

LONDON'S RAILWAY PROBLEM IN WORD AND PICTURE

EDITORIAL

London has had its old Grand Trunk station for a long time. London has had its level crossings for a long time, and it looks as though these things might continue indefinitely if a movement is not launched locally to move on to something better.

The question of elevated tracks through London has been sidestepped, and the matter has been pigeon-holed. Now the city of London is out to suggest that these old pigeon holes be either cleared out or forgotten, and the work undertaken on a new basis.

Level crossings have taken their toll in London as they have elsewhere. Between Talbot street and the Trafalgar and Hale street intersection, in the last 23 years there have been 67 accidents, in which 23 people have been killed and 66 injured. The gate system as it operates today is probably as efficient as any system of that type could be, but it belongs to a day that has gone, and it has no place in the controlling or handling of traffic in a city of this size.

No matter of what the traffic consists, whether it is urgent or bound on pleasure, it is all held up when the gates go down. It is not an uncommon thing to see lines of street cars, automobiles and delivery wagons waiting on Richmond street for a long freight train going west, then another long one going east, and finally a passenger train or a yard engine come along to finish out the work of delay. The proper place for all these trains is on a track up above the rest of the traffic, then each can go ahead and attend to its own business without delay and without danger.

It is the one next big step that London must take in the path of progress. The matter of letting it stand so long can hardly be placed to the charge of city councils in years past. In 1906 it looked as though negotiations had been advanced to the stage where work would be proceeded with, the tracks elevated, a new station built, and subways at the leading street intersections. But the work was not undertaken, the subways were not built, and the new station probably went elsewhere, for there have been many erected since that date in places of far less promise and claim than the city of London. London has been told for years that its turn would come in due season.

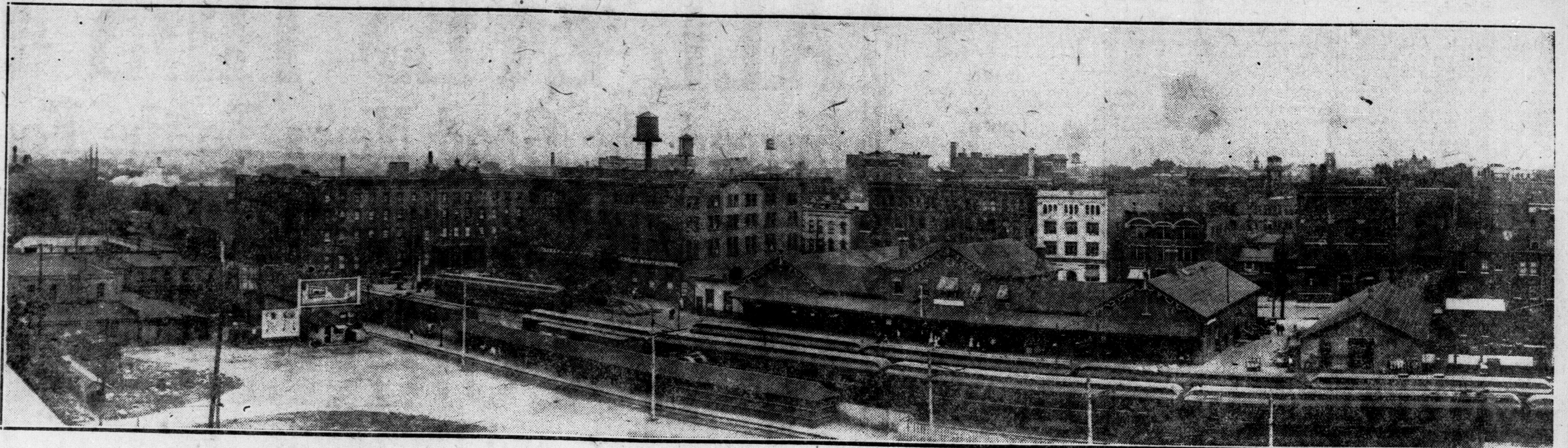
London has been told to stand in line and wait until Toronto was attended to. Whenever this city became unduly insistent the old theory of standing in line and waiting was warmed over and served with a new sauce.

So London has lined up and waited, waited until she has become tired, weary and disgusted with waiting.

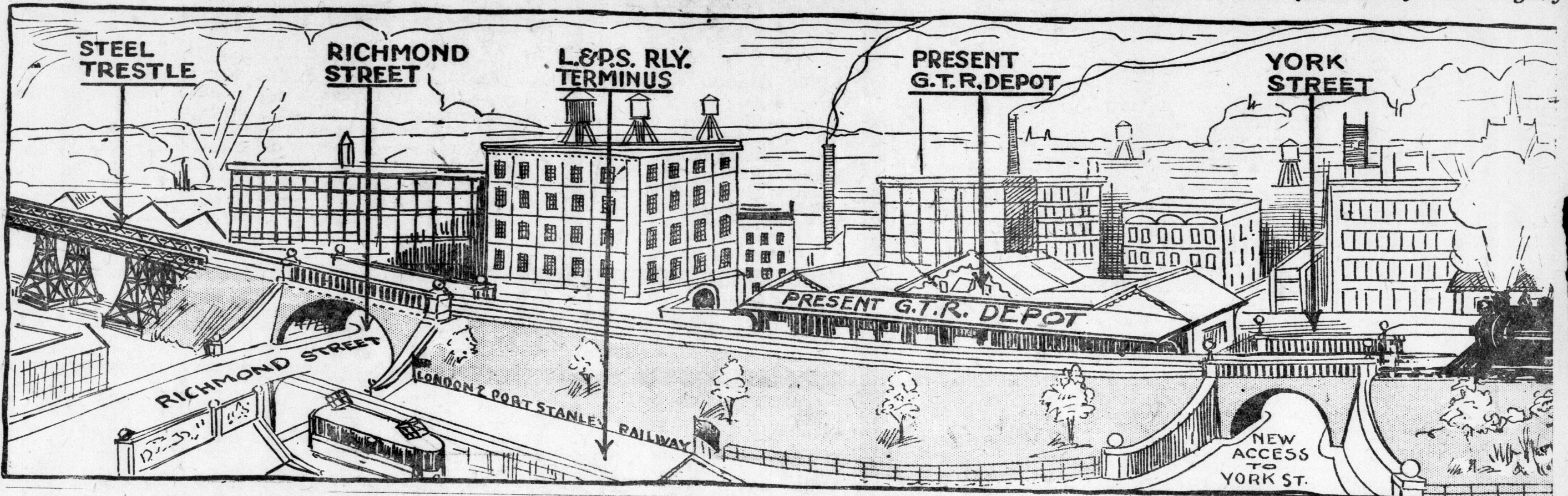
And all the time London has continued to give its trade and its dollars to the Grand Trunk, and now to the National lines. This whole district is a good performer for the National lines.

London can get what it wants and what it needs if Londoners go together. We want a united front in this matter; not too many generals or colonels, but a fine lot of privates determined not to budge until we have the tracks up and the thoroughfares down, and a station in which to come and go that will be in keeping with the business the Canadian National does here.

Sir Henry Thornton's visit to London is an opportune time to start anew. Sir Henry is an ardent railwayman, and he can see at a glance the unsatisfactory condition in London because the tracks of the National Railways are all on the level with the public thoroughfares.



Here Is the Heart of London's Railway Problem at a Glance—the City Cut In Half by a Strip of Tracks Which Spell Delay and Tragedy



Here Is London with the Proposed Railway Embankment-Subways Replace the Level Crossings, Affording Both Safety and Efficiency.

NOW IS THE TIME TO URGE UPON C.N.R. PRESIDENT LONDON'S JUST CLAIM FOR NEW RAILWAY DEPOT AND ELIMINATION OF DREAD LEVEL CROSSINGS

Mayor Wenige, Members of City Council and the Chamber of Commerce Have an Opportunity That Must Not Be Neglected, No Matter How Imperative Pressure of Other Business—London Should Now Go Out For Action.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE; WHY PLANS FAILED

Today's visit to London of Sir Henry Thornton, president of the Canadian National Railways, places again within the grasp of Mayor Wenige and members of the city council an opportunity to revive this city's moral claims upon the Grand Trunk Railway for the elimination of grade crossings and the erection of a new depot.

Seventeen years ago, the Grand Trunk, when "under the thumb" of the municipality, negotiated an undertaking to effect improvements, the need for which is emphasized by the fact that the delay has cost the lives of 20 men, women and children, the injury and maiming of more than 70 others, and property loss high in the thousands of dollars.

The city at the time relinquished its hold upon the company, unwilling to use its manifest advantage in a situation in which it could have held the railway to intolerable operating conditions and with a million dollar investment lying idle, but the city refused to throttle the company and accepted the Grand Trunk's pledge to go through with the elevation scheme.

Elevated 30 Feet. Londoners will recall that at that time—in 1906, when the mayor's chair was occupied by J. C. Judd, father of Ald. Albert M. Judd, and now a county judge of Middlesex—the Grand Trunk, to rid itself of the excessive cost of operating over the grade between this city and Hyde Park, elevated its tracks 30 feet above the old rail level. The work was carried through, at a cost said to have been nearly a million dollars, while traffic was carried on temporary lines laid beside the big fill. The embankment was brought up to the westerly limits of the city, while the company negotiated with the city council to carry the elevation through with

viaducts over all streets as far east as William street, the purpose being to reach the old grade east of Adelaide street.

The Grand Trunk and the city, after weeks of negotiation, agreed to immediately launch this undertaking, and within three years London was to have a new depot, either over Clarence street, with pedestrian and vehicular traffic carried through under a viaduct or on the site of the present freight sheds on the south side of York street between Wellington and Waterloo streets.

Purchased Property. So certain did it appear that the work would be carried on from the westward into the city, that the Grand Trunk purchased all property through from Richmond street on the north side of Bathurst street to a point east of Adelaide street, where its own lines curve southward and close the thoroughfare. Factory buildings were torn down, houses were razed or removed, and, according to the statement made by General Manager Brownlee before the city council at that time, the company had spent a quarter of a million dollars on these preliminaries. The London and Port Stanley freight house at Colborne street and the old L. and P. S. roundhouse at Burwell street alone remained out of the company's ownership, and that point was covered in the agreement by the city's abandonment of the property and the company's undertaking to replace the buildings with others of equal usefulness and value on a satisfactory location.

Contested Points. There were stubbornly-contested points about the narrowing of a couple of streets, and particularly about a determination to close William street to vehicles, but these points were thrashed out to a basis before the stumbling block of responsibility for abutment damages was reached.

The mayor and members of the council, on the city's behalf, and officials on behalf of the company, stood aloof and decided that their legal counsel should decide whether or not the agreement should contain a clause indemnifying the city and placing the onus on the Grand Trunk. The city held out for protection, lest some owner of adjacent property should feel that his interests had been harmed by the embankment; the company stated that it was ready to meet the situation, but it refused to have any such stipulation in the contract. The point came back before the negotiators, and gradually the opinion gained ground that the company was seeking an easy way to break off all negotiations if it could gain its own ends, but the company's representatives protested that they had no such objective.

The company's attitude became more stubborn and no headway could be made toward an adjustment. In the meantime the costly works west of the city were idle and trains were being handled under the most difficult conditions along five miles of temporary track.

If the company could secure the city's consent to carry its work on into the city and to taper off the elevation to the old track level, little more was needed to serve the company's own purposes.

The question was broached to the city council in 1907 with a pledge that the work was but to be of a temporary arrangement while negotiations on the main project were continued to a satisfactory adjustment. The city took the company's word for it; the plan, in any event, gave the protection of viaducts at Wharncliffe road and Wortley road; and the company was allowed to taper off its tracks to a point "west of Ridout street."

With this agreement in their grasp, the officials who had carried on the negotiations found it necessary to return to Montreal. Further efforts to resume the parley brought evasive answers, and at length excuse. First the story was that officials had been changed and that the new regime did not know much about what had been done or promised. Then London was told that important works involving a large expenditure and commanding the whole time of the officials had been undertaken in Toronto. "When Toronto is finished up, London's turn comes again," was the story.

Next the war furnished a splendid excuse. The conflict ended, but left another quile as useful: The company was in straightened financial circumstances and its ownership was in



ALDERMAN JUDD, who sponsors the motion given on page one for the appointment of a committee of five to open negotiations with Sir Henry Thornton and with Canadian Pacific Railway officials for correction of the present situation.



ALDERMAN DRAKE, who is seconding Alderman Judd's motion to open negotiations regarding the railway situation.

See text of the Judd-Drake resolution on the front page.

London's Business Leaders Ready to Work Side by Side To Secure What Is Due City

General Agreement That Level Crossings Must Be Done Away With and That One of City's Greatest Needs Is New and Well Equipped Union Station.

Apparently no one in the business world of London needs convincing that the C. N. R. tracks need elevating or that a new station is desirable. For many reasons, both economic and humane, the biggest men in London have unanimously given their support to the plan and are ready to fight shoulder to shoulder to gain for the city what they consider belongs to her.

The Advertiser today asked several business men, picked at random, for their views on the matter, and while some of them were reluctant to offer a solution for the problem, they hesitatingly expressed their views on the needs of the city in this respect. "London must certainly do away with level crossings," declared T. W. McFarland, president of D. S. Percin & Co. "The matter should be pressed until we get what we want."

"The city certainly lost a golden opportunity in 1906 when Judge J. C. Judd was mayor. The company was willing then to elevate the crossings, but the city quarreled with the officials so long over an unimportant point, and the company went broke. Since then they have been too poor to elevate tracks or build stations."

Must Elevate Tracks. "Elevation of tracks, in my mind, is the only solution to the level crossing problem. I believe steel trestles could be used very well."

"In my mind, a union station would be just the thing for this city, but of course it is a matter that will have to wait until a definite policy on track elevation is adopted."

Arthur T. Little of the Robinson, Little Company stated that there was no question of the desirability of elevated tracks, but he saw some difficulties in the way.

"I think we can be perfectly safe in leaving things in the hands of a man like Thornton. When he comes to the city he will realize what should be done."

Mr. Little felt certain that a new station must come in the near future. He did not think that the company could ignore the needs of London in this respect much longer.

Jared Vining declared that it was a blunt question of how much it would cost. He was so strongly in favor of elevating the tracks, however, that he thought the city could very well bear a portion of the burden. The city would gain some return in the way of increased assessment, and then there was the all-important consideration of life.

"If the city or the company can finance the project, then it should be undertaken without delay. There is no question of the wisdom of the move," Mr. Vining said.

"As to the station," he continued, "it is now in a class with antiquities. In this respect it is becoming too valuable to destroy. You know there comes a time when everything ceases to lose its value and becomes more valuable with the passing of time."

Hon. C. S. Hyman stated that it was a mighty big problem and that there were two sides to the question. "We must look at it from the viewpoint of the government as well as our own. We all know that track elevation would be desirable, but we must remember that the ability of the government to bear the burden must be considered."

"If the matter is taken up with Mr. Thornton I think he will listen to every argument. He is a very just man."

No Counter-Arguments. Major Gordon Ingram of Snailman & Ingram declared that there could be no arguments against elevation. The matter of financing was the only one to be considered.

"The only thing to do is to put it up strongly to Mr. Thornton, and we are planning to do that. We must keep plugging away until we get it."

Alderman Frank McKay was a strong supporter of the scheme.

"I believe it would well pay the city to bear part of the cost. I see no reason why the plan could not be carried out. The cost of land perhaps would be a little higher, but I think that the project as a whole is quite feasible. The road certainly has better backing now than it had when the plan was so nearly consummated a few years ago."

The matter of a union station could be taken up after a policy on track elevation was decided. He believed that the whole city should get behind the scheme and work until the desired results were gained.

"It would be the finest thing that could possibly happen to the city," he claimed.

E. V. Buchanan was emphatically in favor of the plan and said the city should ask Mr. Thornton to begin just where the G. T. R. and the city left off in 1906.

LONDON PLAYED FAIR WITH THE GRAND TRUNK IN 1906—IT'S HER TURN NOW