

CANADIAN RAILROAD HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED.

NEWS REPORT No. 82

MONTREAL, CANADA

OCTOBER 1957

Notice of Meeting

The October meeting of the Association will be held in Room 203, Transportation Building, 159 Craig Street West, on Wednesday, October 9th, 1957, at 8:15 PM. As an experiment, the Entertainment Committee have decided to hold an Auction Night, for the benefit of the Association and those of its members who may have duplicate railway or trolley material to dispose of, such as books or other publications, notices, periodicals, tickets, photographs, slides or any other type of portable memorabilia. Material auctioned may be donated to the Association, in which case the proceeds accrue to the group, or those who possess objects of a more valuable nature may wish to award a percentage of the proceeds to the Association, which, for practical purposes, should not be less than 10%.

Those with material to be auctioned should telephone Mr. Douglas Brown at ME.7-1277, or Mr. Omer Lavallee, at Cr.9-8822, at which time they should be prepared to advise in what manner the proceeds are to be distributed.

As usual, members are invited to bring interested guests.

Association News

A "Mystery Trolley" tour was held over lines of the Montreal Transportation Commission, on Sunday, September 22nd. Seventeen members congregated at St. Denis Shops on that date, to await the arrival of an unannounced vehicle with an unannounced destination. As it turned out, the "Mystery Trolley" was Tool Car No.3200, now retired from service, but presently being retained tentatively for the Museum Collection. No.3200 is a double-truck, wood body, steel underframe closed car, whose chief feature is a pair of baggage doors from which photographs were taken to advantage. Despite its antique appearance, the unit was built as recently as 1928, and is in very good running condition, despite a need for paint which it is hoped to remedy in the not-too-distant future.

The route followed was from Youville Shops to Saint Denis car-house, where the majority of the members joined the trip. After picking up President Clegg en route somewhere on Park Avenue, the tour proceeded to Craig and St. James Streets, west, thence up Girouard and the private way to Cartierville. Photo stops were made at Victoria Square, Garland, and on the Bois Franc Road loop. Returning, the tour passed via Queen Mary Road, Cote St. Catherine Road, and so via St. Denis carhouse to Youville, where a couple of turns were taken on the test loop for demonstration purposes.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6TH IS OUR ANNUAL FALL FOLIAGE EXCURSION. TICKETS ARE SELLING RIGHT AND LEFT, BUT WE CAN STILL SQUEEZE IN A FEW MORE ! CONTACT TRIP COMMITTEE, BOX 22, STATION B, MONTREAL.

Forster Kemp reports on

The Route of the AuRoRa - Arctic
streamliner of the Alaska R.R.

ON THE MORNING OF WEDNESDAY, July 24th, I went over to the Alaska Railroad station in Fairbanks, Alaska, after having spent the night in a motel. In the station stood a train painted in bright blue and yellow, with the largest windows I have ever seen on a train; not only long, but very high. This was the AuRoRa, a five-car streamlined (or at least, semi streamlined) train, whose equipment comprised converted United States Army hospital cars. Hauled by engine No. 1514, a General Motors 1500 HP "A" unit, the train consisted of a baggage car, a reclining-seat, second-class and smoker, a diner-lounge, and two first-class coaches with reclining seats. Both of the first class coaches have a small section with tables at one end of the car, as well as spacious washrooms and parcel racks. This train runs daily except Tuesday during the summer, but is replaced by a tri-weekly overnight sleeper train in the winter.

Other equipment of the railway is quite modern and well-maintained. Motive power is provided by a fleet of 1000HP Alco units with specially built bodies which give them a very unusual appearance, and a number of 1500 HP standard GM F-7 units, which are the "pride of the line". There are also a number of 1000 HP Alco road-switchers which are used in yard service, and on short hauls such as the Anchorage-Whittier passenger train. Box and refrigerator cars are converted former troop sleepers, mostly equipped with their original trucks. Box cars are red with yellow lettering. Refrigerator cars are yellow with black lettering. Those with one-piece rollaway doors also have the doors painted black, like TH&B boxcars. Open-top cars are black with yellow lettering. Tank cars are owned either by the Army, the Union Oil Company or the Union Tank Car Company. There are special flatcars for piggyback and container use. Piggyback cars have special swing-out gates which support the front of the trailer solidly when in motion. Containers are about 28 feet long, and are carried two to a flatcar. They are painted bright blue and yellow like the passenger cars and locomotives. A great number of old troop sleepers and kitchen cars are used as service boarding and cook cars on the Alaska Railroad. Some of them still bear their original paint and lettering ("Pullman - Troop Sleeper") They must be the only real side-door Pullmans still around! Others are painted slate grey and still others are in the aforementioned blue-and-yellow livery.

Historic locomotives: There is a small saddle-tank engine preserved at each end of the line. Both are 0-4-0 and both are numbered "1". The one at Fairbanks is an old Tanana Valley RR narrow-gauge engine built by H.K. Porter Co. The one at Anchorage is a standard gauge unit bearing Davenport Locomotive Works No. 784.

Steam Locomotives: Three of these were seen, one each at Fairbanks, Curry and Healy. There is probably also one at Anchorage but the shops there are quite extensive and if there is one there, it is under cover. The three noted were all ex-United States Army 2-8-0 coal-burning engines. Tenders are full of coal and there is sufficient coal around that they can use if necessary. The engines are kept in case of flooding of the line, when diesels can not operate.

Coal is mined at Eska and Jonesville, in the Matanuska area, and at a point near Healy. There are also about twenty engines of various types stored at Whittier. These are said to be awaiting shipment to Spain, but the Spanish Government, apparently, are unable to raise the money for shipment. Included in the lot are 2-8-0's or Army and U.S.R.A. vintage, 2-8-2's and 4-6-2's.

Hotels: There are railroad hotels at both Curry and Healy and a 'posh' resort hotel at McKinley Park which has been leased to a private operator.

Marine equipment: The Alaska Railroad has several diesel-powered sternwheel tugs and barges which operate on the Tanana (pronounced "Ta-na-naw") River and on the Yukon River. The sternwheel steamer Nenana, which was retired in 1953, is moored in the Chena River at Fairbanks, where the staterooms are rented to overnight guests and meals are served. It is under the auspices of the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce.

Returning to my trip over the line, I boarded the AuRoRa on Wednesday, the 24th at Fairbanks. Leaving the station, which is on the end of a short branch line, the train passed through the yards and shop building's where No. 556's tender was protruding from the locomotive shop. The buildings of the University of Alaska are then passed, situated on a hill overlooking the tracks. Beyond this was the experimental farm, which is one of the few farms in the area, most of which is covered by second-growth forest. The line to Nenana lies in a shallow valley bordered by low hills. At Nenana, the line approaches the Tanana River in the upstream direction, parallels it for about two miles on a ledge between the hills and the river, and then crosses it on a single arch-truss span, some 700 feet long. After leaving the bridge, the line turns back on itself to come alongside the river at Nenana station.

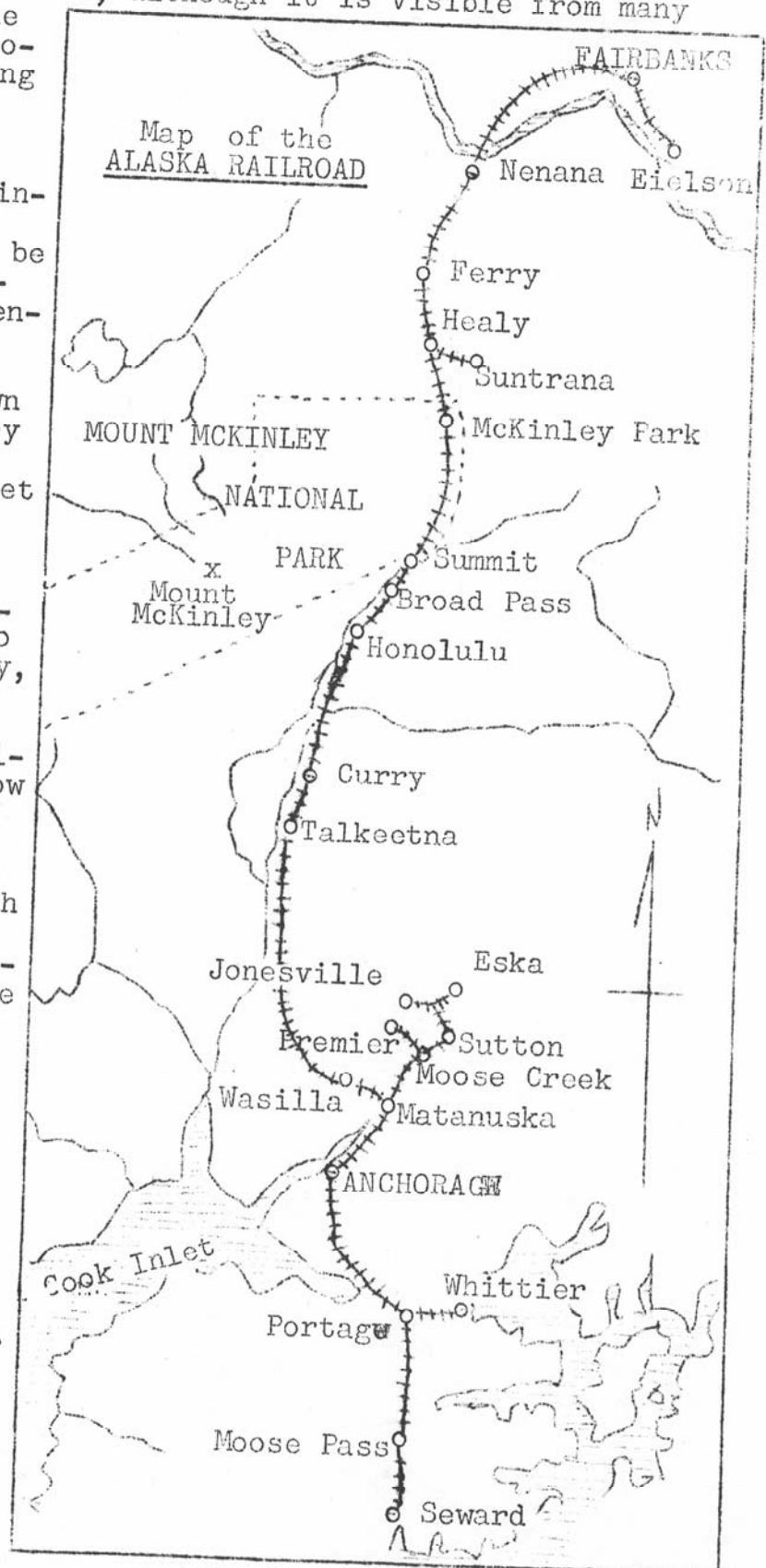
The track resumes its southwesterly direction after leaving Nenana, ascending the valley of the Nenana River. This river is crossed at a point known as Ferry, and the valley becomes steadily narrower, with mountains beginning to rise on both sides. At Healy, there is a railroad division point and a four-mile branch line descends to a two-span crossing of the river, then up the valley of the Healy River to some coal seams which are clearly visible in the sandy valley sides. After leaving Healy, the train climbs up through the Nenana Canyon, which is comparable with that of the North Thompson or the Kicking Horse. There are many rock cuts and several tunnels. At a wide place above the river is the station of McKinley Park, where the hotel is located. At present, the railway is the only way to get there, but a highway is scheduled for completion this year.

Above McKinley Park station, there is more canyon scenery, but soon the train climbs on to a level plateau, bordered by high mountains. This is the continent's lowest rail pass -- it is only 2,363 feet above sea level and only 50 miles from Mount McKinley, whose 20,269 feet make it North America's highest mountain. The surrounding mountains vary in height from 5,000 to 12,000 feet and the breadth of the Pass (appropriately known as Broad Pass) affords a good view of the mountains from the track. On the descent from Broad Pass, the train crosses the swift-running Chulitna River, whose valley it

follows for more than seventy miles. At Colorado, the first view of Mount McKinley may be had on clear days. I saw only traces of it during three days in Alaska, although it is visible from many points on the railway. The next station is named Honolulu, and it is the meeting place for Trains 5 and 6. The train crews exchange trains, a procedure which usually takes about ten minutes. A spectacular view of the Chulitna River may be seen just beyond this station, with a spidery suspension bridge far below. A few miles further on, the Alaska Railroad has its own version of the CPR's Stoney Creek viaduct -- a steel bridge which passes 296 feet above Hurricane Gulch.

More mountain, river and valley scenery is visible as the line descends to the division point of Curry, which is famous for bears. It is a railway division point, and possesses a railway hotel. The railroad now follows the Susitna River, which runs parallel to the Chulitna before joining the latter near Talkeetna. Both are wandering, gravelly streams, and have many tributaries which are said to be good for salmon and trout fishing. Our train stopped several times for fishing parties to entrain. It is possible to use the trains for one-day fishing excursions from Anchorage, leaving in the morning and returning in the evening. Two lakes are passed at Wasilla and Nancy; both are summer resorts for the residents of Anchorage.

The line then passes through a fringe of the Matanuska Valley, Alaska's principal farming area. From Matanuska station, a branch line extends to the Valley



and to the coal mines at Premier, Eska and Jonesville. The main line runs through a swampy, four-mile flat which borders the delta of the Matanuska and Knik Rivers, which discharge into the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet. Mountains rise on both sides of this broad valley, and in one of these mountain ranges, there is a lake which forms every year behind a glacier. The glacier breaks up in late July or early August, releasing the waters of the Lake (Lake George) in a flood which covers the area with water. This had occurred the previous week, and much of the gravel ballast had been washed away. The railway has half-a-dozen bridges crossing various arms of the river, but they are insufficient to deal with this once-a-year flood. Most of the line from this point (Matanuska) to Anchorage, is being reballasted with rock ballast. The track follows the shore of Knik Arm, but turns away before reaching Anchorage, passing then installations of Elemendorf Air Force Base, and down the valley of Ship Creek to Anchorage depot.

The town of Anchorage received its name when small boats found a safe place to anchor at the mouth of Ship Creek. However, it is not a major seaport due to its high tides and long freezing period.

The Alaska Railroad serves two seaports, one at Seward, 114 miles below Anchorage and the point from which main-line mile posts are numbered, and Whittier, about 62 miles from Anchorage, reached by a 12-mile branch line from Portage. As Thursday, July 25th, was a poor day for weather, I decided to visit Whittier on that day. I went to the depot at about 9:20 AM for the 9:30 train, but found no train in the station. I looked across toward the shops, and saw an auxiliary crane approaching, boom forward. Several equipment cars followed, pushed by three diesel units, with a caboose on the end. It wasn't hard to tell that this meant derailed equipment. The Whittier train had been cancelled. I went across a creek to have a look at the railroad shops. There was some interesting equipment in the yard and I did not notice until later that the auxiliary had not gone very far, but was only a short distance beyond the station. I went back into the town and along the side of a hill above the tracks until I reached the depot where the mishap had occurred. Four diesel units were off the track, with a long freight train still attached. Apparently, the overnight freight train from Seward was approaching Anchorage when a switch leading to a piggy-back trailer-loading terminal split beneath the leading "A" unit. The forward truck followed the main line, but the trailing truck and the other units followed the spur, derailling and tearing up track. The last unit and two cars took the spur without derailling, but one pair of wheels of the unit derailed when they reached the torn-up track. The train stopped in about 500 feet after going through the switch.

The removal of the derailed units elicited a great deal of interest from the people of Anchorage, who turned out in large numbers to watch the proceedings. Many photographs were taken as the leading "A" unit was lifted and moved to a temporary cribwork of ties, where it would not block the main line. This work was done before lunch time, and during the lunch hour, a radio announcement was made that the Whittier train would leave at 3:00 PM. The trailing "A" unit was rerailed after lunch, and the auxiliary crane switched to work from the other side, to begin work on the "B" units.

At 2:30 PM, the three-car Whittier passenger train was moved into the station, hauled by a 1000-HP Alco road-switcher. There was an express car, a baggage-and-second-class combination car, and a first-class reclining-seat coach. The train was operated as a passenger extra, though it still bore the number "3" in its designation boards. I might add, here, that the Alaska Railroad uses train designation boards like those of the Harriman roads -- the Union Pacific and the Southern Pacific. The train left at 3:00 PM as announced, inched slowly past the overhanging diesel units, then gathered speed along the shores of Turnagain Arm. The arm is reminiscent of the Bay of Fundy (or at least, the inner reaches of it) in that there are high, turbulent tides, second only to those of Fundy in height. Large mud flats are exposed at low tide. At certain times, the tide comes up in a wave, or "bore" similar to that to be seen in the Petitcodiac River at Moncton, N.B. It was this feature, apparently, which gave Turnagain Arm its name, as it is said that Captain James Cook, when exploring the Arm in his ship, was forced to "turn again" when he ran into the flowing tide.

For much of the 50-mile run to Portage, railroad and highway run between high cliffs and the shore, with many curves around rocky headlands. As we rounded one of these curves, the brakes were suddenly applied in emergency position. The entire train crew disembarked into the track and walked back a quarter of a mile to the body of a moose which the train had struck down. Another moose hurried away around a curve. They removed the moose from the track, then returned, made a brake test and called in the flagman. Delay: twenty minutes.

At Portage, there is a glacier on a mountain, and this was the only place where the sun was shining all day. Portage station was surrounded by automobiles, as the railroad is the only way from Portage to Whittier. The Portage-Whittier line follows the valley of a glacial river for the first seven miles, and appears to be going toward a glacier. Just as it reaches the glacier, the train plunges into a tunnel almost a mile long. There is a valley following this, about half a mile wide between two ridges, then another tunnel almost three miles in length. Both tunnels are quite straight but while inside, the cars give the passenger a sensation of turning, possibly due to the uneven track. The train emerged from the second tunnel into Whittier Army base, passed the line of old steam locomotives and turned on a wye before backing into the station. There is a small shop at Whittier and several diesel units around, some of them belonging to the United States Army. The train remained at Whittier only long enough to do the express work, about forty minutes. The return trip to Anchorage was uneventful, and the arrival would have been about 8:00 PM, but for a fifteen-minute delay getting past the scene of the morning's accident. No. 5 had arrived from Fairbanks, and this was the only time that I saw two passenger trains in this terminal at the same time.

I returned to Fairbanks on No. 6 the following morning. The trip was on time, but the weather was worse than on the "down" trip. I spent the night at Fairbanks in the old "Nenana"; if I can no longer ride a sternwheel steamer, I could at least sleep on one!

A note on the Alaska Railroad dining cars: The A.R.R. operates

dining and lounge service on the "AuRoRa". The cars are built with the kitchen in the centre, an eight-table dining section at one end and a twenty-seat lounge in the other. The bar adjoins the kitchen. They usually have a four-person crew (Cook, barman, waitress, dishwasher). Prices are about the highest I have been on any dining car, but they are high in an insidious way. A price is set opposite the main dish, and this includes the main dish only, that is to say, the meat, vegetables, potatoes and bread. Soup, beverage and dessert are extra, if desired. Main dishes are \$2.25 and \$2.50, tea and coffee 15 cents, milk 40 cents, and desserts 50 cents, so that you usually end up by paying more than \$3.00 for a meal. Both quality and quantity do not compare favourably with most Canadian and United States railways. However, this is about the only drawback to an otherwise good passenger service. Crews are courteous and amiable, eager to point out scenic spots along the line. Cars are clean and comfortable, and the route is very interesting.

In summing up, I must admit that I enjoyed my trip over the Alaska Railroad -- the route of the "AuRoRa".

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EQUIPMENT NOTES - Canadian National Railways is effecting a further locomotive renumbering, principally to separate Diesel units of different weight categories:

Old number	1500	becomes	1119	(original number)
"	1100-1104	become	850-854	
"	1200-1203	"	1500-1503	
"	1222-1226	"	1504-1508	
"	3043-3049	"	3800-3806	
"	3050-3057	"	3807-3814	
"	3066-3073	"	3815-3822	
"	4496-4501	"	4200-4205	
"	4588-4609	"	4206-4227	
"	4350-4369	"	4800-4819	
"	4370-4373	"	4820-4823	

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Springfield Terminal Ry. electric locomotive No. 20 has become Cornwall Street Railway, Light & Power Co. No. 14, and is painted in maroon and cream. S.T.Ry. No. 15 is also on the CSRL&PCo but has not been repainted.

Canadian Pacific recently converted sixteen arch-roof, 18-section colonist cars of the 2400 series, into combination cars, numbered 3319-3334 inclusive. Of distinctive appearance, they have six-wheel trucks. As colonist cars, they were mounted on eight wheels only.

OUR SALES DIVISION HAS MANY INTERESTING ITEMS FOR SALE. ASK FOR LIST.

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 R & C S & L&PSQNS&LMCR&PNJRRSA&JQCRONR
 NOTES AND NEWS
 by
 Forster A.Kemp

• Relocations are under way on several steam and electric railway lines in the Montreal area. On the Canadian National Railways, the track of the L'Aassumption Subdivision has been relocated between Ville Saint Pierre and Ballantyne to permit excavation of the depressed roadbed which will

form an approach to the Cote de Liesse Yard, passing beneath the Canadian Pacific Railway's Winchester Subdivision. The latter has also been diverted and is carried upon a temporary wooden trestle which spans the excavation.

- The Saint Lawrence Seaway construction has resulted in the use of temporary trackage by the Canadian Pacific Railway between St. Constant and LaSalle. Necessary slow orders have caused some delay to most passenger trains using the line. A lift bridge is to be placed in the Adirondack Subdivision where it crosses the ship channel.
- On the Montreal Transportation Commission's lines, abandonment of the car line on Notre Dame Street resulted in a revision of the unusual approach to Hochelaga car barn which existed since the conversion of the east end of St.Catherine Street to busses some years ago. Cars approaching the car barn by running eastbound on St.Catherine were forced to turn south on Frontenac to Notre Dame, then return via Harbour to St.Catherine and turn east to the rear of the barn. Most cars returning to Hochelaga car barn used Notre Dame street for this purpose. With the abandonment of the track on Notre Dame, the long-unused eastbound track on St.Catherine between Frontenac and Harbour was rewired and connected with the track leading to the barn. A single-track loop has been left on Frontenac, Notre Dame and Harbour streets.
- A more extensive relocation on the MTC has been commenced on Cremazie Blvd., on the line which enables cars to reach the MILLEN route and Youville shops. The boulevard has been quadrupled in width, with an exceptionally wide centre reservation which will carry the elevated structure of the Metropolitan Boulevard. The MTC track is being relocated to the centre strip to allow unimpeded construction of the planned expressway. As only a single track will be laid, a crossover has been installed in St.Denis Street just south of Cremazie.
- A recent visit to two of Montreal's four remaining car houses, it was noted that there was been a marked reduction in street car storage space. At St. Henri, only four tracks are still usable by trolleys, but some yard space is still available. At St.Denis, it was noted that all storage tracks north of the car barn have been removed.
- Canadian National Railways' Pointe St.Charles shops in Montreal outshopped what is claimed to be its last steam locomotive on August 23rd, 1957. The engine concerned was No.49, a suburban tank engine (4-6-4T) of class X-10-a, after general repairs. All steam locomotives will henceforth be repaired at Stratford, Ontario, for the eastern lines.

- Canada's most complicated electric railway intersection has been reduced to more orthodox proportions. The Toronto Transit Commission's Roncesvalles-King-Queen-Lake Shore Road intersection, which brought together five lines of double track and a single-track loop, has been cut down to a four line intersection by the inauguration of the new Queen Street Extension line and the abandonment of the former line on Lake Shore Road. The bridge crossing the Canadian National at Sunnyside Station, and the special track-work which connected the Lake Shore Road line with King, Queen and Roncesvalles and Sunnyside Loop has all been removed, as has most of the loop itself. The new line went into service on July 21st.
- Pacific Great Eastern Railway has purchased six 72-passenger coaches from the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad. It is understood that the cars have been operating in service on the PGE in their Milwaukee Road colours.
- On August 30th, CNR unveiled a master plan for the future development of the Montreal Central Station area. Developed in cooperation with Webb & Knapp (Canada) Limited, the area surrounding the present Central Station-Queen Elizabeth Hotel-ICAO building development, will be transformed into an imposing group of office buildings, chief of which will be a 40-storey, 550-foot high cruciform-shaped glass-walled office building, whose summit will rival that of Mount Royal in height. Other structures will include a 20-storey air-conditioned office building between the new Hotel and that ICAO Building, a five-storey CNR general office building on Lagachetiere Street which will presumably replace the present headquarters facilities at 360 McGill Street, and a three storey-transportation centre occupying an entire block south of Lagachetier Street, equipped with heliport on the roof. It is expected that the development will be substantially completed within five years.
- Early in September, the former Montreal & Southern Counties Railway station in St. Lambert, a landmark since the line was opened in the fall of 1909, was dismantled. Service on the railway had ceased on October 15th, 1956.
- The New Haven RR has accepted from General Motors Corp., four new all-purpose heavy combination electric/diesel-electric locomotives. Thirty more are to be acquired by the end of this year, and an additional thirty will be supplied next year. The locomotives, known as "Universals", are said to operate with equal ease on regular electric power drawn from third rails, or on conventional diesel-electric propulsion, generated on the locomotive. The main purpose of the engines is to permit of a complete run being made without change of locomotives between New York City and Boston. At present, electrification extends only from New York to New Haven.
- Canadian National Railways has two 98-ton depressed-centre flat cars on order from Canadian Car Co., for its Newfoundland service. They will be the largest railway cars ever placed in service on the Island, when they are delivered early next year.