

spectacular train derailment at Mountain



looking east

MOUNTAIN — Arnold Johnston is used to waking up to the sound of the 6:50 a.m. Montreal-bound freight train whistle as it passes his farmhouse. It is as regular as a rooster crowing in the morning.

Saturday morning however, he awoke to a far more ominous noise.

"I've never heard anything like it," said the 62-year-old Johnston. "I couldn't believe the noise."

"As soon as I heard it, I knew it was the train."

He ran to the window and there in the pasture behind his house lay an estimated 24-car pile-up of twisted metal — the aftermath of a spectacular derailment unlike anything the small village of Mountain has ever seen. One of the boxcars came to rest within 20 metres of his farmhouse and a steel railway shack was thrown even closer.

"Our neighbors a few miles away could hear it," Johnston commented.

Miraculously no one was injured in the early morning smash-up here on the Canadian Pacific railway line at the edge of this hamlet.

Evidence of gouges on the railway ties indicate the freight train initially left the tracks on a curve in the line about two and a half miles from where it finally came to rest.

CP Rail officials believe this is where the wheels of one of the boxcars came off. The exact cause is still under investigation, but one CP investigator noted one side of the track is higher than the other on this curve.

The force of the derailment on the 18-year-old track left a trail of sheared-off track bolts and savagely gouged railway ties for a distance of over two miles in its wake. The train finally came to rest just past a

railway crossing, in a pile of twisted metal which literally spilled over into farmer Johnston's backyard.

Johnston has lived at his current residence for about 26 years and he confided, "I'd often thought about an accident occurring, but never seriously worried about it."

"I'm just feeling lucky and relieved there was no real damage. All this (pointing to his torn-up field) can be replaced."

Looked like "somebody dropped a bomb"

The Recorder and Times July 12/82



Wreckage litters track before clean-up operations began Saturday morning

Kemptville Advance July 14/82 (looking west)