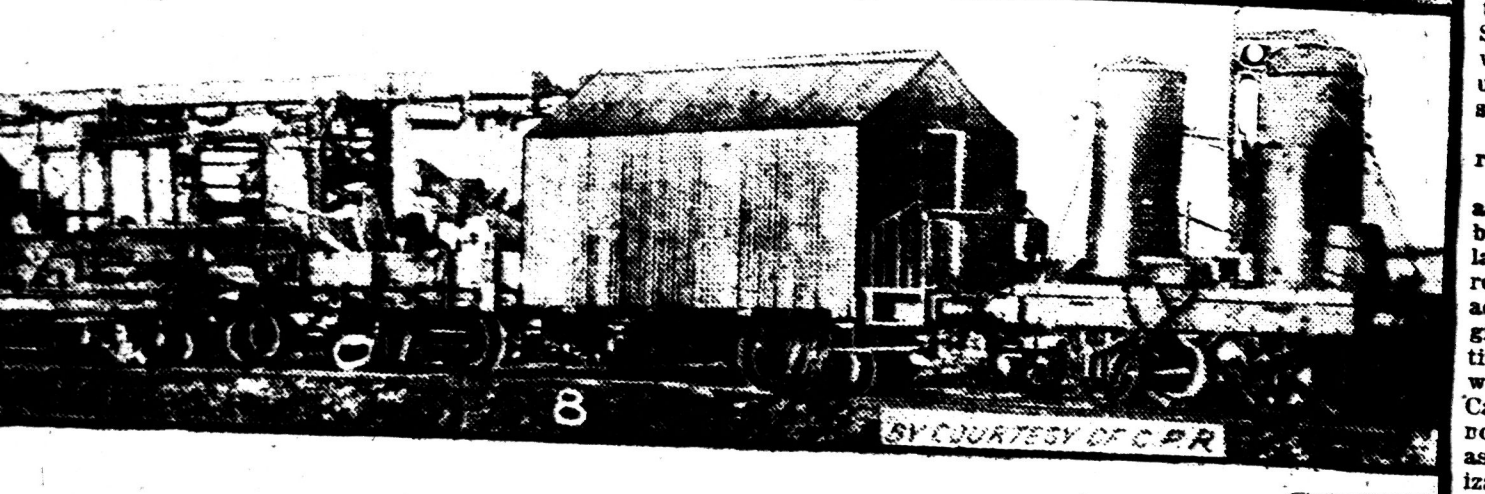
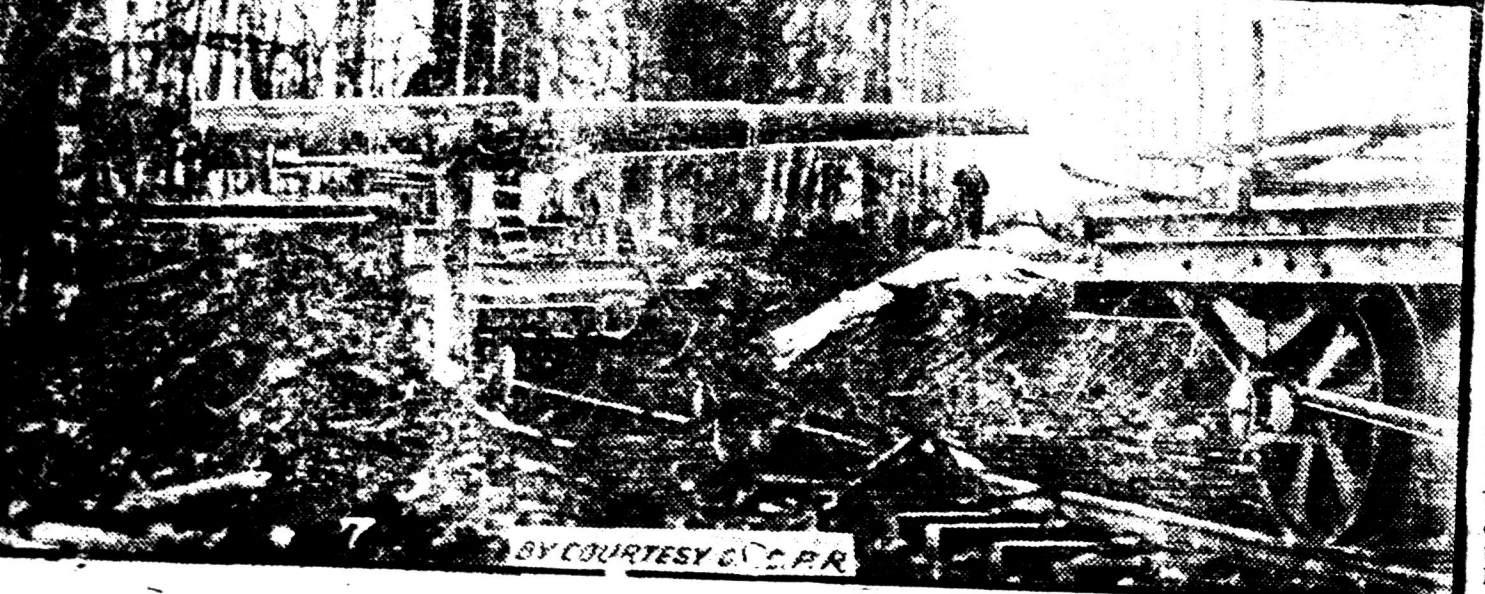
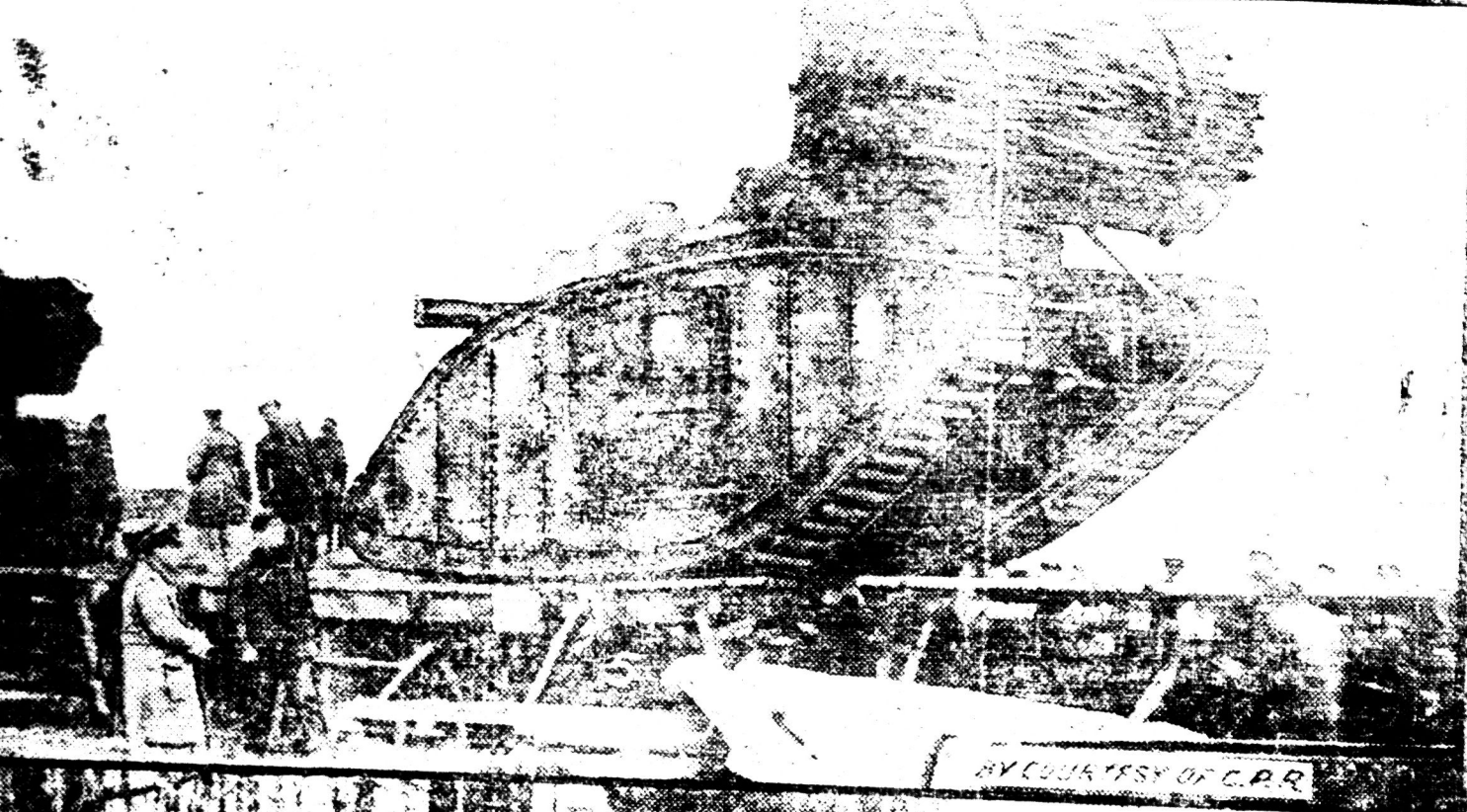
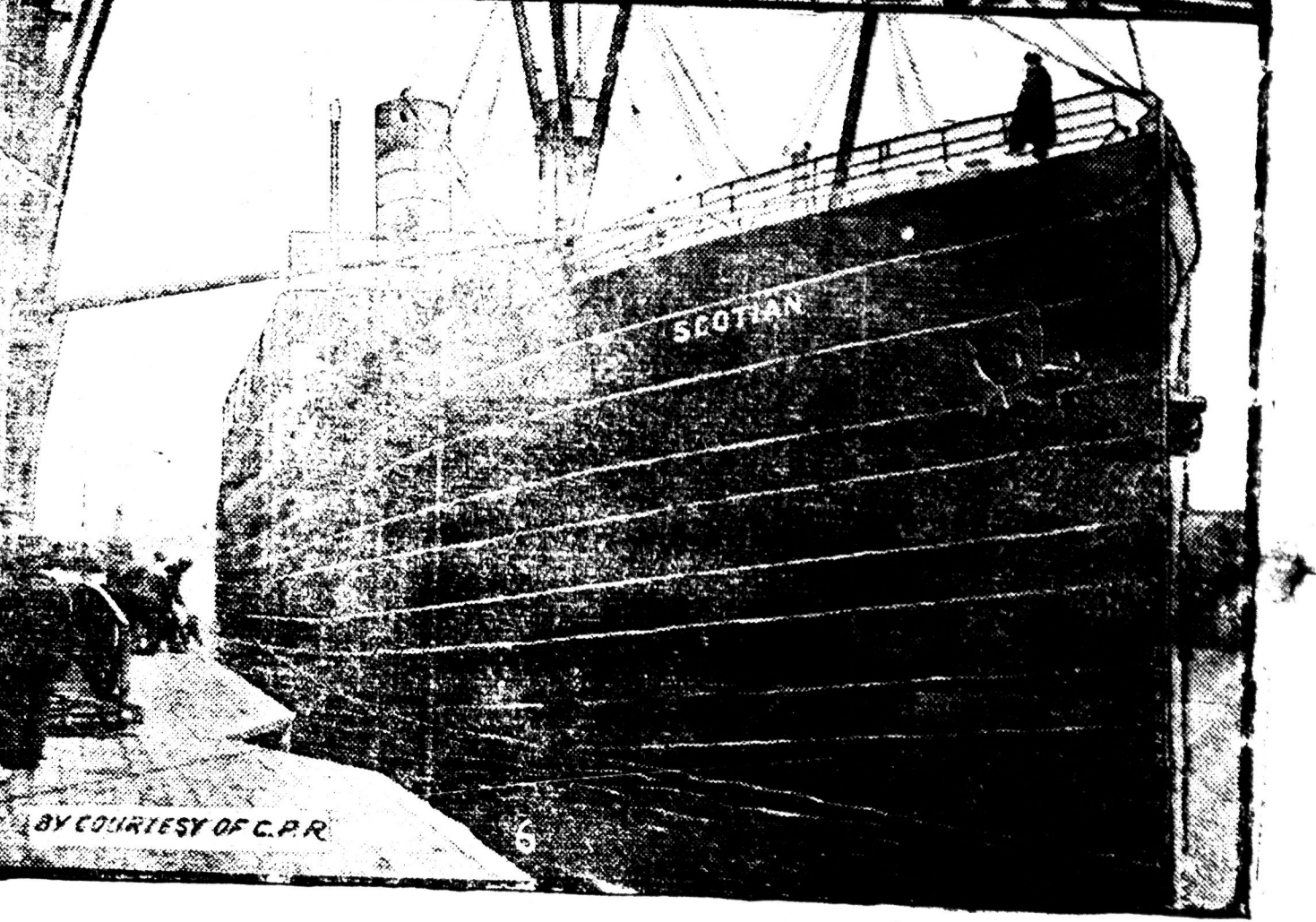
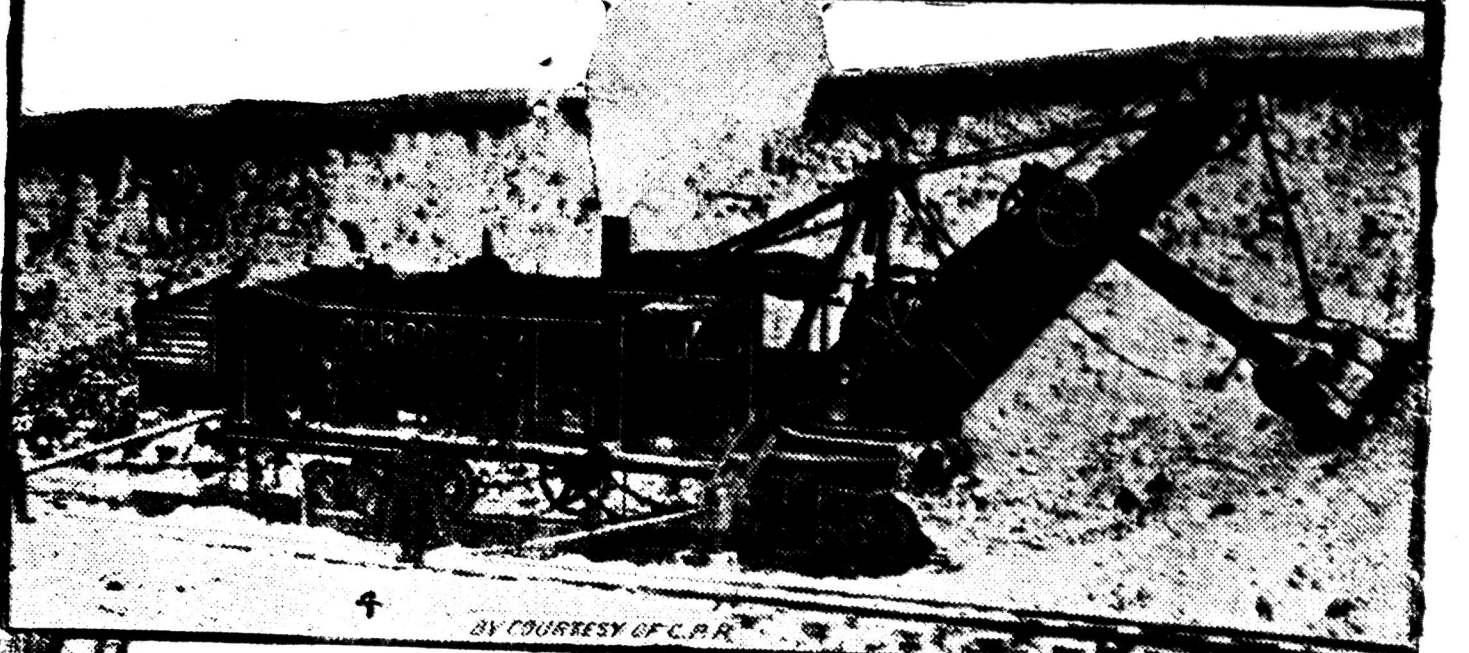


- (1) Pioneer Battalion constructing grade, Leducquiere-East.
- (2) Bapaume yard looking East.
- (3) Newly laid track along tow path of Nord Canal, Leducquiere-East Division.
- (4) Steam shovel working in chalk pit.
- (5) System for loading tanks, showing bundles of wood carried to dump in deep trenches to allow passage.
- (6) C. P. O. S. Liner Scotian arrives at St. John, New Brunswick, with returned troops.
- (7) Gun on newly laid railway preparing to fire.
- (8) Track pile driving outfit.
- (9) View of timber ramp from tow path to bottom of Nord Canal.



COLONEL RAMSEY'S EXPERIENCES

Colonel C. W. P. Ramsey, C.M.G., who commanded the first Railway Construction Corps from Canada to France, and who previous to going overseas was engineer in charge of the Engineering Department of the Canadian Pacific, was responsible for the gigantic steam shovels, weighing 65 tons each, capable of eating up earth at the rate of 150 to 200 cubic yards an hour, and self-propelling extension track pile drivers, built at Angus Shops for the Canadian Government, which formed part of the equipment used by the famous Railway Construction Corps.

Col. Ramsey, in the course of a recent talk, said: "Our work overseas was regarded as of considerable value to the combatant forces, and that work was largely due to the strong support we received from the first from the Canadian Pacific Railway. From the beginning of our organization to the time when we went overseas our work was aided in its entirety by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and they not only aided in our recruiting, but assisted in every way in the organization and equipment of the work. Further than that a very large percentage of the corps was supplied from the ranks of the C. P. R.

"For the 900 men we needed there was no competition. No less than 3,000 men, all experienced railway men, applied, and we had to do much careful work selecting the best men we could get for the work.

"We went over in June, 1915, and on reaching the other side there was little delay. We had two months in Camp at Longmoor for training, after which we were sent over the Channel. It was found then that the greatest need for railway work at the front was in Belgium, and we were sent there.

"We did not know just what the work was, but we were all keen for it, and we jumped in as hard as we could, every man doing his share with a desire to do all that he could.

"Our first work was at Dixmude, where we started in building concrete structures with a vast amount of miscellaneous work. From this we proceeded to the building of ten miles of track, which was the first railway work done by the allied armies. The only previous railway was a wooden road, which was put down with wooden rails with the idea of keeping down the noise so as to avoid warning the enemy of what we were doing.

"Our first work put in constructing railways behind the British front, where we put in the first advance railway for war purposes they had. Later on the British war people put in a great railway organization, which operated with much success back of the British front.

"When we arrived the British had had a few railway men at work. But when the Canadians arrived the value of this work was at once seen, and the force grew very quickly, so that the railway corps grew to 4,000, and eventually to over 100,000.

"In February, 1916, shipments of box cars began to arrive from Canada and the first plant for the erection of these cars was supplied from the equipment of the Canadian Railway Corps and installed at Andruicq.

"At that time a monster ammunition dump had been collected there, but the Germans, by their air service, and other means of information, had learned about it. Then when we had 20,000 tons of munitions and high explosives collected there, the Germans came and bombed it. The results were not pleasant, but there were only 40 or 50 Canadian casualties.

"Later on I went to the Somme front. They had tried in that area to handle transport, but all their roads had failed. They were trying to get railways to various points until the Canadians arrived. They built the most advanced railway in France, only 1,200 yards behind our front lines, which was a great saving for our forces.

"In 1917 the Boche began his great retreat. It was evident that the retreat had been carefully planned long before, because anything that had not been carried away was blown up on a systematic plan. Further, they fired time charges to blow up anything they could not get away with, in the hope that the charges later on would get the British troops, while other charges were so arranged that they would explode from the vibration of passing troops and material.

"During the summer of 1917 a large number of advanced railways had been established, and this called for severe work. Munitions had to be brought up under cover of night for the advanced troops in order to prepare for a surprise fire. But this was so well done that the November attack proved a success, 450 tanks being brought up that one night, and brought up so well that the enemy never knew they were there until the attack developed.

"However, the C. P. R. Canadian Overseas Corps did two or three things during their service overseas that more than justified their existence. They laid the first standard gauge railway back of the lines. At 600 men. Following that they increased their strength, and during the war they laid 400 out of 2,000 miles of track laid back of our lines. Eventually they finished their work by laying the tracks in the Valenciennes and Mons region, which had very much to do with the success of the closing operations of the war.

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