

THE DISPATCH

June 27, 1900

Fell Through the Bridge

Fearful Disaster as the Train Approaches Grand Falls

A frightful accident occurred at Grand Falls at noon on Thursday last. As the down train from Edmundston was crossing the railway bridge, a short distance above the town, the second span of the structure from 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, 60 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 all 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. 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. Through some of the cars fell but a short distance, yet results were very serious, as four men were severely injured and two of them dangerously. 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 his case is critical. Hiram I. Smith, of St. John, was badly bruised. J. O'Neil, an Englishman, was severely cut and bruised, but will recover. Dr. Clarence Kirkpatrick, of Woodstock, was badly shake up and cut.

Word was at once sent to Woodstock, and a wrecking train proceeded to the scene of the disaster. Drs. Hand and Kierstead went up on the special train.

On Friday afternoon the doctors returned. Dr. Kirkpatrick also came down. He was seen by a Dispatch representative at his home on Saturday morning. He was considerably bruised and shaken up, but thankful to have come out of the catastrophe alive. He said: -- "I was in the first class car, and looking ahead the first thing I noticed was a car loaded with lumber in front swayi8ng. I thought it was going off the track, and started for the rear of the car. The first thing I knew we were all thrown in a heap at the lower end of the car and mixed up amongst the seats. As soon as I came to my wits, and found out I was not much hurt, I looked up and there was the smoker and baggage car right above us, and as I thought

about to fall. I put my hands over my face expecting we would be immediately crushed to death. Then a train hand shouted out, that the car would not fall on us. I then set to work to help out a young lady, Miss Kierstead, I think she said her name was, who was returning to her home in Machais, Me. She had been attending the convent at Van Buren. She was very little hurt. I started then to assist the other passengers who were more seriously hurt than I. Mr. McKenna was forced right through the door his head in the water excepting his mouth and nose. It was a most wonderful escape, and if the baggage car had been ahead of the passenger, the result would have been worse. Also, the heavily laden lumber cars filling the river aided in our preservation.

Mr. Henderson of the Dominion Express Office was on the train. He passed through on his way to St. John on Friday.

The latest reports are that McKenna and Smith are doing as well as can be expected.

Immediately on receiving news of the accident Superintendent Newcomb left Woodstock with a special for the scene of the wreck. He took with him Drs. Hand and Kierstead to care for the wounded.

Mr. Timmerman also left St. John at once taking with him some friends of the men who were reported injured.

Nurses were sent from St. John and reclining chairs telegraphed for. Everything was done that could be done to make the sufferers comfortable.

The tramp who went through the accident, with the proverbial enterprise of his profession, put his arm in a sling and struck for Perth. He told his sad story. He was a carpenter on his way to Houlton and had injured his arm and lost all his tools in the wreck. He was in a fair way to get rich when some heartless man came along and gave his game away. Mr. Tramp smiled, took his arm out of the sling, and struck for fresh fields and pastures new.

January 9, 1901

Discharged

The C.P.R. have discharged all Ontario and western men employed on the new bridge across the St. John river at Grand Falls. The electric light plant has been removed and the night crew are also discharged. About 60 men are now employed. The bridge will be open for traffic about the first of April, meanwhile, trains continue to cross on the temporary structure.