

Program helped improve skills

William Tokaruk earns MMR 214

William “Bill” Tokaruk, 70, lives in Regina, Saskatchewan, with his wife, Gertrude. Bill and Gertie have been married for 45 years and have raised five children. — Brian, Charmaine, Maureen, Wayne and Helen. Bill retired in 1990, after 43 years service, from Dairy Producers Co-operative Ltd. He worked part-time during his high school years in Canora for Canadian National Railways as assistant agent, handling the waybilling and value shipments when LCL was big business. Canora was the junction point for lines running from Winnipeg and east to Edmonton and west from Regina and south to the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay. His fascination with and love of trains probably sprang from this period in his life.

Following completion of high school, he was off to war in the Royal Canadian Air Force. After discharge he attended the University of Saskatchewan.

Besides reading everything in sight, building models of one type or another has always been a part of his leisure time. “My parents

couldn’t afford many toys when I was a youngster, so I built my own,” he said. He built models of tractors, binders, threshing machines, snowmobiles, trucks, planes and, of course, trains.

The model railroading bug bit in earnest in 1955 when a copy of *Model Railroader*, picked up at a newsstand, rekindled an interest in model trains. The first layout was a 5 x 7’ fold-away in the dining room.

A move to a new home in 1965, which included a layout room in the basement, resulted in the second. This layout was cut into manageable sections and moved to Regina in 1973, where it was reassembled and enlarged. This layout, the Canora Division of Canadian



National Railways, is built around three walls in a 12 x 24' basement room. It features a single-track mainline, two passing tracks, sidings, storage and interchange yard, steam and diesel servicing facilities, on-line industries and is as complete as any model railroad can be.

Changes are inevitable. Structures, including bridges are 95 percent scratchbuilt. Off all the phases of model railroading Bill enjoys scratchbuilding the most. He has won numerous awards at division meets.

Bill joined the NMRA in 1960 and the Pacific Northwest Region in 1968. He says the NMRA Data Sheets, Standards and Recommended Practices he purchased when he joined proved to be very valuable when he was the lone modeler in Canora.

He is a charter member of the Echo Valley Railroad Guild, a 100-percent NMRA club in Regina. He has served as club secretary-treasurer since its inception. He assisted in the design and construction

of both its permanent and modular layouts.

He was AP judge at a number of division and one region convention, and was appointed AP Chair at the 1988 division convention in Calgary, a position he currently holds. He completed a term as superintendent of the 6th Division in 1990 and served as treasurer and registrar for the 6th division convention in Regina in 1989. Bill was presented with the Silver Spike Award for Service to the Hobby and 6th Division in 1991.

Bob Gardner introduced Bill to the Achievement Program at a convention in 1980, by suggesting Bill enter his model of a modernized grain elevator in the AP as well as regular contest. That earned Bill his first merit award.

Bill attributes his improvement in modeling to the AP and credits the NMRA and PNR, the conventions in particular, for the many model railroad friends he has made over the years. •