

MLR SNOWPLOW
Editorial:
The Great Publishing Fiasco


Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
Maple Leaf Region
12/14/73

Nationally--over a year ago, the new TAMR Executive of Ralph Deblasi, Begnt Muten, Jean Brisson, David Johnston and auditor Tom Papedeas became fed up with the incompetent handling of the Hotbox by Mike Bonk. The latter was fired and a replacement sought. About this time, publisher Dick Magie found that he did not have the time to continue in that post. He was replaced by David Garretson and Chapman College of California. John W. Held was then appointed editor. The material for the September-October 1972 and November 1972-April 1973 ("catch-up") issue was sent to Garretson who demanded payment of half the costs before printing the September-October issue. This was done and the Hotbox was reputedly mailed and returned for insufficient postage. My good friend John "Squeaky" Held then started, and has continued, to raise hell--but to no avail as his demands were, and are, ignored. It was only through his perseverance that the members got the May-June 1973 Hotbox for, as you know, he took it to a commercial publisher. While all this was merrily continuing on, the national executive was grinding to a halt and by summer there were clamours for the resignations or impeachment of President Deblasi and Vice-President Muten. And, the Chicago National Convention was faltering until it was rescued by Gary Tempco. In Chicago, plans were being made for the slow process of impeachment, but before such action could be taken, Deblasi saw the writing on the wall and resigned. This meant that Muten became President and Dale Madison was appointed Vice-President. By this time Jean Brisson was having a hard time of keeping up with his dual role of Secretary and Snowplow editor since he was/is attending college. He resigned and Phillip Simonds was appointed. That brings us up to this point in time. An election will soon be held after which Muten will reportedly resign, assuming that Dale Madison is re-elected. According to what I understand, I will then be appointed Vice-President--but I can have no part in such plans, as you will soon see.

Regionally--Think about it: the above does sound more than familiar. Snowplows at irregular intervals, undependable answers to correspondence, questions as to why being overlooked and so on. The reason for this was Jean's inability to keep up under trying conditions. It was inevitable that he should succumb, and 12/8/73 I received an envelope of material from him.

It contained a letter of resignation. Due to his lack of time he could not compile a set of organized regional records but he had compiled a Snowplow. I immediately assumed the position of interim editor where I was faced with three alternatives: (1) publish Jean's Snowplow with an editorial of my own, but the cost of this would have been prohibitive (over 80% of the region's assets); (2) publish a smaller edition, but like the former case, the cost would have been high and the quality of reproduction, by photocopying, low: or (3) talk my father into printing an issue at his office--purely an emergency solution. It was the latter course which was chosen and is being fulfilled as I type this.

The next day I gave region president Mike Plumb a call. We decided to call an emergency meeting for December 27, here in Hamilton. All are invited to attend (assuming you receive this in time). Both Mike and I are determined to make the region work--but we can't do it alone. There are many problems to be solved, many offices to be filled, constitutional matters to be dealt with. With your help we'll make it. We're not out of it yet, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.


John C. Eull
Interim Editor

P.S. - The next issue will hopefully, be a photo extra. With it we would like to begin a regular schedule of publication. It will, needless to say, contain a full report on the emergency meeting, the plans that came out of it, and a full examination of regional committees.

P.P.S.-And, of course, my warmest wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'E' or similar character.

THE HAMILTON CONVENTION REPORT

From the astute eyes of Richard Guitar

It was a bright fairly cool day, at about 12:00 when I registered at the Royal Connaught Hotel. I went up to the Laura Secord room where the remainder of the happy modelers had gathered. The introduction showed the number in attendance was 8. They were George Redburn and John Eull from Hamilton, Jean Brisson of Montreal, Gordon Midgley of Cambridge (Galt), Mike Voelker from Agincourt, Mike Plumb of London, Phil Simonds of Tonawanda (NY) and myself, Richard Guitar of St. Catharines.

Due to the Rail strike, all tours of railroad facilities were cancelled. We then decided to spend part of the afternoon in a bull session, after four had left to get their pictures taken for the newspaper. When they got back, we were then interviewed as a group. Results were an interesting article with a photo in the Hamilton Spectator. Around 15:30 we left for George Redburns, the only pike on the layout tour. We went through Gage Park to get some pictures of TH&B consolidation #103. We tramped through what had become a wet day to George's. George's pike already has plenty of operating opportunities due to well planned yard and many industries served. It was also the occasion for George to acquire a new piece of motive power, an Alco Model RS-18 painted in CP RAIL colours and the official ceremony, along with the region's banquet which was held next at Mother's Pizza Parlour.

We discussed region's business while we consumed 5 jugs of assorted drinks, 5 pizzas and two rolls of film. Soon after, we returned to the hotel, where we first saw CP RAIL coal unit trains in the Rockies. Wise cracks included couplers, locomotives, and washing the coal...This was followed by an highly interesting clinic on railroad yards, their operations and the men who serve them. The clinic was given by Mr. John Bullock and his assistant photographer (just can't recall his name) and with the help of the commentaries from yours truly (help!!! ed. note).

We tried to show an NMRA tape-slide clinic, and like everyting in the NMRA, it didn't work (pun). The subject of the clinic, by John Allen, was the optimum use odd space. The clinic was truly interesting, especially the many fine pictures from the clinic that were unpublished yet.

The time elapsed rapidly, so we were able to see mostly the slides taken by John C. Eull. This was the perfect occasion to start arguing, with Diesel Spotter's Guide as arbitrator, on such things as louvres on MLW RS-18 and RS-10's, and whether or not there was such a thing as a Junior Trainmaster, and preferences over new and old paint schemes into the wee hours of the morning. After that, such talks switched over to modeling and politics with occasional dashes of Watergate and Penn Central. After this finally ended at about 5:00 AM, we slept till 9:00. After a nice breakfast for those of us who found their shoes (right Gord?) we missed our bus, started walking back only to find another bus following right after and just made it (why don't busses carry green flags to indicate a section following?)..

After a lengthy talk about the Big Bankrupt (Penn Central) we finally arrived in Toronto at around 11:00 AM. We then took the subway followed by streetcar to Goerge's Trains Hobby Shop. There, Mike Voelker who stayed overnight in his native Agincourt (he really missed something) joined the group. After some comments from Mike on European equipment and Jean on details in N scale, a couple of purchases were made and we went our way to the Exhibition. We then had dinner in the food pavilion area, did a little girl watching and then proceeded to the crafts and hobbies building where we decided to invade the pike there and have some operation going. Comedy ensued. A car derailed on my train, but when I tried to stop, I turned the rheostat the wrong way. They would have to set then in reverse on standard power packs. I then proceeded to work in the yards, with the usual derailments, short circuits, running in the other guy's block, etc...We had found that the equipment was reliable as snow in July, so I should have been prepared for the worst, but Gordon "lost my shoe" Midgley screamed stop too late. It seems that a freight had crossed over a crossing but was unlucky enough to hit an open switch and was derailed. A passenger train then smashed into it's side. After a major screw-up, an old lady who had read the sign "we're not on strike" on the operator's tower said: "You're not on strike, but I can't see a train running!"... We then left for Mike Voelker's place.

There, we were more successful at showing the NMRA tape-slide clinic. Some of us read Mike's European railroads books while others attempted a switching contest, a tricky one planned by Mike, using his German Federal Railways equipment (even more tricky...ed.note). Yours truly finished in first, Gordon Midgley second and nobody else finished the contest. We then took a group shot in front of a TTC bus stop, since we had travelled by buses, trolleys (acceptable) and subways (less acceptable) in place of our favorite transportation, which were on strike.

Then, back by bus(...) to Hamilton. Tired, but restless, we wandered around midnight all the way down King Street to an A & W, while yours truly sang the Wabash Cannonball and Wreck of the Old 97. After a mysterious person had mysteriously dropped some Coke in Gordon's hair, we went back to our room to get some sleep.

The next morning, we paid our room fee (right, John?) and then left for home after shaking hands, after one of the best times I've ever had.

Jean Brisson continues:

The story doesn't end there...Four of us (john, Phil, Mike Plumb and I, Jean) decided to head for Chicago. After riding GO bus to CN Burlington Station, we had to walk a quarter mile on the tracks to reach the station. And, you guessed it...we missed our TEMPO to Windsor...So, we decided to have a chat by the friendly stationmaster in Burlington, as we had him phone every place on earth for details on air fares, news about the rail strike (trains ran only one day, the one right after the Convention ending), and we purchased a CN-Air Canada Youth cards, emptied the station of most of their timetables, glanced at a freight passing by and finally deciding to take the next train to Toronto. Most of the travel was spent in the dutch doors watching signals change as the train entered in another block, and calculating speed of train with reference from mileposts.

In Toronto, we resigned on travelling place by place and chose rather to take the afternoon TEMPO to London. The trip to LONDON was mild, with various talks. (Jean conveniently neglects to mention how he picked up a girl on TEMPO 141 - ed. note).

We were then picked up by Mike Plumb's father and went to Mike's home to see his layout. We then headed to the Quebec Street yards and met Richard May of London. Some night rail-fanning ended up with a fleet of thundering CP RAIL purebreeds at rest. We went to the yard office to pick up some information and went then to the CN yards. We spent little time there, discussing with employees about the strike, discovered, to our amazement, that the CN doesn't run on schedule, explaining the question I had brought as to why the CN carried white flags so often.

Back to Mike's place where we almost fell asleep immediately. The next morning dull news: rail strike again. So, we took a bus to Windsor, crossed the border and ended up in Detroit. A taxicab to the PC station and for a 5 hour wait there (thanks to AMTRAK scheduling). We went on the platforms to shoot some pictures and finally boarded our train with the observation's tail running next to the E-8...The trip was rather quiet, despite some stir caused by Phil's SLAMTRACK President's card...

In Chicago, we were picked up by Gary Tempco (now attending University of London) and rode Illinois Central's electrics. Cars were built in the twenties and the ride was a glimpse of the ride offered in those days (rough!). Then, as we saw an IC freight backing up with a flare lighted on the caboose platform, we were picked up by Gary's father and went to his place. We saw some operation on Gary's Kiamichi & Tennessee Midland, a rare performance in the TAMR, went by car to meet Bob Polasky, then went around Gary's place to railroad spots, went back home and finally went to sleep at around 3:30 in the morning. We woke up early, took the bus, with Bob and Art Mulligan, picked up Don Nelson en route to the Chicago national convention. Follow report of this event in the coming HOTBOX.

From the satirical eyes of John C. Eull:

Beneath the smog and mounds of garbage lies the City of Hamilton, somewhere near the shores of Lake Ontario (for, indeed, one cannot tell the water from the land). There railfans stand and stare at, as well as take pictures, of the rails at deserted junctions. (How else did they get the name, railfans?).

40-ouncer: Hey, is that a steam locomotive?

The Walking Toothpick: No, Gord, it's a trolley bus. It's a means of transportation for getting people around the City.

40-ouncer: Sure it's not a steam locomotive with that wheel arrangement, 7-5-9?

German Federal: It might well be, let's take a fan trip on it.

7 AM Bowler: Why don't we save that for tomorrow when we ride the TTC-the Toddling Transit Contraption.

A short time later (24 hours)...

40-ouncer: This is too much, I'm going to have to get a wideangle lens!

The Man: But for now my instamatic will have to do!

Bearer of Good (Strike) News: How about those two over there?

7 AM Bowler: Let's follow them onto that streetcar!

All: Agreed!!

The next day:

Twang:...and that's the corporate history of the NS&T back to the third millenium BC.

40-ouncer: ...Oh.

Twang: Say did you find your shoes yet, Gord?

40-ouncer: No, that's why I'm down here in the lobby in my socks.

Twang: Well I won't tell you that they're in my room.

Later that day--

That Man" Well, so much for Chicago--hey, I've got an idea, why don't we take a train to Toronto and then back to Dundas.

Bearer of Good (Strike) News: We should have taken the morning train.

The Walking Toothpick: Where's my passenger train?

7 AM Bowler: We missed it at Burlington station!

Still later that day--

Bearer of Good (Strike) News: According to this chart in RMC I'm an average railfan.

7 AM Bowler: Why don't you join the National Society of Freight Passengers so you can be rated as a super-fan.

Bearer of Good (Strike) News: Like John?

The Walking Toothpick: Don't knock it, riding freight trains is cheap, fun transportation...that's a different one, Jean picking up a girl with a match.

7 AM Bowler: But couldn't he have picked a letter looking one?

The Walking Toothpick: Well there's one further up the car, I'd do it, but it's a little obvious...(leaning back--chair grinds as it flies back) Now I know why Jean moved!!

MLR Vocabulary

Contributions to this column are solicited.

Pulling a--Brisson: Picking up a girl.

--Feull: Ruining a picture, usually by missetting the range on the camera.

--Mule: An unusual railfanning expedition. Term comes from that Laurel and Hardy team of John C. Eull and Gordon Midgley.

--20 Second Squeaky: One has 20 seconds to race across a busy intersection, against the light, to catch a connecting bus.

--10 Second Squeaky: One has 10 seconds to charge across a busy intersection, against the light, to catch a connecting bus.

--5 Second Squeaky: One has five seconds to catch a connecting bus.

This is generally performed by the driver opening the bus door and the potential passenger jumping onto the moving bus while it is going in the opposite direction of his movement. This manouever is also known as a Voelker.

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A word to those who have not begun or renewed their subscription in the last year. Unless the regional membership dues (\$1.25 annually) are sent to the Secretary/Treasurer, you will not receive this publication again. These should be sent to: John C. Eull

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