



In the Ditch: Stories of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway 1929-65

Eric Prince Stathers

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Eric Stathers knew the Pacific Great Eastern Railway all too well. In the 1920s and 30s, the PGE was a struggling, backwoods railway if ever there was one, and it presented endless challenges to those whose job it was to keep it running. Eric was Car Foreman at the railway's Squamish shops and he was often called out with his crew to recover wrecked locomotives, cars and equipment all along the tough and mountainous line between Squamish and Lillooet, British Columbia. Heavy rain, snow, rock slides, collapsed bridges, washouts and floods were all too frequent occurrences. Not only that, but the railway had a makeshift collection of equipment that took constant attention to keep rolling. This is a fascinating and unusual firsthand account of a rugged railway and the rugged and tough men who made it survive in the years of the Great Depression and World War II. This book takes you right to trackside to witness the challenges, frustrations and dangers of working on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway when its survival was problematic, but its role so vital to all those who depended upon it. Robert D. Turner Curator Emeritus, Royal BC Museum Eric Prince Stathers' stories describe the brave men and working conditions of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (P.G.E.) during the Depression, World War II, and expansion to Northern British Columbia. Original pictures and maps, provide detailed accounts of how the men risked their lives to pick up train wrecks to keep the rail line open. The story is filled with anecdotes about the operations of the P.G.E. railroad.

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