

THE R.P.O. NEWSLETTER
OF THE CANADIAN R.P.O. STUDY GROUP (B.N.A.P.S.)

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5830 Carlier St.
Vancouver, B.C.
V6M 3A7

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S T O P T H E P R E S S ! - SHERIFF CAUGHT ON HIS OWN

COWCATCHER - Seventeen year-old mystery finally exposed by R.P.O.

sleuths - A diabolical plot to mislead Canadian railway postmark collectors has recently been revealed. Unprecedented in the annals of R.P.O. history, what for seventeen years has defeated the best brains of the criminal investigation department of the R.P.O. Study Group of the British North America Philatelic Society, has now been revealed as nothing but a monstrous "con-trick" perpetrated by none other than Lewis M.Ludlow, the self-styled leader of the group.

To understand fully the depths of low cunning to which this hitherto respected (nay, revered) conductor, mastermind and progenitor of this group has descended it is necessary to re-trace our steps to the year 1970, or thereabouts, when Lew came into the possession of a partial strike of a postmark reading L.DER & EST on a three-cent 1931 "Arch" issue. Dated 1932 and with train number 138 clearly visible, Lewis M.Ludlow immediately recognized that this run could be none other than a section of the Brandon & Estevan railway post office. Having checked beyond peradventure of a doubt that the lettering "EST" could be nothing but the first three letters of "ESTEVAN", he immediately, deliberately, and with malice aforethought let it be known that the second terminus of this postmark was "ESTON". Indeed, he blatantly and deliberately did more than let it be known to his wide circle of (former) friends and collaborators - he actually persuaded T.P.G. SHAW to print the word ESTON in his 1970 catalog addendum. This "solid" information he then reprinted as gospel in his own 1975 and 1982 catalogs.

Then, with pretended ignorance, he innocently enquired of one Lionel F.Gillam, a well-known R.P.O. cognoscenti (Latin for know-it-all) just exactly what this abbreviation "L.DER" might be. Now, this R.P.O.retriever, this tracker-down of mystery R.P.O.s, this postmark detective, this Sherlock Holmes of the R.P.O. world has dozens of railway maps of Canada, and many, many hundreds - nay, thousands - of R.P.O. schedules and time-tables, R.P.O.distribution lists, and other detection aids, that had always hitherto been his infallible guides. To these he applied himself day and night, week after week, month after month, year after year with unflinching diligence, unrelenting perserverance in a well-intentioned friendly gesture of goodwill towards his so-called friend. Blood, sweat, tears, heart-searching, brain-boggling, sleepless nights, restless days, loss of appetite, listlessness - notwithstanding all of these - the "know-it-all" pressed on regardless. Old age overtook him, the years passed, his days were clearly numbered. "LEADER" he had suggested - a small town in western Saskatchewan on the Canadian National Railway. "No good, a load of rubbish" said Ludlow. (We are not now on Christian name terms). "Eston is on the former Canadian Northern Railway line, now C.N.R. You ought to know that - and

that the C.N.R. and C.P.R. are the original twain that never meet. You can do better than that. Get back to your sleuthing. You're not trying." Those were his very words. Stung into action, the poor old, worn-out, stricken geriatric - now but a shadow of his former self - returned to his unremitting toil, determined to satisfy his stern task-master or die in the attempt. "KINDER" Gillam wrote in desperation. Short for Kindersley - it's not an "L", it's a "K". A poor strike has misled you. It's "K.DER". That was the gist of his final solution. Ludlow replied "Absolute, complete unadulterated grabage." His words were not really put so diplomatically, but we were still friends then. Ludlow chuckled to himself as he continued - "I thought you were an expert - you're a charlatan, a great pretender, a half-wit, a ninkapoo, a you-know-sweet-Fanny-Adams." or words to that effect. I gave up, I admitted defeat, the infallibility attributed to me was finally exposed - in short, I jacked it in.

Now, for the denouement, the final exposure of the arch criminal. In the January/February 1987 "R.P.O. Cow-Catcher" column of "BNA Topics", he "innocently" wrote that he "now" believes (mark the word "now") the second terminal should be "Estevan". The effrontery of it all defies the imagination. But more than that (for the first time look-you) he reveals all. He shows a photograph of the abominable strike. Before that not even a rough tracing of this mystery R.P.O. had been vouchsafed to us. There was the vital clue - train number 138 - and IN HIS OWN CATALOG we find W.8, 8A and 9 - to wit BRANDON & ESTEVAN runs with this self-same number. After 17 years, in as many seconds, with one leap to Table No.82 of the C.P.R. Timetable for 1957, what do we find? You've guessed it - Train 138 - Brandon, Lauder (mark you), Napinka and Estevan (mark you again).

Note the criminal traits: (a) the deliberately misleading "evidence" i.e. "ESTON". (When I die you will find it engraved on my heart), and (b) the overweening confidence that criminals acquire when their misdeeds go undetected for years. The sudden, incriminating, unsuspecting revelation of a little insignificant detail - i.e. the train number 138. THAT is what brought him to justice, and now he hangs there - hooked on the buffer box of his own Cowcatcher, CAUGHT AT LAST.

The file is closed, Lewis Ludlow, you have had your chips, thanks to several members of your Study Group who also twigged your little game at the same time. Just to be on the safe side, a copy is going to my Solicitors, Messrs. Bodger, Higgins & Ketchum.

Lionel F. Gillam

REBUTTAL - In order to provide fair coverage of both sides of this argument (and to avoid possible libel suits) here is Lewis M. Ludlow's picture of the event -

"I should have had your pity, rather than your diatribe. Seventeen years ago I was a beginner in R.P.O.s, a 'tyro' no less. Shaw was the Doyen, you were his Master, and I was merely a fledgling student - resident far away, next to the moon, trying to learn at the feet of experts. Can I be faulted

if you were ineffective teachers ? Well, well, well !!! Even the righteously attacked must make some defense, however poor."

"Seriously, it is good that - even late - it has been identified and now we have to find more examples. Even though Lauder was a short-lived terminal, there must be other copies."

"I loved your screed on the 'Sheriff'!!!! Such malevolent prose, such vituperative venom. It was great !!! - and, of course, so undeserved."

EDITORIAL COMMENT - I hope the members have enjoyed this verbal sparring by our two senior members. Lew says that this article on W-66E brought him more immediate response than anything else he has put in the "Cowcatcher". Among the members who figured it out and wrote Lew in addition to Lionel Gillam were John Hornsby, Colin Campbell, Ken Ellison, Alex Price, Cecil Coutts, and your Editor. Lew has asked Mike Street to print your Editor's version as a guest column in his next cow-catcher - as we wanted a fairly full account therein. As "Topics" is a family journal, however, and the general readership might not appreciate the rapier-like wit and the heavy-handed bludgeoning which Lew received about the head and shoulders, we decided Lionel's letter would be better received here - where we were all in on the joke (if that's the right word, as all that racking of brains was certainly not funny).

Just to have the last word, Lew asks us to consider R.R.-7. Is it B.& L.H. R.P.O., or B.& L.E. R.P.O. ? See Lionel Gillam's new book on the Provincial R.P.O.s, pages 119 and 120 for details.

ENUFF SAID

C.P.R. TIMETABLE No.67 - dated May 1, 1932 - on the next page was contributed by Alex.Price. This is an employee timetable, with much more detail - including mixed and freight trains - which isn't shown on the usual passenger timetables. Thanks Alex.

THE MAIL CLERK'S LAMENT

One summer day in the mail car the trip it was long and slow
And the mail clerk feeling groggy, began his tale of woe.
"Oh bless my soul,"he murmured, "This track is rather rough,
And after sixteen hours of it, I've really had enough."

"For sixteen hours upon my feet I've sorted and I've stamped,
And after sixteen hours of it my legs are feeling cramped.
The next stop down the line I know I'll pick up ten bags more,
And then I'll start to stamp again, and my poor eyes are sore."

"There ought to be a rule you know against this sort of thing;
My hammer's getting rather worn, and it has lost its ring.
The letters too are rather blurred, they should read MONT.& TOR.
But after ten years' hammering, they look like TONT.& MOR."

"And fifty years from now you know, when I am here no more,
Those daft collectors will go mad as on these stamps they pore."
And one will cry, 'now what is this ? It's not upon the map.
There is no place that is called MOR., aren't I a silly chap!"

"I'll have to ask the Study Group, they have a Sheriff who
knows all about those R.P.O.s and ask him what to do.
The Sheriff he will look at it, and swear it is quite new;
!Alex found strike he'll cry with glee, it is for me, not you."

TIME TABLE No. 67, MAY 1st, 1932

[illegible]

THE RAILWAY MAIL CLERK's LAMENT - (Continued) -

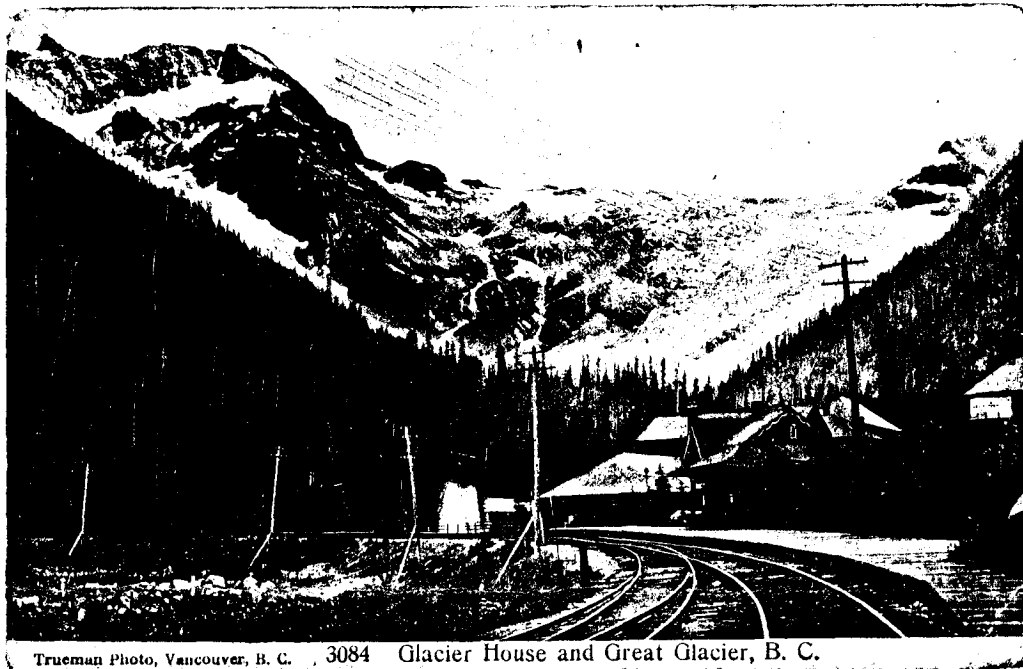
The mail car gave a great big lurch, a shudder shook the van.
The driver had the brakes full on, and stopped at ESTEVAN !
"Oh dearie me," the mail clerk cried, his head poked out the door;
"Lauder & Estevan" he moaned, "It's not the MONT.& TOR.!"

"I must have boarded the wrong train, what will my super say ?
Ten thousand letters I've stamped wrong, It's not my lucky day!"
So now you know why TONT.& MOR's a common R.P.O.,
While LAUDER & damned ESTEVAN's as rare as desert snow.

The author of this "Poem" wishes to remain

ANONYMOUS (Guess who ?)

A 1910 POSTCARD - Showing the original C.P.R. Main Line at
Glacier House, near the summit of the Selkirk Range, in B.C.
The present line follows the Connaught Tunnel, built in 1916
under the mountain to the left in the picture. Currently
another tunnel is being constructed to lower the summit and
improve the grade for west-bound coal trains.



Trueman Photo, Vancouver, B. C. 3084 Glacier House and Great Glacier, B. C.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP - Gordon Hill of Calgary, a charter member
of the Study Group has resigned as he has sold his R.P.O.s
We welcome one new member - J. Malcolm Smith, 11 Abbey Rise,
London, Ont. N6G 1Y8. We hope he long enjoys our company.
We also have two new addresses -

Thomas Washington
USAMEDDAC - J
APO, San Francisco, CA
96343 - 0076

Trevor Gartland
% S.N.C.O. Mess
SOAF Masirah, Box 1731
CPO Seeb, Muscat
Sultanate of Oman

- and Lew thought he was back of beyond !

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP - Ken Ellison sends these extracts from the "Vernon B.C. Daily News" of February 22, 1917 -



TIME TABLE

SHUSWAP & OKANAGAN BRANCH

Daily trains both ways to Okanagan Landing, except Sunday.

South bound read down.	STATIONS	North bound read up.
10.45 (Lv.)	Sicamous Jet.	(Ar.) 18.16
11.18	Mara	17.30
11.34	Grindrod	17.14
11.49	Enderby	16.59
12.15	Armstrong	16.30
12.36	Larkin	16.10

13.03	(Regular stop) Vernon	15.45
13.25 (Ar.)	Ok. Landing	(Lv.) 15.30

OKANAGAN STEAMSHIP SERVICE

Steamer Sicamous runs daily except Sunday between Okanagan Landing and Penticton as follows:

Ok. Landing—South bound, 13.40; north bound, 12k.

Whiteman's Creek—South bound, Wednesday only.

Ewing's Landing—South bound, Monday and Friday.

Sunnywold—South bound, Wednesday only.

Nahon—South bound, Monday and Friday.

Okanagan Centre—Daily except Sunday.

Wilson's Landing—South bound, Wednesday only; north bound, Saturday only.

Kelowna—South bound, 15.50; north bound, 8.15; daily except Sunday.

Okanagan Mission—South bound, Wednesday only.

Westbank—Daily except Sunday.

Gellatly—South bound, daily except Sunday; north bound, daily except Sunday.

Peachland—South bound, 16.45; north bound, 7.15; daily except Sunday.

Summerland—South bound, 17.45; north bound, 6.15; daily except Sunday.

Naramata—South bound, daily except Sunday; north bound, daily except Sunday.

Penticton—South bound, 18.45; north bound, 5.30k; daily except Sunday.

C. P. R. MAIN LINE
East bound from Sicamous daily—No. 2, 10.38; No. 4, 23.15.

West bound from Sicamous daily—No. 1, 19k; No. 3, 7.40.

H. W. BRODIE, Gen. Passenger Agent, Vancouver, B. C.
J. A. MORRISON, Agent, VERNON, B. C.

KETTLE VALLEY-RAILWAY TIME TABLE

Daily Westbound Read down, C. P. Ry.		Daily Eastbound Read up.
7.40 (Lv.)	Nelson	(Ar.) 21.10
12.25	Grand Forks	16.10
14.20 (Ar.)	Midway	Lv. 14.30
K. V. Ry.		C. P. Ry.
14.40 (Lv.)	Midway	(Ar.) 14.10
16.39	Carmil	12.09
18.03	McCulloch	10.52
21.40 (Ar.)	PENTICTON	(Lv.) 7.30
21.50 (Lv.)		(Ar.) 7.20
22.30	West Summerland	6.25
1.30	Princeton	3.25
3.09	Brookmere	1.27
3.21	Brodie	1.15
6.30	Hope	22.10
7.00 (Ar.)	Petain	(Lv.) 21.40
C. P. Ry. (Junction C.P.Ry.)		K. V. Ry.
7.08 (Lv.)	Petain	(Ar.) 21.32
10.40 (Ar.)	Vancouver	(Lv.) 18.00
		C. P. Ry.

Passengers for Coast points, via Hope, leave Penticton 21.50 daily, arrive Vancouver 10.40 the next morning.

Passengers for Merritt, Nicola and Spence's Bridge change at Brodie. Arrive 3.21. Leave 8.45 daily. Arrive Merritt, 10.00, Nicola 10.10, Spence's Bridge 13.30.

Canadian Pacific trains leave Spence's Bridge:—
Number 3, Westbound.....13.53
Number 4, Eastbound.....15.35

STAGES.

Stage for Kelowna leaves Vernon Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 a. m.

Auto stage for Lumby leaves Vernon daily at 1.30 p. m.

For Mabel Lake and Shuswap Falls leaves Lumby at 12 noon on Fridays.

For Richlands, Cherry Creek Camagna, Reisdig and Blue Springs leaves Lumby at 7.30 a. m. on Tuesdays and Fridays.

For Creighton Valley leaves Lumby at 12 noon on Fridays.

For Trinity Valley leaves Lumby at 12 noon on Saturdays.

POST OFFICE.

Mails close for the north daily, except Sundays3.15 p. m.

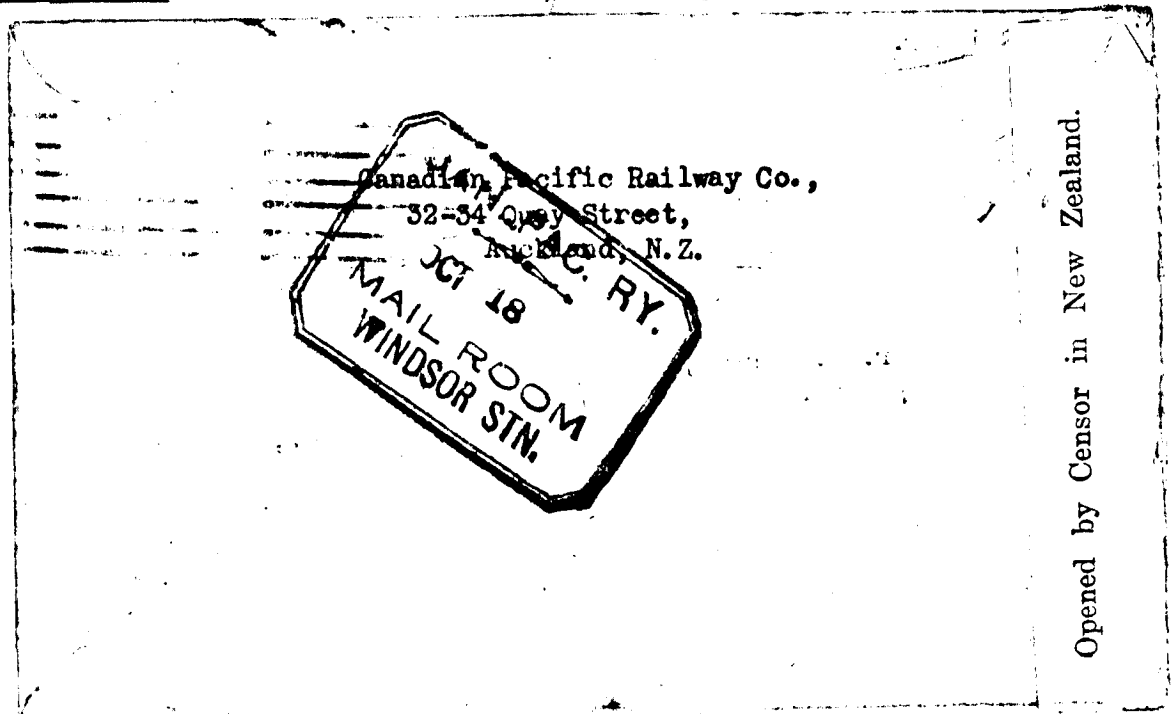
Mails close for the south, daily, except Sundays12.45 p. m.

Registration closes fifteen minutes before closing the mails.

Money Order business from 8 a. m. to 6 p. m.

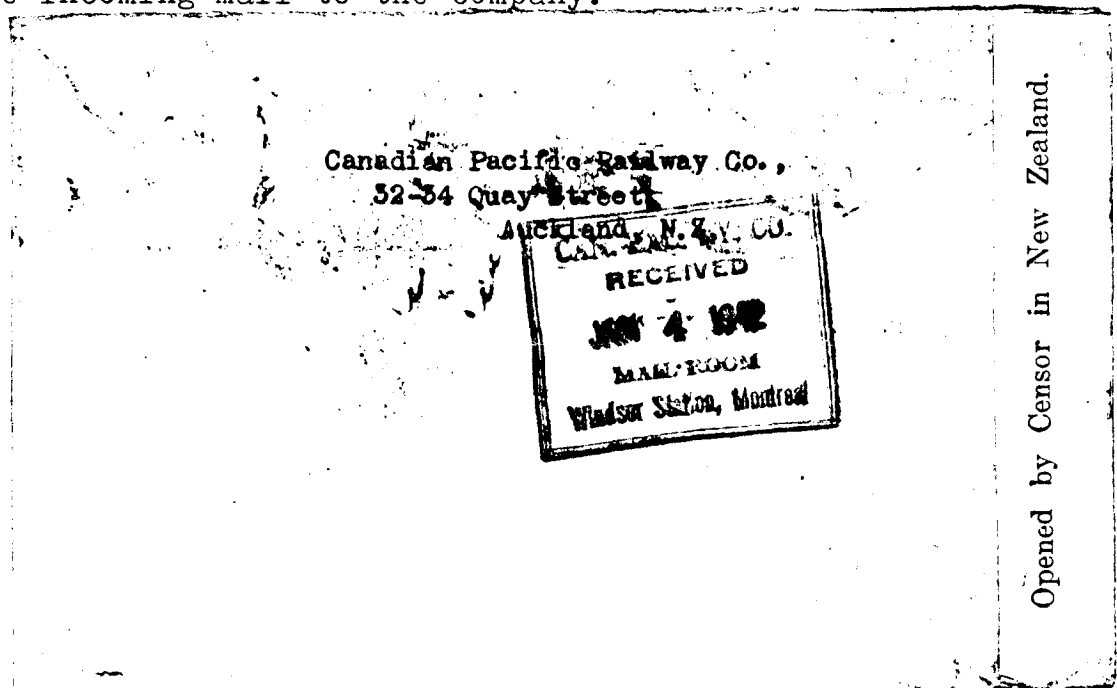
Warren Bosch would like to know which of the various clerk strikes were actually known to have been used as a cancelling device on the stamp. Since he has spent untold dollars and hours buying more than a million wholesale stamps and looking through stocks of dealers while finding only a handful of such strikes, it is his suspicion that most clerk strikes are known only as backstamps as transit or receiving markings. (or on facing slips). As there are so many known clerk strikes, this may be a large job, but if he is correct, it won't be.

Robert Gagnon sends these two interesting airmail covers



from New Zealand to Montreal. The one above was mailed from Auckland on October 10, 1941, and received October 18. That below was mailed December 10, 1941, and received January 4, 1942. Both received New Zealand censorship.

The Mail Room markings shown are office receiving stamps applied in the C.P.R. internal mail room at Windsor Station to date incoming mail to the Company.



As such, they are interesting collateral material - and well worth having - even if they aren't really R.P.O. markings.

Peter Eggett sends the accompanying photograph and article from the "Toronto Globe and Mail" of February 17, 1987. You will note that many of the abandoned branch lines which Mr. Bowers wishes to operate once supported thriving R.P.O. services.



TIM MCKENNA/The Globe and Mail

Peter Bowers and one of the branch lines he wants to buy in Owen Sound for Ontario Midwestern rail services.

Lew Ludlow has been working on his book keeping and advises that up to last September there existed 3,507 total listings. Of these 3,093 were major listings. 223 of the total and 198 of the major listings are unconfirmed or only proof known. This leaves 3,284 or 2,895 of which actual examples are known.

Lew reports that he has examples of 2,343 of the total in his collection, and 2,180 of the major listings. Your scribe is still trying to catch up with 2,137 and 1,936 at last count. It's slow work ! How about some more reports ?

Our esteemed Second Vice-President and long-time Study Group member, Dr. Robert V.C. Carr has recently written to each Study Group soliciting exhibits for BNAPEX '87, at Charlottetown, PEI, September 17 to 19. Dr. Bob advises that because of space and logistic restrictions, there will be only sixty frames of invited exhibits. He has asked this Group to let him know which members might exhibit one or two frames of their specialty. Lew and I have volunteered. Any others please advise Bob direct at 117 Robin Hood way, Sherwood Forest, Youngstown, OH 44511.

Owen Sound man pursues plan to build short-line railway using unwanted track

BY JOHN HARRIS
Special to The Globe and Mail

Peter Bowers has a plan to rescue several hundred kilometres of unwanted railway branch lines in Ontario. It is a case of hoping to turn a life-long passion into a healthy profit.

Mr. Bowers is convinced that there is money to be made in a western Ontario railway system that shows no sign of making it into the next century unless he rescues it.

"I like trains — I always have — and because of that people hesitate at first to take this project seriously," said Mr. Bowers, a 40-year-old Owen Sound mail order book salesman and author of a history of steam locomotives.

After spending thousands of hours and more money than he cares to mention to promote his plan during the past 10 years, Mr. Bowers is finally getting official support for his proposal to organize a short-line railway on track the major railways don't want.

His target area is a triangle roughly bounded by Brampton, Owen Sound and Stratford.

"Peter Bowers may be just the kind of entrepreneur who can move in with a small, personalized service and make a go of it where the big rail companies are losing money," said Ian Chadwick, manager of the railways office of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

The ministry is studying the short-line idea in the face of mounting pressure from Ontario communities, which are beginning to realize that the major railways do not want their business. It has offered to help Mr. Bowers pay for a detailed business plan for his proposal.

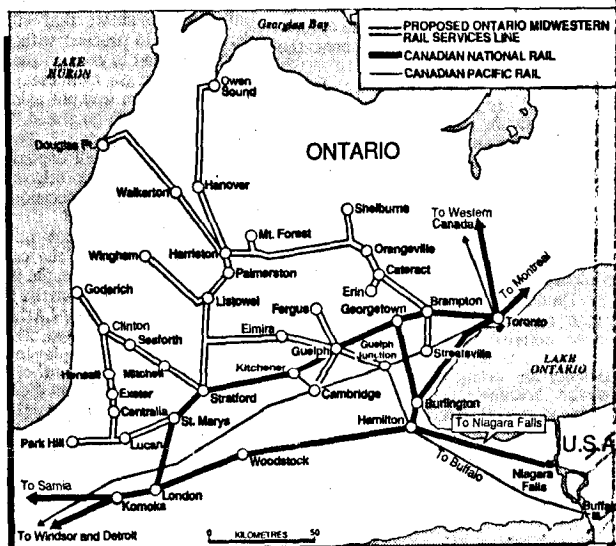
Ontario has no legislation covering long-term financial aid for short-line systems, but Mr. Chadwick said his ministry is considering a plan that would offer startup assistance. As well, he said, the ministry "could put some pressure on the rail companies to make locomotives and other equipment available."

Mr. Bowers said his railway could be financed by a partnership of municipal and private sources, the arrangement used by many new short-line companies in the United States.

Ontario Midwestern rail services, as he calls his proposed 750-kilometre line, would be a "service-oriented, more personalized railroad — the same kind of company that thrived in Ontario more than a century ago."

"The majors aren't capable of serving customers on the small branch lines and they're determined to shed as much unprofitable track as possible. That's where Ontario Midwestern comes in."

Interest in reorganizing and rescuing threatened railways in Canada has been kindled by the success of short-line operations in the United States. More than 100 railway companies have been formed since the U.S. industry was deregulated in 1980.



BERNARD BENNETT/The Globe and Mail

The U.S. companies, most of which use track not wanted by the major railways, range from networks of 1,000 kilometres or more to a two-kilometre line in Colorado.

Canada's first modern-era short-line railway is Central Western Railway Corp., which was launched last November in southeastern Alberta on a 173-kilometre branch line formerly owned by Canadian National Railway Co. It was purchased for about \$2.5-million.

If Central Western survives — and early indications are that it will, with the CN freight volume already tripled — it may be copied widely.

There could be plenty of surplus track available: CN wants to abandon 16,000 kilometres of track across Canada. Canadian Pacific Ltd. of Montreal wants to abandon 11,000 kilometres.

After surveying the freight shipping needs of dozens of companies in southwestern Ontario and the current railway traffic on the 11 branch lines left in the area, Mr. Bowers is certain a well-run, low-overhead operation could increase its business and make a profit, although the major railways say there isn't enough demand for them to do so.

His plan calls for freight service only at the outset. Passenger service could be added later.

CN and CP Ltd. are encouraging his efforts to find partners and to organize a business plan for the company, which could be launched for between \$10-million and \$15-million, Mr. Bowers said.

Rolling stock would be leased or purchased secondhand from the major railways, and the short-line system would connect with the national railway system.

"It makes sense to us," said Michael Matthews, manager of public affairs at CN's Toronto office. "We're interested in hearing a firm proposal from Mr. Bowers."

The problem is that Project Re-rail, formed by Mr. Bowers in 1977

to promote the plan, is running out of time. It may already be too late for many communities.

One by one, Ontario railway lines considered unprofitable have been discontinued. Stations have been torn down, track ripped up and rights of way abandoned to the weeds or sold to adjoining property owners.

The Canadian Transport Commission is considering railway applications to cut service on three branch lines in southwestern Ontario, and additional applications are expected soon. In the past five years, approval has been given to all but one application, ending railway service in dozens of small centres.

The next round of applications will affect bigger Ontario centres, including Owen Sound, Guelph and Fergus.

The Ontario Government is expected to try blocking more railway cuts in a number of areas, Mr. Chadwick said. "It would be unfortunate if railway abandonments overtook us before we could organize the kind of provincial railway system that would include short-line and recreational railroads."

Jim Gibbons, reeve of Fergus, which is fighting CN's application to end service and rip up the track on its Fergus-Guelph line, said communities have been slow to get behind a reorganized rail system because they gave up on trains years ago.

"The rail companies are making it official now, but actually they abandoned rail service through here 20 years ago." He said there may not be enough business for the railways now, but there could be much more if service improved.

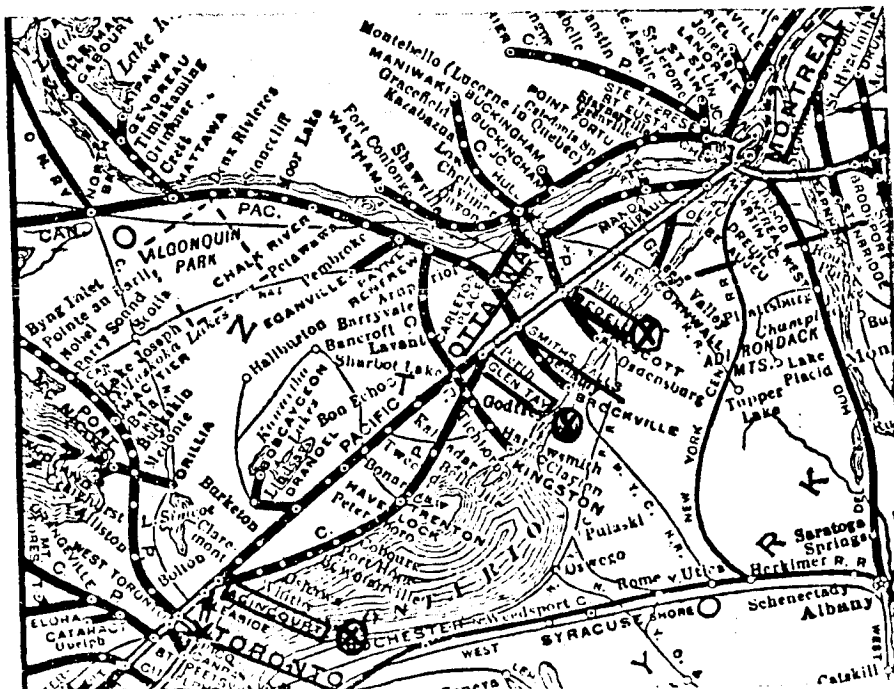
Mr. Bowers, who surveyed the current condition of the track under consideration by literally walking the rails, said the lines needed for the Ontario Midwestern system are in "relatively good shape."

The bulk of the system was built in the early 1880s. Today, even on unwanted branch lines, the railways operate a train every week or so to monitor track maintenance needs.

GREMLINS - Dr. John McCrae reports that neither he nor your Editor caught a slip on the first page of his report on Page 1 of Issue No.60, March, 1987. regarding the Eastport & Spokane run. In the middle of the page Northport is mentioned. This should, of course, be Eastport. Sorry John!

HYPHENATED TRAINS - John McCrae also sends some further dope on these unusual runs - following up on the item in Issue No. 61. He states that they were uncommon in Canada - but he recalls they appeared in the Admiral era on the Toronto & Niagara Falls R.P.O. Later there was a compound or hyphenated train 33-21 in Ottawa, Smiths Falls & Toronto service with the C.P.R. Lew has it recorded for 0-387 and 388, while John has one for 0-389. One more item to look for.

33-21 is clear from C.P.R.schedules. During the 30-year pool train arrangement between the CN and CP for the Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal corridor, the CP ran an overnighiter, Train 33, from Ottawa to Toronto, and a second overnighiter, Train 21, from Montreal to Toronto. Train 33 joined the Montreal-Toronto main line at Bedell, east of Smiths Falls and continued to Glen Tay, Agincourt, and Toronto. Train 21 ran over the main line from Montreal through Bedell, Smiths Falls and to Glen Tay - where it went on via the Lake Ontario shore line through Belleville, to Agincourt and Toronto. The two trains had leisurely schedules. No.33 went through Smiths Falls ahead of No.21, and dropped the postal car there. It was then cut into No.21 for service through Belleville, Trenton, Cobourg, Port Hope and Oshawa, on the way to Toronto. The period is not clear, but probably during the depression, and not for too long. The map below shows the area concerned.



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THE END. That's all for this time. The next issue will be sent from PIPEX at Spokane, Washington, at the end of May, and should contain Annex V to Lew's catalog. Thanks for all the letters and information. See you then.

Bill