Toronto Union Station

owned and operated by

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The Toronto Union Station is one of the finest on the continent. It is unique in that it is one of the only large stations in which provision is made for through train operation. That is to say, it is not a station of stub end tracks such as is the case in most of the larger stations.

The present station is the successor to the Old Union Station which was located a block west and which served from 1873 until 1927 when the present station was officially opened by the Prince of Wales on August 6th, 1927, and was actually opened for traffic on the 11th day of the same month.

The property is owned and operated by the Toronto Terminals Railway Company, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railway Companies, each owning 50% of the stock. It was incorporated by Act of Parliament of Canada on July 13th, 1906.

The Station is the result of intensive engineering studies incorporating and improving upon the best features of large American Stations and adapting them to the specific needs of the growing City. Construction of the Station building was commenced in 1913, but was not completed until 1920 due to delays created by World War 1. The main building was occupied then by railway offices only, the tracks, grade separation, etc., delayed the completion for train operations until August 1927. Even then complete ancillary works such as express facilities, signalling, etc., were not wholly completed until 1931.

The Station proper is the part in which the Public is most interested. First, let us eliminate the easterly one-third of the building as this is owned by the Dominion Government and is known as Postal Terminal "A". In architectural appearance it conforms to the station, being built at the same time.

Entering the Station proper, one is impressed by the massive stone columns along the face of the centre block. There are 22 of these, each 40 feet in height, weighing more than 75 tons and are turned from solid Bedford Limestone, their foundation going down to solid rock. The other exterior stone is Indiana and Queenston limestone. Exterior decoration is in harmony with the massiveness of the structure, which is 752 feet long (including Post Office section) with an average height of 87 feet from street level, the centre portion rising to 112 feet.

On passing through the doors one enters the Ticket Lobby. This room is 250 feet long, 84 feet wide, and the ceiling 88 feet above the floor. The walls are of Zumbro stone from Missouri, selected for its natural fossilized structure whose mellow effect lends itself to interior use in such large areas and for its light reflecting qualities. Below the cornice surrounding this room, are carved the names of Cities and Towns in Canada which are served by the two major Railways. The ceiling is a true arch of Vitrified Gustavino Tile, whose colour harmonizes with the walls. The arched windows at each end are four stories high. The floor and stairways at each end leading to the Exit Concourse are of Tennessee marble, selected for its colour and hard wearing qualities. On the north side of the room are the ticket offices, the Canadian National at the west, the Canadian Pacific at the east. Between the two are located telecommunication offices and information centres. On the opposite side are the baggage checking and parcel checking facilities,

Green light information centre, News Stand, Candy Shop, etc. In the centre at the clock circle will be found the train information boards listing all arriving and departing trains.

Adjoining the Ticket Lobby to the west are the Waiting Rooms, Oak Room, York Pioneer, Kitchens, Wash Rooms, Barber Shop, Shoe Shine, etc.

During 1967, extensive renovations and alterations were undertaken throughout the Station. The interior stone walls of the Ticket Lobby and the Waiting Room were cleaned. A new entrance stairway to Track 1 was constructed from the Waiting Room, and the Waiting Room was completely refurbished, including new seats.

The new "GO" Commuter train service commenced operations during the summer, and the arrival concourse along with tracks 2 and 3 were turned over to this service almost exclusively. Due to the regular train traffic being confined to the departure concourse, it was necessary to enlarge the concourse by removing the inner row of stores and offices. In conjunction with this phase, existing outer offices were renovated, new seating was supplied, a new P.A. system and lighting were installed. One also goes from the "GO" Commuter level, through a tunnel to the Royal York Hotel, and to a direct connection with Rapid Transit Station. To further enhance the appearance of the public areas of the Station, a new trainboard was installed, the baggage checking area was renovated and new signs were erected throughout the Station.

As one proceeds to his train, he may have an opportunity to view the train shed - the area under which, as far as possible trains are parked. This shed accommodates trains up to 14 cars in length and there are 10 such tracks under this roof and one immediately

adjoining the train shed to the south. Nonetheless, the growth of the City since this facility was put into operation has been such that at certain peak hours it is not possible to park all trains under this roof despite its 1170' length and 275' width, covering over 7 acres. Consequently three and four trains are on certain tracks which unfortunately means that some passengers must walk a considerable distance to reach their trains.

Another notable feature of this Station is that with the exception of platforms serving tracks 1 and 2-3, which are combination platforms, every alternate platform is for passenger use exclusively and trucking is confined to exclusive trucking platforms between the passenger platforms.

Before going further into details, let us return to the area where the "GO" Commuter passengers are accommodated. In a plant so large as the Union Station, there are necessarily vast facilities which are never seen by the travelling public. Under the floor of the Commuter level and extending greater than its length, is another basement in which is housed the engine room wherein are located the various machines for such purposes as heating, ventilation, sewage disposal, air compressors, pumps, steam distribution, ice manufacturing, etc. There is a power substation fed by two high tension lines from Hydro and switchboard room capable of taking care of the needs of a good sized town; also there are carpenter, plumbing, electrical, machine, paint and other repair shops necessary for the maintenance of such a vast plant.

With trains coming and going in all directions on the two major railways there must necessarily be a nerve centre. On the outgoing train concourse a room in which communication is maintained with all outlying train despatching offices, and here Conductors get

their train orders and report their train arrivals and departures. From this nerve centre we disseminate train information on a "Telautograph" machine having outlets in a dozen distant places, such as the baggage room, information centres, Post Office, and others. This ingenious machine duplicates the Operator's written information simultaneously to all outlets.

Railway stations must have tracks. The Union Station is served by six main tracks between Bathurst Street on the west where trains converge from the east and north, and in the Station area these tracks spread out through extensive switching leads or ladders as we call them, to eleven station tracks. It is possible to cross trains in any manner desired at either the east or west approaches to the Station. All this means elaborate electric interlocking and signal equipment which is housed in three interlocking stations and one manually operated station. The electric interlocking system is one of the largest on the continent, actually being fifth in rank, and embodies the best in safety and flexibility of operations.

In addition to the Union Station Building, the Toronto Terminals Railway Company did own the building on the west known as the Canadian National Railways Express Building, and the building to the east, south of the Dominion Customs Building, which houses the Canadian Pacific Express facilities. Each Railway bought back its own Express Building on September 12th, 1957.

Another part of the property not usually thought of is the Central Heating Plant located at York and Fleet Streets. This is the largest Central Heating Plant in the Dominion of Canada, being rated capable of generating over 300,000 pounds of steam per hour. Something of its size may be grasped when it is realized it generates over 973,000,000 lbs. of steam each year. This plant supplies all the

steam requirements for all the buildings between Yonge and Simcoe Streets on the south side of Front Street. This includes the Dominion Customs Building, Postal Station "A", the Union Station, the Canadian National Express Building and the new Canadian National Communications and Garage Building; also the Canadian Pacific Express Building and, on the north side, the Canadian Pacific Royal York Hotel with its new addition; the Workmen's Compensation Board Building and the Postal Terminal Building located on Fleet Street. Steam is also supplied to the many shops and coach yards etc. belonging to the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways.

For the statistically minded, the immensity of the Toronto Terminals Railway property may be gleaned from the following:

There are:

4 Passenger elevators
12 Freight elevators for Mail, Express, and Baggage
Approximately 44 miles of pipe for handling steam, water, air, refrigeration, sewage, etc.
Approximately 1500 steam and hot water radiators
Approximately 216 miles of wire for power and light (exclusive of signal system, telephone or telegraph)
Approximately 5000 fluorescent lighting fixtures
Approximately 2900 other lighting fixtures
Approximately 10,000 electric light bulbs
Approximately 350 electric motors of various sizes
25 transformers of various capacities complete with control equipment
Approximately 4 miles of station platforms, 11,000 feet with roof covering

Over 2000 persons daily work in the various offices throughout these buildings.

The Signal System briefly, covers:

25½ miles of circuited track
239 signals
76 double switches
89 single switches
427 levers for operating switches and signals

Station ------/

Over 3500 incoming wires to electric interlocking stations and hundreds of other pieces of equipment incidental to electric signalling and interlocking

278 switch machines

Trains and cars handled in 1970 were:

33,992 passenger trains or average of 93.1 per day.
242,640 engines and cars or average of 665 per day.
519,093 freight engines and cars or average of 1422 per day.

TORONTO, March 31st, 1971.