

The Railway and Pioneer Museum

When decision was reached in 1970 to establish a permanent museum in Cochrane, it was natural that it should be thought of as an exhibition on wheels.

Incorporated in 1910, Cochrane came into existence as the junction point of two railways—the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario (now the Ontario Northland), and the National Trans-continental (now part of the Canadian National system).

The railway surveyors chose as the site for the junction an Indian meeting place, known as the Little Lakes Camping Ground, and before their arrival none but Indian trappers knew the spot. When the T. & N.O. Commission laid out the townsite and put lots up for auction, in November, 1908, however, settlers were already beginning to look for homestead sites, and soon a cosmopolitan influx of land-hungry farmers, railway construction crews, and alert businessmen, were axing a settlement out of the forest.

The purpose of this museum is to preserve a three-dimensional picture of the pioneer railway and homesteading days—a tribute to the men and women who within the present century opened Northern Ontario, in itself an empire bigger than the territories of many members of the United Nations.

MUSEUM MAKERS

The museum program was launched in 1970 by the Cochrane Board of Trade (incorporated (1909), and then turned over to the Town of Cochrane, both bodies making substantial contributions to the enterprise.

Essential to its success has been the wholehearted co-operation of ONR and CNR, management and staff sharing in the planning and work. All the rolling stock and track used have been the gifts of the two railways.

The timing has been perfect. The launching of the project coincided with plans of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests (now Ministry of Natural Resources), and the ONR, to provide interpretive centres for the benefit of the many thousands of travellers visiting the James Bay Frontier, particularly as users of the ONR's Cochrane-Mooseonee excursions.

The Board of Trade was also given financial help under a Local Initiatives Program grant, under federal legislation.

The help of the Museums Branch of the Ontario Department of Public Records and Archives is gratefully acknowledged. The advice of its staff has been given readily, and the museum will be earning grants in the future on its local expenditures.

Despite all this generous help,

however, the museum could not have taken shape without the interest, work and contributions of the people of Cochrane and neighbouring communities.

GUIDE IN BRIEF

T. & N.O. Locomotive No. 137 - Chosen for use in the ONR's

Centennial train, this steam locomotive has much of the original fittings from the days when it was coal-fired. As it is still operating under steam, however, it now has to use oil as fuel.

CN Caboose- The "Travelling hotel" of countless rail workers, it is being preserved so far as

possible in its original condition.

CN Baggage Car- Entrance lobby holds Indian and Eskimo displays as a reminder of the inhabitants of the country before Cochrane existed. Successive exhibit areas show logging tools, trapper's cabin with skins, traps and "bachelor apartment".

The forge, with its anvil, bellows and tools, is a reminder of the days when the Northern Development Branch was responsible for roads; the exhibit was assembled by its modern successor, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

The homesteader's log cabin was not a bachelor apartment-

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Bilingualism

This takes on a different meaning in Moosonee and Moose Factory. The train museum located near the Moosonee station has Cree as well as English writing on it. Several other signs in the centres are in Cree and English.

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