

Credit Valley Railway

“The Third Giant”

A History By
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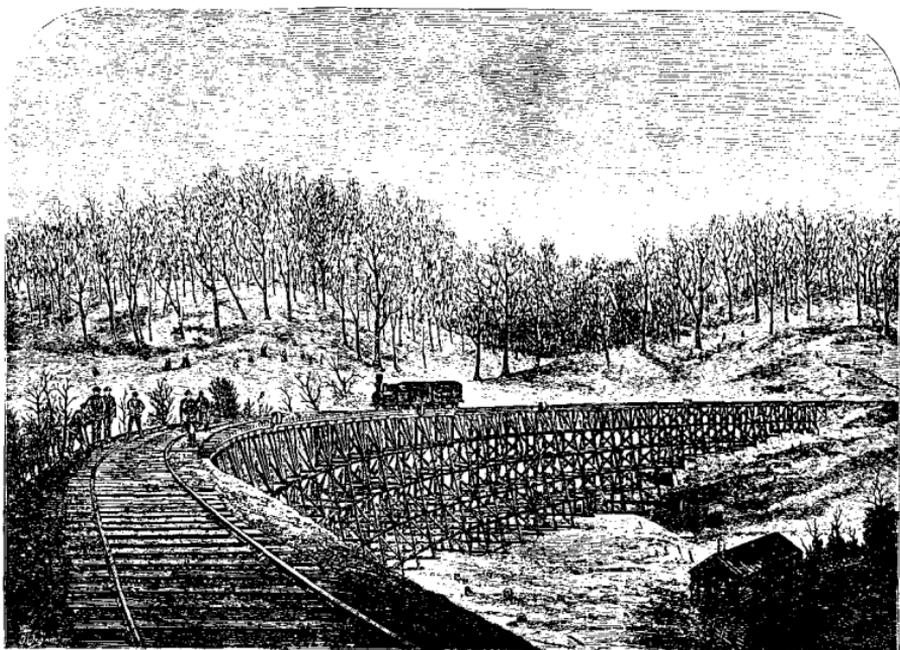
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can easily be imagined and it wasn't until the standardization of gauge took place that an efficient transportation system could be developed within the Dominion.

Therefore, in spite of his successful building of two narrow-gauge railways, the T G. & B. and the T. & N., Laidlaw constructed the Credit Valley on a standard gauge compatible with the major contemporary roads. Regardless of argument and design, operational proof taken from the above narrow-gauge railways together with the impending loss of subsidy due to the implementation of the Guarantee Act convinced Laidlaw and his associates that further ventures in the narrow-gauge field would be futile and the Credit Valley settled on standard track width.

At the annual meeting of the shareholders of the C.V.R. in Toronto on October 29, 1874, it was announced that the building of the railway so far had been done in a most satisfactory manner and the bridges at the Humber and Credit Rivers "if equalled are not surpassed in the Dominion" states the Orangeville "Sun". Full credit for the construction of the bridges is awarded to the skill of the Chief Engineer of the C.V.R., Mr. J.C. Bailey, who superseded Mr. Holt, his resident engineer, Mr. J. McCalman, and his superintendent of bridges, Mr. T. Watts. At this particular time the grading of the line was under way on the Orangeville and Elora branches, effectively



Sketch of Forks of the Credit Trestle 1879; *Public Archives of Ontario drawing*

managed by Mr. J.A. Walsh, while Mr. F.B. Brothers was in charge of the St. Thomas main line.

In order to gain entrance into Orangeville, Mr. Bowles, one of the

RAILWAY PEOPLE

In 1880 five men worked together on the Credit Valley Railway. They were all young men getting their start in life. They worked hard and well, and the railway that they built became an important factor in developing the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario.

The names of the five men were: James Ross, William Mackenzie, Herbert Holt, George D. Perry and H.E. Suckling. Perry was a clerk in one of the railway's offices; Ross was starting as superintendent of the line; Mackenzie received various small contracts such as stations and worksheds; Suckling was Secretary-Treasurer of the company; and Holt, the young Irishman from Dublin, was a graduate civil engineer, and assumed the duties as the railway's engineer. All of these young men were fast, firm friends.

Each one of these men made his mark in Canada, and each became a leader in his own field. Three of them joined forces after the Credit Valley Railway was completed and, together with another young man named Donald Mann, they formed the contracting firm of Ross, Holt, Mackenzie and Mann, building many of the prairie and mountain sections of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Holt later became Chief Engineer of the C.P.R. prairie and mountain sections until its completion at Craiggellachie. He then returned to Montreal, formed a syndicate which combined the Montreal Gas Company and the Royal Electric Company and which eventually grew to the gigantic Montreal Light, Heat and Power Consolidation, one of the most amazingly successful public utility corporations in the world. He also built dams and power distribution systems elsewhere in Canada, became interested in the Royal Bank and eventually helped it to become the second largest bank in Canada.

Perry, never the dreamer but rather the hard, steady worker, accomplished, by working up through the ranks, the position as General Manager of the Great Northwestern Telegraph Company, although he had never learned to operate a-telegraph key.

James Ross rehabilitated the street railways of Toronto and Montreal, after having remained for many years previously in the railway building field. He also acquired interests in some big British Utility Companies and, when he died, left one of the largest fortunes ever accumulated in Canada.

H.E. Suckling came to Montreal about the time that the others left the Credit Valley line, and staying with the C.P.R., he eventually worked his way up to become the Treasurer of the huge corporation.

William Mackenzie became one of the greatest of "Canadian Builders". His imagination and power of personality, his vision and his determination eventually gave birth and helped to successfully achieve Canada's second great transcontinental railway. It is said that because of the type of man he was, when he died, none were too poor or too rich to pay him tribute. Such were the men that George Laidlaw chose to help him to establish the Credit Valley Railway.

No story of the Credit Valley Railway could be complete without the background of the people who envisioned it and of those who built it and ran it. One family connected with the building of the C.V.R. was the McEnaney's of Cataract. Patrick McEnaney Sr. came originally from Ireland, settling in the village of Silvercreek, Caledon Township. With the coming of the C.V.R., the family moved to Cataract. Patrick was born in 1826 and died in 1897; his wife Ann was born in 1836 and died in 1903. They had ten children, six boys and four girls. The eldest son, Peter, was engaged for many years as a construction foreman on the C.V.R. Born in 1854, he never married but made his home in Cataract. According to old timers he used to boast that he was one of the first persons to own a regulation railway watch. Tradition also says that he could get more work out of a construction gang than any other man on the railway. He died in 1938 at the age of 84.

The next McEnaney to enter the employ of the C.V.R. was Patrick Jr.