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William P. Brooks, C.N.R. Agent at Park Head, Retires After 41 Years at Station

Native of Fergus, He Has Been in Railway Business for 47 Years—Is Second Oldest Agent in Point of Service in Stratford Division—Has Many Other Interests in a Busy Career.

The oldest agent in point of service, with one exception, of the Canadian National Railways in the Stratford Division, but still a young man in the very prime of life and the enjoyment of excellent health is William P. Brooks, of Park Head, who is retiring on pension on November 23rd. The only agent in the Stratford Division ahead of Mr. Brooks is A. E. Robinson, of Palmerston, who was given a year's extension and is still doing duty at Palmerston.

For more than 41 years William P. Brooks has been on the job, day and night, except during his annual holidays, at the Park Head station, which is one of the important points on the line, being the junction point for Owen Sound and Wlarton. In good weather and bad he has faithfully and diligently carried out his duties as agent, and during that

periods that an employee must retire at the age of 65 years, and Mr. Brooks has arranged to give up his position and take life easy on the 65th anniversary of his birth. It is known that the Railway would have liked to retain his services awhile longer, but he is using his prerogative to quit when he reaches the age of 65 and will step down and out on his birthday. What his future plans are he has not decided, but there is a possibility that he may take up residence in Owen Sound.

Native of Fergus

Mr. Brooks was born in Fergus on November 23, 1879. He received his education in the Fergus school, and 47 years ago took up telegraphy with the Great Western Telegraph Co. He quickly learned to be an operator and then commenced his railway career with the old Grand

Trunk Railway as assistant agent at Fergus. He remained there for two years, and in order to gain experience acted as relieving agent for three years at various places in the Stratford Division. He went to the Hepworth station the day after Christmas in 1902, remaining there only a few weeks, to be exact until February 28th, 1903, and was then transferred to Park Head and appointed Agent, and has been there ever since that time. There have been numerous opportunities for removal elsewhere in the Stratford Division, but Mr. Brooks liked it at Park Head, the people there liked him, and so he remained. He has one of the finest homes in that part of Bruce County, situated opposite to the station, and the hospitality of that home has become a by-word among the people of Park Head and community. It is his second home, the first one burning down on October 11, 1939, due to a faulty furnace, and he then erected this new and modern home which has been much admired in its picturesque setting.

Mr. Brooks was married on August 6, 1919, to Elizabeth J. Young, of Park Head, a graduate of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, and they celebrated the silver wedding anniversary this year. During his 41 years at Park Head Mr. Brooks has had some interesting experiences, but prefers not to talk very much about them. Some of the winters have been very severe, and the snow has been piled high around the station, but he has always kept things moving smoothly and has catered to the necessities and pleasures of the travelling public, many times to his own inconvenience, and has thus endeared himself to all.

Prominent Mason

Mr. Brooks is a prominent member of the Masonic Order. He is a Past Master of Burns Lodge, A. F. & A. M., of Hepworth, and is also a Life Member of the same Lodge. In 1929-1930 he had the honor of being elected District Deputy Grand Master for the Bruce District, an honor much coveted and prized by Masons everywhere, and he was signally honored during his official visits to the various lodges in his district. He is also a life member of Barrie Lodge of Perfection, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. He is an enthusiastic Mason and is always accorded a hearty welcome on his visit to the various lodges and gatherings in the district.

For many years he took an active interest in outdoor sports and is a Past President of the Bruce Baseball League. He is an Elder in the Park Head United Church. He is a member of the Toronto Railway Club and of the Order of Railway Telegraphers, headquarters at St. Louis, Mo.

As a public spirited citizen he became financially interested in the Hepworth Furniture Co., and from 1932 until 1938 was a member of the Board of Directors of that company, which is now located at Southampton. He was a Justice of the Peace for Bruce County from 1919 to 1934, a member of the Mothers' Allowance Commission for Bruce in 1928, and is at the present time a member of the Amabel Township Municipal Council. With his excellent health and youthful spirit he has many years of usefulness in front of him and wherever he decides to locate will be a valued citizen.

Taking It Easy in His Comfortable Home



This picture shows C.N.R. Station Agent William P. Brooks enjoying the quiet of his home at Park Head where he keeps abreast of the times by reading The Daily Sun-Times and listening in on the radio.—Sun-Times photo.

single demerit mark against him, a record of which he has every reason to be proud. He is known among the travelling public as a gentleman in every respect, obliging, courteous, painstaking and efficient, and his retirement will mean that the C. N. R. will lose one of its most faithful employees. He holds the highest esteem of his superiors, his friends are legion, and his smiling face and engaging personality is going to be missed by those who down through the years have had the pleasure of his acquaintance as he went about his duties at the Park Head station.

Retires At 65

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A Tough Winter

"The toughest winter in my experience at Park Head was that of 1904-1905," said Mr. Brooks, who stated that there were 10 days when the train service was abandoned. He stated that the railway tracks between Park Head and Allenford had to be literally picked clear of the ice which had formed as a result of the sleet storm and snow, followed by freezing before it could be removed. It took a large gang of men several days to pick that ice out of the four and a half miles of track before a train could be operated. For many years the train leaving Owen Sound and the one leaving Wlarton in the early morning departed considerably earlier than at the present time, and Mr. Brooks prides himself in the knowledge that he was never late in meeting those trains at Park Head. The original station at Park Head was burned down on August 19, 1934. The Company has as yet not seen fit to erect a new station there, but is making use of an old passenger car, which has been fitted up as a station, and is serving the purpose of a station very satisfactorily.

Has Many Interests

While Canadian National Railway business has been his chief