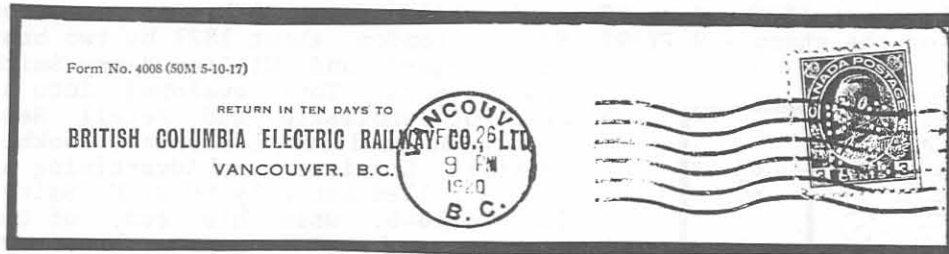
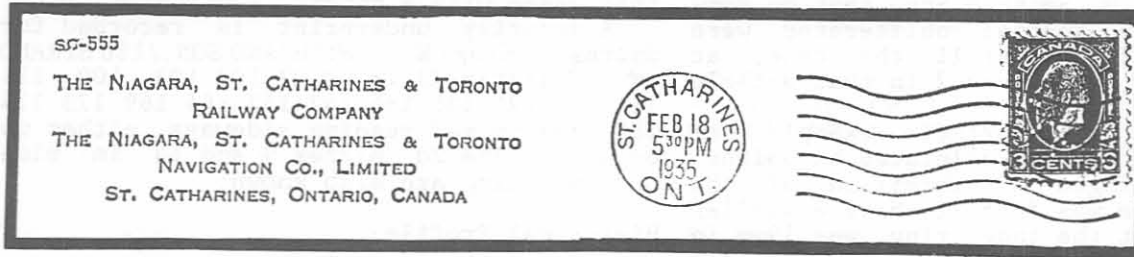


# Background on Perfin Users

ELECTRIC RAILWAYS OF WESTERN CANADA

BY EDWIN C. HAACK



## NIAGARA, ST. CATHARINES & TORONTO RAILWAY CO.

In the year 1888, a steam road, The St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, completed its line between the two cities of its title. Following bankruptcy in 1889, the road was taken over by the Haines Syndicate of New York, reorganized as the Niagara St. Catharines and Toronto, and electrified, service beginning on July 19, 1900. In 1901, the company acquired the Port Dalhousie, St. Catharines and Thorold, which had built the first intercity electric line in Canada, placed in service between St. Catharines and Thorold in 1887. In May the line to Port Dalhousie was completed.

In 1905, the Nicholls, E. R. Woods group, affiliates of Mackenzie, acquired the road. Nicholls was a pioneer developer of electric equipment and president of Canadian General Electric. A new line was built southward from Thorold to Welland in 1907 and to Port Colborne in 1911, and a line to Niagara-on-the-Lake was completed in 1913. The system became a Canadian Northern subsidiary and thus passed into the hands of the Dominion in 1917.

In 1931, the Niagara-on-the-Lake line was discontinued, and the local line from Thorold to St. Catharines was abandoned. In the summer of 1958 the company applied for permission to abandon service, and this was approved in January 1959. Carload freight service continues.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA ELECTRIC RAILWAY

This 125-mile system centering on Vancouver was the Dominion's largest system, providing extensive suburban service, plus a long-distance line with concentration on freight traffic.

The first segment was built in 1891 as the New Westminster and Vancouver Tramways, Ltd., directly to New Westminster via Central Park. It was absorbed by British Columbia Electric when the latter was formed in 1897. In 1905, the company leased the Vancouver and Lulu Island from CPR and electrified from Vancouver to Steveston for passenger service. In 1909, a link was completed from Eburne on the Steveston line to New Westminster, and on June 12, 1911, a third line was opened to New Westminster via Burnaby. The company had built a 65-mile line from New Westminster up the Frazer Valley to Chilliwack, opened on October 3, 1910. The last line, disconnected from the remainder, was built from Victoria on Vancouver Island to Deep Cover, 22 miles, completed on June 19, 1913. British Columbia Electric was for many years a British company, its policies directed from London. In 1927, control passed from England to the Power Company of Canada (Nesbitt-Thompson-Gundy) interests.

The Saanich line was abandoned in 1924, but otherwise the system remained largely intact until after WWII. In the late forties, however, the management decided to abandon all rail passenger service on September 30, 1950, and the line was dieselized. The lines were abandoned, with the last being on November 17, 1956. One line was in service for 63 years, for years of service the second longest in either country. Most of the lines, except the Burnaby route, have been retained for freight operations.

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