

**MATTAGAMI
RAILROAD**

C H RIFF

Canada's Shortest Common Carrier

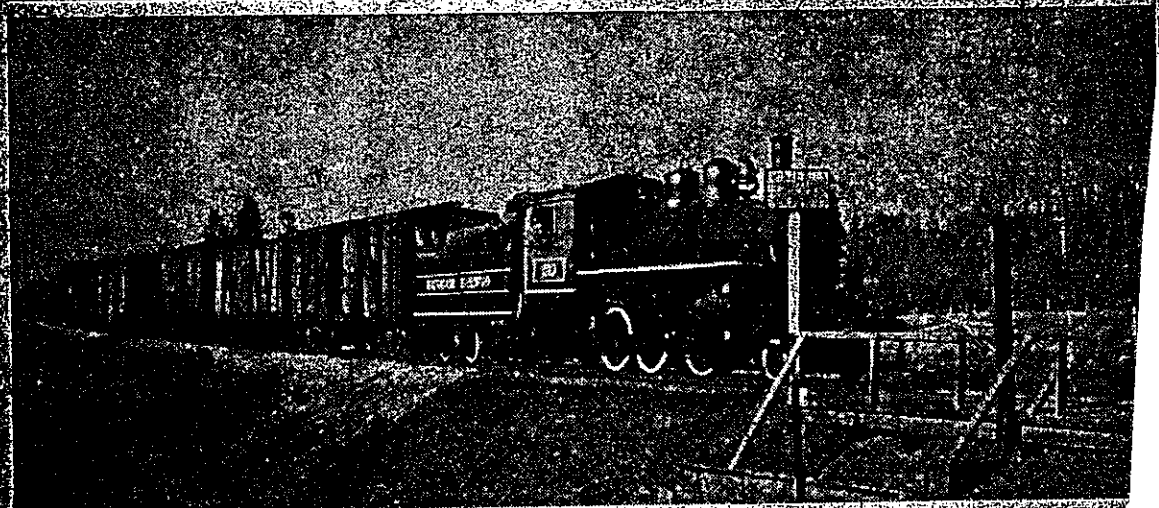
Story and photos from J. Norman
Edwards, Cochrane, Ont.



SMALLEST chartered, standard-gage line in Canada is the three-mile Mattagamit Railroad, owned by the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Co. of Toronto. Travelers on the run between Smooth Rock and Smooth Rock Falls, Ont., record the novel experience of being able to see the next station ahead when they leave the home terminal.

The miniature line serves some 200 people and hauls over 100,000 cords of wood. Twenty cars pass over the road each day with an estimated passenger list of 500 per month.

Standard practice with the two locomotives is to reserve Number 100 for summer use. Number 102, formerly Ontario Northland's 115, is a winter-time gal. The two coaches do not rotate in service. Number 1 is the daily, but 1 moves off the siding when



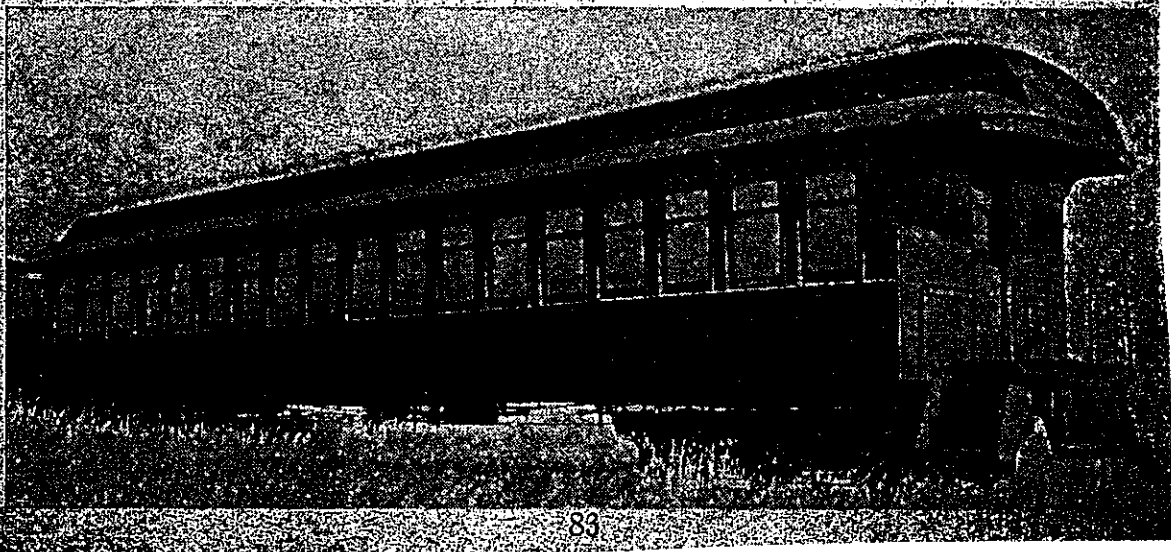
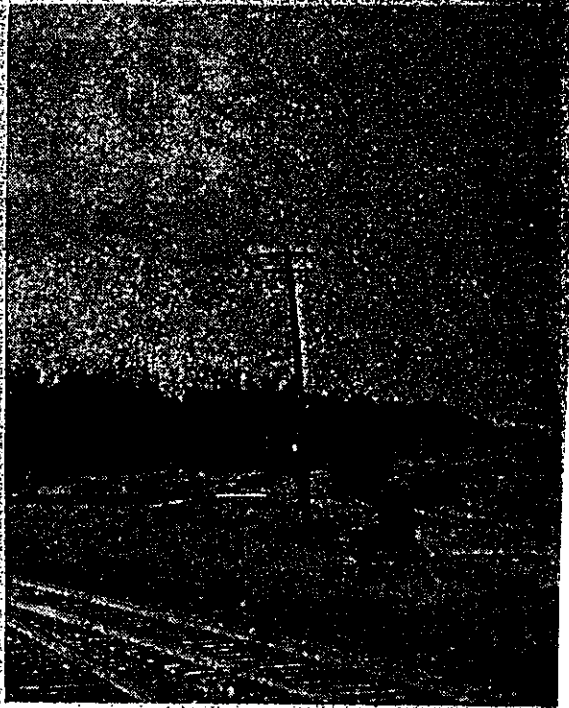


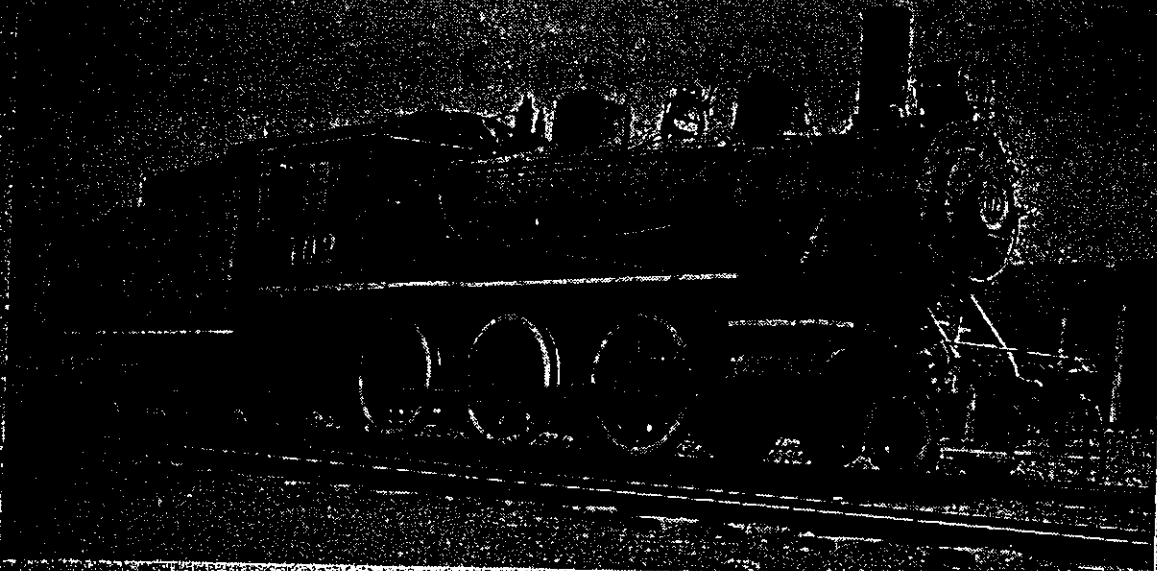
traffic is heavy. They scrapped Number 2 some years ago.

Ticket price for a one-way ride appears to be based on speed—fifteen cents for the fifteen minutes it takes to cover the three-mile run.

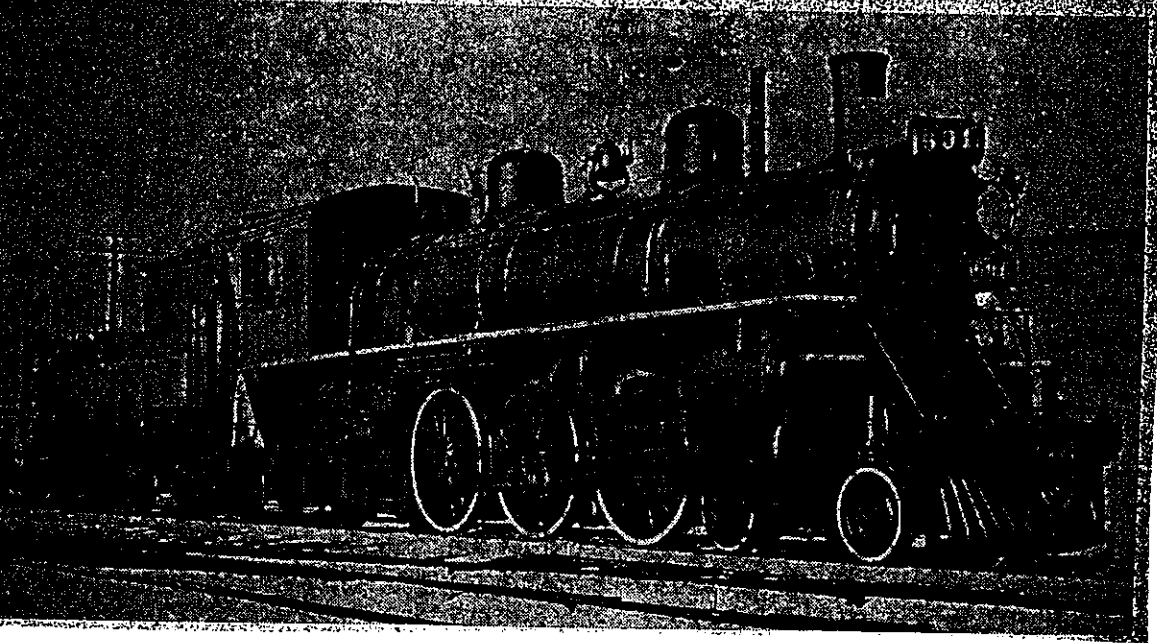
OPPOSITE PAGE: Mogul 100 is strictly a dual-service engine. Engineer W. (not West) Shore and Conductor P. Fraser handle a lone coach or string of CNR-bound freight cars with equal aplomb.

ON THIS PAGE: Above: Smooth Rock Falls is point of inter-change with CNR whose station is at left. Mattagami tracks in foreground. Right: Other Mattagami terminal is Smooth Rock Hill in distance is end of line. Below: One of roads' two coaches, Number 1 is taking it easy among the weeds.





From Rail Photo Service
MADAGAMP'S 102, a heavy 4-6-0 for winter service only, was purchased from
Tamskaming & Northern Ontario, now Ontario Northland. Below, a T&NO 1632



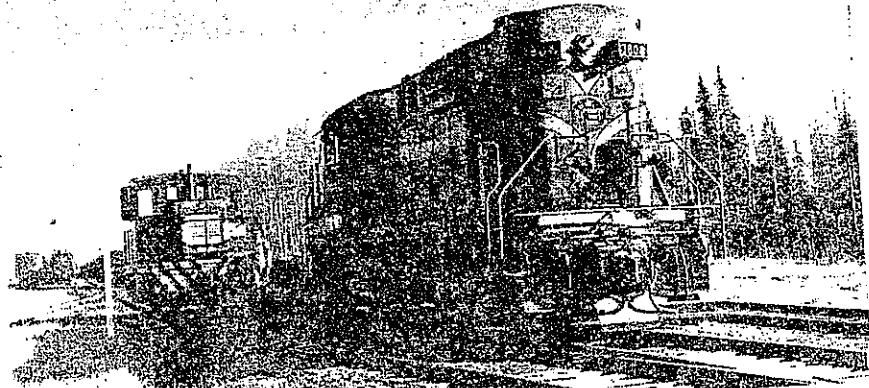
The Mattagami — Canada's Shortest Rail Line

Believe it or not, you can actually see both ends of a railway main line by standing in the middle. Where? ... spread out a map of Ontario and trace a line from Toronto to North Bay, from there head north through the rich unexplored sections of Northern Ontario to Cochrane, then head West to Smooth Rock Falls, a distance of some 509 miles from the beginning. And there, nestled among the poplar and birch as though a gigantic hand had suddenly thrown open a long narrow section of forest, can be seen a sight to rest the sore eyes of anyone, especially a railroader. No block signals to worry about, no way-side stations to maintain, no meets to worry about; in fact, no nothing but a little more than two miles of well ballasted 85 pound rail extending from Smooth Rock Junction to the Town of Smooth Rock Falls, the former on what was for many years a station of the Canadian National Railways East-West transcontinental main line, presently being served by secondary traffic.

Mattagami Railroad by name, the shortest standard gauge common carrier this side of the 49th parallel, in fact, possibly in the whole of North America.

Still going strong after more than forty-two years of service, the Mattagami Railroad hasn't let a parallel highway bother it, nor a section of the Trans-Canada highway at its back door, take any wind out of its sails. Situated near a river of the same name, the Mattagami Railroad is principally a pulp and paper line but it will sell you a ticket to anywhere via Canadian National Railways, send a telegram, handle your luggage, or express or route a boxcar load of anything to anywhere.

Activity starts at the junction with the arrival of No. 149 from Cochrane. Once express mail and baggage have been unloaded and transferred and No. 149 high-balled for Kaspuskasing, one can't help but suddenly feel the immensity of the North, with a touch of quietness, and yet feel the propulsion of activity just around the corner. Letting one's eyes wander a little, a well-appointed ex-T.H. & B. coach is sighted, and awaits her passengers and before one has a chance for a second look, a well-



The Long and Short of It
The Mattagami's only diesel locomotive is dwarfed by its big brother of the CNR.

meaning "all aboard" is heard and locomotive No. 103 gives a gentle nudge, and some twenty boxcars and a coach head for the Town of Smooth Rock Falls at a leisurely clip of fifteen miles an hour, although twenty-five to thirty MPH are not uncommon. Mind you, this is not a fast limited, but rather like a friendly little old lady trodding her way from one place to another. Regardless of the weather, never a complaint and if the snow is too deep — it comes high here in the winter months — a steam engine as a rule comes to the aid, with a plow clearing track and right-of-way. In this day of hustle and bustle, a ride in the coach is like taking a page from history. The windows in summer can be opened — in winter too if you can stand it — so as to let the sweet smell of fresh air come in. Indeed, there is little doubt that the rubber upholstery is more in keeping here than richly appointed seats. With this rustic atmosphere, who wants modern comfort?

Shortly after leaving — no sudden jerks by this hogger, just one notch of the throttle at a time and the results are a smooth get away — the conductor-baggage man comes through the car asking for a nominal fare for the fifteen-minute ride, and if things aren't too pressing for him round about, he'll pass the time of quarter hour with you by talking about the latest bits of information till before you know it, the tall stacks of the mill can be seen, and the ride is over. From the statistical point of

view, a few years ago over 3,232 loaded cars were pulled over the pike, representing a tonnage weight of around 149,681 tons.

Up to a few years ago, motive power consisted of a mogul No. 100, a heavy 4-6-0 No. 102, which was formerly an Ontario Northland Railway locomotive No. 115. Present power is done with a 50 ton diesel-electric locomotive chosen principally for its operating economy. No. 100 is still stored at Smooth Rock Falls and is used as a stand-by only. Rolling stock numbers coal and ash cars, as well as plows, extra passenger equipment, etc.

In addition to the road's main line, there are well over three miles of sidings and yard trackage keeping a three man section gang on the job five days a week putting what's out of place in place.

Supervision and office work is carried out by an agent and his assistant who looks after clerical work, freight, telegraph and passenger tickets.

Permission to ride the cab is not an uncommon request. Granted most of the time, No. 103 has carried such notables as Sir Patrick Cooper, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, senior officers of the pulp and paper company, to name but a few.

So, for a treat instead of a treatment, hie yourself up over the Ontario Northland Railway on 'The Northland' and Canadian National Railways to the Mattagami Railroad where "go-ahead" is as common a sight here as it is with Class One roads. — J. Norman Lowe.