

'Cross Town

With Austin F. Cross

Hallowe'en Like Act Satisfied Churchmen

For more than forty years now, a railway bell has been calling faithful Anglicans to church. What astonishes me is that I have been scooped on such a story for that church bell is right over in my own Ottawa East. How the church bell got from the bottom of the Rideau Canal to the top of Ascension Church belfry is an interesting story. This is one Lud Hawkins shouldn't miss.

One day, back about '04 or '05, before any lady working on The Evening Citizen was born, Engineer Frank Turner of the old Canada Atlantic Railway was easing a train eastward from Bank Street toward the Rideau Canal. Handling the shovel was Fred Page.

As often happens, when an engineer has a good fireman, he lets the knight of the shovel take over.

"Take her over, Fred," he said.

Those were the saddest words he ever said. Fred took her over, and started to wheel No. 33 toward the bridge. She was a little old Rhode Island type. Then as now, there was a swing bridge, and the bridge opened to let traffic through. There was a lot more water traffic then than now.

For what reason I know not, Fred ran C.A.R. No. 33 through the open bridge. In a word, he put her in the drink. No. 33 settled down calmly and quietly into the ooze, and that was that.

I am not sure what happened to Frank Turner, but it was goodbye to the Canada Atlantic for Fred Page. Mr. Turner, incidentally, dead many years, had a

son, Louis Turner, who worked for the Canadian National.

Meanwhile Fred Page got a job with the Ottawa Electric, and ran on the street cars for Ahearn and Soper for many years before he retired. He is dead now.

The little Rhode Island engine sat in the ooze for some time till the Canada Atlantic got the hook, and hauled her out.

At this time, somebody mentioned in Ascension Church that they were without a bell.

I got in touch with Mrs. Ike Johnson, 137 Hawthorne, who is over 30, and who recalls the incident very well. Rose Johnson said that when the matter of the bell came up, Joe Leslie, then people's warden at Ascension, drew attention to the existence of this bell, and said he thought he could get it. It also happened that E. J. Chamberlain, who later became president of the Grand Trunk which bought the Canada Atlantic, was the original general manager of the C.A.R. The result was that it was an easy thing to get the train bell for the

Little Anglican Church on Echo Drive.

Old No. 33 has gone to that heaven of all engines, the scrap heap, a long long time ago. But there's a touch of immortality about old 33 just the same. For each Sunday the spirit of the little Rhode Islander rings out a message, calling the Ottawa East Anglicans to church. As it ding dongs a message to the faithful, it conjures up a message to the old timers still alive.
