for its railway training programs. After being retired on December 12 last year, GP9RM 4019 is now based at BCIT's Great Northern Way Campus in Vancouver, where it can operate on an isolated 600-ft. stretch of track. BCIT offers courses for training would-be railway engineers and conductors. (*Branchline*)

**BCIT's locomotive simulator** is open to railfans who want to try their hand at running an engine. Using the same kind of simulator employed by the major railways, the one-week course will teach trainees how to operate a train safely and efficiently under the guidance of a qualified engineer, reduce in-train forces through good train-handling practices, perform shop track brake tests, and change operating ends of a locomotive.

Cost of the full course is \$1,000. For simulator time only, the cost is \$80 for 50 minutes. For more information, contact the BCIT School of Transportation at (604) 451-6846. (BCIT)



**SkyTrain will offer SkyTour** to tourists, starting in May.

That's the name for automated self-guided tours of the SkyTrain route and nearby attractions, with commentary provided through headsets that tourists can rent for a fee.

The headsets will provide recorded commentary in six languages about what a tourist is seeing, with the location ascertained by data from the Global Positioning System. For example, the commentary will point out that Mount Baker is both an active volcano and the snowiest place on Earth in 1999.

Tourists who get off the train can wear the headsets while taking a walking tour of Gastown or downtown New Westminster.

In summer months, up to 20% of SkyTrain riders are tourists.

Total cost to SkyTrain will be about \$30,000, with most costs borne by the company that will provide the technology. The two organizations will share the revenue from headset rentals. (*Vancouver Sun*)

**Seven four-car Mark II trains** are being regularly rostered for the weekday morning peak period, in a move to boost capacity that started last year. A four-car train seats 168 riders and holds 520 altogether.

The seven trains are booked to work in the busiest 40 minutes of the morning peak, so that one leaves the busy interchange station at Broadway toward downtown Vancouver every third trip between 08:05 and 08:55. With SkyTrain's precision automated control system, this means a four-car Mark II train leaves every 324 seconds,

with two other trains running in between.

Since there are 60 Mark II cars in the fleet, this deployment means that roughly half are being used in four-car formations during the morning peak.

In 2004, SkyTrain had introduced the four-car Mark II trains, with three to five in the cycle at a time. (Ian Graham/"Alan G.")

## Port News

**New Prime Minister Stephen Harper** acted even quicker than expected to settle the controversy over the proposed sale of Ridley Terminals in Prince Rupert. As reported in the previous issue (page 45), the deal was expected to be reviewed by the new Conservative government.

Instead, Harper cancelled it outright on his second day in office, saying his action was "in the best interest of northern B.C. in particular, but also the Canadian economy." (*Vancouver Sun*)

**Fraser River Port Authority** set records for cargo in 2005, for the fourth year in a row, with shipments reaching 38.8 million tonnes.

Most traffic was in domestic shipping, led by logs, aggregates and general cargo. But container traffic through Fraser Surrey Docks (FSD) spurted to 373,000 TEUs (20-ft equivalent containers) from 318,000 a year earlier (*Vancouver Sun*).

**Unhappy news for FSD** comes from a recent dramatic shift in container traffic to the Port of Vancouver, resulting from CP Ships being acquired by the parent of German line

Hapag-Lloyd in December (see item in CPR section above). Under the new ownership, former CP Ships vessels are being diverted to Vanterm and Deltaport, resulting in a 70% cut in containers at FSD. CPR rail traffic to FSD, which sometimes involved two trains a day, has ceased in conjunction with this change. (railsnorthwest@yahoo.com)

**The Port of Vancouver** saw cargo volumes reaching their second-highest levels ever last year, with a total of 76.3 million tonnes handled. This was just 300,000 tonnes short of the record set in 2000, and was achieved despite a lengthy strike by container truckers.

Nevertheless, container traffic was up 6% to a record 1.77 million TEUs. Coal jumped 2% to 25.2 million tonnes, about one-third of the port's total volume.

Other gains were seen in petroleum products, canola and "other" bulk shipments (including potash and sulphur). Lumber, wood pulp and grain volumes dropped. (*Vancouver Sun*/Port of Vancouver)

**Expansion plans** in the Port of Vancouver have fallen about a year behind schedule, owing to delays in the environmental review and public consultation processes. The project immediately affected is the planned third berth at Deltaport container terminal at Roberts Bank, which now will not start until late 2006 at best.

Behind that is a huge project to add a second terminal at Roberts Bank which would have a capacity of 2 million TEU, more than the current combined capacity of Vanterm, Centerm and Deltaport. (*Globe & Mail/Vancouver Sun*)

## Preservation

**Earl Roberts is the latest winner** of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Earl is the "Marathon Man" of Canadian railway publishing. He has made longstanding contributions to the recording of railway history as editor of the Bytown Railway Society's monthly *Branchline* magazine and as co-editor of the annual *Canadian Trackside Guide*, a definitive listing of all motive-power on Canadian railways, preserved equipment, passenger rolling stock and much more, which has just published its 25th Anniversary Edition. Well done, Earl! (CRHA)

**Two ex-CN passenger cars** from the mas-

sive build of 1954 have been leased by Kamloops Heritage Railway from Rocky Mountaineer Vacations. Coaches 5578 and 5611 were acquired by RMV last year, after serving on the defunct Waterloo-St. Jacobs tourist line in Ontario and then sitting in storage for five years (see Summer 2005 issue, page 44).

They already wear the classic CNR green, black and yellow livery, and will thus fit in well with KHR's other equipment in the same paint scheme. (*Branchline*)

**Nelson station has been donated** to the local chamber of commerce by CPR, and will be restored to "its original splendour" to serve as the chamber's offices, a visitor information centre, and premises for the Nelson Economic Development Partnership.



*Nelson's CPR station, seen here on July 25, 2003, has been donated to the chamber of commerce for restoration and use as an office building.*

*(Photo by Ian Smith)*

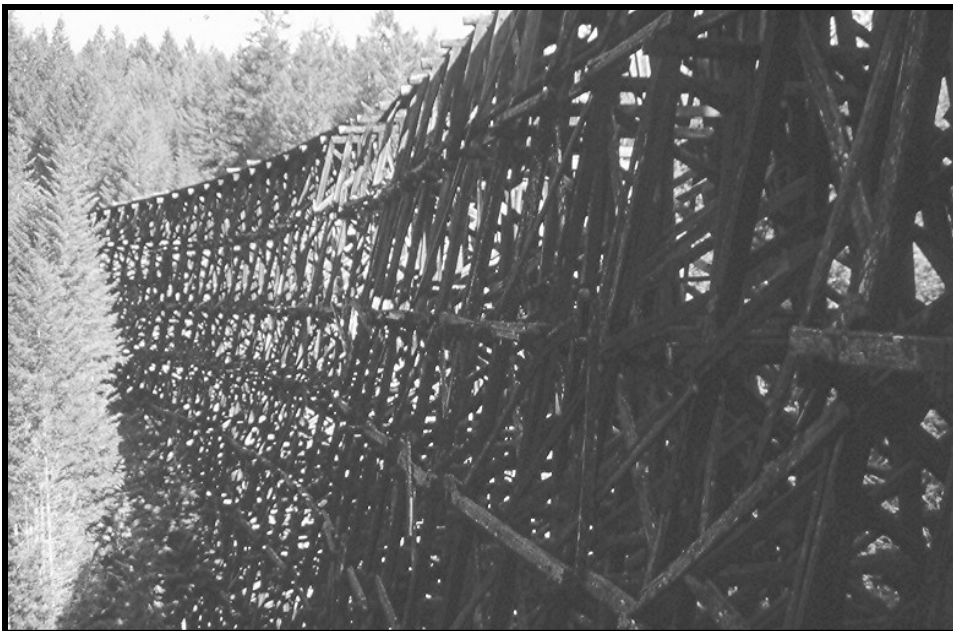
The building is the oldest surviving CPR division point station in B.C. and is essentially unchanged since its construction. It is likely the oldest wooden station building in B.C. (Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce)

**The massive Kinsol wooden trestle** on southern Vancouver Island is slated for demolition, after a study for the B.C. Ministry of Transportation determined that it poses a liability hazard. The Ministry will pay about \$1.5 million for its demolition.

Less clear is whether it will be replaced to provide a link in the Trans-Canada and Cowichan Valley hiking/biking trails. The trestle is off-limits to the public, and some would like it replaced in some form to enable trail users to cross the Koksilah River below.

Kinsol was once the largest curved wooden trestle in the British Commonwealth, at 615 ft. long and 125 ft. high. Completed in 1921 and situated at MP 51.5 of CN's Cowichan Subdivision, the bridge carried its last train in May 1979. (*Cowichan Pictorial*)

**A steam double-header will kick-off** the 2006 regular operating season for the Kettle Valley Steam Railway in Summerland. Two trains on May 20 will be hauled by both ex-CPR/BCOL 3716 and Shay No. 3, with the little logging locomotive leading. (Roman Krizek/KVSR)



*The massive Kinsol trestle is to be demolished. This view looking north shows the bridge in an advanced state of decay on March 28, 2005. (Photo by Ian Smith)*



# THE SANDHOUSE



The opinions expressed in **THE SANDHOUSE** are those of the author concerned and are not necessarily those of the PCD or of the CRHA. Excerpts of articles and news items may be used in other publications, provided that **THE SANDHOUSE** is credited. Photographs may not be reproduced, in any form, without permission.

**THE SANDHOUSE** is normally published once each quarter, in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, and mailed to paid-up members. Additional copies can also be purchased from the following retail outlets:

Central Hobbies, 2845 Grandview Hwy., Vancouver	(604) 431-0771
Pacific Scale Rail, 612 Carnarvon, New Westminster	(604) 524-8825
Kelly's Kaboose, 634 Victoria St., Kamloops	(250) 377-8510
Victoria Scale Rail, 3595 Ravine Way, Victoria	(250) 475-2860

All contributions are gratefully received, but are subject to editing. Please send all news items, photos and articles to the Editor, care of the Division address (see page 2).

Ian Smith — Editor

## Parting Shot



*CP class R3d 2-10-0 locomotive 5788 approaches Kamloops yard with a westbound freight on August 1, 1945, with a stock car coupled to the tender.*

*(Addison Lake collection)*

Canadian Railroad Historical Association, Pacific Coast Division  
P.O. Box 1006, Station A Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2P1

## WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US

Get together with fellow railway enthusiasts and take part in the varied activities of the CRHA's Pacific Coast Division.

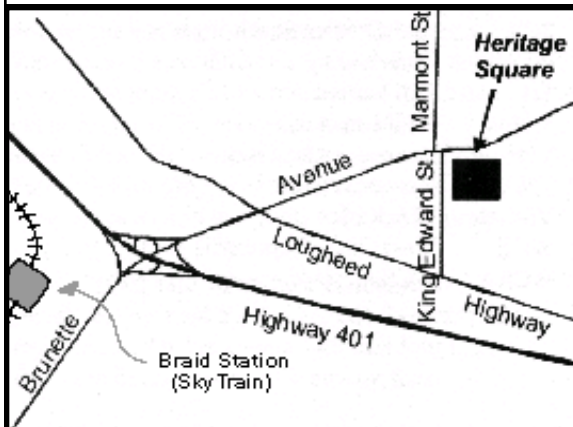
We meet nine times a year on the 3rd Thursday of the month (see below)

- ◆ Meetings feature slide shows, video programs, talks by railway officials and writers on railway subjects, and the opportunity to socialize with other railway enthusiasts.
- ◆ We publish **THE SANDHOUSE**, a quarterly journal on B.C. railway matters. Membership dues include a subscription.
- ◆ We operate a museum in the preserved Fraser Mills CPR station at Heritage Square.
- ◆ We're restoring a CP Rail caboose at Heritage Square.
- ◆ We organize field trips to local railway facilities and explore sites of historical interest.

We hope you'll join us. Please send your address details (name, full address, phone number, e-mail), together with your payment, to our postal address or bring it to one of our regular meetings.

Annual dues are: \$20 for Canadian residents; \$30 for U.S. and Overseas (\$20 if paid in U.S. funds)

**Website address: <http://pcd-crha.tripod.com>**



Pacific Coast Division's regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except July, August and December) at

**Heritage Square, Place Des Arts  
1120 Brunette Avenue  
Coquitlam, B.C.**

Informal socializing starts at 7:00 p.m.  
Presentations begin at 7:30 p.m.

# Switching on the Fly, E&N Style

