

# Steam train proposal takes off on wrong track

The Ontario Rail Association's proposal to recreate a page from Canada's steam locomotive history on unused CN railway tracks extending from Cheltenham to Georgetown, could be derailed by incensed residents of the Terra Cotta area before the first boiler is fired.

It has already generated generous amounts of verbal steam.

The proposal was attacked by Terra Cotta resident Bill Zilio at Monday night's meeting of Esqueusing council and he told councillors he was only the vanguard of a groundswell of disapproval from township residents who live near the old "northern" railway, which extends from Georgetown to Barrie.

They charge the locomotive page from the past is going to pollute the air, nearby houses will be bothered by vibration and it will bring an influx of unwanted city people to the area, who will break down fences and trespass on farmers' and other residents' property.

Two members of the Ontario Rail Association, Sherwood Hume of Milton and M. C. (Mac) Black, a director from Georgetown, listened to Mr. Zilio's charges with astonishment, following their presentation of the steam railroad proposal to council.

Reeve Tom Hill also strenuously opposed the proposals suggesting the rail association had found some means of "getting around" the air pollution control branch of the Department of the Environment, which had eluded the township.

If the township can't get a permit to burn garbage in the dump to save tax dollars, how do you get one to run steam trains which will cause a lot of dust and smoke? the reeve asked Mr. Hume.

"If the right coal is used and the proper men are firing the engine it would not be objectionable," Mr. Hume replied to the unconvinced reeve.

## Cheltenham base

The two man rail delegation explained the group has a charter and would run the proposed steam rail tourist type attraction from a base at Cheltenham. Trains would travel to Georgetown for a nominal fee, turn around, and then go back to Cheltenham. There are some 100 or more similar operations in the United States, Canada and Britain, they pointed out, operated by enthusiasts with nostalgia for the steam operated railroads of the past.

The association has acquired four steam locomotives, 15 pieces of passenger equipment and three freight cars so the tourist

railroad can operate as authentically as possible.

Mr. Hume explained the group was there to get township support so the CN could apply for permission from the Canadian Rail Transport Commission for "abandonment of service" on the old northern line. The last train had used the tracks about three years ago, he said.

The CN would apply for abandonment of service in favor of the Ontario Rail Association using the track for a running steam museum. He said support for the project had already come in the form of letters from Premier Davis, M. P. Terry O'Connor, M.P.P.s Jim Snow and George Kerr. He asked the township for a similar approval.

Hume said the tourist railroad would only operate on summer weekends to begin with but could become a daily operation in summer months if demand warranted. The Peel County Board of Education is interested in use of the steam railroad by students who had never experienced a ride on one.

"We feel the project has great potential," said Hume, noting most children under 16 have never ridden on a steam railroad. All crossings would have signals or be

gated, he declared, with adequate provision to warn traffic of oncoming trains. Tracks would be completely maintained by Ontario Rail to better than ordinary railroad standards, which includes keeping culverts and fences up to standard.

"I'm against it," declared Bill Zilio, as the reeve indicated someone in the council chambers was there to oppose the proposal. "Any steam engine I ever saw never had clean smoke."

Mr. Black said Ontario Rail intended to purchase low pressure sulphur coal which met the standards of the air pollution control branch and if the right staff men were operating the engines and they were fired correctly problems would be minimal. Problems from smoke in the past had been largely the result of poor operation, he said.

Mr. Hume also said that people mistakenly presumed a full head of steam is pollution when it is not.

## Reeve snorts

This brought a snort from the reeve, who declared he could distinguish between clean steam and black smoke and had failed to observe much of the latter from any steam locomotive.

Mr. Hume said that perhaps residents of the area would consider the proposal more

considerately if they were aware the CN did not intend to abandon the railway, considering it as a future route to the north, circumventing Toronto. In his talks with railway officials there was talk of 100 trains a day using the tracks. This is why they would only lease the tracks to Ontario Rail for a 20 year period, he said.

Mr. Zilio intimated residents would face that problem when it occurred, indicating there were many more objectors who would appear at the next meeting of council. "I hope council doesn't approve this," he said, "until we are given a chance to speak."

The reeve agreed, noting there was a meeting in Chinguacousy township that night where many residents had gone to register objections and he predicted a lot of flack.

Mr. Hume replied that a previous meeting in Chinguacousy had drawn only two objections and he could not understand their reluctance to accept the proposals. "It will be one of the biggest tourist attractions in the area," he felt, predicting it would also bring a lot of money into Esqueusing.

"Yeah," thundered the reeve, "but why should the township have to put up with all the inconvenience for the people of Toronto who would use the railroad. We are fighting



STEAM LOCOMOTIVES like this one chugging through Acton will pollute the clean country air, residents of Terra Cotta say.

their garbage now and this is another problem.

Hill said he had received many phone calls objecting to the proposals and thought about them all day Sunday, turning all the problems over in his mind. He was convinced now he had all the answers.

"We have heard Mr. Hume and Mr. Black," said Councillor Len Cox quietly. "It is only fair we hear the ratepayers' side, too."

Mr. Black reiterated that probably a lot of the concern may only be lack of information. He said steam trains on the route between Cheltenham and Georgetown would only be travelling 10-25 miles an hour which would not cause much vibration. The road bed had been surveyed and found in excellent condition, with replacement of ties the main item.

"We intend to take every precaution and abide by all the rules of the railroad."

At this point, John Cole of R.R. 2, Acton, present with a delegation on roads, chortled that the rail group could take the steam proposal to Acton where a station already existed and train service was needed.

"I believe we are doing a service to the community preserving a way of life that has virtually disappeared as well as trains from the past," declared Black.

"We will hear both sides April 30," commented Councillor Howitt.

"Don't you think they are taking this pollution bit too far?" asked Councillor Leslie, a steam buff himself.

"I'd just like to know why the township of Esqueusing gets all the things no one else wants," grumbled the reeve.

Mr. Hume explained the township was in the centre of the Golden Horseshoe, the track was not being used and it was within easy driving distance of a whole lot of people.

The reeve concluded the discussion by remarking that the group's friends headed by Premier Davis had made sure Esqueusing did not share in the gold in the Golden Horseshoe by placing the township in a no development area.

# Centennial planning delayed

Chairman, secretary-treasurer and committees to arrange the celebration of Acton centennial in 1974 were to have been formed at a meeting called for Sunday afternoon, but no organizing was done, due to limited attendance and some disgruntlement.

Back to each of the 27 organizations will go a letter again requesting representation at another meeting.

This motion was made after about an hour of discussion at the community centre. There were 15 people attending. (This new letter of explanation will go out this week, but no date is set for a further meeting.)

No Commission now

The centennial commission had dissolved, as intended originally, to make way for working committees which were to have been finalized Sunday. All the representatives of 27 organizations as well as other volunteers had been informed of the place, date and purpose, with the letter requesting a substitute be sent if the person could not attend.

Organizer Jack Carpenter draped a couple of centennial flags over a table, handed out mimeographed lists of committees and purposes, and began to outline his suggestions and tentative plans.

He had prepared a list of people who had agreed to sit on subcommittees for program, decorations, building, country market, historical, youth and At Home. Of the 33 named, 11 were present.

It had also been suggested in the letters sent out calling the meeting that a chairman and secretary should be appointed. However, this point was never reached.

Questions answered

Some questions were asked about finances and the new plan of organization, answered primarily by Mr. Carpenter and councillor Bill Coats of the original centennial commission. Mr. Coats said he feels a paid secretary-treasurer is essential.

There is a half mill in the council budget for centennial providing \$4,500 in the operational account. This sum is not for the major project.

Object to contact

Objections were raised by C. of C. president Ed Bendicks and past president Roy Goodwin that contact had not been made directly with the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Carpenter explained he had contacted their appointed representative Henry Slachyra who had agreed to sit on one of the sub committees. They maintained a letter should have

gone directly to the Chamber of Commerce since this re-organization is "a new ball game."

Some indicated they felt the letter received Friday was too late; another relayed objection to Sunday meetings.

A motion was put that letters again be sent directly to organizations asking for a representative to attend a general meeting. The motion passed and the meeting broke up with no certainty what's to happen now.

Work for money

Noticeably disappointed, Mr. Carpenter said "I'm leaving to work... for money." He had a filming assignment out of the country. He added later "We've been through all this before! Now

we're back at square one. We're at some of the deadlines, and the chance to re-organize was lost."

Present at the meeting were Jack Carpenter, Bill Coats, Harold Townsley and Paul Nielsen of the now defunct centennial commission, G. W. McKenzie of council, Barry Insoce for council, parks and recreation, George Elliott for the band, Ivan Harris for the Golden Age Club, Mrs. Rose Hall for Guides and Brownies, Mrs. Kay Dills for the Free Press, Mrs. Marie Hargrave as a substitute for Acton W.I. representative Dorothy Simmons, Bob Hart for St. John Ambulance, Roy Goodwin for Lakeview Centre and the Chamber of Commerce, Jim James and Ed Bendicks, with two reporters.

## Obituary

### Peter Wilson

Peter Wilson of R.R. 1, Limehouse, died April 9 in Guelph General Hospital at the age of 89. A stonemason, Mr. Wilson came from Poland to Canada in 1912 and homesteaded in Saskatchewan. He came to Ontario in the fall of 1945 to lot 31, con. 6 Esqueusing where he

farmed till ill health forced him to retire a few years ago.

He is survived by his wife Anna, sons Paul and Frank, R.R. 1, Limehouse; Rudy, Lundbreak, Alberta, Edward, R.R. 2, Rockwood, 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his oldest son Michael of Saskatchewan.

Funeral service was held at St. Joseph's church, Acton, conducted by Rev. J. J. Gillen. Interment was in Fairview cemetery. Pallbearers were Clarence Allan, Jesse McEnery, R. R. 2, Acton; Fred Shortill, Willard Sanderson, R. R. 1 Georgetown; Morgan Madill R. R. 1, Limehouse and Charles A. Thomson, R. R. 2, Conn.

# Lack info, public support Lions postpone station project

Acton Lions Club has decided to defer any further decisions in connection with their proposal to move the C.N.R. station to a piece of parkland on the north side of Fairy Lake, near the intersection of Elizabeth Dr. and Jeffrey Ave.

In a letter to Acton Parks and Recreation Committee read at Monday night's regular meeting the Lions Club cited lack of further information from the C.N.R. and lack of public support for the project as major reasons for their decision.

No support

"Because we have heard nothing from the railroad, received no public support and much opposition, we are holding any decisions in abeyance until such time as something more concrete comes along," the Lions Club letter stated.

The letter said the C.N.R. has given the club no further indication they intend to dispose of the building at this time.

"We feel that unless there is something more definite from them, there is no sense stirring up any more unrest among residents of the proposed area," the letter continued.

The club was critical of a simulation photograph of the station in the proposed area that appeared in the Free Press. Members felt the simulation was very misleading because the site shown was not exactly the proposed site and because they said the picture of the site

appeared to have been taken before the lake was dredged. A lot of water shown in the picture is now actually land, the letter claimed.

The letter also suggested the picture of the station was to a different scale than the property and that the picture was taken from an angle that makes houses on Nelson Court appear as if they are directly in front of the lot.

"What is actually superimposed is a building which would probably be close to 300 feet long," the letter charged.

Apology

The letter said any secret regarding use of the building was unintentional. The club apologized for any apparent secretive intentions.

"The intention was that the building would be available to any responsible group which cared to use it. We have been approached by a group of Brownies and some members of the Golden Age Club. We felt there probably could be others," the letter stated.

The club said they were also looking into the possibility of opening up a rowing club where people of all ages could be taught the art of rowing competitive shells.

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**DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME**  
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME (Clock advances one hour) shall be adopted for the Municipality of Acton from Sunday, April 29th, 1973 at 2:00 a.m. to Sunday, October 28th, 1973 at 2:00 a.m. and that a proclamation to this effect be published in the Acton Free Press

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Let's talk about **HORSES**  
with Jennifer Barr  
Question: My horse is impossible to worm and yet I want to do what's right for him. The previous owners told me that he became hysterical if tube wormed, yet he refuses to eat any worm powder and I've tried them all. What do I do now?  
Answer: It's hard to fool a fussy horse but there are several things you could try. Freeze the powder before feeding to get rid of the smell. Some people have success adding a packet of strawberry jello or freshie to the feed with the powder to disguise the flavor. Be sure to get your horse used to additives before worming, such as molasses, sweet feed, etc.  
The good lady, Mary Hatch, who has been nursemaiding my donkey, wormed her effectively by mixing the powder with water and shooting it down AnnaBelle's throat with a large dose syringe. Marvellous idea—if you have a dose syringe. However, a horsey magazine gave me the bright idea of using a meat baster for the same job—one of those hard plastic tube affairs with a rubber end piece and rubber bulb.  
Don't give up on tube worming, though, it is the very best way to worm a horse so far, and another vet might get on better with your horse.  
Please send letters to Jennifer Barr, R.R. 2, Acton.  
**15 more permits**  
Fifteen building permits for work valued at \$279,500 were issued by Nassagaweya Township during the month of March. The permits include 10 new residences, three alterations, one private garage and one institution.  
The month's construction brings the total for the year to \$459,500.

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