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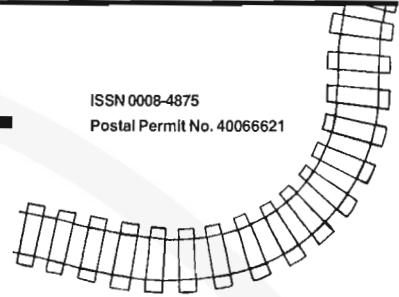


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FRONT COVER: CPR commuter train No. 250, hauled by engine 2822, en route from Rigaud to Montreal, passing Valois on October 11, 1958. The 800-class cars in the train were only five years old. Photo by Ron Ritchie

BELOW: One of the major complaints about the use of "Renaissance" equipment on VIA's "Ocean" was the lack of dome cars. Accordingly, early in May, VIA began running a "Park" car on the rear of each train. This photo, taken by David Morris on May 5, 2005 at Amherst Nova Scotia, shows the first run of a westbound Renaissance-equipped "Ocean", No. 15, with a dome car. The car was the "Waterton Park". For the record, the rest of the train consisted of 6404, 6413, 7009, 7228, 7231, 7311, 7402, 7314, 7526, 7521, 7520, 7501, 7518, 7503, 7602. Photo by David Morris

<p>For your membership in the CRHA, which includes a subscription to Canadian Rail, write to: CRHA, 110 Rue St-Pierre, St. Constant, Que. J5A 1G7 Membership Dues for 2005-2006: In Canada: \$45.00 (including all taxes) United States: \$43.00 in U.S. funds. Other Countries: \$80.00 Canadian funds.</p>	<p>Canadian Rail is continually in need of news, stories,, historical data, photos, maps and other material. Please send all contributions to the editor: Fred F. Angus, 3021 Trafalgar Avenue, Montreal, P.Q. H3Y 1H3, e-mail angus82@aei.ca . No payment can be made for contributions, but the contributor will be given credit for material submitted. Material will be returned to the contributor if requested. Remember "Knowledge is of little value unless it is shared with others".</p>	<p>EDITOR: Fred F. Angus CO-EDITOR: Douglas N.W. Smith ASSOCIATE EDITOR (Motive Power): Hugues W. Bonin LAYOUT: Fred F. Angus PRINTING: Procel Printing DISTRIBUTION: Joncas Postexperts Inc.</p>
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Farewell to the 800s

by Fred Angus



One of the last steam locomotives in Canadian commuter service was 2816, seen here between Westmount and Montreal West about 1960. Note that the first car is an 800 class. 2816, now known as the "Empress" is still in special excursion service on CPR lines in Canada and the United States. Collection of Peter Murphy

On Friday, April 15 2005 the last of the former CPR 800 series commuter cars were retired from service on Montreal's "Lakeshore" commuter line serving the western portion of the Island of Montreal. These cars had been in continuous service for 52 years, a record almost unmatched (at the present time) by Canadian passenger cars.

Let us go back to June 1953. In many ways it was much the same as now, in other ways much different. There was no medicare, no social insurance and no Canada pension plan. No one had a personal computer or a touch-tone phone. Television (black-and-white of course) had only come to Canada the previous September. Louis St. Laurent was Prime Minister of Canada, Maurice Duplessis was Premier of Quebec, and Camilien Houde was Mayor of Montreal. The major story of that month was the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on June 2. Just before that event Mount Everest, the highest mountain on earth, had been climbed for the first time. There were no artificial satellites or taped TV programs, so on June 2, the Coronation movies were flown to Canada on an air force jet and developed en route so they could appear on television that night. In Korea, the war that had begun almost three years earlier was still raging despite on-going peace talks (fighting would finally stop on July 27). Amidst all this news, appeared an item about the "million dollar ride", the first ten of 40 sleek new commuter cars for the Lakeshore; such a contrast to the old pre-World War I wooden coaches then in use. At last the commuters on that line would be riding lightweight streamlined cars in keeping with the mid twentieth century.

The CPR's lakeshore commuter service dated back to about 1892 when the line was completed to Point Fortune, on the Ontario border, near Rigaud. At first it was operated mainly in the summer months for the benefit of those who had cottages along Lake St. Louis. As more people began to live in the area year-round, the service also was operated year-round. In 1904 the first of the 100-series coaches were built. These were designated as "Suburban", and were used on short runs throughout the system, including commuter service. The first of these had open platforms, although later ones of the type had closed vestibules. Most were equipped with gas light, using gas carried in tanks aboard the cars. In all, 251 of these cars, numbered from 100 through 350, were built between 1904 and 1913, and 240 of them were still in service in 1938. Cars of this type were the mainstay of the Lakeshore commuter fleet until the early 1950s.

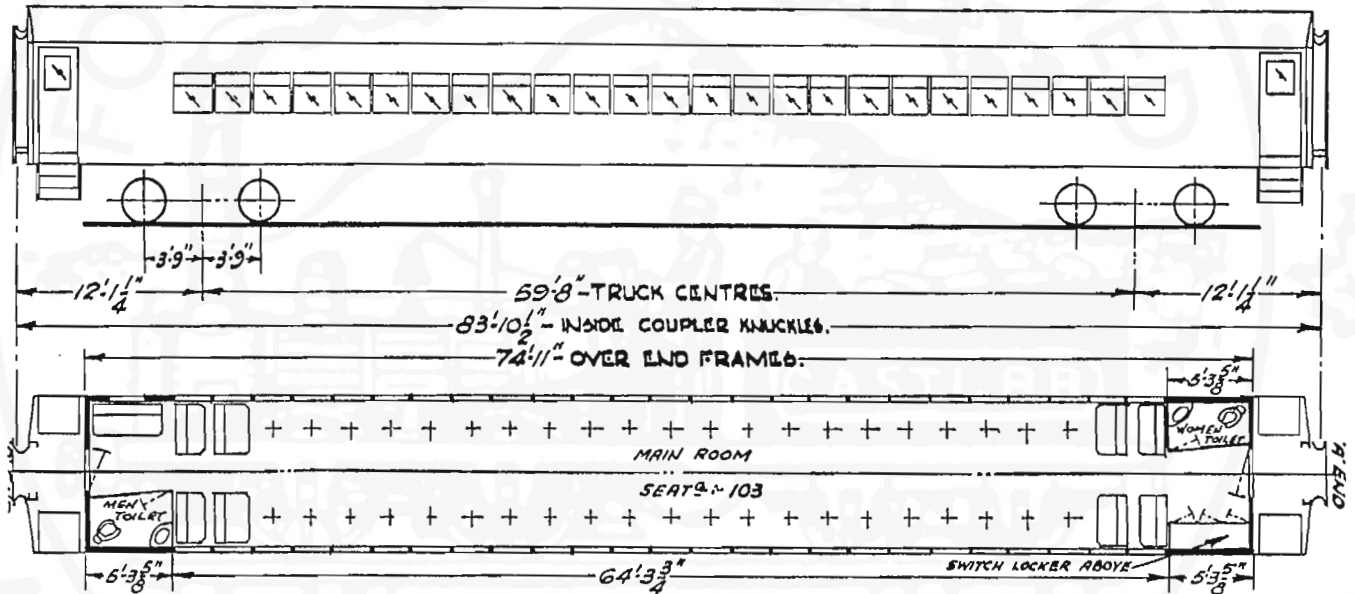
By 1950 it was obvious that the old wooden cars were near the end of their useful life and would soon need to be replaced. Accordingly, in 1952, the CPR, under equipment order 3875, ordered forty lightweight suburban cars from the Canadian Car and Foundry Company in Montreal. These were to be 83 ft 10 1/2 inches long and would have seats for 103 passengers. The windows were quite small, but adequate for the relatively short runs on which these cars would be used. Although the cars were not air-conditioned, the upper portion of the windows could be slid downward to provide sufficient ventilation. Interior finish was simple, consisting of light green arborite, and the seats were upholstered in a light green plastic material which matched the interior. Since the cars had arch



Before the 800s. Commuters boarding the old wooden cars at Valois on a late winter's day, March 11, 1952. At that time the newest of these cars was 39 years old. Sixteen months later they were retired. CPR photo

more than a million dollars. In some ways the new cars resembled those used in Britain, possibly a legacy of the visit of the "Royal Scot" to Canada in 1933. Not all of the train was new; motive power was still steam, often the "G" class Pacifics, some of which dated back as far as 1906, but the passenger accommodation was fully up to date.

During July and August 1953 more and more of the 800s were placed in service. Soon a second train was converted to the new equipment, using Nos. 810 to 819, also marshaled in numerical order. Late in July, Nos. 820 to 829 appeared and were assigned to another train. Curiously, the strict numerical order was not quite followed this time, as the last two cars were



COACH

**CPR ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES CFCP**

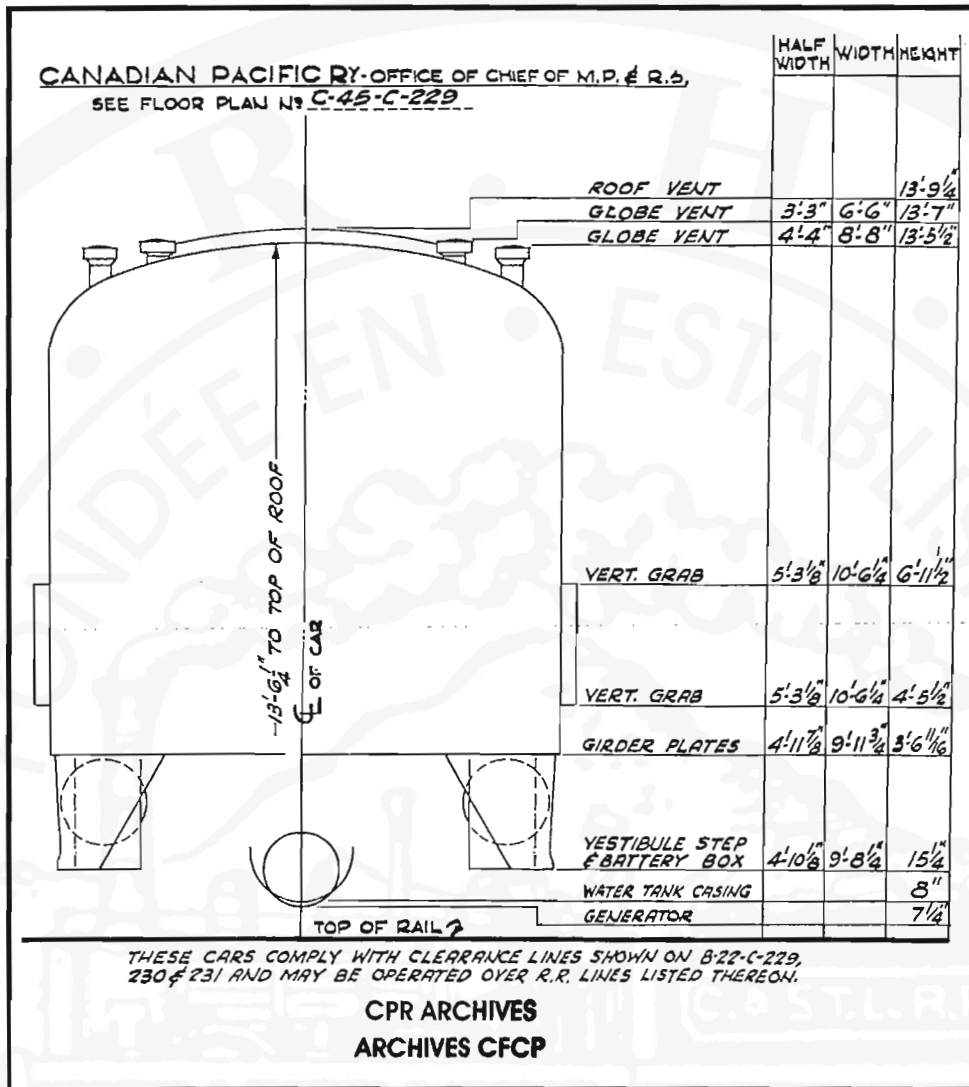
ABOVE, AND OPPOSITE TOP: Plan and cross section of the 800 class commuter car as they were when new. Canadian Pacific Archives, courtesy of Jonathan Hanna

roofs, they always appeared spacious inside, in contrast to some of the older cars. With their simple functional decor they well epitomized the style of the 1950s.

By June 1953 the first of the new cars had arrived, and ten were placed in service. These were numbers 800 to 809, and they were assigned to the CPR's fastest commuter train, the "5:15" from Windsor Station to Rigaud. Interestingly, all ten cars were marshaled in strict numerical order, with No. 800 at the front, and running in order through 809 at the rear. The contrast between these and the old wooden cars was amazing, and the train soon received the unofficial title of the "million dollar ride". This name was partly due to the fact that the cars cost over \$100,000 each, making the ten cars worth

reversed; thus the last three cars were 827, 829 and 828! Finally, in August, Nos. 830 through 839 went into service, completing the order for forty cars.

As the 800s went into service the old wooden 100s were quickly retired. The last time the author rode a wooden car on this commuter line was in the evening of July 26 1953 aboard car 296 which had been built in 1913. One thing I vividly remember on that ride was the conductor coming through the car announcing that the armistice had been signed, and the Korean War was over after three long years. Although I had taken a brief trip on No. 800 on July 21, my first trip on an 800 from Ste. Annes to Montreal was on No. 827 starting at 1:01 P.M. on July 28, 1953. My first impression



Train No. 587, Engine 2527, Montreal to Vaudreuil, at Montreal West 14 July 1955. At that time the 800s still appeared as they did when new, two years before. The locomotive was built in 1907 and scrapped in 1960. Photo by Ron Ritchie





OPPOSITE TOP: *Train No. 519 Engine 2393 Montreal to Rigaud at Montreal West 14 July 1955.*

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: *Train No. 578 Engine 2581 Montreal West Turn leaving for Montreal. Montreal West 14 July 1955.*

ABOVE: *Train No. 589 Engine 2406 Montreal to Vaudreuil at Montreal West 14 July 1955.*

All photos by Ron Ritchie

of the new cars was how smooth and quiet they were. In fact they were so quiet that the application of the brakes as the train slowed for a station actually doubled the noise level.

Although the 800s had completely replaced the wooden cars, there were not enough of them to cover all the service. Older heavyweight steel cars were used as well, often former first class cars downgraded to commuter service. Some of these remained in use until the spring of 1970. It was not long before the numerical-order marshalling of the cars disappeared as extra cars were added and consists shuffled. No. 800 was the first car in the train for quite a few months, but the orderly progression of the others disappeared. With the return of the students to school in the fall of 1953, other cars were added to the consists, so 800s and heavyweights were mixed together in the same train. This was standard operating practice as long as the heavyweights ran.

By the end of 1953 the novelty of the new cars had worn off, and the 800s became a part of the commuter scene as if they had always been there. At that time few dreamed that half a century later they would still be in service, in much the same configuration as when new, having had a career considerably longer than the wooden cars they replaced.

During the ensuing fifty years, three generations of commuters rode these faithful cars as they traveled back and forth in all kinds of weather, broiling heat in the summer and bone-chilling cold in the winter. Through all this, the 800s carried on and ran up millions of miles of travel. After waiting on a cold station platform in the midst of a blizzard, it was a welcome experience to climb aboard a nice warm 800 for the trip to Montreal.

Until 1960 most of the Lakeshore commuter trains were hauled by steam locomotives, but in the late spring of that year all these trains became diesel-hauled. However the cars were still steam-heated, only now the steam was supplied by a generator unit aboard the locomotive.

Although primarily used in commuter service, the 800s sometimes ventured farther afield. In busy holiday weekends they might travel to Ottawa or Sherbrooke, and occasionally all the way to Saint John N.B. How the passengers felt about riding the 481 miles to Saint John in an 800 does not seem to be recorded. Once, in 1980, some 800s traveled all the way to Edmonton, Alberta (without passengers!) for a steam excursion run in that city. (See next page for an account that mentions this far-away trip).

SOME ANECDOTES ABOUT THE CPR COMMUTER TRAINS

by Paul McGee

Speaking of commuter trains, in working on my films, I have two sequences probably taken on a couple of Saturdays in April 1959, showing 2459 leaving Montreal West with about 6 *heavyweight* coaches, including a combine. I thought nothing of that odd combination at the time—a regular occurrence. It seems that CPR at that time used only heavyweight cars on the Saturday-only early afternoon train to Rigaud, presumably because they assigned virtually all the 800s to mid-distance trains on weekends.

As another anecdote/notation you might want to consider including, CPR usually brought about 25 to 35 of those cars in as a deadhead movement from Rigaud and/or Vaudreuil about 10:00 pm Friday nights for use on the mid-distance trains on Saturday and Sunday. One night, probably in 1954 or 1955, I saw a 2200 series Pacific with something like 27 of those come to an ill-timed stop at Montreal West as the evening train from Quebec was still on the crossover. It was a most interesting display watching a 2200 (2239?) trying to start a 27 car train on the grade in Montreal West station, but eventually it started to move after numerous attempts to take up the slack. I have often wondered what the engineer had to say when he found himself facing a red over red over red signal at Elmhurst Avenue! Bet it could not be printed in Canadian Rail even if you did know what he said.

Strangely I have no idea when those cars were deadheaded back to Vaudreuil and/or Rigaud— never saw them going that way, Would probably have been in the wee hours of Monday mornings. And equally strange I don't recall seeing all that many of them in service on weekend trains—certainly saw some of them cut into normal consists but never more than a couple at a time.

I assume you are aware that ten of the 800s were used in Edmonton behind 6060 for 10 days in 1980, undoubtedly the furthest those cars ever strayed from home turf, and also undoubtedly the only time they ever ran on CNR lines. Edmonton to Camrose with 6060, Edmonton to Whitecourt with 6060, Edmonton to Calgary on CN with 6060, Calgary to Drumheller with 6060, Calgary to Hanna with 6060, and 4 of those ten cars back to Edmonton with 6060 on CNR lines.



2838 hauling a train, consisting largely of heavyweight cars, at Grovehill, Que. about 1958. Steam had about two years to go.
Photo by Paul McGee



Train No. 531 Engine 1229 Montreal to Rigaud at Grovehill 7 September 1957. Photo by Ron Ritchie



Train No. 243 Engine 2822 Montreal to Rigaud at Grovehill 28 October 1958. Photo by Ron Ritchie



A winter scene showing train No. 243, Engine 2470, Montreal to Rigaud, at Dorval 7 March 1959. One 800 is at the front and one at the rear. Photo by Ron Ritchie



Many years before its revival as the "Empress", CPR 2816 was serving out its last days of regular service in the Montreal area. Here it hauls train No. 248, Rigaud to Montreal at Grovehill on 20 June 1959. Photo by Ron Ritchie



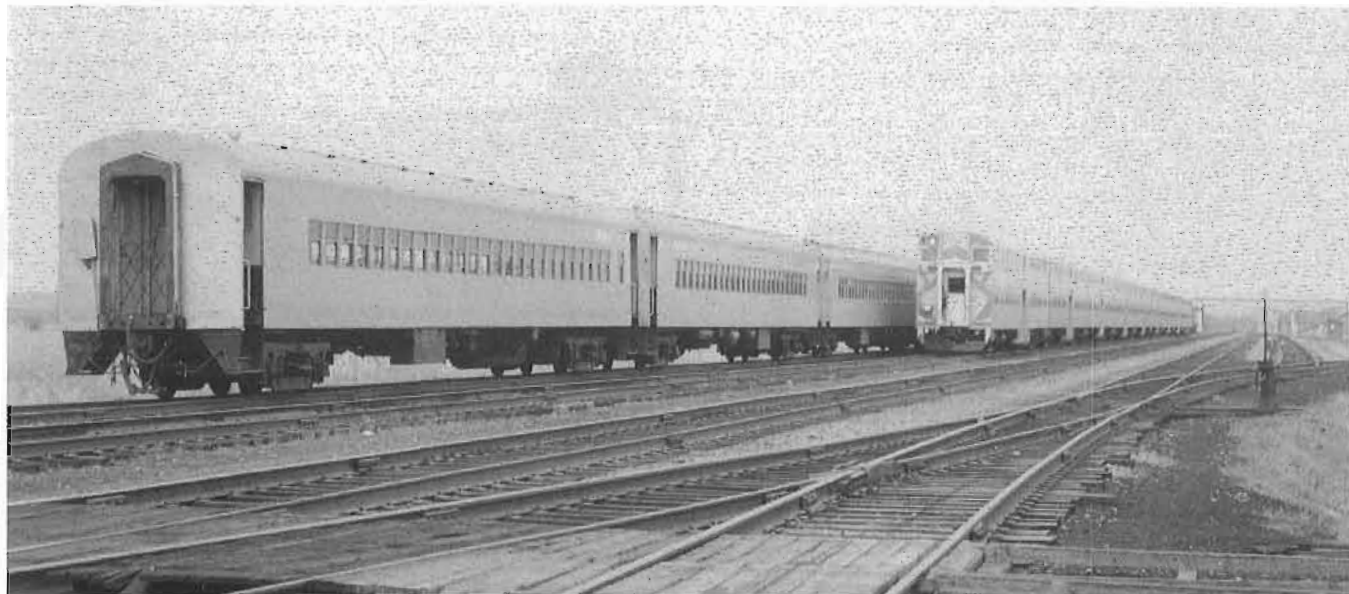
TOP: Soon after the 800s started to be painted silver, a commuter train, hauled by a locomotive in the "Canadian Pacific" livery, approaches Windsor Station.

ABOVE: A later photo, with both locomotive and cars in the "CP Rail" paint scheme.

Both photos by Ron Ritchie

Starting about 1968, the first big change in the appearance of the 800s took place when they started being painted in C.P.'s new passenger car livery of aluminum paint with tuscan red trim. This paint scheme was quite short lived, being replaced by the C.P. Rail "action red" letterboard on the aluminum background. About this time the words "Town Train" and "Train de Ville" were painted on some of the cars. An interesting sidelight was that, around this time, the toilet rooms were closed on many of the cars, but were retained on those with the "Town Train" designation. In most respects, the interior of all the cars remained the same, even the original green plastic upholstery remained intact despite all those

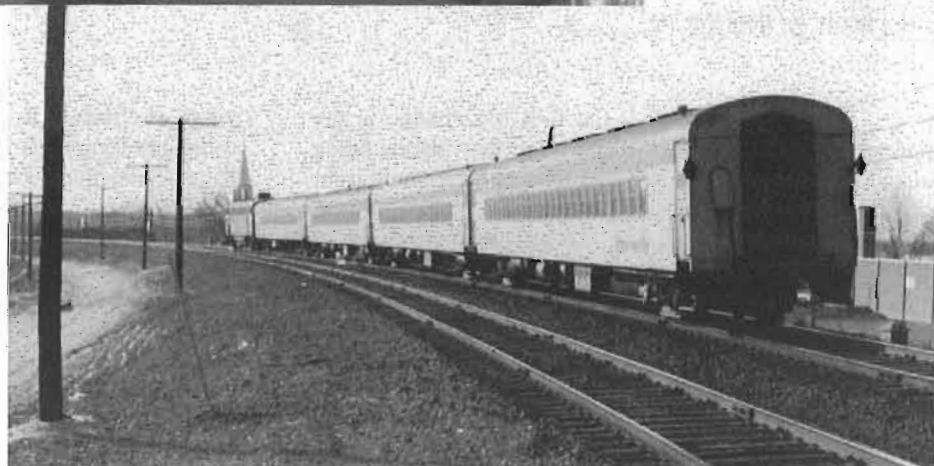
years of constant use. Meanwhile, in 1970, the first new commuter equipment in seventeen years made its appearance. Nine new double-decker cars of the 900 series began running on these lines, and the last of the old heavyweight cars were retired. Some of the latter were scrapped, while others found new homes as far away as Peru. The 800s were now the oldest cars on the line. For a short time there was a 41st 800. Streamlined coach No. 1700, a unique car built in 1938, and intended for high-speed streamlined train service, was renumbered 840 and was used in commuter service for a few years. It was later retired, renumbered back to 1700, and is now preserved at Cranbrook B.C.

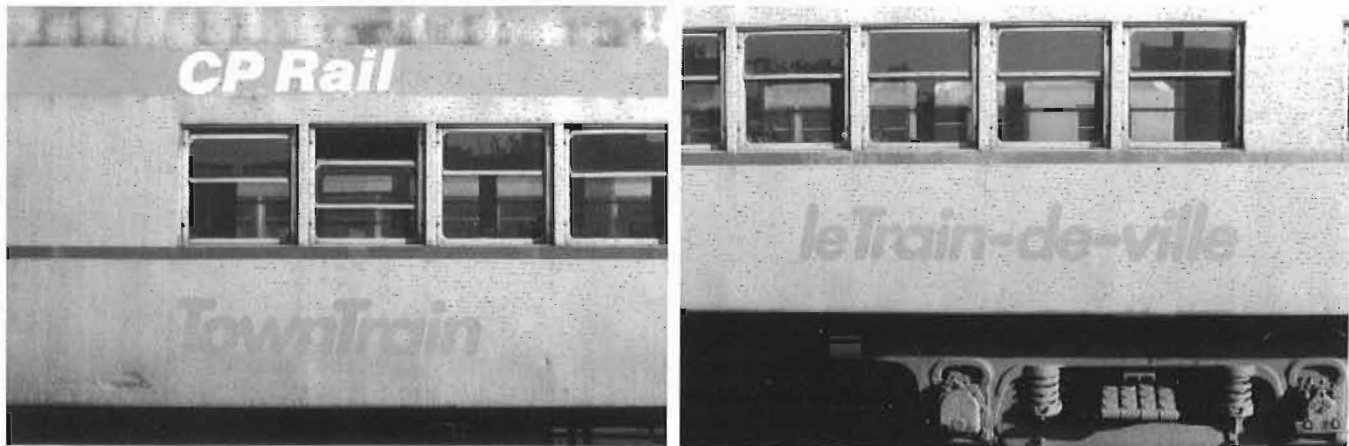


800s and double deckers appear side by side in this photo by Ron Ritchie.



*ABOVE AND RIGHT: A "New Year's Eve special" passed Ste. Anne de Bellevue on December 31, 1979.
Ron Ritchie*





Two photos showing the "Town Train", "le Train-de ville" logo. These were taken by Ron Ritchie on September 29, 1982, the second-to-last day of CP operation of the service.

September 30, 1982 was the last day of CP operation of the Lakeshore commuter service, and on the following day AMT began running the trains, still using CP tracks and CP crews. Before long a completely new paint job of blue, purple and white was adopted, and the older cars, including the 800s, were gradually repainted this way. About that time, all the toilet rooms were removed, and the seating capacity increased to 107.

In the early 1990s the new 700 series commuter cars, with head-end power and control units, were placed in service, and the 800s were converted to HEP in 1990. As the last

decade of the twentieth century passed, the 800s were approaching fifty years of service. Still, because of their streamlined design, they never seemed to look old, and it seemed that they might be around indefinitely. However, time was taking its toll, and the end was slowly but surely approaching. The first gap in the series occurred in 1999 when Nos. 815, 824, 828, 829 were sold to the Mattawa-Temiscaming Excursion Company (the Timber train), where they were renumbered 7401, 7402, 7403, 7404. In 2002, after the Timber Train ceased operations, these four cars were sold to the Adirondack Scenic Railway in New York State.



Train about to leave Windsor Station on September 29, 1982, the day before CP operation ceased. Ron Ritchie



Two photos taken on September 30, 1982, the last day of CP operation. Left, Ron Ritchie, Right, Fred Angus

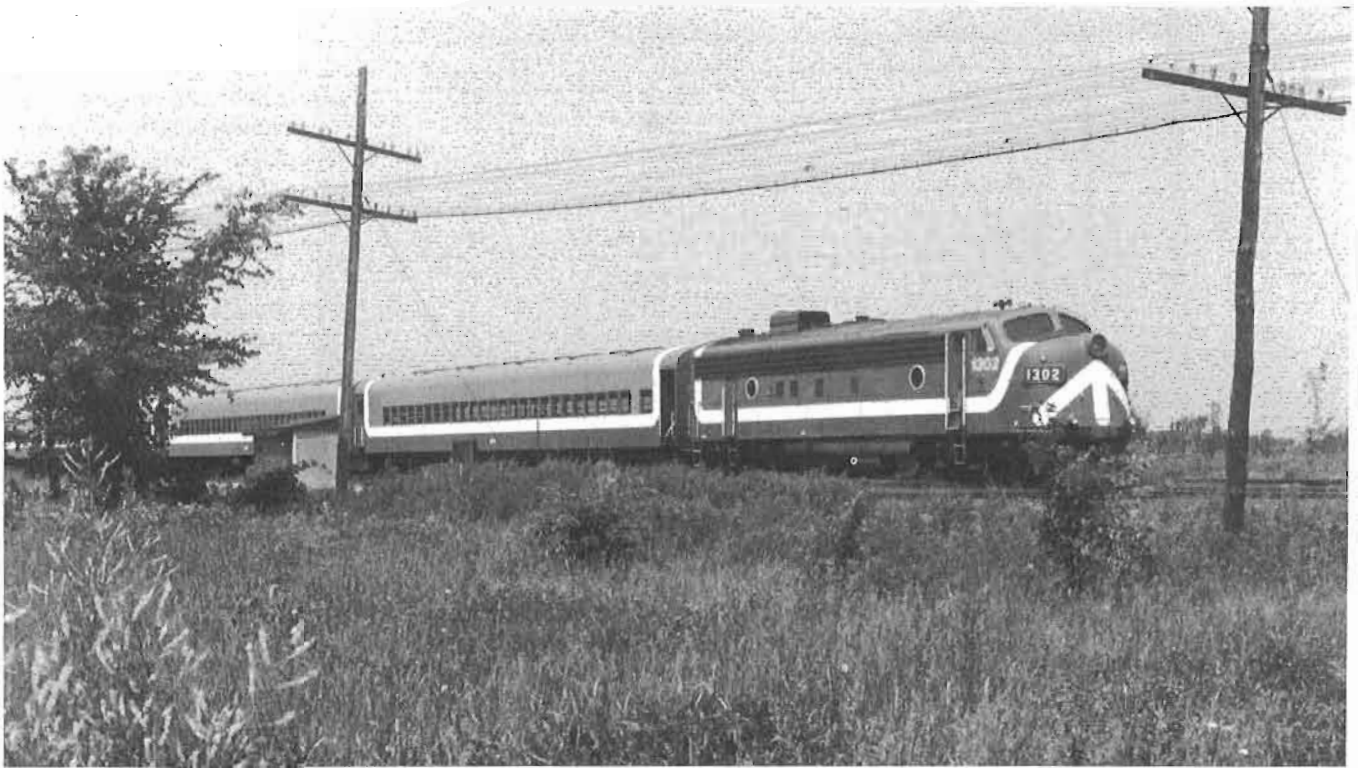


ABOVE: A winter scene at Dorion in 1989. Note the double-deckers in the consist.

RIGHT: A summer scene at the same location, August 19, 1989.

Both photos, Ron Ritchie





Rigaud, July 16, 1989. This was the last regular train consisting entirely of 800s (no control car at the rear end). Ron Ritchie

RIGHT: Train No. 212, Engine CUM 1301 Rigaud to Montreal at Hudson 17 May 1989. Ron Ritchie



LEFT: Draft of CP Train No. 211, Engine CUM 1302 entering wye at Rigaud 23 June 1989. Ron Ritchie



LEFT: Three generations of commuter cars. Left to Right, Trains Nos. 25, 33, 211 and 19 at Windsor Station 17 July 1989. Destinations are Dorion, Beaconsfield, Rigaud and Dorion respectively. Photo by Ron Ritchie

RIGHT: Train No. 18, Engine CUM 1306, Dorion to Montreal at Dorion 11 August 1989. It was operating on Westward Track due to repairs to Eastward Track on bridge over Ottawa River at Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Photo by Ron Ritchie



A train of 800s about to depart Montreal in the early spring of 2005. Photo by Fred Angus



The inside of an 800-series car on April 27, 2004, a year before retirement. This view is little changed from what the cars looked like in 1953, fifty-one years before, when they were new. Photo by Fred Angus

The remaining 36 cars served into the twenty-first century, and in 2003 passed the fifty-year milestone of continuous service. Numbers 808, 822, 827 and 836 were equipped with bicycle racks and their seating capacity was reduced to 103. In 2004, two of the 800s were used on a steam special, hauled by 2816, from Montreal to the Canadian Railway Museum. This was quite fitting, for in the late 1950s, 2816 had frequently hauled commuter trains of 800s.

By now the end was near. The arrival of the new double-deckers of the 2000 series meant that the 800s could be retired. Although still looking sleek and streamlined, they were not air-conditioned or handicap-accessible. They still had the same seats as in 1953, and in some cases the original upholstery. The green arborite was still there, a little worn perhaps, but still looking much as it did in 1953. Under the surface, however, time had taken its toll, and there was evidence of corrosion and aging. The 800s had reached the end of the line.

In April 2005, many of the new 2000s were running, but there was still one train consisting almost entirely of 800s. It was the last chance to ride these vintage cars in regular service, and many enthusiasts availed themselves of the opportunity to do so. Finally on Friday, April 15, the last train arrived at Montreal, and deadheaded to Sortin Yard. The era of the 800s was over.



Less than a year from the end for these old cars, a passenger has disembarked at Dorval station on April 27, 2004. The train of 800s heads off into the sunset; and retirement. Photo by Fred Angus

AMT has kindly donated No. 827 to the Canadian Railway Museum, and it is scheduled to go there during June or July. Thus visitors will be able to see, and maybe even ride, one of these cars that were a part of the Montreal commuter scene for so many years.

Fleming and Old “King” Coal

by Jay Underwood

“We must admire the part played by Sir Sandford Fleming Few public servants have displayed his scrupulous honesty and his conscientious application to his duties.”

- Leonard Seton CRHA Bulletin May, 1958

“He wrote a book of *Short Daily Prayers for Busy Households*, (and) invested so shrewdly that he was wealthy by his mid-thirties...”

- *Royal Bank Letter* Vol. 59, No. 8, August 1978

“Sandwiched between these examples of how not to build railways there was an equally striking example of what could be done if a man knew his job and was allowed to go about it in his own fashion.

- G.R. Stevens *History of Canadian National Railways*, Vol. 1 1964

There can be no doubting Sandford Fleming’s energy and ingenuity, but somewhere sandwiched between these statements, made over the course of three decades, lies a truth that indicates Fleming’s wealth may have been the result of something less than shrewd, scrupulous, and independent honesty.

It would explain how, for example, he went from having a modest home in Halifax (219 Brunswick Street) during his term as engineer-in-chief of the Nova Scotia Railway (and later chief contractor of the Pictou Branch) to being the owner of a splendid house – Winterholme – in Ottawa, a fishing lodge on the Miramichi, and the spacious summer home property now known as Fleming Park on Halifax’s prestigious Northwest Arm. (The Brunswick Street home is now a halfway house for released inmates, operated by the St. Leonard Society.)

Along the way he would receive the benefit of alliances with prominent businessmen and politicians, the unquestioning loyalty of subordinates, and the adulation of historians who considered his reputation sacrosanct as they raised him to a position as a national icon.

Behind it all there was the wealth promised by black gold, especially Nova Scotia’s Cumberland County coal.

The idea of running a railroad through the Cumberland coalfields pre-dated both the Spring Hill Mining Company and its founders. As early as 1846, as part of his survey for an inter-colonial railway, Major William Robinson of the Royal Corps of Engineers had suggested such a course (although his final route did not reflect the view) might provide a source of revenue for a line that would be hard-pressed to earn much money in those times.

This opinion found favour with the commissioners of the Board of Trade in Westminster, whose railway expert Captain Henry Drury Harness (also a Royal Engineer) informed the government of the colony of the united Canadas in 1849:

“Of the traffic which the Cumberland coal-field might occasion, it is of course impossible to judge; within the Province, while it remains thickly wooded, it is not likely that the coal would obtain a profitable sale at any great distance from the pits; but if it be of such quality as would command a good price in parts of the United States, it might prove remunerative to connect this coal-field by railway with one of the ports of Nova Scotia; it would not, however, be prudent, until this is ascertained, to calculate on any important return from this source.”

Both Robinson and Harness were of the opinion the railway should be a military line that attempted to make money when and where it could along the route. It is curious that Harness would advocate building a railway to carry coal to the very country the line was calculated to defend against!

Be that as it may, the Cumberland field was soon proven to be a rich deposit, well worth the risk any investor was expected to make, the equal of anything that had been found and profitably exploited in Pictou and Cape Breton counties. At the time the General Mining Association held a restrictive monopoly on the province’s mineral rights, and those riches in Cumberland County were left largely untapped.

The GMA surrendered its monopoly in the 1850s, and one of the first ventures in the unrestricted market was the construction of a railway from the village of Spring Hill (as it was then known) to the port of Parrsboro at the head of the Bay of Fundy. This was known as the “American Line,” but it came to nothing largely because it lacked financial backing in the United States, where the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty in the mid 1860s had seen a return to onerous tariffs on imported coal. Small companies opened pits in the region, but there was little output.

One of those companies was started in 1870 by Alexander Macfarlane and Charles H.M. Black. Black had ties to Cumberland County’s most influential politician, Charles Tupper, then Minister of Railways and Canals, and held Tupper’s shares in the Windsor & Annapolis Railway in trust. (One wonders then if Black’s holding in the Springhill company was, in fact, Tupper’s stake?)

By 1872, local confidence in the marketability of the coal was bolstered by the approach of the Intercolonial Railway, and it seems Sandford Fleming was among those quick to recognize the opportunities.

It was a propitious time to be in the coal business, especially at a mine so close to a railway, for as early as 1870, George Taylor, superintendent of the Nova Scotia Railway (the following year it would become part of the Intercolonial), told the minister of public works at Ottawa:



*Illustration of a typical coal mine operation. The trains are loaded at the right.
Taken from Morrow's history of the 1891 Springhill disaster.*

"Coal has been successfully used in several engines. I have every reason to anticipate that a large saving will be effected when coal is used on both lines."

William Johnston, the railway's locomotive and car superintendent, in his report to the superintendent dated Richmond, October 1, 1870, similarly stated:

"There are eight engines burning coal, and, I may say, with great success; and as yet, no detention has been caused to any train for the want of steam, or anything that could be contributed to the use of coal."

In his 1884 report to a potential investor, Lionel H. Shirley, C.E. noted:

"Shortly after that the Province was free from the mining restrictions, coal was accidentally discovered at Spring Hill in the County of Cumberland and a company was formed to work it. At that time the Intercolonial Railway was not thought of, the country was covered with dense forest, no roads existed, and the locality was twenty-seven miles from the coast. It was unsuccessfully attempted to dispose of the company's property in England. Still, some good work must have been done, for in 1872, the Intercolonial being in course of construction, and the country being better known, some capitalists of St. John, N.B., formed a company with a capital of \$400,000, under the name of the Spring Hill Mining Co., and bought out the old company for \$270,000. The new company was successful, and shortly after the Government granted a charter for a railway to Parrsboro', a town on Minas Basin, Bay of Fundy, the distance being 27 miles."

These two companies – incorporated provincially – were the creation of Edwin N. Sharpe, a Saint John, N.B. stockbroker. Robert A. Morrow's chronicle of events – recounted in his history of the 1891 explosion at Springhill – has become the popularly accepted version of the development of the mines:

"During the time that Mr. Sharpe was talking up the enterprise in St. John the "missing link" of the Intercolonial

Railway between Amherst and Truro was being completed. A connecting line from the mines to the Intercolonial Junction was also under consideration. This line was built by the Springhill Mining Company immediately afterwards."

The last of those statements is significant, as will be made clear later. Morrow records:

"The first passenger train from St. John to Halifax was run on the 17th November, 1872, and the first car load of coal that left Springhill mines by rail was taken to the Junction in the fall of 1873 by Mr. Hugh Tait, engine driver on the Intercolonial."

The new owners proved to be an august bunch, as Morrow records in his 1891 history:

"Alexander Macfarlane of Wallace, N.S. was president, and William E. Vroom of St. John, treasurer. Among the largest stockholders in this company were Alex. Macfarlane, Magee Bros., James L. Dunn, Sanford Fleming, Edwin Frost, R.B. Dickey, Hall & Fairweather, J. & W.F. Harrison, George McLeod, John W. Nicholson, W.J. Ritchie, Robert Reed, Charles J. Stewart, George F. Smith, R.P. & W.F. Starr, W.W. Turnbull, John F. Taylor, William L. Black, J.P.C. Burpee, and Charles Merritt. These gentlemen owned from one hundred to nearly one thousand shares each."

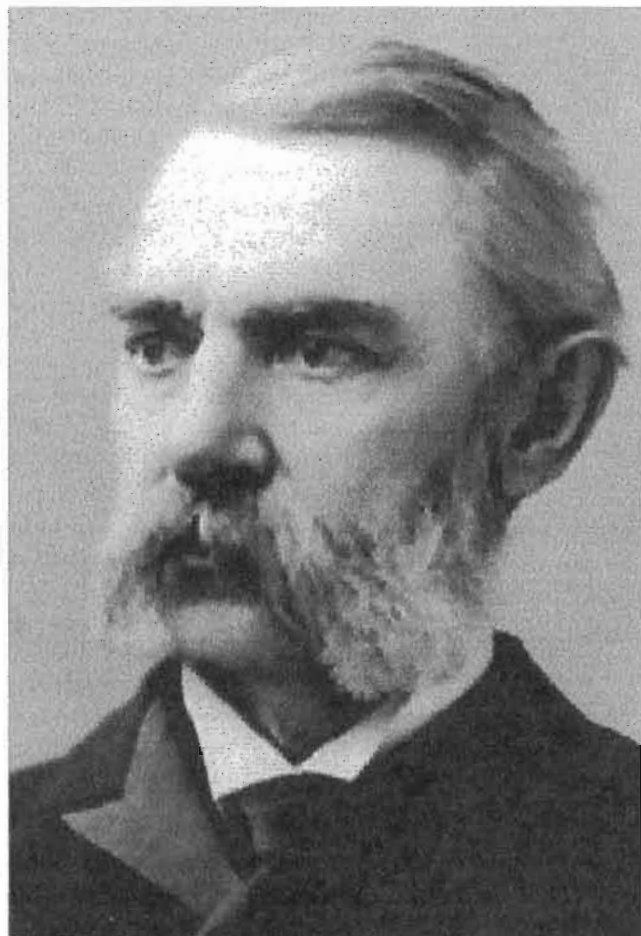
Fleming's money probably came from his investments in real estate in the Peterborough area of Ontario. The records of the law office of Dennistoun Bros. and Hall (E.H.D. Hall was Fleming's brother-in-law) at Trent University indicate he was very active in the market, as was his father-in-law. (In 1862, while still chief engineer of the Northern Railway, Fleming was advocating Peterborough as a possible terminus for his trans-continental railway.)

If G.R. Steven's account (*Sixty Years Trial and Error*, Clark, Irwin & Company Limited, 1960) of the building of the Pictou branch is accurate, Fleming had little left from that venture with which to invest:

"The completed cost of the Pictou branch, including payments made before Fleming came on the scene and the costs of its rolling stock, came to \$2,321,577, from which it would appear that Fleming made little if any profit on his contract. No one could have cared less."

The engineer was joined by an interesting cast of characters, almost all of them men used to getting the job done in their own fashion. John Peabody Coburn Burpee was the brother and business partner of Saint John Liberal MP Isaac Burpee (from 1862-1882), and W.L. Black was from the prominent Saint John family with mercantile interests in Halifax.

Isaac Burpee, J.P.C. Burpee, Stephen S. Hall (no relation to Fleming's in-laws) and Charles H. Fairweather would also go into business together as incorporators of the St. George Granite Company (1873.)



Charles Carroll Colby, the Quebec MP and railway executive who joined the Montreal capitalists who acquired the Springhill coal mines. (Library of Parliament)

Dunn was not the man who later became industrialist/philanthropist Sir James Dunn, of Bathurst, N.B. James Lindsay Dunn (1822-1893) was a Saint John businessman, who was a partner with John McMorran in the firm of McMorran & Dunn, which built several ships at Dorchester, N.B. before moving into the St. John shipbuilding district.

Their most notable vessel was the Queen of the North (1668 tons) built in 1860, which later became part of the White Star line.

R.P. and W.F. Starr, Saint John merchants, would later (1880) offer their customers "COAL, nut or stove, of the best description," landed by the brigantine *Belle Waters*. They would also later get a federal contract to supply coal to Saint John's Head harbour light station.

The "local" faces of the shareholders included two well-connected politicians. Dickey was a "Father of Confederation," Macfarlane deserved to be considered as such. Both men were serving members of the Canadian Senate. Macfarlane (1818-1898) came from a privileged family. Educated at home, earning his law degree, and later an appointment to the Executive Council of Nova Scotia in 1863. He served as the MLA for Cumberland County from 1855 to

1867. A delegate to the London conference on Confederation, he was appointed to the Senate in 1870.

Robert Barry Dickey (1811-1903) was called to the bar in 1834, and was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1858. He attended the Charlottetown and Quebec conferences, refusing to endorse the Quebec Resolutions until more favourable terms were obtained for Nova Scotia, but was a supporter of the Intercolonial Railway. He was appointed to the Senate in 1867.

Reed, Taylor and William Magee were shareholders of Sharpe's second corporate creation, also formed in 1872. The Springhill & Parrsboro Coal and Railway Co. was developed to build the line from the mines to the port at Parrsboro, thence to ship by sea to St. John, and markets on the U.S. eastern seaboard. None of them appears to have had any prior experience in operating or managing a railway, but that is not to say they were not successful in business. Reed was a partner in J. & R. Reed, one of Saint John's largest and most successful shipbuilding and ship-owning firms. His enormous mansion (no longer standing) was known as "Reed's Castle."

Of the railway, Morrow notes:

"The road was to be a narrow-gauge line of two feet nine inches, of easy construction, with a down grade nearly the whole length from the mines at Springhill, five hundred feet above the sea level, to the port of Parrsboro."

The gauge was later increased to the 4' 8½" Stephenson (standard) gauge. Over the years the line has taken on a romantic aspect, but for its first years it was only a modest enterprise, described by Shirley as:

"The Spring Hill and Parrsboro' Railway is 32 miles in length. It runs from Spring Hill Junction on the Intercolonial Railway through the Spring Hill mines, distant 5 miles from the Junction, to Parrsboro'. There are stations at Spring Hill, West Brook, Maccan, Southampton, Half Way Lake and Parrsboro'. The line is solidly built, with stone abutments to bridges, and six watering stations. It is laid throughout with new steel rails, and sleepers. The road is newly fenced. About half the road has been lately reballasted and the remainder is being done. The grades are favourable to the load. Four way sidings are laid down at the Junction for exchange of full and empty trucks and marshalling. The main track runs up to the passenger platform of the Intercolonial railway. A Fairbain's weigh-bridge, and narrow gauge trucks, and a tipping stage, for supply of coals to the Intercolonial railway locomotives are provided, telegraph posts and wires are fixed.

ROLLING STOCK

The rolling stock of the Railway consists of:

- 4 locomotives
- 80 hopper coal wagons (capacity 6 tons).
- 25 flats or timber wagons.
- 10 gondolas.
- 2 passenger cars.
- 2 box cars."

The first shipment from the mines to the dock at Parrsboro was made 15 March 1877, but thanks to the Intercolonial, Springhill's boom had already commenced. For

five years, the company's coal was moved over the line between the mine and the junction. Writing in 1884, Shirley noted:

"Up to last year the Spring Hill Mining Company and the Spring Hill and Parrsboro' Railway Company were perfectly distinct and separate undertakings. The Mining Company owned the railway from the mines to the junction, and the Railway Company that from the mines to Parrsboro' with running rights to the junction. The relations between the two companies were not harmonious, and in consequence of this and the inadequate wharfage accommodation, but a small percentage of coal was shipped to Parrsboro'. The earnings of the railway averaged from all sources – passengers, goods, building materials, lumber and coal – about \$2,000 monthly."

While the railway company struggled, watching most of its business go to the Intercolonial, the mining company's shareholders were having their own doubts about the profitability of the scheme, even with the ready made customer on its back doorstep, in the form of the Intercolonial. Shirley said of this market:

"In 1882 the company supplied the Intercolonial Railway with 98,000 tons of coal, and have contracted to supply the railway for 1883 and two following years with 100,000 tons yearly.

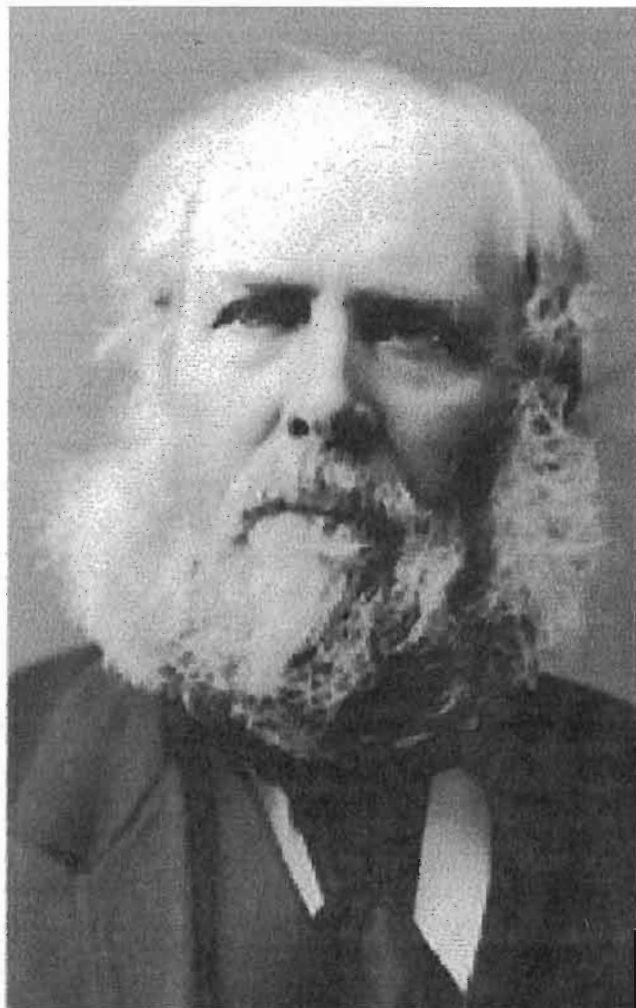
The Intercolonial engineers prefer this coal to any other as it raises steam quickly and does not clinker."

These circumstances made it convenient for the shareholders to consider selling out, as Morrow noted:

"Although Springhill had increased from its origin, and the prospects for the future good, yet the companies who commenced developing the mines and constructing the railroad failed to realize the large dividends on their invested capital they had anticipated. The expense connected with coal mining on "a large scale" and operating a railroad, was greater than many had contemplated. As to the company connected with the railway they found that rolling stock was expensive and the "adjoining" coal measures were difficult to develop. Owing to small profits on the outlay, some of the stockholders got dissatisfied, and after working the collieries for ten years, sold out their claims to a company of Montreal capitalists, and retired from coal mining speculations.

The amount realized for the mines of the Springhill Mining Company, and railway from the mines to the Junction, in the interest of the stockholders, was \$801,250. This sum was paid on the 2nd January 1884, to Mr. Wm. E. Vroom, of St. John, secretary and treasurer of the company. Messrs. R.G. Leckie, present manager of the Londonderry Iron Works, and the late William Headley, who was managing Dun, Wiman & Co.'s Commercial Agency in Halifax, negotiated for the Montreal capitalists, and conducted the transfer of the mines from the Springhill Mining Company to the Montreal Company.

The Springhill and Parrsboro Coal and Railway Company transferred their interests to the Montreal Company also for a considerable less sum than the Mining Company received for their claim.



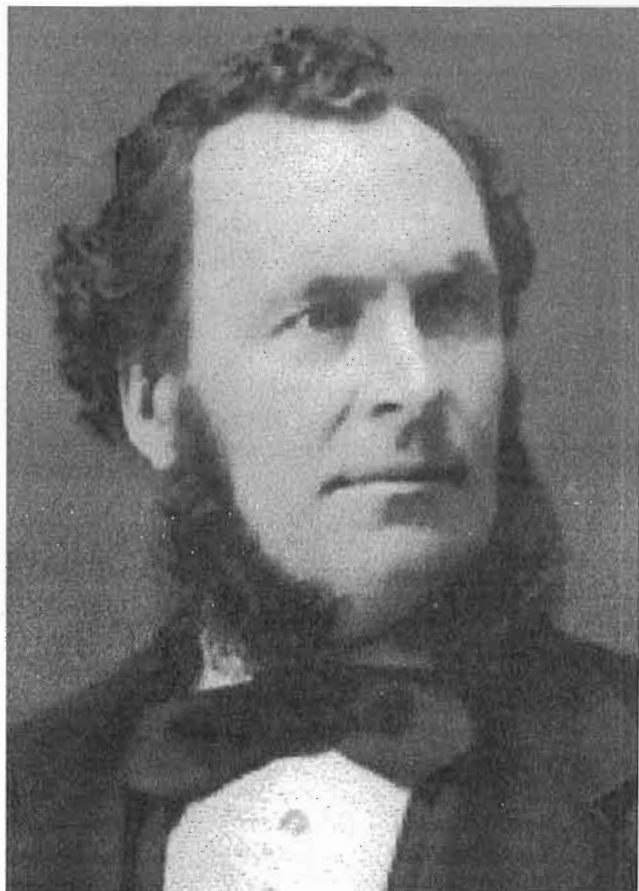
James Hall, pro-Liberal MP and father-in-law of Sandford Fleming. (Library of Parliament)

The Montreal capitalists commenced operations under favorable circumstances. New machinery was introduced and work pushed forward with avidity. Capital was invested without stint. This company organized under the name of Cumberland Railway and Coal Company."

At this point Morrow notes Dickey dropped out of the picture, selling his shares to the Montreal capitalists. J.P.C. Burpee did not live to get the chance. On January 14, 1884, at the age of 45, he was struck by a locomotive at the station in Boston, MA, and died instantly. Macfarlane stayed on as a director, and it is difficult to imagine that Fleming, the "shrewd" businessman would surrender his opportunity to stay involved with such a promising venture.

Those who did sell their shares to the Montreal syndicate doubled their initial investment. Those who stayed put would reap fortunes.

There is an irony in Fleming's involvement with an enterprise that included a representative from the Londonderry iron works, with whom he had quarreled 15 years earlier about the route of the railway over the Cobequid Hills. But James Livesey - Fleming's antagonist in the dispute



Saint John Liberal MP Isaac Burpee, brother of Fleming's business partner J.P.C. Burpee. (Library of Parliament)

that historians tend to mark as the epitome of Fleming's professional detachment - had long since left the iron industry, and another company had purchased his mines and foundry, running a profitable business with the assistance of the Intercolonial. Leckie would become general manager of the Springhill mines in the late 1880s.

The president of Cumberland Railway & Coal (the firm's first name, later changed to Cumberland Coal & Railway to reflect its priorities) was John McDougall, vice-president of Montreal's North Shore Railway, and a principle in the Caledonia Iron Works. The vice-president was Robert Cowans (Montreal Car Works, Montreal). Their directors were C.C. Colby M.P. for Stanstead, Quebec; George O. Drummond (a director of the Bank of Montreal, and president of the Canada Sugar Refinery); Alexander Macfarlane; L.A. Senecal (president of the Richelieu & Ontario Navigation Company, and president of the North Shore Railway); and James Crossen (proprietor of the Cobourg Car Works, Ontario.)

Leckie, the mining engineer from Sherbrooke, Que. - who was serving as manager of the Londonderry works - was the managing director, and J.R. Cowans, of Montreal was secretary.

(Cowans moved to a residence in Springhill, and became a millionaire. He later purchased his summer home, Ottawa House in Parrsboro, from Charles Tupper.)

This amalgamation of railway men and political veterans should dispel any notion that the Springhill and Parrsboro railway was one of those "little lines that could," struggling against all odds for its very survival. The cast of characters who involved themselves in the operation after 1884 ranged from professional railway men like MacDougall to political heavyweights like Macfarlane and Colby, all capable of using their political positions to safeguard their financial interests from the occasional inconvenient shifts in national policy.

The American-born Charles Carroll Colby (1827-1907), for example, was no lightweight. Besides wielding considerable influence in parliament as an independent Conservative loyal to Sir John A. Macdonald, he held a great deal of sway in the business world, having been a director of the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly Railway, the Waterloo & Magog Railway and the Massawippi Valley Railway while they were under construction.

At the time he became part of the Cumberland Coal & Railway Co., he was also a director of the International Railway Co., and president of the International Railway Company of Maine, which was proposing a short line from Montreal to the Maritime ports.

In his parliamentary career, in addition to enjoying overwhelming majorities in every election from 1867 to 1891, he was to become deputy speaker and chairman of committees of the whole of the House of Commons (1887-1889) and president of the Privy Council (1889-1891).

Add to this roll the name of Charles James Townshend (1844-1924), the company's solicitor, and MP for Cumberland from 1884-1887. He studied law under R.B. Dickey, and would become a member of Macfarlane's family, by virtue of his second marriage to Margaret Macfarlane of Wallace, the senator's niece.

Shirley's report (to potential investor C.R. Hosmer, president of Canada Mutual Telegraph Company) indicated the new owners would take a more pragmatic approach to the railway operation adding to the company's great potential:

"The management of the two undertakings will continue to be kept distinct under the control of the Managing Director; that the mines will cease to do any shipping which will in future be entirely the department of the railway. The Managing Director estimates an output of 400,000 tons during the current year, that of this 250,000 tons will be shipped via the junction, and 150,000 via Parrsboro'. The coal by the former route is loaded into Intercolonial wagons at the mines; five cents per ton will be the freight to the junction, and the working expenses should not exceed 30 per cent., thus giving a profit of \$8,750. The carriage of coal to Parrsboro' is 40 cents per ton in the company's wagons, and the working expenses will average about 50 per cent., giving \$30,000 profit or a total net profit derived from shipment of coal of \$38,750; and add from other sources \$20,000, the net earnings of the railway would amount to \$58,750 for the current year."

What the new company got in the purchase of 1884 - aside from the largest coal mine then in operation in the

province - was not made clear until 1908, when a panel of Intercolonial executives commissioned by then deputy Minister of Railways George Graham to assess the potential of absorbing local branch lines into the system, discovered the government had built the line connecting Springhill to the federally-owned railway.

It would become readily apparent, however, that Morrow's assertion the line from the mine to the junction was "built by the company" was woefully inaccurate.

In the report filed in August of 1909, the Intercolonial's traffic manager, E. Tiffin wrote:

"It is interesting to note that previous to 1875 the branch line from Springhill Junction to Springhill was built and operated by the government, and that on or about that time an agreement was entered into between the Intercolonial railway and the Springhill Mining Company, in which it was stated that the Springhill Mining Company was to execute a deed taking over the branch from the junction with the Intercolonial Railway to the mine, and to work it at their own cost and risk, and then follow the various conditions. It does not appear in this agreement that the mining company paid anything to the Intercolonial Railway for the branch, but that evidently the branch was turned over to the mining company without any consideration being paid therefore...."

This "sweetheart" arrangement was undated, and signed by Charles Brydges as general superintendent of government railways, and "S.S. Hill" (probably Stephen S. Hill) on behalf of the mining company. There were twelve conditions to the deal:

First- That the railway deliver the empty cars required for the traffic at the junction with the branch to the mine.

Second- The Springhill company to deliver them back loaded at the junction with the railway.

Third- The railway to give the Springhill company the use of the engine house and turntable at the junction.

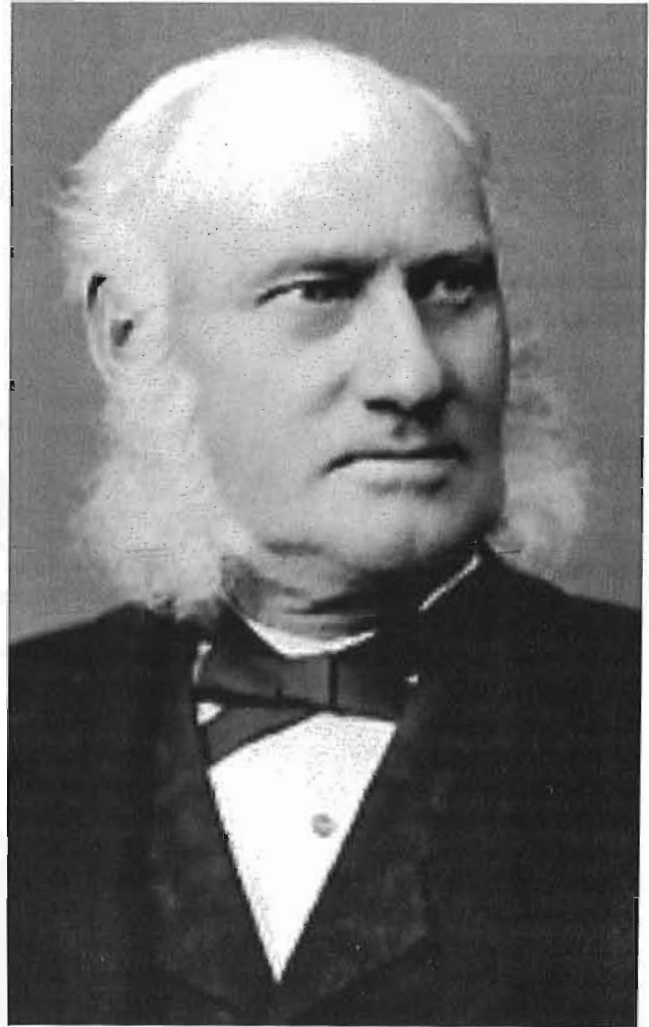
Fourth- The Springhill Company to be responsible to the railway for any damage or injury to the cars while working upon the branch.

Fifth- In the event of the gauge being changed within five years, the cost of changing the engines to be borne by the railway.

Sixth- The Springhill Company to bear the cost of changing the gauge of the branch.

Seventh- The railway to give the Springhill Company two hundred tons of new iron rails and fittings this fall, two hundred tons in the fall of 1875, and the balance necessary to relay the line in the fall of the year 1876. Also to allow the Springhill Company to retain fifty (50) tons of the old rails to lay additional sidings at the mine, but with this exception of fifty tons, the balance of the old rails and fastenings taken up from the branch to be returned to the railway and delivered at the junction of the branch with the main line.

Eighth- The railway to give to the Springhill Company the use of an engine free of charge up to July 1, 1875, the Springhill Company being responsible for it whilst



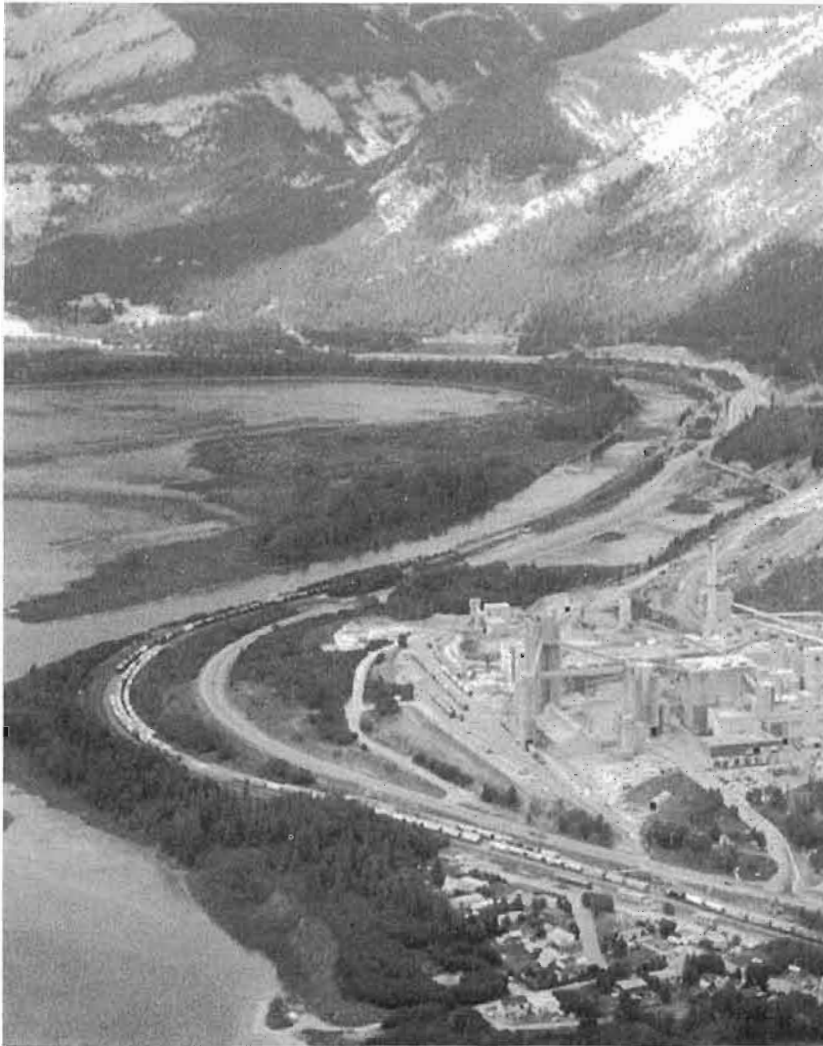
Alexander Macfarlane: The Senator from Wallace, N.S. was a shareholder in the Spring Hill coal mines, he also had ties to the International Contract Company. (Library of Parliament)

in their possession, and paying all the expense of working it. Should the engine house become disabled whilst in the possession of the Springhill Company, the railway to send them one to take its place whilst it is being repaired at the expense of the Springhill Company. The Springhill Company to pay rent at the rate of seven dollars and fifty cents per day for such engine loaned to them.

Ninth- The railway to charge the Springhill Company sixty cents per net ton for transporting the coal from the junction to the shipping point at Dorchester wharf, until such time as the Springhill Company commence to work the branch.

Tenth- The rates from the Junction to Saint John or Moosepath to be two dollars per ton of two thousand pounds.

Eleventh- Arrangements to be made by the railway to collect whatever freights are chargeable by the Springhill Company on local traffic for carrying coal over the branch. This account to be arranged from time to time.



The present-day Lafarge cement plant at Exshaw, AB. founded by Sandford Fleming and his son-in-law, Lord Exshaw, it is probably the only remaining example of Fleming's business ventures. (Photo courtesy LaFarge Canada.)

Twelfth- No charge to be made by the Springhill Company for the carriage of coal required by the railway over the branch, the railway of course supply the cars.”

This kind of arrangement clearly required some political assistance, and one can only guess at the extent of Sandford Fleming's involvement in these arrangements, as both a shareholder of the mining company, and employee of the railway commission at the time the deal was struck. (The reference to an engine house in the eighth condition appears to be a typographical error, and should refer simply to a locomotive engine. It is clear that from the line's opening in 1873, to the conversion to standard gauge in 1875, the railway ran on a split gauge. This also indicates that Fleming, as engineer of the Intercolonial, was anticipating a change of gauge, as luck would have it, to the standard gauge used by his mine railway.)

That he was involved cannot be disputed: One of his engineers mapped out the line.

Albert James Hill was born at Sydney, Cape Breton in 1836, and took his first engineering job on the European

& North American Railway, locating the line to Winn on the Penobscot River in 1868.

In May of 1869 he joined the Intercolonial staff under the supervision of Alexander Luders Light in the Miramichi surveys, and by 1870 had transferred to section 12 in the Truro, N.S. area.

From there he worked on sections 12 and 7 - the infamous Cobequid Hills section - where he laid out the branch line that connected James Livesey's iron mines with the Intercolonial at Londonderry Station. This line was built at the expense of the mining company, a 36" gauge line of six miles.

His biography in John Blaine Kerr's *Biographical dictionary of well-known British Columbians* (Kerr & Begg, Vancouver 1890) records that he also laid out the five-mile branch from the Springhill mines to junction with the Intercolonial, leaving the employ of that railway on January 1, 1872. This date is significant, in that it shows there were plans to connect the mine to the main line as the Springhill Railway & Coal Co. was being incorporated.

Hill moved on to survey the Louisburg Mineral Railway (the Sydney & Louisburg line) and then manage two collieries in Cape Breton before returning to Cumberland County in 1875 to lay out the Thompson & Pugwash and Springhill & Oxford Railway lines. Neither line went into operation, but Hill stayed in Springhill to briefly (1876-77) manage the collieries.

He joined the C.P.R. survey in British Columbia January of 1880 to engineer the section from Yale to Sumas, and never returned to Nova Scotia.

It is interesting to note that at no time was a similar branch line arrangement offered to Livesey at Londonderry. Had it been made to him, it could well have saved a great deal of time, money and acrimony, and Fleming might have had his choice of route over the Cobequid mountains.

And, almost unnoticed except by the press of the day, were the men who contracted to build the branch line to the mines. The *Halifax Morning Chronicle* of October 14, 1872 reported:

“LOCAL & OTHER MATTERS - Spring Hill Railway - Saint John Telegraph - Arrangements were completed yesterday between Spring Hill Mining Company and Messrs. Schreiber & Burpee for the construction of the Branch Railway between the Intercolonial and the Company's works at Spring Hill. The work of locating the line is to be commenced at once and construction will be begun within a fortnight. It is expected that nothing will remain to be done but the laying of the rails by 1 December.”

The company principals were Collingwood Schreiber, Fleming's lieutenant on the Intercolonial, and Egerton Ryerson Burpee, brother of J.P.C. Burpee and Isaac Burpee.

Fleming's associates formed a compact, one might almost say incestuous, clique, quite typical of the business climate of the time: Macfarlane a veteran Cumberland County politician with a vested interest in the success of both the Londonderry Iron Works (it is said his Wallace home hosted John Livesey when he visited the iron works and railway project) and the Springhill mines; Dickey with a son (J.A. Dickey was a junior engineer on the location and construction of the ICR from 1868 to 1871) who was apprenticed to Fleming, who in turn was Hill's boss.

Thomas R. Burpee (1848-1915), Fleming's secretary on the Intercolonial engineering staff (from 1868 to 1873) was the cousin of J.P.C. and Isaac Burpee, and named his son Sanford A. Burpee. He was married to the daughter of one of New Brunswick's "Fathers of Confederation," Sir Leonard Tilley.

It must also be remembered the agreement was penned in the era when Sir Hugh Allan and Sir John A Macdonald were conspiring over the construction of a railway to the Pacific coast. The resulting "Pacific Scandal" would topple a government, and in light of its magnitude it is easy to see why the small-time Springhill deal would avoid the outraged scrutiny of Alexander Mackenzie's Liberals.

Of course, despite the considerable Tory ties, Fleming and his fellow shareholders were not without Liberal allies. Quite aside from Isaac Burpee, Fleming's own father-in-law, James Hall, was to become a Mackenzie reform-minded MP (1874-1878) for Peterborough East.

The branch from Springhill to Springhill Junction was vital to the success of their mining venture. With the mines already in production, and the line from Springhill to Parrsboro unfinished, the Intercolonial was the only route the coal could take to market, and this fact offered another interesting glimpse into Fleming's practices.

In addition to Livesey's "Grecian Bend," the Intercolonial was obliged to take the "Dorchester Diversion" when it ran through New Brunswick, a fact about which Fleming offers great comment, but little criticism in his history of the line.

Popular history suggests this great roundabout way was sponsored by Edward Barron Chandler, another "Father of Confederation," one of the Intercolonial's commissioners, and a resident of the village of Dorchester, N.B. For years this diversion has served as an example of the heinous interference inflicted upon the railway by grasping local politicians.

Yet Fleming and his partners profited by this route, since the Intercolonial took coal from Springhill Junction and delivered it to the wharf at Dorchester (as the 1910 report notes) for shipment to markets in Saint John and Boston until the Spring Hill & Parrsboro Railway and Coal Co. line opened for traffic in 1877.

(The Springhill mines also produced a profit for the shareholders by virtue of the higher price the railway paid

for its coal. The board of commissioners' report to the Department of Public Works in 1876 noted that coal was purchased from the pithead of the Albion Mine in Pictou County for \$1.80 a ton. The coal from the Springhill Mines was purchased at Springhill Junction for \$1.95 per ton.)

Fleming acknowledges none of this in his history. Instead, he calls the diversion the result of some local interests that were judged – in 1866 – to be minor and "unimportant."

There was nothing "minor" or "unimportant" about Fleming's interest in the coal industry. As Lorne Green notes in *Chief Engineer: Life of a nation builder – Sandford Fleming* (Dundurn Press, Toronto 1993):

"Fleming bought property in Montreal and paid £17,000 for a new collier ship which he ran between Pictou harbour and Montreal with coal shipments. He urged his brother, David, to open a coal yard in Montreal to stock coal that was not sold immediately from dock side. Fleming paid \$4,000 to Tupper for the balance due on a coal mining venture in Cumberland County; he bought David's farm in Weston in 1869 and gave it to his sister, Jane; and the following year he bought several lots of prime land on the Northwest Arm of Halifax, amassing nearly 41 hectares. It bears recalling that Fleming's annual salary on the Intercolonial was \$4,800."

While today these liaisons between businessmen, politicians and civil servants are considered scandalous, they were not unusual in the days of Victorian colonial economics, especially for the Fathers of Confederation. Charles Tupper had interests in the coal mines of Maccan (an area to become known as "Tupper's Bustle" when the railway was diverted to pass by the mines) and Chandler was a principal in the Westmoreland Mining Co., which proposed to open a coal mine near his home, an area that became the location of the "Dorchester Diversion."

Chandler's interests were important enough to be given consideration as the route of the ICR through New Brunswick was being argued by partisans in their pamphlets. On such publication was *"The Intercolonial Railway, A National Military Work,"* which may have been written by Fleming.

If so, Fleming demonstrated he was already familiar with the economics of coal mining. The pamphlet was a response to a plan published by Minister of Fisheries and Marine Peter Mitchell, suggesting the Intercolonial should take a 100-mile diversion from Robinson's route to Apohaqui on the European & North American railway, thus opening up coal reserves in the centre of New Brunswick:

"We have no desire to be-little the coal deposits "at Grand Lake, Salmon River, and Coal Creek." We trust that when the country becomes opened up other and larger deposits may be found, but if the production was a thousand times what it actually now is, the Intercolonial Railway could be of very little, if any, service in developing these regions; nor would they afford much, if any, revenue to the railway in return for such service. It will be observed that the *coal raised* is from "Grand Lake," according to Professor Hind – from the "Newcastle Stream," according to Professor Bailey – *the same place*, several miles down the Lake, and not approached by the route to Apohaqui. "But," says Professor

Bailey, "a little coal has been raised at the mouth of the Little River and of late on the Salmon River." "Little River" is further down the Lake, and "Salmon River," with Coal Creek – not alluded to in the reports – are the only districts to be "opened up" by the Apohaqui route. *But all these districts have already the Grand Lake for an outlet*, where, at small expense, vessels of large tonnage can come directly to the mines and load. It needs no argument to prove that this mode of conveyance is the preferable one, and that, however large the business might become, it would be the successful competitor with the railway.

We submit the question whether it is worth while to make a deviation of 100 miles in the route of the Intercolonial Railway – at vast expense – in order to "open up the coal regions of Grand Lake, Salmon River, and Coal Creek."

The pamphleteer found more merit in providing rail service to the Dorchester coal region.

"But what shall be said of the WESTMORELAND AND ALBERT COAL REGIONS?"

In the first place, the "Albert Mines," famous all the world over for the richest oil and gas materials known, raises nearly 20,000 tons per annum. This is principally shipped to the States; a large portion of it is manufactured into oil at Portland, Maine, on which heavy duties, excise and import are paid to the United States; thence the oil is sent to Montreal and Quebec, paying duties to the Dominion! The building and location of the Intercolonial Railway by the Major Robinson line, will, it is hoped, induce the manufacture of this article on the spot, and its transportation by rail to the Upper Provinces. There is every reason why it should.

But even this is a *small matter* compared with the cannel beds of Dorchester and Memramcook in Westmoreland, and Baltimore and Turtle Creek in Albert. These beds, principally hundreds of feet above water-levels, and of very great thickness, are capable of producing practically *unlimited* quantities of a very rich material for the production of *gas* of extraordinary brilliancy, and oil of a superior quality; from which, ere long, doubtless, the cities of the Dominion will be supplied with essential articles, and the Intercolonial Railway derive its most direct and profitable traffic."

These were the considerations Fleming judged to be "unimportant." As it turned out, Chandler's mines were never developed; they simply couldn't compete with Springhill's quality and quantity.

Neither was the Springhill & Parrsboro taken over by the Intercolonial. The report compiled by Tiffin and his assistant D.A. Story offers some interesting detail on the state of the company's mining and railway operations at the time. The principal difficulty faced by the federal investigators was a determination of the company's real earnings and potential for revenue. It appears as though this was part of a deliberate attempt by the company to hide certain facts from the government.

"...In addition to the coal...for which the Cumberland Railway is not credited with any earnings, there is a further tonnage of freight carried by the railway for its

own use, and also for the use of the mines, and for which no earnings are allowed, and which in 1906 amounted to 68,955 tons, and in 1907 to 58,090 tons, and this tonnage consisted of stone from the mines, and refuse coal for ballasting, &c., railway ties and pit timber, the latter being for use of the mines, and I am also informed that the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company operate timber limits and sell ship lumber, and that up to this year no earnings have been allowed to the railway for this traffic, but they are now billing it at regular rates.

We were further advised that while in the statements furnished us no earnings were given to the railway for the coal hauled, yet in their head office at Montreal there was allowed to the railway 20c. per ton on all coal hauled, so that if this be so, it would show a surplus in the operating of the road instead of a deficit. We think it would be found, however, that if the Intercolonial Railway operated the road that the Coal Company would not be willing to pay any such rate for hauling the coal, and further it might be that on the coal supplied to the Intercolonial Railway that we would have to pay the same price at the mines that we now pay delivered at the junction, and we would have to haul the coal the additional mileage from the mines to the junction.

From the manner in which these accounts are kept, it is a hard matter to get at the present earnings of the road. It is essentially a coal proposition and the future possibilities depend upon amount of coal that can be mined and disposed of, and we would not undertake to say what value it would be to the main line as a feeder."

Clearly the company was saying "thanks, but no thanks" to the government's expression of interest, and supplying just enough information required by federal law when commissions of inquiry came snooping.

It is possible the company was attempting to protect another large customer from the wiles of a competitor, for the authors of the Intercolonial study went on to reveal one of their areas of interest:

"Could it be possible to divert the quantity of coal now being shipped via Parrsboro' for the Canadian Pacific Railway, St. John, to the rail route via Springhill Junction, the tonnage that might be so controlled would amount to large figures, as in 1906 the quantity of coal shipped to St. John for Canadian Pacific Railway by water was 62,504 tons, and in 1907 69,348 tons."

The report also acknowledged that the company had its own self-interest at stake:

"The value of this line to the Intercolonial Railway would depend upon what arrangements could be made with the Coal Company for the haulage of coal to Springhill Junction and Parrsboro'. It will be seen from the figures given above that practically all the business done is in connection with the mines, and it would be a matter of concern to the Coal Company as to what would be charged them, not only on the coal, but also on the refuse from the mines and the pit timber and other commodities used so largely by them"

It is not clear just how far the government was willing to go in order to acquire the railway. Only \$1,000,000 had been set aside to acquire some portion of the almost 20 branch lines in Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia

that were inspected for the report, but it would matter little to the Intercolonial Railway. One year after the report was filed in Parliament, the mining company received a better offer from the Dominion Coal Co.

In this deal another Fleming associate comes to light in the person of James Ross (1848-1913), whose contribution to Canadian railroad history is as great as Fleming's, yet has gone without the celebrity that has been attached to Fleming.

Another expatriate Scot who made his money in railway engineering, by 1909 Scott had become president of Dominion Coal. His memorial in *Montreal, Pictorial and Biographical* (S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914) noted:

"At a comparatively early stage of the development of the coal and iron industries on the island of Cape Breton, Mr. Ross with his customary business astuteness, foresaw the possibilities of great development, and decided to invest a considerable amount of his capital there. He became the owner of a large block of shares in the coal company, and after the promotion of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company in 1901 he became a director."

His association with Fleming came through a joint involvement in the construction of the CPR, by then Fleming as a director, Ross as contractor:

"He was one of the most successful railway builders and owners in the Dominion, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway over the Rockies being due to his power of organization and engineering ability, and when Sir Donald Smith, later Lord Strathcona, drove the last spike of the road, no one of that historic group held a higher place in public regard in Canada than Mr. Ross..."

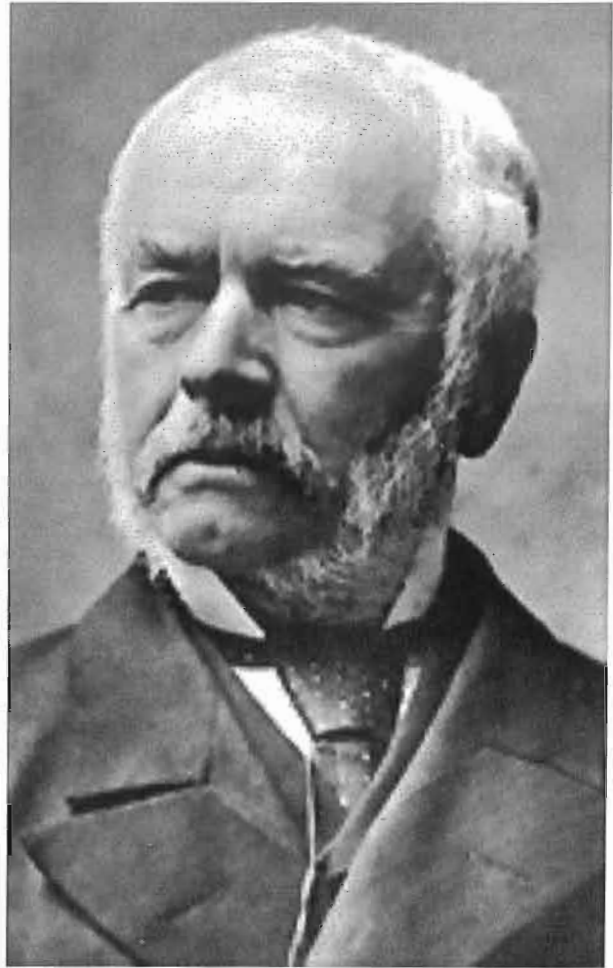
"In the spring of 1883 as general manager of construction, Mr. Ross began at Swift Current the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway over the Rockies, the Selkirks and the Gold Range, and early in November, 1885, this stretch of six hundred and twenty-three miles ending at Craig Ellachie [sic], was completed more than a year ahead of time, creating a record for fast railway building on this continent and evoking from Sir William Van Horne the statement that such a record meant millions to the Canadian Pacific Railway."

Still, the deal of 1872 was not totally out of character for Fleming. In his 1879 *Report in reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway*, Fleming outlined his concept of a national system under federal control that may not necessarily have been restricted to the development of the line to the Pacific:

"Having constantly in view the advantageous settlement of the more important fertile tracts of territory, the great leading lines should not be unnecessarily lengthened or diverted from the most suitable location in order to meet some merely sectional want or subserve individual advantage."

Admittedly that statement contradicts what occurred on the route of the ICR in Cumberland and Westmoreland counties, but Fleming goes to indicate that a branch line built by the government for private operation was not necessarily contradictory:

"The subsidiary railway system should not be left to chance, or be given over to private control. All lines should



A Father of Confederation and the Senator from Amherst, R.B. Dickey was a shareholder in Spring Hill Coal Mining Co. and a partner of Fleming's. (Library of Parliament)

be conceived in the interest of the whole system and the whole country. A railway and road system of the entire habitable territory should be designed so as to meet, in the best possible manner, the future requirements of the country and its future occupants. Each line of communication should be in the right place and of the proper character; and whenever constructed, each link should be established so as to form a part, ultimately, of a general system."

Despite the enormous profits the company would make aided by the agreement of 1872, it apparently never felt compelled to repay the government for the favour bestowed upon it when Fleming was a shareholder. And, if he was indeed a reluctant capitalist in 1872, he had become an extremely adept one by the end of the century. One of his major, but less successful, investments was another coal and railway venture.

In 1891 he was named as one of the incorporators of the Nicola, Kamloops, and Similkameen Coal and Railway Company, along with John Fall Allison, of Princeton, B.C. (listed as a "gentleman), merchant A. E. Howse, of Nicola; civil engineer R. H. Lee, of Kamloops; William Mara of Toronto; mining engineer William Hamilton Merritt of Toronto; Frank A. Fleming, "gentleman", of Toronto (and



Charles James Townshend, Amherst Conservative MP and solicitor for the Spring Hill Coal Mining Co. (Library of Parliament)

Sandford Fleming's son); Charles H. Keefer C.E., of Toronto; barrister George F. Harman, and C. N. Shanly, financial agent (both of Toronto.)

With one million dollars in capital (raised as 10,000 shares at \$100 each), the 40-mile long railway was to be built:

"...from a point at or near the western extremity of Nicola Lake, where the terminus of the Nicola Valley Railway Company shall be located; thence to the town of Princeton, and thence by the way of Similkameen River, as far as may be deemed advisable in a southerly direction to Osoyoos Lake; also from a point near the junction of the Company's railway with the Nicola Valley Railway Company's terminus at Nicola, in a northerly direction past Nicola and Stump Lake to the South Thompson River, at some point to the eastward of Kamloops, and thence to the town of Kamloops."

The charter does not appear to have met with much construction, but by 1904, running powers had been vested in the Kettle River Valley Railway Co., and in January of 1905 the line was leased by the CPR, with the sod turning taking place on June 20 of that year.

Fleming's Alberta coal venture proved more rewarding, again accomplished with the help of some influential friends, this time his son-in-law Lord William Exshaw and Exshaw's business partner Lord Dudley. Fleming joined the two as a director of the Western Canada Cement and Coal Company, with the plant built in 1905, and sold in 1912 to the Canada Cement Company. The enterprise endures today under the Canada Lafarge corporate name.

In both of the former cases, Fleming had made careful note of the natural resources of the area while on his federally funded 1872 expedition across the west, recorded by George Munroe Grant in *Ocean to Ocean (Fort Edmonton to Athabaska River*, pp. 193):

" We forded the river which is about a hundred yards wide, and looking back saw on the east side a seam of coal about ten feet thick, whereas on the west side to which we had crossed only about four feet showed above the water. Pick in hand the Chief [Fleming] made for the coal, and finding a large square lump that had been carried down by the river, he broke some pieces from it to make a fire. In appearance it was much superior to the Edmonton seam; instead of the dull half-burnt look, it had a clean glassy fracture like cannel coal...

...It was evidently coal, equal for fuel, we considered, to the inferior Cape Breton kinds, burning sluggishly, and leaving a considerable quantity of grey and reddish ash, but giving out good heat."

Grant sent samples of the coal to George Lawson, professor of geology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, (Grant had led the campaign to fund the university's library) and the man who had evaluated the deposits for the Springhill Mining & Coal Company.

Lawson, expressing some reservations about the quality of the sample, had no reluctance to suggest:

"...if we view this as a surface sample - and such are invariably of inferior quality, - I think it offers great encouragement, for the percentage of ash is less than the average of the best marketable coals in Britain."

It was not unusual for engineers on government contracts to indulge in some private speculation, nor was Fleming alone. His lieutenants on the CPR survey were quite familiar with the practice, as surveyor John Flewin (1857-1942) of British Columbia recalled in an article published in the *Cowichan Leader* of April 19, 1934:

"Mr. Flewin has one particularly happy recollection of those years and this was his first meeting with Mr. Henry J. Cambie, notable engineer and explorer, who was some years later in charge of that stupendous work, the surveying for and construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the canyons of the Fraser and who died at the age of 90 a few years ago.

"Mr Cambie was one of the finest men I have ever known," said Mr. Flewin. "Our first meeting took place on the North Fork above Tranquille — the old Fortune Ranch — above the confluences of the two rivers and we walked for some hours together. I remember one thing he said was 'You young fellows get pretty good pay. Why don't you take up 160 acres of land on Burrard Inlet — the railway terminus will be somewhere in the vicinity?' I said 'No, it will be Bute Inlet.' Mr Cambie laughed. When I met him in Vancouver some years later, after the railway had gone through, and he quizzed me "You didn't take up that 160 acres' he said, smiling. I replied, 'No — what about yourself?' He laughed. ' No I didn't either,' he said."

Cambie was a close associate of Fleming on both the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific projects. Clearly his boss took business matters more seriously.

A Nexus With The Past

The Chance Meeting of a Man, a Train and a Station

By: Robert & Marco Marrone

We stood waiting for a train that hadn't come around these parts in more than forty years. It was a bright Sunday morning in July 2003, the place was Bolton, Ontario, and the train was the CPR Empress.

The iron horse, scheduled to pass the setting of the one-time Bolton station, was late, and the cameras we'd brought along remained latched on to us for a whole hour.

But soon enough, through the rustling brush and morning birds, an unmistakable sound cracked the bright blue sky. It was wraithlike and absurd to hear it now on this section of mainline, where modern diesels go through their daily machinations of hulling freight. Yet, somehow, it didn't seem so out of place. Anyone born after they stopped running could tell you exactly what it was: A steam train.

After the whistle blew, a good minute of silence followed and then a clickity-clack forged in the distance. The sound gradually swooned harder and faster, intensifying as "2816" appeared and rounded the bend.



2816 approaching and passing Bolton station in July 2003.

All its parts shone, reflecting sunlight like the tracks before it. In the instant, the ground shook, and it felt like a heard of rushing buffalo as it came within a few feet of us. Our cameras were put through the wringers from the second the train emerged till it turned to a singular point in the horizon where all tracks seemed to converge. And just like that it was gone. Back to western Canada. Water spots speckled the tie plates evenly as if the big machine had left footprints, and a quarter we had placed on the rail had been flattened thin, utterly defaced: The Queen, too, was gone.

We scurried back to our car thinking that if we were quick enough we might catch up to it in Palgrave, a town just north of Bolton. But our quick departure was interrupted. Standing in front of us was a white haired man with fragile knees and a convincing smile. We hadn't noticed his car pull up just when "2816" had turned the bend.

He looked like any other aging enthusiast but he wasn't. "My daughter dispatched this train," he said. "She called me a couple of minutes ago, telling me it was on its way by." If that alone were not enough to grab our attention, then what he said next did. "I used to be the station agent here," he uttered, rather modestly, referring to the building that once graced the gravel crackling underneath our feet. "My name is John Barton." He would say his name twice to make himself understood.

With clasped hands he shared a few words with us. But the Empress would soon be in Palgrave and we had to make a brusque exist. Quickly, we got his telephone number and promised to call; and sounding unwittingly poetic we told him, "We must go, we have a train to catch."

We sped northward to the small town. With little traffic we thought we had a chance to get there before it did. At an undulating clearing we parked and slogged through foot high grass to the area of the mainline. But on the tie plates, under the shadow of a bridge, the same water markings were there, slowly evaporating in the warmth of the morning air. We had missed it.

Weeks latter, at his home in Bolton, John Barton's wife, Martha, opened the door when we came knocking. Their tiny dog danced between our shoes while she invited us in;



Three views of the inaugural run of The Canadian as photographed by John Barton at West Toronto on April 24, 1955.

Leaside station, then worked at West Toronto - first on the diamond and then the station itself. Here, he witnessed the inaugural run of *The Canadian* in 1955. Later, in 1963, he became the agent in Bolton.

Bolton has always been a major supply center for the surrounding farming community. In 1882, the CPR bought the Toronto Grey and Bruce railway and the Credit Valley railway. Since both lines ran a similar route in the area, the railway

she is gracious and soft spoken like her husband. The house is their daughter's, the one who is the youngest of five children, the CPR worker who dispatched the empress. John was quick to remember us, his mind is sharp, though he is hard of hearing and has a sluggish gait from his bad knees. He sat us down with piles of photographs and stories. Above, on the wall behind the chair he was sitting, was a family portrait decades old with the five children, his wife, and himself, of course, looking serious in that one picture with his eyes not quite on the lens as if his attention were focused on some other object beyond the camera.



discarded portions of one and segments of the other to form a new route. By the early nineteen hundreds the CPR built the Sudbury extension [the Mactier Subdivision] to this line and a new station replaced the original, which stood a few kilometers west. The Bolton station remained in use until 1986, where it was soon after decommissioned and boarded up.

When John Barton got there it became the family home. They had a unique living arrangement with the railway: in exchange for maintaining the station, the Bartons had part of the building as their personal living quarters to which the CPR covered the cost of utilities. Along with the responsibilities of being a husband and father, he sold tickets, sorted freight, and hooped orders to passing trains. It was hectic from early morning to suppertime, especially in the 1960s. There was even a dispatching service for the ambulance and volunteer fire department. Familial life was intertwined with the business of railways, and family members often helped out. Martha helped with the express as well as operating the dispatch service. "It was a difficult place to keep clean," she remembers, "from all that dust and diesel fuel from the tracks."

He was born in 1922, in England, and immigrated to Canada at fifteen. In Gormley, Ontario, he worked on a farm, and later obtained a job with General Steelwares in Toronto. He eventually enlisted in the army during the Second World War. He learned telegraphy and became a wireless operator with the occupational forces. He was stationed in Italy and latter Holland, where he met Martha. In 1946, he retired from the armed forces and returned to work at General Steelwares. But he wanted a new challenge, so he enrolled in the Cassan Systems School and trained as a station agent. By 1950, the Canadian Pacific Railway hired him despite the injured hand he had suffered years earlier. He started as a relief agent at



ABOVE: Bolton station just before it was demolished in 1992.



LEFT: John Barton "hooping up" orders to CP 5999 at Bolton station on July 3, 1986.

BELOW: John Barton (far right), Martha Bolton (third from right) with friends at Bolton station.

streamed by, it was if he were seeing an old friend that had dropped by to say hello, a visit foretold by his daughter. In his shine, he was as wraithlike as the whistle itself—a chink in time, a flavour of old.



Gerilee was the youngest. She was born and raised there, and simply saw the place as home. She was there, watching and photographing, when the railway finally flattened the place in 1992. The old family homestead is romanticized in a Wentworth Folkens print that hangs in her living room. She and one other sibling, Ron, took to careers in the railway.

When asked about life with the CPR, John says it was a good company to work for, but he holds no particular sentiment for it as he does his other passion, the Boys Scouts of Canada, where he gave much of his time. Yet, there was that unmistakable smile he bore that morning when the Empress

Le Tunnel Wellington - The Wellington Tunnel

by - par Jacques Pharand



"Duplex" articulated car 2501 descends the grade to the Wellington Tunnel, en route to Verdun, in 1949. The two articulated cars, 2500 and 2501, were regulars on the Wellington route for many years until they were transferred to the St. Catherine run in the summer of 1950. Collection of Daniel Laurendeau

La « Grande Dépression » des années trente, plusieurs en ont entendu parler, d'autres même, l'ont vécue... Pour contrer le chômage omniprésent, le maire du temps, Camillien Houde, n'hésita pas à initier de vastes travaux de construction, dont plusieurs viaducs et marchés publics. Mais l'ouvrage le plus spectaculaire entrepris à cette époque est assurément le tunnel Wellington, le premier du genre dans la métropole.

Il faut dire que le pont tournant avait été construit en 1886, pour laisser passer les navires dans le canal de Lachine, lequel servait à contourner les rapides de Lachine et allouait le passage des navires vers les Grands Lacs, avant l'ouverture de la Voie maritime du Saint-Laurent en 1959 et connaissait une grande activité. Le pont était plus souvent ouvert qu'en position régulière, ce qui créait des embouteillages monstres et compromettait la régularité du service sur le circuit Wellington. Le 9 février 1931, le contrat fut donc octroyé à la firme Dufresne Construction Ltée. pour la construction d'un tunnel comportant deux voies pour les tramways, flanquées de deux autres pour les automobiles, au coût de 2,56 millions de dollars.



1948 map showing location of tunnel, marked "Lachine Canal".

Many people have heard about the "Great Depression" of the 1930s and some of them have even lived through it. To fight the omnipresent lack of work, mayor Camilien Houde didn't hesitate to initiate huge construction projects, including many underpasses and public markets. But the most spectacular task undertaken is most certainly the Wellington tunnel, the first of its kind in the city.

It must be mentioned that the swing bridge was built in 1886 on

L'opération n'était pas simple : il fallut fermer le canal pour permettre aux grues à vapeur de creuser l'emplacement du tunnel sur le sol asséché, alors que le circuit Wellington fut tronqué à la rue Centre du côté ouest et remplacé par le prolongement du circuit Ontario, du côté est. Malgré quelques inondations, le tunnel fut ouvert à la circulation automobile le 3 juin 1933 – mais pas aux tramways!

Pourquoi donc? C'est qu'on constata tardivement qu'il serait impossible de créer un virage en épingle à cheveux à la sortie est pour se raccorder aux voies existantes sur la rue McCord (aujourd'hui, rue de la Montagne), qu'empruntaient alors les véhicules. Il fallut homologuer une emprise sur l'actuelle rue Peel et y construire de nouvelles voies, jusqu'à la rue Notre-Dame. Ce n'est donc que le 31 octobre 1934 que les tramways purent enfin utiliser le fameux tunnel...

Malgré un système de signaux souvent dérégulé par l'humidité des lieux et des véhicules aux moteurs noyés par des infiltrations d'eau, le tunnel Wellington assura le service des tramways jusqu'en 1957. Les passages des voies furent alors murés, les autobus empruntant les voies automobiles. Mais la forte densité de circulation eut finalement raison de



A 1600-class car emerging from the Wellington tunnel.

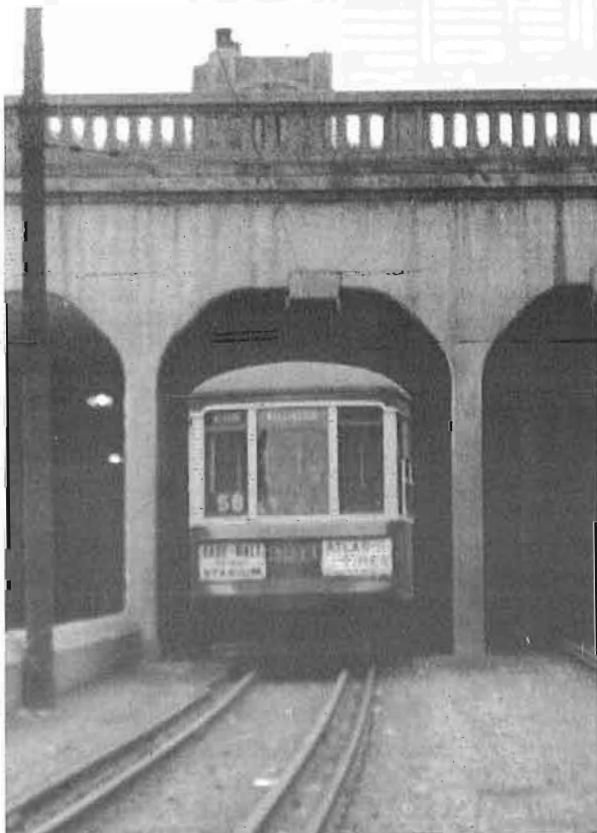
Collection of Jacques Pharand

Wellington Street over the Lachine Canal, which was used to bypass the Lachine Rapids. The Lachine Canal allowed passage of all the 'lakers' prior to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway which opened in 1959, and was a very busy waterway. The swing bridge was more often open than in its regular alignment, thus creating huge bottlenecks on both sides and was the cause of unreliable service on the Wellington streetcar line. On February 9, 1931 a contract was awarded to the Dufresne Construction Company Limited, to build a tunnel with two automobile lanes and two streetcar tracks, for a fixed price of 2.56 million dollars.

But why? The task was anything but simple: the canal had to be closed to allow steam shovels to dig the trench on dry ground. The West leg of the Wellington line was cut back to Centre Street, while the Ontario line was extended to a wye at Young Street, on the East side. Despite a few water infiltrations, the tunnel was opened to automobile traffic on June 3rd 1933 % but not to streetcars!

But why? Simply because it was found out that a hairpin turn at the eastern end of the tunnel, to connect with the existing tracks on McCord Street (now de la Montagne Street) would be an impossible task. The solution was to hastily expropriate a right-of-way on Colborne Street (nowadays Peel Street) and build two tracks up to Notre-Dame Street. Thusly, it's only on October 31st 1934 that streetcars could finally use the Wellington tunnel...

Despite a block signal system often out of operation due to inherent dampness and water infiltration, the tunnel was used until 1957. The streetcar lanes were blocked at both ends, while the busses used the automobile lanes. With the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, marine traffic no longer used the Lachine Canal thus permitting a conventional (non swing) bridge to be built. Increasing traffic finally ended the usefulness of the tunnel, which was replaced by an elegant new bridge in 1996. The Lachine Canal has been restored as a project of the federal government and is today used by recreational boaters.



A closeup view of a Wellington car emerging from the tunnel.

Collection of Jacques Pharand

cet ouvrage d'art, qui fut remplacé par un élégant nouveau pont fixe en 1996.

Et une anecdote pour les curieux qui se rappellent la mention «ce char ne passe pas sous le viaduc Wellington», affichée dans le vestibule des véhicules plus anciens, précisons qu'elle s'appliquait au viaduc sous les voies du CN, à l'angle des rues Wellington et de la Congrégation, construit en 1889 et dont le dégagement en hauteur était insuffisant pour les toitures surélevées de ceux-ci. De quoi faire quand même frémir les usagers lorsque certains tramways du circuit « Centre » s'engageaient dans la pente du « nouveau » tunnel...

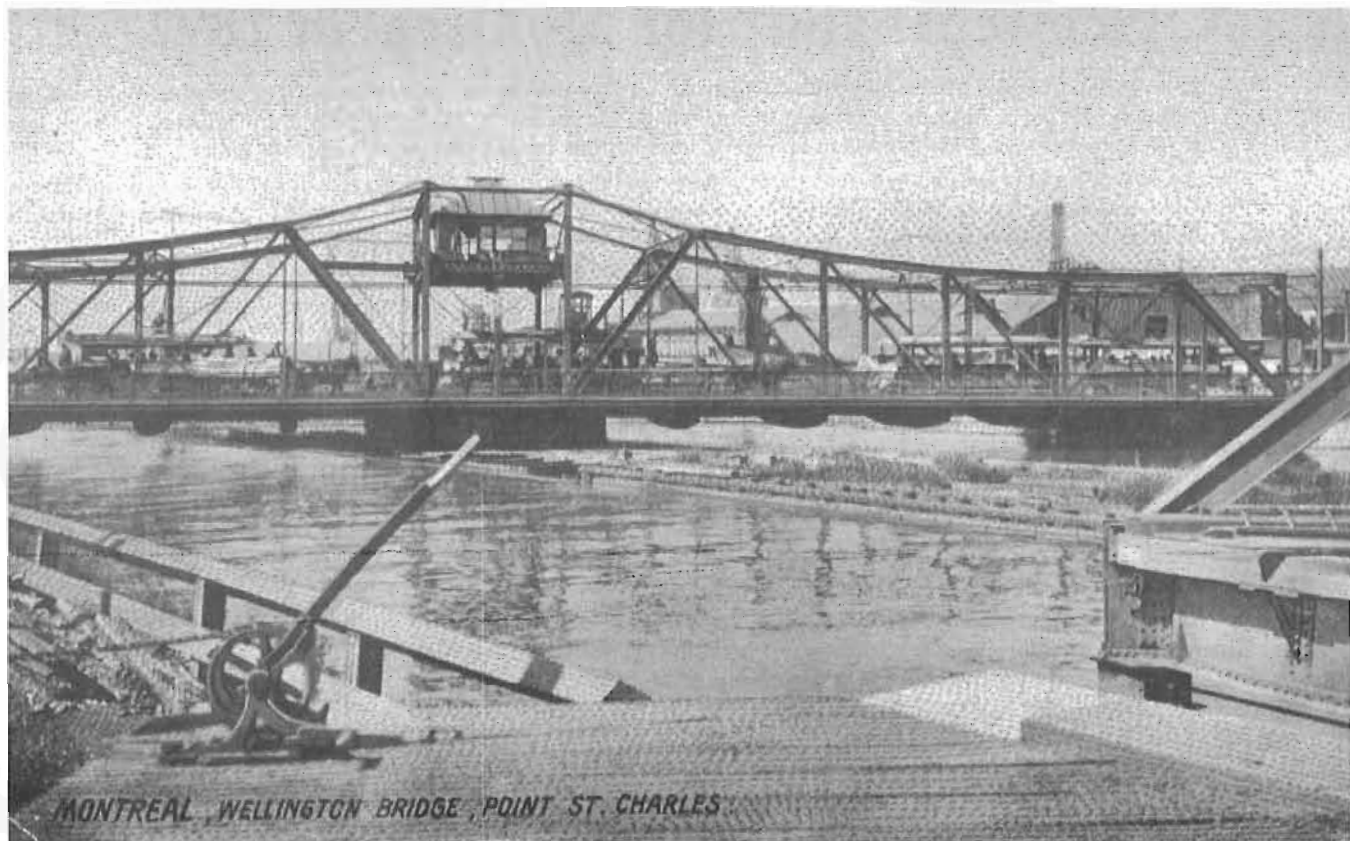
Finally, an anecdote for streetcar users who recall the note in the front vestibule of some older cars: "This car does not pass through Wellington subway". In fact, this note applied to the underpass under the CN tracks between Richmond and de la Congregation Street, built in 1889, which didn't provide sufficient clearance for cars with clearstorey roofs. Nevertheless, some passengers had the jitters for many years, when they saw the "Centre 2" car they were in heading down towards the "new" tunnel entrance...

RIGHT: A former Springfield (Massachusetts) car entering the tunnel on April 20, 1957, shortly before the line through the tunnel was abandoned. Thirty-nine of these cars were acquired second hand during World War II, and ran until almost the end of street car service in Montreal.

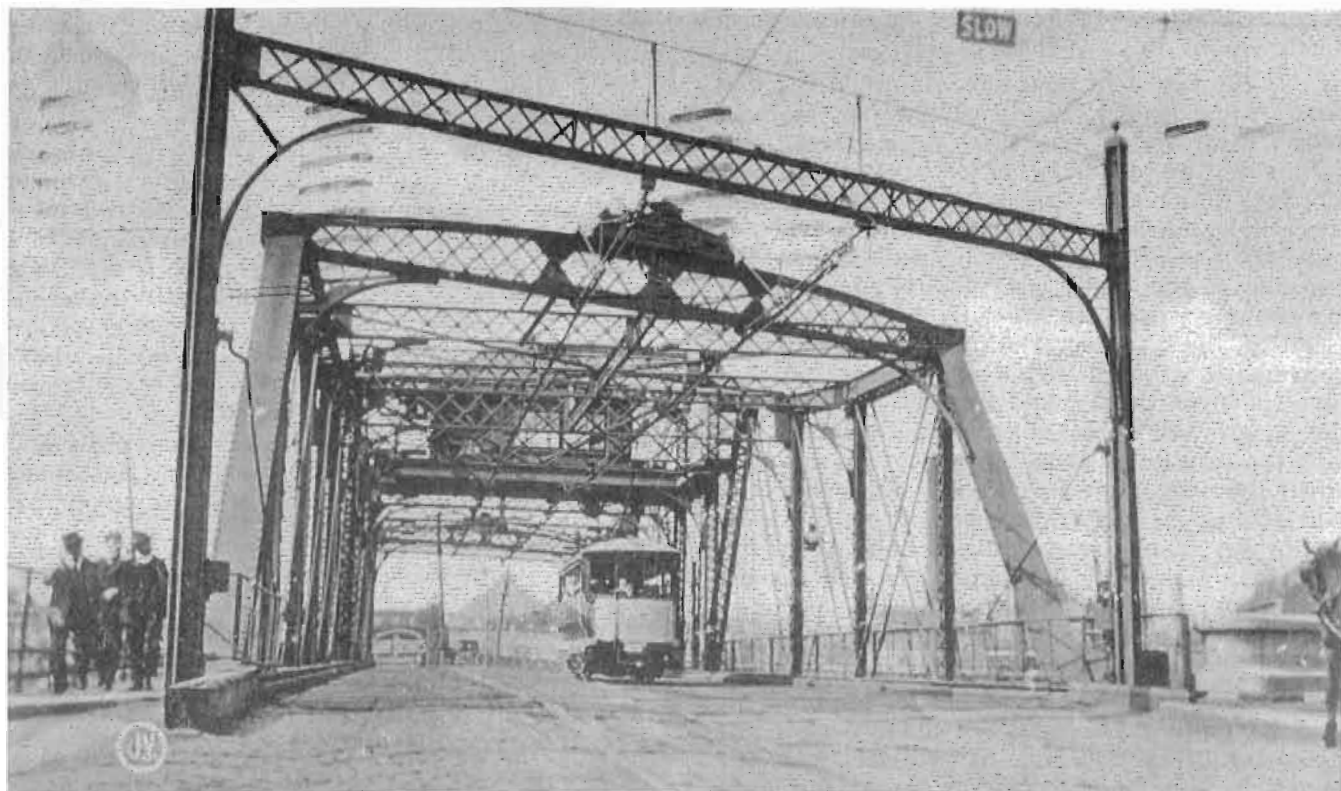
Photo by Fred Angus



One of the tunnel portals as it appears today (2005). Photo by Peter Murphy



A postcard view, taken about 1905, of the old Wellington Street bridge that stood before the tunnel was built. No less than five single-truck open cars appear in the photo, all of the type built in 1899 and 1900. Collection of Daniel Laurendeau



Another view of the Wellington Street bridge about 1900. Car 405, one of 60 open cars built in 1898, is crossing the bridge. This car was burned in a car barn fire in 1920. Collection of Daniel Laurendeau

A "Schwebbahn" for Montreal in 1892?

When one thinks of a rapid transit system in which the cars are suspended under a supporting structure, only one line comes to mind. This is, of course, the famous "Schwebbahn" which has served the city of Wuppertal in Germany for more than a hundred years. Despite its success for more than a century, no other line of this description was ever built.

The city of Wuppertal is situated in a steep narrow valley, and there is little room for a transit right-of-way. When the city began to think of a transit line in the 1890s, a design was developed whereby the line was constructed, for much of its length, directly over the river, the superstructure being held up by supports standing on both sides of the river.

Construction began in 1898, and the completed line opened in 1901. Despite two world wars, it has been in service ever since. One of its most bizarre incidents in its history occurred on July 21, 1950 when an elephant being carried on one of the cars as a publicity stunt jumped out of the car and landed in the river without injury.

In 1892, Montreal was considering electrifying its street railway and retiring the horse cars that had served for thirty years. There was still much doubt as to whether electric cars would work in Montreal's deep snow, so Mr. Henry K. Wicksteed came up with the idea of a "Schwebbahn", six years before the real one in Wuppertal. The following article was published in *Engineering News* on May 26, 1892.

Mr. Wicksteed went on to bigger things, being remembered today as the engineer who designed the Mount Royal tunnel, built 1912-1918. His 1892 transit system is one of his less inspired ideas, a forgotten chapter of "what might have been".

A PROPOSED RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR MONTREAL

That circumstances alter cases is an axiom which engineers are taught by experience to appreciate far better than ordinary men. A system of water supply, for example, which gives the best of satisfaction in one community might prove a failure in another place where topographic or geologic conditions are different. So in the case of rapid transit, a system best for a new city might not be applicable to an old one, and a system applicable to a city where traffic moves back and forth in a narrow channel might not be a success in a city where the chief lines of travel radiate in all directions from a single center.

Montreal is peculiar among American cities in its climate, which in winter is far more severe than that of any other great city on this continent. The population of Montreal is 216,000, which is more than that of Detroit, Milwaukee, Newark, Louisville or Kansas City, and is exceeded only by 14 cities in the United States. The snowfall at Montreal is so great that keeping the streets or even the street car tracks clear of snow is out of the question. The only means of public conveyance other than hacks are the horse car lines, of which the city has 35 miles. The company has to provide "rolling stock" of three varieties to suit the conditions of the streets. Cars are used when the streets are free from snow, sleighs are run during the winter, and during the break-up in spring, when the sleighing is destroyed, but the slush is still too deep to make clearing the car tracks practicable, heavy omnibuses are used. The company's equipment includes 135 cars, 100 sleighs and 75 omnibuses.

It is needless to say that for a city of the size of Montreal horse-car service is a slow and unsatisfactory method of transit. Yet the necessary abandonment of the tracks in winter has thus far kept the horse in service, for no other motor is available for both sleighing and wheeling.

Mr. Henry K. Wicksteed, Member Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, has given some attention to the transit problem in Montreal, and has designed a rapid transit electric system for the city, the principal features of which are made clear in the accompanying sketches. In a letter to us Mr. Wicksteed describes the difficulties in Montreal and his plans for meeting them as follows:

Montreal is probably worse off in the way of internal transit facilities than any other large city on this continent. Three different styles of vehicles are necessary to enable the horse car company to carry on its business in all conditions of the streets, and the wear and tear on horseflesh is tremendous. Besides this, the service is inadequate to the needs of the public.

On the other hand the distances are comparatively short, and it does not seem likely that an ordinary elevated railway could be a financial success for some years to come. The surface electric railway seems a delicate experiment on account of the depth of the snowfall. If the tracks are cleared and the balance of the street is left for sleighs, there would be wide ditch 10 to 12 inches deep along the center of the street, with barely enough room on either side for the sleighs to pass one another. To clear the whole street would be enormously expensive, and would practically ruin the business of the storekeepers on either side.

The compromise I have proposed is less expensive than the elevated road, and has all the advantages of the surface road. It is intended to insulate the rail and carry the current through it, using the metal structure itself to complete the metallic circuit.

The system would be constructed as a circulating one, as proposed by *Engineering News* for the Brooklyn Bridge railway, the cars going along one side and back on the other, passing

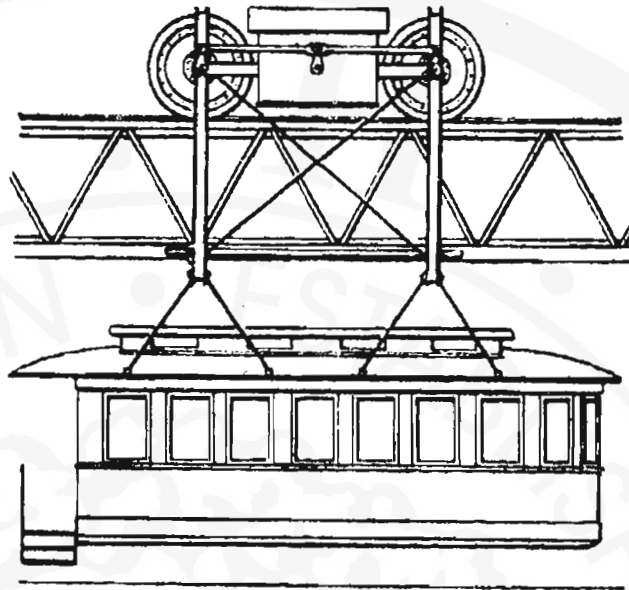
around a loop at the terminal. Transfers to branch lines could be made by means of turn-tables, a short section of the track swinging on a central column. The spans are intended to be from 40 ft. to 50 ft. in length.

While the cost of a structure with such spans would be much in excess of the cost of a single track surface road, its capacity is far greater. Compared with a well constructed double track road the difference in cost is not so great.

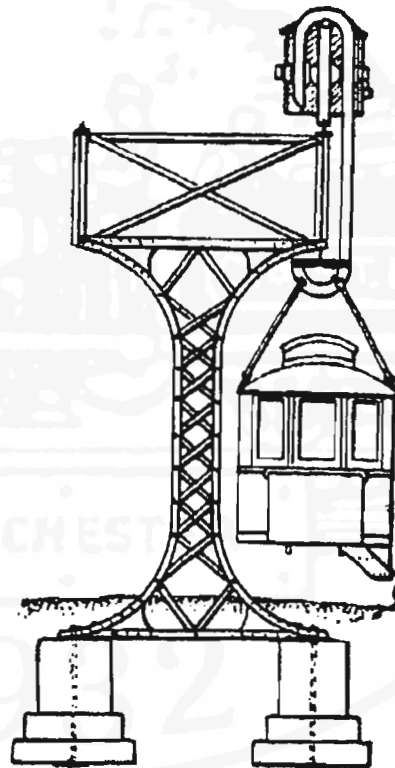
For a suburban or mineral road running on its own right of way, a double track line of great capacity can be built at very moderate cost by reducing the spans to 15 or 20 ft. This is especially true if the structure is built of timber.

Among the advantages of Mr. Wicksteed's design it is important to note that the supporting structure may justly be built with a much smaller factor of safety than an ordinary elevated railway, where the failure of the structure means the plunge of a train into the street, a fall almost certain to be attended by many fatalities. Should a structure of this sort fail, however, the car would have only a foot or two to drop to reach terra firma, and at the moderate speed at which cars in this system would have to move, such a fall would have very little danger for the passengers inside.

It is further pointed out that the use of large wheels in the truck would be perfectly practicable and that by using a let-down step under the conductor's control the car could be made as accessible as an ordinary surface car and still be high enough above the ground to clear any ordinary obstacle. In the side elevation it will be noticed that the mode of suspension of the car is such as to cause some doubt of its safety to resist fore-and-aft motion, due to sudden application of the brakes or other cause. Doubtless this would be



Side Elevation.



Proposed Sectional View of Rapid Transit Railway With Suspended Cars.

corrected in actual construction. We understand that a company has been organized with a view of carrying out Mr. Wicksteed's plans, provided a franchise can be secured from the city of Montreal.

Engineering News, May 26, 1892.

VIA Rail Marks *Canadian's* 50th Birthday

by Ian Smith

Reprinted from *The Sandhouse*



Cutting the *Canadian's* birthday cake at Pacific Central Station are an unidentified passenger (left) and U.S. rail travel writer Tom Savio, as VIA official Dawson Wolk looks on. (Photo by Chris Wasney)

Although it began life as the flagship train of the Canadian Pacific Railway, *The Canadian's* 50th birthday wasn't ignored by its second parent, VIA Rail Canada.

Indeed, VIA carefully noted in its news release on the event that Sunday, April 24, 1955, had marked the launch of both the modern transcontinental trains that it adopted in 1978 — CPR's *Canadian* and rival CN's *Super Continental*.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, VIA offered a special fare to anyone turning 50 in the same month as the classic train. From April 1 to 30, those lucky people could take a trip on the train anywhere between Vancouver and Toronto for \$50, or \$100 for the round trip, in Silver & Blue class with on-board meals and accommodation included.

For the anniversary, VIA held small celebration events at the stations in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto.

Vancouver's event was staged at Pacific Central Station in the outdoor waiting area at the station end of the platforms, with several tracks appropriately occupied by stainless-steel rolling stock just a few feet away. Not only was it exactly 50 years to the day of the first *Canadian* — both historic days happened to fall on a Sunday.

Refreshments included a specially decorated cake and Canadian champagne, and souvenirs included a small poster, bookmark and fridge magnets. Most of those taking

part were passengers, but railfans — who had entered the area to take photos of a homemade poster affixed below the drumhead of dome-observation car Glacier Park on No. 2 — were welcomed to join in the festivities by VIA marketing manager Ali Macaraeg.

The poster had been made by Interior railfan Bob Walters, who drove to Kamloops to present it to the on-board service manager of Train No. 1 on its way to Vancouver. He had hoped it would be used at the anniversary event, but had a great surprise when he learned later that it had actually travelled east on the ceremonial train.

The cake was cut by a passenger and the American rail travel writer Tom Savio, the latter dressed in the ornate costume of a "railway baron." Savio and Master of Ceremonies Dawson Wolk, VIA's Director of Customer Service for Western Canada, then posed for pictures with the tail-end of Glacier Park.

A nice touch was the use of a reproduction of one of CPR's famous posters promoting *The Canadian*, to which a small notice of the anniversary had been added. This poster was mounted on a portable stand at the end of Platform 5, enabling photos of it to be taken with Glacier Park in the near background. (Purists will note, however, that VIA dropped the word "The" from the train's official name, to conform to its standard for named trains).

News coverage of the anniversary in general included spots on national television based on the Toronto event and a detailed article in the Toronto Star. VIA's main advertising medium for the anniversary was a radio commercial that aired in major cities across the country.

Last year, more than 120,000 passengers travelled on board the Canadian. It's to be hoped that there will be many more anniversaries ahead for Canada's special train, and many more passengers who will enjoy what National Geographic rates as one of the top five journeys in the world.

RIGHT: A homemade birthday card adorns the tail end of dome-observation car Glacier Park, as No. 2 awaits departure from Vancouver on April 24, 2005. (Photo by Ian Smith)

BELOW: The sign says it all — Happy 50th Birthday, Canadian! (Photo by Ian Smith)



BACK COVER TOP: Before the Wellington tunnel was built a bridge, built in 1886, spanned the Lachine Canal at Wellington Street. This photo, taken early in the twentieth century, shows the old bridge with five open street cars, of 1899-1900 vintage, crossing it. The photo was originally in black-and-white, but was coloured before being reproduced on a postcard, probably in Germany, around 1910. Collection of Daniel Laurendeau

BACK COVER BOTTOM: A Wellington car emerges from the tunnel on April 20, 1957, only a short time before tram service through the tunnel was abandoned. The street car right-of-way was too narrow for road traffic, so that section was walled up and never used again. Note the two CNR rail bridges in the background. Photo by Fred Angus

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