

porarily improvised, it was possible to rush relief trains and supplies to the heart of the city and carry refugees therefrom. On the evening of the day following the disaster, the first regular train for Montreal also left from the new terminals and the latter were continued in use until the regular station was available.

Heavy cranes were put to work clearing away the wreckage, and by the second day after the disaster, trains were able to leave the regular passenger station at North Street.

Gangs of men were also put on the reconstruction work at Piers No. 2 and 3, North Street station, Willow Park and Richmond, and the work of repair was pushed to the utmost. Arrangements were made to erect additional freight sheds on the completed docks at the Ocean Terminals, to replace those lost at Richmond.

At the same time, order had to be restored in other branches of the railway service. The importance of the terminals called for a large and varied body of skilled



This Fire Department Auto was Travelling a Street Half a Mile from the Waterfront When the Explosion Occurred. The Driver was Blown Out of His Seat and the Machine Wrecked

labor. Hundreds of the employes had had their homes in the immediate vicinity of the catastrophe. They were naturally concerned about their families. The explosion had demoralized the local staff. Fifty-eight employees were killed, over forty seriously injured and over one thousand were incapacitated from their regular duties. Hundreds of employees were called upon from various parts of the line to fill the gap; a whole new staff had to be organized.

As soon as possible a survey was made of the railway properties. At Pier 9, the most northerly railway pier along the waterfront, the force of the explosion was such that the wooden shed had totally collapsed. Pier 8 was destroyed from the water level up, and Pier 6, the reconstruction of which had been completed just a few weeks previously, was completely blown away. No trace of it remained.

Richmond yard station, car repair buildings and cattle pens were blown to atoms; the water tank was rendered useless and the switchmen's shanties were so badly wrecked as to be unfit for repair.

The North Street passenger station sustained very heavy damage. A large portion of the train shed roof was blown up, the remainder practically collapsed and fell

down inside the brick walls and what did remain was pulled down later on for safety. The glass was blown out of all the side windows and the doors blown out of their casings. In the solid brick station structure, all the doors, windows and fixtures were blown off, as also happened in the power plants adjoining the station.

On Pier 4 the shed was completely wrecked. Pier 3 had all the trusses on the north half of the shed broken and all the doors and windows blown out. Pier 2 had the doors all blown off on the north side, both upstairs and down. On the south side eight of the large steel doors were blown off and a number damaged.

The roof over the bins of the 500,000-bushel grain elevator was badly damaged.

Damage at Willow Park

At Willow Park, where engine cleaning and housing facilities are located, the doors and windows in the car shop, stores building, planing mill, oil house and engine house were blown out. The roof of the engine house was badly damaged and the greater portion of it collapsed. The power plant was put out of commission, and the power transmission line to North Street and Deepwater, which follows along the city streets, was also wrecked.

The telephone despatching line between North Street station and Rockingham was rendered useless by the explosion. All automatic signals between North Street station and Willow Park were badly wrecked.

With the early operation of the new terminals in view, temporary repairs were made on the old sites and North Street station was made habitable only temporarily.

Notwithstanding all this disorganization, eight days after the catastrophe all the branches of the service were working.

Special Railway Construction Organization

A special railway construction organization was made up to handle the work of repairing and rebuilding the railway structures, and the repairs to the naval dockyard were later also put into the hands of this organization, which consisted of a manager of construction, an architect and a naval man, assisted by two contracting superintendents who acted in a consulting capacity. Under this board there were assembled office and field engineers, draughtsman, auditors, purchasing agent, storekeeper, material men and commissary men. The office of manager of construction was held by C. B. Brown, assistant general manager of the Canadian Government Railways, and the execution of the work was under the direct charge of W. A. Duff, assistant chief engineer.

The Civic Reconstruction Situation

The railway organization normally included a large number of engineers and contractors; and on account of the Ocean Terminals work which was in progress, there was considerable construction equipment available. The city staff was in no such fortunate position, so on the morning of the disaster the emergency committee telegraphed to Ottawa to Col. Low, requesting his services. Col. Low's genius for rapid organization was well-known in Halifax and the committee decided that he was the man to handle the emergency. Col. Low consented to take charge of reconstruction for five or six months, but stipulated that his services and those of his staff be accepted without remuneration. He and his staff even insisted upon paying for their meals at the boarding camp, and it is understood from the Commission that Col. Low and Bate, McMahon & Co.'s staff did not get so much as a postage stamp from the Halifax relief work.