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Canada Celebrates 50th Anniversary of First Train

The First Transcontinental Train Left Montreal
June 28, 1886, Covering 3,000 Miles

Canada will join with the Canadian Pacific Railway at the end of this month in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the first through passenger train entirely on Canadian soil from Montreal to the Pacific Coast. The first through train left Montreal on June 28, 1886, covering the 3,000 miles to Port Moody in 136 hours.

It was a big event in Canada's history, the consummation of the 1867 Pact of Confederation, the physical union of the provinces by a bond of steel. Representing the fruit of years of toil, the first train carried the best wishes of the entire Empire, as well as Canada. It was given a tremendous send-off from Montreal and met with warm receptions at every stop across the country. Sir George Stephen, W. C. Van Horne, T. G. Shaughnessy, and other Canadian Pacific officials received telegrams from the leading men of the day, heartily congratulating them on having overcome almost overwhelming economic and physical difficulties which they had met since the inception of the enterprise.

Duplicating the historic first train, exactly 50 years later, the regular transcontinental train will leave Windsor Station, Montreal, at 7.20 p. m., standard time, on June 28. Public interest in this event indicates that the anniversary train will be given a hearty send-off as well as royal greetings all along the line, because of the fact that it typifies 50 years of Canadian progress.

Warm Welcome

Vancouver, in particular, will warmly welcome the train as an important part of the Golden Jubilee celebration there. The first arrival will be re-enacted at Port Moody on July 3rd. At the throttle of the locomotive, which will duplicate the original locomotive as far as possible, will be W. H. (Billy) Evans, of Vancouver, original engineer. P. A. Barnhart, of Kamloops, original conductor, will also officiate.

The significance of the event was magnified by Queen Victoria's celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of her illustrious reign, adding as it did another jewel of expanding empire to her already brilliant crown. For this reason world-wide attention was drawn to the passage of the first train across Canada.

Plans were made in the Canadian Pacific offices at Montreal to inaugurate the service on a simple workaday basis, without celebration. Sir George Stephen, W. C. Van Horne, T. G. Shaughnessy, and other officials were inclined to regard this history-making train with the same unsentimentality that was responsible for the comparatively simple rites at the driving of the "Last Spike—A Plain Iron One"—high in the Selkirk at Craigellachie on November 7, 1885.

To the editors and reporters of 1886 however, and to the Canadian public generally, this first through train had special significance. It caught the romantic fancy of an adventurous

young people to think of a train leaving Montreal and six days later emerging on the favoured shores of the Pacific. They thought of the vast new country beyond the Lakes; thousands of miles of rolling farm and ranch land awaiting settlement; of the high, snow-crowned Rockies, tales of whose startling beauty had filtered back with returning explorers, and, to the more daring, the far-off Pacific Coast with its giant trees, rich mines, rushing rivers and pleasant climate, invited a personal tour, always with the hope uppermost of hitting on something that would lead to a career of remunerative enterprise.

Thoughtful Canadians saw in the crossing of the first train the beginning of a new era of expansion. Canada was growing up, they said, and the Canadian Pacific's new line was causing Canadians to shake off the lethargy born of previous isolation and wake up to the possibilities of their western lands.

Increased Trade

Of the railway's promise in the direction of trade, the Montreal Gazette had this to say: "What the trade will amount to we cannot now conceive any more than five years ago we could predict that in 1886 the statesmen of England and Canada and Australia would be debating how far it was practicable to utilize the new highway as a means of intercommunication for the conveyance of mails, bearing messages of peace, or of men and material, to be used in the defence of the Empire in the event of war." And the Ottawa Free Press said: "Although not heralded by the booming of drums or the flourish of trumpets, or made the occasion of a national celebration, or even accorded a public demonstration it must be apparent to all that this event marks the commencement of a new era in Canadian history."

If there were no "public demonstrations" or "national celebrations" as the old Ottawa paper suggests, there was, however, throughout Canada as that first train sped on its way, something that looked suspiciously like a general celebration. And in the wake of this triumphant train came the Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, with Lady Macdonald, to travel by special train over the steel highway which more by his efforts and statesmanship than by any other political force became a possibility. Sir John, leaving Ottawa on July 8, 1886, came west in a veritable blaze of glory, cheered to the echo and cheered again; lionized, idolized and monopolized by his people sincerely grateful for his part in the building of the first transcontinental railway.

Montreal Celebrates

But a few days earlier, amid a continuous round of applause and good wishes, the first through train had moved across Canada on its special march to the Pacific shores.

Unwonted bustle stirred the vaulted concourse of the old Dalhousie Square station on that warm evening of Mon-

day, June 28, 1886. It seemed as if all of Montreal had gathered there, top-hatted, scarfed and frock-coated; whiskers and moustaches elaborately coiffed, shoes polished to within an inch of their lives.

Portentous news has a habit of travelling swiftly. Canadian Pacific officials had made no fuss about it yet, to quote the Montreal Gazette, "the announcement was ventilated in the city newspapers and the citizens turned out in force." It was estimated that there were fully five thousand people thronging the platform and lining the terrace overlooking the depot on Notre Dame street.

While the throng cheered the departing train, the Montreal Field Battery thundered a salvo of fifteen guns as the train chugged out of the station and gathered speed for her westward run.

On its pioneer trip to the Pacific Coast the through train of 1886 was operated essentially as it is today, that is, a train was operated out of Montreal as the Pacific Express, and another left Toronto the same evening to meet the Montreal train at Carleton Junction where it was consolidated with the Montreal train and operated into Ottawa and onward as one train for the west.

So it was that the train reached Ottawa, about 12.20 a.m., it was a consolidation of Montreal and Toronto trains, or thirteen cars in all.

Despite the late hour, hundreds of people lined the station platform and several rockets were sent up and loud cheering broke forth as the engine whistle was heard on the bridge beyond the station.

Of that first train newspaper reporters and correspondents at the various cities where the train stopped as well as correspondents, including the late Col. George Ham, who accompanied the train as passenger, had much to say. Each in his own way, appeared to find the furnishing and fittings of the sleeping cars in particular almost beyond description in their luxury.

Chalk River, the first divisional point after leaving Ottawa, was reached at 6.30. The engine which took over the train at that point was decorated with flags and evergreens and presented a gala appearance in the bright morning sunshine.

Nationwide Enthusiasm

Mattawan, Callander—then not known for multiple births—North Bay and Sturgeon Falls were reached in due course and each stop brought a cheery burst of cheering and a hearty send-off. Surbury, then as now junction point on the Algoma and Ontario districts, made the best showing of any of the smaller stations along the line.

Port Arthur, which not long before had changed its name from Prince Arthur's Landing, determined to show all concerned that it was not to be outdone in the reception of the history-making string of cars. The train arrived at the lake city at 3.15 p. m. June 30, and Mayor G. H. Macdonnell and his council headed a demonstration in which hundreds of citizens took part during a one-hour visit. Flags were hoisted, brave bunting stretched across the tracks over South Water street, and the mayor

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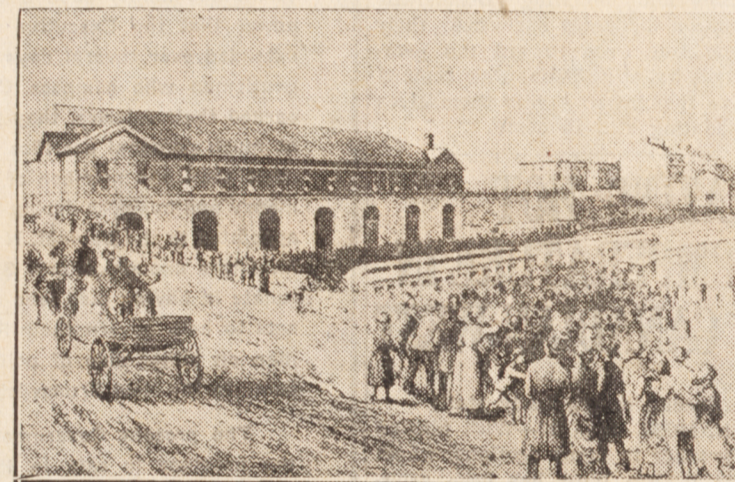
congratulated W. F. Salsbury, in the name of the Company.

Winnipeg on Dominion Day

For weeks Winnipeg had been anticipating the arrival of the first through train, and a fitting recognition of it had been included in elaborate plans for a civic celebration on Dominion Day.

Consequently, the train arrived at 9.10 a.m. on July 1, 1886, to find Winnipeg's streets and buildings, to say nothing of the station, bright with flags and bunting, and a thoughtful Dominion Day committee had switched the display to a point on Main street between Pononose and Alexander streets instead of in front of the city hall, in order to fit with the proper celebration of the train's arrival. The St. Andrew's Society, together with the different clubs in uniform, joined the military of which all units were represented in the march to the station where the Mayor, greeting the train in the name of the city, presented an address to General Superintendent J. M. Egan who replied fittingly. Conclusion of Mr. Egan's reply was the signal for a salute of fifteen guns by the Field Battery drawn up to the north of the station.

Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Medicine Hat where the train halted briefly, showed decorations and raised loud cheers to greet the train; at Regina the reception was particularly colorful as crimson-coated Royal Northwest Mounted Police mingled with the crowd and helped to form an unofficial guard of honor.



Where the First C.P.R. Train Started

The departure of Canada's first Transcontinental train must have presented such a scene as this. It was thus the first C.P.R. Station in Montreal looked a few months earlier when the troops left to quell the Riel rebellion. The passenger train left from the same spot and, according to all reports, the crowds that saw it off were as enthusiastic as those that said good-bye to the departing troops.

Calgary's Musical Reception

Calgary, the foothills city which had welcomed the "front train" to the head of construction three years previously with a show of interest which amounted almost to a holiday, now outdid it previous demonstration as the first through train pulled into the station a few minutes after 11 p.m. July 2. The reception was more informal than otherwise, however, but lacked nothing in western enthusiasm.

A ball and concert had been proceeding in the roller rink, the entertainment being for the benefit of the Calgary brass band, and well known local artists had been contributing to the programme. After the concert the musicians and dancers adjourned in a body to the station where they joined a large number of citizens who had gathered to celebrate the arrival.

If intermediate stations along the route of the history-making train had turned out notable demonstrations of appreciation of the economic and political significance of the first train, they were as nothing compared with the reception that was being prepared at Port Moody, western terminus of the train at the end of its momentous 3,000 mile crossing of the forests, plains and mountains.

There the train heaved to a stop

promptly at 12 noon, July 4, and at the throttle of the locomotive was W. H. (Billy) Evans, still a robust citizen of Vancouver though long since retired from his old post of master mechanic at the Coast, with P. A. Barnhart, still living in Kamloops, B. C., as train conductor.

Port Moody Festival

Port Moody's population had swelled by the addition of 1,500 visitors from Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster and Nanaimo, to say nothing of smaller communities along the British Columbia coast, and the demonstration they staged in honor of the train's arrival became one of the memorable events of the decade. In the first place, it was something of a holiday—being July 4.

For many the day started auspiciously if at an unusually early hour. The steamer "Yosemite" had left Victoria at 4 a.m., July 4, with a gala load of 750 passengers, including Premier Smithe, the Victoria Brass band, and the mayor and other leading citizens. The ship stopped at Vancouver to pick up additional passengers and then proceeded to Port Moody. In the meantime, the steamer "Amelia" had been crossing the gulf from Nanaimo and arrived with 250 more celebrants.

Mayor Fell had come up from Victoria with a huge bouquet of blooms, descending he would present them to the first lady who descended from the cars, and he was as good as his word presenting them ultimately to a Mrs. Hurchburg, Mayor M. A. McLean, of

City of Fredericton NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT

The Assessment Roll for the City of Fredericton for the year 1936, is now in the hands of the City Treasurer, for collection, and all persons therein assessed are hereby required to pay the amount of the respective taxes forthwith to the City Treasurer at his office in the City Hall, Fredericton. A discount of five per centum will be allowed on all taxes paid on or before the TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF JULY NEXT, after which date interest at the rate of one-half per centum per month will be added and execution may be issued and proceedings had thereon, as by law provided.

Dated at the City Hall, Fredericton, this twenty-second day of June, A.D. 1936.

FRED I. HAVILAND,
City Treasurer.

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