



Wreckage almost reached highway

The wreckage from Monday morning's 23-car derailment near Upsala almost spilled on to the Highway 17 branch of the Trans-Canada. (Full story on Page 1.) The westbound pickup truck in the photo above shows how close the

accident was to the highway. The 106-car CP Rail freight was carrying mostly construction materials and three cars worth of automobiles.

J. David Galway photos

NWO - Accidents - Rail

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Investigation underway into worker's death

MARATHON (Staff) — Ministry of Labor and coroner's investigations are under way into the death here Monday of a man crushed by a railway boxcar at the James River-Marathon Ltd. pulp mill.

Wayne Ferguson, 37, reportedly jumped from a boxcar after it left the tracks Monday morning in the mill yard. "He was unable to get clear and the boxcar tipped over on top of him," said James River-Marathon safety coordinator Harold Griggs.

Ferguson was a switcher in the mill's rail section. His job was to ride the trains and "throw the switch to move (boxcars) on to sidings" and position them for unloading, Griggs said.

The boxcars are owned by CP Rail but operated by James River-Marathon. They are used to bring wood chips from area sawmills for processing into pulp, the raw material for paper products.

Griggs would not comment on what caused the boxcar to leave the tracks.

Ferguson worked at the mill for "a number of years," Griggs said, although he did not know exactly how long. He said Ferguson was married and had two children.

A Labor ministry spokesman said an investigator from Thunder Bay was sent to the mill Monday afternoon. The ministry's investigation will include site inspection and interviews with mill personnel.

The spokesman said he could not comment on the details of the accident, beyond saying that Ferguson was "crushed by a rail car."

Meanwhile, the coroner in the case, Dr. Wayne Goven of Marathon, says an inquiry into the fatality is likely.

"I visualize an inquest being held, but I have to get all the information before making a final decision," Goven said in a telephone interview Tuesday. (Inquests are held at the coroner's discretion in industrial deaths, while they are required by law in all mining deaths.)

Goven said he expects to have the information he requires to make his decision by early next week. He said a post-mortem will be conducted on Ferguson's body.

NWO - Accidents - Rail

The Labor ministry spokesman noted that federal investigators are called after accidents involving inter-provincial trains. The boxcar in this case, however, is being treated the same as any piece of industrial equipment, since it was only used by the mill.