

Van de Water, George C.

Started rail career locally

Intell June 26/85 Bel-Birr

TORONTO - George A. Van de Water, of Oakville, vice-president of the Great Lakes Region of Canadian Na-

tional Railways -- who worked in various Belleville railroad posts -- died early Tuesday following an illness of several months.

He was 57.

Born in Listowel, Mr. Van de Water received his engineering degree from Queen's University in 1951 and joined CN's engineering department on graduation. His first job was as an instrument man at Belleville.

In the next few years, he also worked in engineering positions at London, Hamilton and Hornepayne. He moved rapidly up the company ladder, said CN spokesmen and by 1976 was chief engineer for the entire coast-to-coast CN system.

This meant he had responsibility for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of CN's huge fixed plant including 24,000 miles of main track, 6,000 bridges, 72 tunnels and hundreds of railway buildings.

His railway career, however, was not restricted to the engineering department. It didn't take long for his organizational and managerial strengths to be recognized by others, said a Tuesday release from the company.

In 1964, when he was area engineer at Belleville, he was named project manager for the huge Place Bonaventure development across from CN headquarters in Montreal.

After masterminding that project, he was asked to co-ordinate the railway relocation project at Ottawa which involved moving rail facilities from downtown Ottawa to the new station on the capital's outskirts.

Mr. Van de Water moved easily in general administration, said a spokesman. He became manager of the Rideau area at Belleville in 1970, the youngest CN area manager at that time.

He then moved to Toronto as express manager and intermodal services manager for the Great Lakes Region.

His opportunity to head the engineering department came in 1976 and for the next five years he guided a multi-million dollar plant expansion and other projects.

He also initiated the development of many new machines which revolutionized CN's system of track and roadbed maintenance.

Mr. Van de Water became vice-president of the Great Lakes Region in June, 1981. The region encompasses most of the province.

"Always alert to new opportunities to attract freight business," said a spokesman, "he spearheaded CN's successful efforts to acquire in partnership CP Rail, the Canada Southern Railway between Windsor and Niagara Falls."

This venture served to strengthen both railways to compete with highway trucking industries.

Mr. Van de Water was also involved with Go Transit, for which CN operates commuter services for the Metropolitan Toronto area.

A resident of Oakville, Mr. Van de Water is survived by his wife, Elaine and four children -- Lynn, Nancy, James and Richard. Funeral arrangements are by the Russell-Morden Chapel, Ward's Funeral Home, 109 Renaud St., Oakville.

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