

## LATE W. G. GRAHAM

The passing of the late W. G. Graham recalls the fact that he was one of the most colorful, progressive and influential citizens of Lindsay. For many years he was widely known in the railroad fraternity and for several years held the position of General Chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. This together with the fact that he was, for many years, a member of the Pension Board of the Canadian National Railways as Chairman brought him into contact with high ranking officials and hundreds of fellow employees.

The late Mr. Graham was born in the village of Omemee where he first attended school. Later his father moved to a farm near Reaboro and consequently Mr. Graham, who wasn't called Mr. Graham then, but just plain, "Billy", moved with him.

The shriek of the locomotive whistle was sending out its plaintive call, and unable to resist he came to Lindsay to begin his career on the railroad. That was in 1902 and a few years later Fireman Graham became a full fledged engineer with his first locomotive to drive.

Recently in a casual conversation Mr. Graham recalled the old four wheeled engine he first drove and he told how this rusted and weather-beaten old heap of scrap-iron was relegated to an old weed covered railroad siding near Midland.

For twenty years his hand rested on the throttle of every type of locomotive running out of Lindsay. In those twenty years his hand guided thousands of passengers and hundreds of freight trains over the ribbons of steel, covering what he estimated was close to a million miles with never a serious accident.

During those years he spent in the engine cab, Mr. Graham by virtue of his powerful and pleasing personality became known to enginemen all over the country. Here he himself did not go his reputation did.

His popularity as a "good fellow" was not confined to the railroad alone, however. For in 1934 his fellow citizens placed their confidence in him by making him mayor of the Town of Lindsay. During the two years that he held office he became one of the most popular mayors Lindsay ever had. It was during his term that he sponsored the famous "Old Home Week" which was one of the most successful feats ever pulled off in this locality.

It was during his service also that this town received a visit from Viscount Byng of Vimy and Lady Byng the Viscount at the time being Governor-General of Canada.

A biographical sketch printed a number of years ago has this to say regarding the late Mr. Graham:

In 1902 he left the farm and came to Lindsay to work on the Grand Trunk Railway in train service. He resigned in that same year and in the following year joined the C.P.R. on a construction project on the line between Burketon and Bobcaygeon. In 1904 he again returned to the Grand Trunk, this time as a fireman. In two years he was promoted to engineer.

In 1907 Mr. Graham was first elected to an office in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Ennginemen when he was appointed chairman of Lodge 136, the local division. It was nearly 20 years later, in 1926, that he was promoted again by his fellow employees, this time to general chairman. His duties on behalf of the brotherhood then consumed his full time and he left the cab of his locomotive to take up his official duties in offices in Lindsay and Montreal.

He was made a member of the Board of Directors in 1940 and in the same year was appointed vice-president, a seat which he held until his retirement.

He was also chairman of the Canadian Railway Board of Adjustment No. 1, a Board made up of 12 members, six from the railways concerned and six from the brotherhoods of employees. These latter included the vice-presidents of the Brotherhood of Locomotive motive Engineers, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, the Order of Railway Conductors, the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the Order of Railway Telegraphers, the brotherhood of Maintenance and Way Employees. The Board was set up, as its name denotes, to

handle disputes between the labour organizations and the railways.

The late Mr. Graham was prominent in various local organizations and held several offices in connection with Lindsay Lodge No 100, Independent Order of Odd Fellows. He was a loyal member of St. Paul's Anglican Church and in politics he was a staunch believer in the policies of the Progressive Conservative party. For several years past his summer home at Pleasant Point, Sturgeon Lake, was the meeting place for many relatives and hundreds of friends.