

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

June 22, 1900

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A TERRIBLE WRECK

TRAIN CRASHED THROUGH THE BRIDGE AT GRAND FALLS.

FATALLY INJURED.

Two men not expected to live. Two others badly injured but will survive. Engineer and fireman escaped unhurt. The bridge was weak.

(Grand Falls. June 21)

A frightful accident occurred here at noon today which may possibly result in the loss of two or more lives. As the down train from Edmundston was crossing the railway bridge, a short distance above the town, the west side gave way and the whole train, consisting of the engine and nine cars with the exception of the saloon and smoker, went into the river, 75 feet below.

The engine, with the engineer and fireman, plunged down with the fall of the bridge and one by one the cars dropped upon the locomotive, until seven of them formed a mass of broken wreckage in the St. John. The saloon and smoking cars went down on top of the pile of broken freight cars, but had a comparatively short distance to descend and one end of the smoker remained upon the bridge. The wreck was appalling in appearance. That all on board were not instantly killed appears due to the intervention of Providence.

The engineer and fireman, who went to the bottom of the river, extricated themselves and came to the surface. They secured pieces of wreckage, clung to them tenaciously and were rescued as the current was sweeping them into the falls.

Though some of the cars fell but a short distance, yet results were very serious, as four men were severely injured and two of them will die.

James McKenna, traveling C.P.R. passenger agent, a native of the city of Quebec, had his arm broken and is so badly injured internally that he is not expected to live.

Hiram I. Smith, of St. John, had both legs and an arm broken and was otherwise injured. He will not live.

J. O'Neil, an Englishman, was severely cut and bruised, but will recover.

Dr. Kirkpatrick, of Woodstock was badly shaken up and cut.

From Grand Falls, help was at once dispatched to the scene of the wreck and telegrams to Woodstock and St. John brought wrecking apparatus. The injured were brought to this place and are now under the care of Drs. Wade and Roulean.

A tramp who had been stealing a ride, after passing safely through the wreck narrowly escaped being drowned. He was clinging to a portion of a box car and floating toward the falls when Hugh Taylor, customs officer, went out on a log and brought him ashore.

Superintendent Timmerman of the C.P.R. and Mrs. Smith, wife of the injured passenger, arrived on a special from St. John tonight.

The span on the bridge which fell and the one adjoining it have long believed to be unsafe and new ones were to be built this summer, but in this case the repairs were neglected for too long a time. To be convinced of the dangerous condition of the bridge all that is required is a visit to the structure just now when the rotten parts are exposed and can be readily seen. The engineer of the wrecked train was Walter Matthews and the fireman, W. McCluskey.

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THE GRAND FALLS ACCIDENT WAS A TERRIBLE AFFAIR.

A MIRACLE THE PASSENGERS AND TRAINMEN WERE NOT ALL KILLED -- PILED UP IN THE END OF THE COACH JUST ABOVE THE WATER.

Grand Falls, N.B., June 22 (Special)

Tonight the report was issued by the physicians that the injured in Thursday's terrible accident at the bridge were improving, this being least noticeable in passenger agent McKenna, about whose recovery there are still doubts. His lung is ruptured and arm and fingers broken. Mrs. E.

McKenna, his sister-in-law, arrived here from Quebec today to help care for him.

Mr. Hiram I. Smith the representative of M. T. McAvity & Sons, is now happily considered out of danger. His chest and back were jammed and he was otherwise bruised. His wife is with him as also is Mr. J. Boyd Mann of McAvity's office.

The passenger, J. O'Neil, is a member of a Cardiff, Wales, Lumber firm. He is in Canada to buy lumber. His ankle and arm were sprained and he was shaken up and bruised, but he is getting along well. Mr. J. Harry Driscoll, of St. John, arrived here today to look after him.

Conductor Henderson, of Edmundston, who, though it is not thought seriously, was in charge of the train, was injured internally. One of the brakemen was named Poitras. He was but slightly hurt. Engineer Matthews and fireman McCluskey, who went down with their engine, are both Woodstock men. Engineer Matthews is not injured, and the fireman's hurts are but little.

Express agent H. Henderson received internal injuries. The injuries of Dr. Kirkpatrick of Woodstock are slight, to his head.

Miss Ada Burns, trained nurse of St. John, arrived here today to tend the injured passenger Smith, and a dispatch from St. John says two more trained nurses left there tonight to care for Mr. McKenna and Mr. O'Neil. The C.P.R. is sending the nurses and has also brought two more physicians - Drs. Kierstead and Hans of Woodstock to assist Drs. Wade and Roulean, of this place in ministering to the injured. The railway corporation is doing all possible for the sufferers.

The accident was indeed a terrible one, unique in many particulars. It was the third span from the Edmundston end of the bridge which gave away. Down to the river, 75 feet below, plunged the locomotive with its engineer and fireman in the cab. Their survival is one of the strange features of the accident. Crashing after the engine came seven freight cars - some box and some flats. The engine and tender were completely submerged, there being some 1 foot of water there. As the cars fell they stacked one upon its neighbor and so remained, forming a chain of cars from river bed to the solid span of the bridge which rests on the Edmundston bank. The stacking of the cars seemed to keep the saloon and smoker much on this span of the bridge. It is appalling to think what would of been the results had there been a less number of freight cars to the train, then the whole line of cars must have plunged into the river,

carrying the passengers to almost certain death. Superintendent Timmerman has brought Engineer Barber here to see about wrecking and repairs. Superintendent Newcombe of the Woodstock division is also here. The officials have put into execution plans for resuming a service. Freights and passengers will transfer across the suspension bridge, a C.P.R. engine being sent around from St. John by I.C.R. to the Edmundston side to attend to that end of the business. This arrangement will be completed by Saturday afternoon. Transfer tickets will be issued on the trains here.

Wrecking crews are here and the wrecked cars will be stripped of their freight and made lighter for raising. It will be a difficult task to get the engine and tender up. The locomotive sent round by I.C.R. will be used from the Edmundston side in hauling the cars up on the remaining spans of the bridge on that side. When this shall be done, the bridge will be examined as to repairs, and a big crew will be put to work.

Apparatus to assist in recovering the wreckage has arrived and one box car, loaded with shingles, has drifted down the river and has grounded a short distance above the falls.

Harry Henderson, the Dominion Express Company auditor, one of those who was in the wreck Thursday, arrived in the city last night and registered at the Dufferin. Mr. Henderson's injuries were not serious, still he shows evidence of a rough experience. At the hotel last night he gave a graphic description of the disaster. It was nothing short of miraculous that all in the first class passenger car were not killed. Had the water in the river been two feet higher, or had there been one freight car less, the passengers would have been drowned like rats in a trap. The train was made up of seven freight cars, one first class passenger and a combination baggage and smoker. The engine all except the smoker and baggage car went down with the broken span. The last car remained on the intact portion of the bridge while the first class passenger, freight cars and engine formed a chain running into the river.

The locomotive, with engineer Matthews and fireman McCluskey in the cab, sank to the bottom and turned over on its side. Neither one of the men knows how he escaped, but they think they were forced out of the cab by air which the locomotive carried down. They first realized where they were when they found themselves floundering about the surface. A boat picked them up and took them to the shore. When the span gave way Engineer Matthews had no time to stop the engine and she plunged into the water in motion. Strange to say neither the engineer nor the fireman were injured.

Mr. Henderson gives the following story of the experience in the first class passenger coach:

"There were six passengers in the car- Hiram I. Smith, traveler for T McAvity & Son, St. John; James McKenna, traveling passenger agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway; J. O'Neil, an Englishman who is buying lumber in New Brunswick; Dr. A. C. Kirkpatrick, of Woodstock; Miss Kierstead, of Machias Me., who was returning home from school and myself. McKenna and myself were standing in the aisle when I felt the train give a sharp jerk. A glance ahead gave the impression that we were plunging through the bridge. The next moment the six occupants were piled in a heap at one end of the car, which was standing almost perpendicular. Most of the seats broke from their fastenings and we were pinioned under these and the other fittings which formed a large pile of debris. My first impression was that we were being drowned in the car, as a stream of water was falling on my head, the only part of my body which I could move. It was a great relief when I learned that the water was coming from the car tank which had fallen on me. I was pinioned on top of another man who proved to be McKenna. It was some time before he regained consciousness. From his groans I felt that he was dying.

He begged for me to get off him, but we were both tightly squeezed under the mass of broken seats. Traveler Smith was at the bottom of the perpendicular car and his head was forced through the panel of the car door. Our car was hanging almost perpendicular from the bridge, with the end we were piled up reaching the water, so that part of Mr. Smith's head was submerged. The first to extricate himself was Dr. Kirkpatrick, who broke open some of the car windows. He was soon able to free Miss Kierstead, who was only jammed beneath a couple of seats, although she was at the extreme end of the car which hung down. The doctor was unable to do anything for the rest of us, but Conductor Henderson and two brakemen and three passengers who were in the combination car which remained on the bridge and practically escaped injury, lowered themselves into our car by means of a rope through the upper door. They got right to work to free McKenna, Smith, O'Neil and myself, but it was a difficult task to clear the heaps of seats from the small space at the end of the car. They were forced to break up the iron seats and throw them out of the window. Mr. O'Neil was taken out after about five minutes, but it was fully half an hour before all were out of the mass. McKenna and myself were released at the same time. Smith was relieved a few minutes later. McKenna when taken out was covered with blood, but was able to stand. Smith was a fearful sight from bruises and was still

insensible. If the car had descended a few inches lower he would have been drowned by the water covering his head."

"Boats from the villagers arrived and we were taken out of the car and rowed ashore. Smith and McKenna, who required immediate attention, were looked after first. The former was taken to the residence of Dr. Rouleau, while McKenna was removed to the residence of Mr. Curless, a customs officer, a mile away. He was attended to by Dr. Wade. The rest of us were kindly attended to by the people of the village."

Mr. Henderson says that Traveling Passenger Agent McKenna is the most seriously injured of the six who were in the passenger car. One of his arms and one finger are broken and he has internal injuries, including a ruptured lung. He sustained some bad cuts about the head and face. Mr. Smith's body and head were badly crushed, but no bones are broken. He will recover. Miss Kierstead escaped with a scratched hand. She was wonderfully fortunate, as she was seated at the end of the car which hung downward. Her escape is accounted for by the seats on her side not breaking from their fastenings. Dr. Kirkpatrick's injuries consisted of superficial bruises and a cut head. Mr. O'Neil had his left side injured and arm and ankle sprained. Mr. Henderson received a bad cut on the back of his head, had one of his shoulders sprained, besides some bad bruises on his limbs.

Conductor Henderson was in the baggage car, which slanted slightly when the other cars plunged down with the 40-foot span of the bridge. He was struck by a chest of tools and had two or three ribs broken. The brakeman as well as three passengers who were in the smoking compartment, escaped being hurt.

Mr. Henderson says the water in the river is 20 feet deep and the level of the bridge is 25 feet from the water. The afternoon of the accident Superintendent Newcombe arrived in a special train at the scene of the accident, accompanied by Drs. Hand and Kierstead, who were sent to the injured by the superintendent.

Mr. Smith is still at Dr. Rouleau's and Mr. McKenna at Mr. Curless' residence attended by Dr. Wade. Mr. Smith's wife is nursing him. Mr. O'Neil is at the hotel in the village, while Dr. Kirkpatrick and Miss Kierstead left for their houses yesterday, while Mr. Hendeson came to St. John.

About 10 o'clock last night a C.P.R. engine with crew was sent out from Fairville to get to the Edmundston side of the bridge. To do this it had to

make the long run through southern New Brunswick and the North Shore, over the I.C.R. rails to Riviere du Loup- there take the Temiscouata Railway to Edmundston and thence over C.P.R. track to the bridge. Engineer W. Beatteay was at the throttle and at St. John an I.C.R. engine was taken as a pilot over the intercolonial rails. This engine will assist in the transfer of passengers and freight at the Edmundston side of the broken bridge and will also be used in raising the wreckage.