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STEAM FOR VERMONT

The state of Vermont, long considered a fount of imaginative planning in the realm of historic preservation, has bolstered that reputation by approving a proposal to restore a statewide system of steam passenger trains. In June the VT Bicentennial Commn approved a basic plan submitted by Waitsfield architect Robert Burley, and hired his firm to investigate means of raising the \$8 million needed to finance it. Burley envisions the project not only as a reminder of Vermont life in the age of steam, but also as a way of inducing the citizenry to reconsider its everyday travel options.

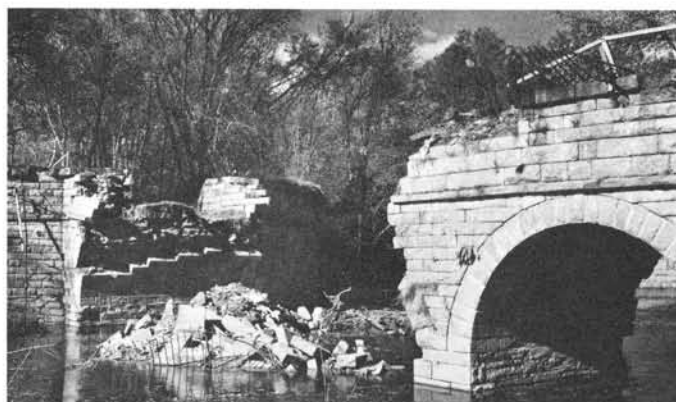
The system would comprise a loop connecting Windsor, Bellows Falls, Chester, Rutland, Burlington, Montpelier, Randolph, and White River Jct, with service also available north to St Johnsbury and St Albans and south to Manchester and Bennington. With no nighttime operation, passengers would have an opportunity to stay at old hotels and inns along the way.

Burley reports that all 6 RRs operating in VT are sold on the idea, as is Amtrack and Steamtown—the rail museum nr Bellows Falls that would furnish much of the necessary rolling stock. He has yet, however, to enlist the cooperation of the Lake Champlain Transp Co, which he hopes would provide service along the western—water—leg of the loop. In any event, there will be some form of boat transp (also steam, it is hoped) along the lake. In all, the system would constitute the most extensive operating museum in the country, and we hope the organizational and fund raising capabilities of its proponents match their ambitions. *Fuller acct: Preservation News, Sept.*

RENAISSANCE OF THE OPEN HEARTH?

We reported in SIAN 2:3 the gradual demise of the open hearth furnace as the fundamental steel-producing unit. Maryland has rejected a Bethlehem Steel Corp application to re-open 4 idle 300-ton OHs (only 3 to run at a time) at its Sparrows Point, Baltimore, plant, contending that their smokiness would violate both visible-emission and particulate-matter regulations. Affected, though, are such other issues as jobs, steel imports, and balance of payments. The capacity of the units simply is lost at a time when steel is in great shortage. BSC was given permission to operate the OHs until July 1973; later only if proper gas cleaning equipment were installed. (about an 18-month process). Steel making—the heaviest of industries—is constantly subject to clean-air regs.

Bethlehem shut down the OH operation in the summer of 1971, discouraged by low demand for U S steel and in view of the great time and cost to install antipollution devices. But in the last 6 months the demand for U S steel has risen drastically and there is now a shortage, making reuse of the OHs a possibility since conversion to the Basic Oxygen Process is costly and would take years. BSC plans another appeal, to reinstate the OHs to meet immediate demands. *Dianne Newell Macdougall.*



Dept of Interior photo

CATOCTIN CREEK AQUEDUCT COLLAPSES

The 134-ft, 3-arch span near Brunswick, MD, one of the C&O canal's 11 stone aqueducts built in the 1830s, and the second in a year to suffer partial collapse from flooding (SIAN 1:3 & 2:1), might cost $\frac{1}{2}$ million to restore. The 185-mi canal was to undergo restoration by the Park Service for the Bicentennial year, but extensive damage by Agnes, plus this setback, will extend both the time and cost.

FOREIGN NOTES

IA in Ireland. The Irish Society for IA has outlined a 3-step program: an inventory of all sites of interest; graphically recording and possibly excavating the more important ones; preservation of significant railway stations, warehouses, viaducts, and mills. Irish IA has made its most noteworthy headway in the north where all 6 counties have been surveyed, a beetling mill preserved at Wellbrook, and a spade mill and scutch mill reconstructed at the Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra. In the Republic, 4 counties have been surveyed, a 4-sailed windmill at North Leverton preserved, a corn (flour) mill in Tuam restored; and in a joint town-county project at Robertstown, Co Kildare, the original character of this 18thC canal town is to be preserved. *Irish Times, 24 Oct.* Information: Kevin Mawhinney, Secy, Irish Soc for IA, An Fores Forbatha, Waterloo House, Waterloo Rd, Dublin 4.

UK Preservation Fund. A Fund for the Preservation of Technological and Scientific Material was established early this year by the British govt, aimed at assisting local museums in England and Wales in the purchase of "any kind of movable scientific, technological or natural history object, or group of closely related objects." The total available during the first year is \$400,000; individual grants may range from \$260 to 26,000. The fund is administered by the Science Museum, S Kensington, under Asst Keeper J C Robinson (SIA). A smaller sum for the same purpose is being administered by the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.