

feeding ammunition to batteries, running at some points within two miles of the front line, and fully exposed to direct observation; 3rd, an ammunition rail head at Mouquet Farm, 1½ miles from the front line, and 4th, an ammunition rail head at Euston dump, in front of Serre at 1,200 yards from the front line, probably the most advanced standard

Corps for assistance. In the short period that the ground east of the Nord Canal was held, this railway line and roadway proved of the greatest value for the forwarding of supplies, men and ammunition, as well as for the evacuation of wounded, being practically the sole means of transportation.

From Dec., 1917, until Mar., 1918, the

when the Germans were actually in occupation of the ground.

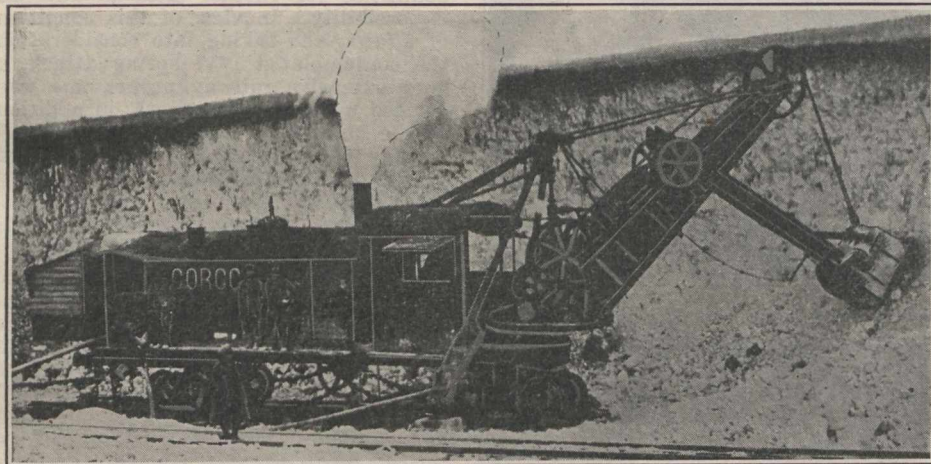
From Apr., 1918, until Aug., the beginning of the British final advance, railway work of the same type was carried on along the lines outlined previously behind the new front, some 50 miles in all being constructed. In the final advance, the corps undertook the reconstruction of the line through Valenciennes, and eventually finished its work by completing the railway line into Mons.

In Jan., 1919, the greater part of the unit was returned to England and at the moment of writing the majority of its members have reached Canada.

Some 500 miles of railway were constructed and reconstructed by this unit, which was probably 15% of the total standard gauge railway work done behind the British front. The skilled railway troops on the British front at the signing of the armistice probably totalled 30,000 men. In addition, many officers were furnished for executive positions and for other units, approximately 70 officers being commissioned from the ranks. The honors conferred on members of the corps were approximately as follows: C.M.G., 1; D.S.O., 9; M.C., 10; D.C.M., 6; M.M., 20; Belgian Croix de Guerre, 6.

Among the officers transferred or seconded, and who filled executive positions, are the following:

Lieut.-Col. (now Colonel) C. W. P. Ramsey, C.M.G., seconded as Railway Construction Engineer, 5th Army, Oct. 23, 1916, seconded to War Office, June 14, 1919. He was, prior to entering the army, Engineer of Construction, C. P. R., Montreal.



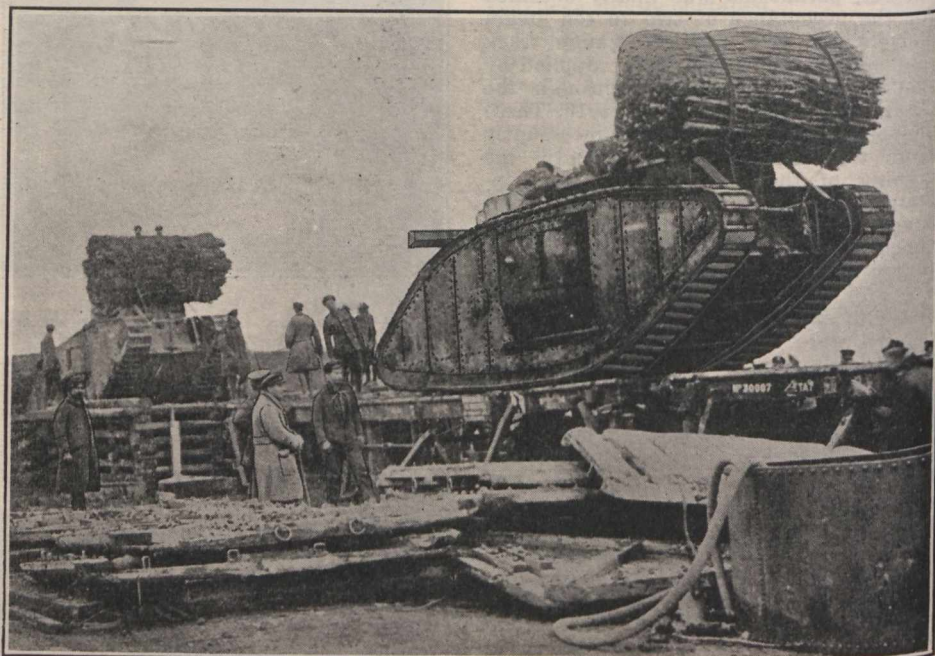
Atlantic Type Steam Shovel, supplied by Dominion Government, through the C.P.R., to the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps, at work in chalk pit near Puchevillers; Nov., 1917.

gauge rail head ever used in France.

During the reconstruction period, it was found that, as the Germans retreated, they had in the majority of cases removed all rails, and the greater part of the ties, from their standard gauge lines. Where they had been pressed, rails had not been removed, but in such cases, they had been destroyed by explosives at practically every joint. All buildings and water supplies were destroyed. A feature which caused some annoyance was that of delayed mines, placed by the Germans in all large embankments. These mines were not discovered and removed, exploded at varying periods from 10 days to 4 weeks after the retreat. The arrangement of them was somewhat ingenious, the detonator being held by a wire in an acid bath, the acid gradually eating the wire away until a shock from a train passing on the embankment put the finishing touch, thus causing the explosion to take place at a most inopportune time. Work, even with track pile drivers, was in some cases carried on at points under direct observation, but without material loss. In this period about 50 miles of new line were constructed and about 80 miles reconstructed. Special detachments were also furnished during this period for work on advanced rail heads in the Ypres area, during the August and September battles.

In Nov., 1917, came the push for Cambrai and all efforts were expended on the advancing of the line to Havincourt, which point was reached some five days after the advance took place. This work necessitated some four miles of new construction, including the bridging of the Nord Canal, and about three miles of railway repairs. A roadway ramp was also built in two days, for the forwarding of artillery from the embankment to the dry bottom of the Nord Canal, which was used as a roadway, none other being available. The drop from the embankment to the bottom of the canal was some 40 feet. This work was not strictly railway construction, but was done on an urgent call from the C.O.C., Fifth

corps was employed in the construction of additional railways and rail heads for a defence line, in view of the anticipated hostile spring attacks. Some 40 miles of railway were put under construction and practically completed by the time the German attack took place, viz: Mar. 21, 1918. Shortly after this attack, it became apparent that the British were losing ground, railway con-



Method of Loading Tanks on Railway Cars. In Nov., 1917, during one night, 460 of these tanks were unloaded, between Etricourt and Velu, for the push on Cambrai.

struction was abandoned and until the end of Mar., the C.O.R.C.C. was broken up into maintenance and demolition parties. All railway mounted guns in its area were salvaged, as was practically all rolling stock, with the exception of a small quantity, so badly damaged by shell fire that it could not be moved. In addition to this, 100 miles of railway track were effectively demolished, much of this work being done

Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) J. G. Reid, D.S.O., transferred to command of unit, Oct. 23, 1916. He was formerly Assistant Engineer, C.P.R., Winnipeg.

Major (now Brigadier-General) C. L. Hervey, D.S.O., transferred to command of 4th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops, Feb., 1917, seconded to War Office, May, 1918. He is an engineer and contractor, living at Lancaster, Ont., with office in Montreal.