

A HERO PRESIDENT THANKS ALERT ENGINEER

ALL PICT A fast-thinking engineman blew his whistle loud and often, and a sleeping village was saved from destruction.

CANADA'S railways are performing a herculean task, moving mountains of war materials smoothly and efficiently. The Canadian National has proved it to this writer.

Without the railways, Canada's war effort would be practically paralyzed, but so well are they organized that they're taking this huge and increasing volume of wartime traffic right in their stride.

Freight traffic originating in Windsor has more than doubled in the past two years. And Windsor, as a link between railway systems of two great allies, has witnessed a corresponding increase in the volume of through international traffic.

To get some idea of the railway drama's scope you have to go wandering around the yards watching operations and talking to railwaymen, riding several hours in the engine of a local motive, pore over timetables and manuals and rule books in the flickering lamplight of a caboose, and travel across country in the comparative luxury of an executive's private car.

Do all that and have everyone you meet instructed to answer all your questions, wise and foolish, without holding back anything, and you'll get some idea of what the railways are doing. But a project like that takes a lot of arranging, so it isn't like you'll get the chance to make a firsthand study of the situation. The next best thing, then, is to take such a tour vicariously, with Don Grant, Staff cameraman, and me as your inquiring reporter.

The assignment was unusual. It involved a trip to London aboard a freight in the dead of night and a return trip by daylight the next day meant living, eating and talking with railwaymen for almost a full day a night. Don and I were properly thrilled.

It gave us a chance to ask all questions that had bothered us years about the why's and whereof of railway transportation. And we can't over-estimate the thrill of filling boyhood ambitions to ride in the cab with the engineer and fireman!

We were advised that tickets had been procured which would allow us to ride the engine of the "hot 476" Chatham and the caboose of the same train from Chatham to London—we have to have tickets to ride a freight as a passenger, unless you're broke.

ON his trip of inspecting Canadian National facilities and car shops at London, Ontario, September 5, President Donald Gordon called on Engineer Frank Joseph Bok, of London, who is credited with saving the village of Mount Brydges from destruction by fire in the early morning hours of July 28, by blowing the "cow-on-the-tracks" whistle signal.

When Mr. Gordon complimented Engineer Bok on his quickness in arousing the sleeping village, 16 miles west of London on the line to Windsor, it was the first time that the identity of the engineer was made known although the story of the unidentified engineer's act was carried by the press throughout Canada, including this magazine.

The rapidity with which the fire threatened Mount Brydges was described by Engineer Bok to the chief executive. He said that he was at the throttle of the mammoth locomotive 6255, on the second section of the fast freight 476 from Windsor to Toronto. At 2.01 a.m. he saw a small fire licking at a lumber pile in a corner of a big plant as the train rushed past. He blew the warning signal of "cow-on-the-tracks" to arouse the sleeping people. "It is remarkable the penetrating power of this signal," Mr. Bok said, "I could not stop to arouse anyone personally because No. 10 was running right behind me on a 10-minute block, and I might have had to go a considerable way to knock them up. By the time No. 10 had passed, the wind had fanned the fire into a roaring blaze and the whole village was fighting it, many of them in night-shirts. I later learned that it was Driver Roy Hoover who first heard the warning. He leaped out of bed and saw a red glow in the lumber yard. Before the fire was under control much of the lumber plant and buildings nearby were destroyed."

Engineer Bok has never visited Mount Brydges, but he was later told that before the fire was brought under control help from four other fire brigades was summoned from neighboring towns. Because the alarm was given early, they were able to bring the fire under control after fighting it all night.

Engineer Bok was born in Wingham 55 years ago. He became a fireman in 1917, running out of London, and was classed as a locomotive engineer in 1922. He has been at the throttle of regular fast freight runs since 1944.

The meeting with Engineer Bok was a highlight of the President's inspection trip which enabled him to tour railway facilities and shops at Stratford, Sarnia, London and Toronto Terminals. He was accompanied by S. F.



—Toronto Daily Star photograph.

Engineer Frank J. Bok, right, receiving personal congratulations of President Donald Gordon.

dent, central region.

At Stratford, Mr. Gordon met the local shops committee and after made a complete tour of the motive power shops, stopping and chatting with the men as they worked on their jobs. At Sarnia, he made a tour of railway facilities, including the big new Point Edward freight shed for lake and rail service between Southern Ontario and the head of the Great Lakes. Subsequently, Mr. Gordon made a tour of Sarnia's expanding industrial areas.

At the London car shops, Mr. Gordon met the local shops committee and later inspected railway facilities and industrial areas.

At Toronto, Mr. Gordon preceded his address at the Canadian National Exhibition by inspecting the Canadian National Railways exhibit, in the Railway Building and, in the afternoon, looked at the site and discussed the proposed project for a garage and office building on Front Street, west of York Street. The following day, he inspected the enlarged Mimico yards and the Leaside shops, where he again met the local shops committee and talked with the men on their jobs.★

National Cheese Festival

During October the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the National Dairy Council and the Associated Milk Foundation will sponsor National Cheese Festival as part of their effort to increase the interest of the Canadian consuming public in cheese, that important product of our dairy industry.

The Canadian National will participate in National Cheese Festival by emphasizing cheese dishes on the regular dining