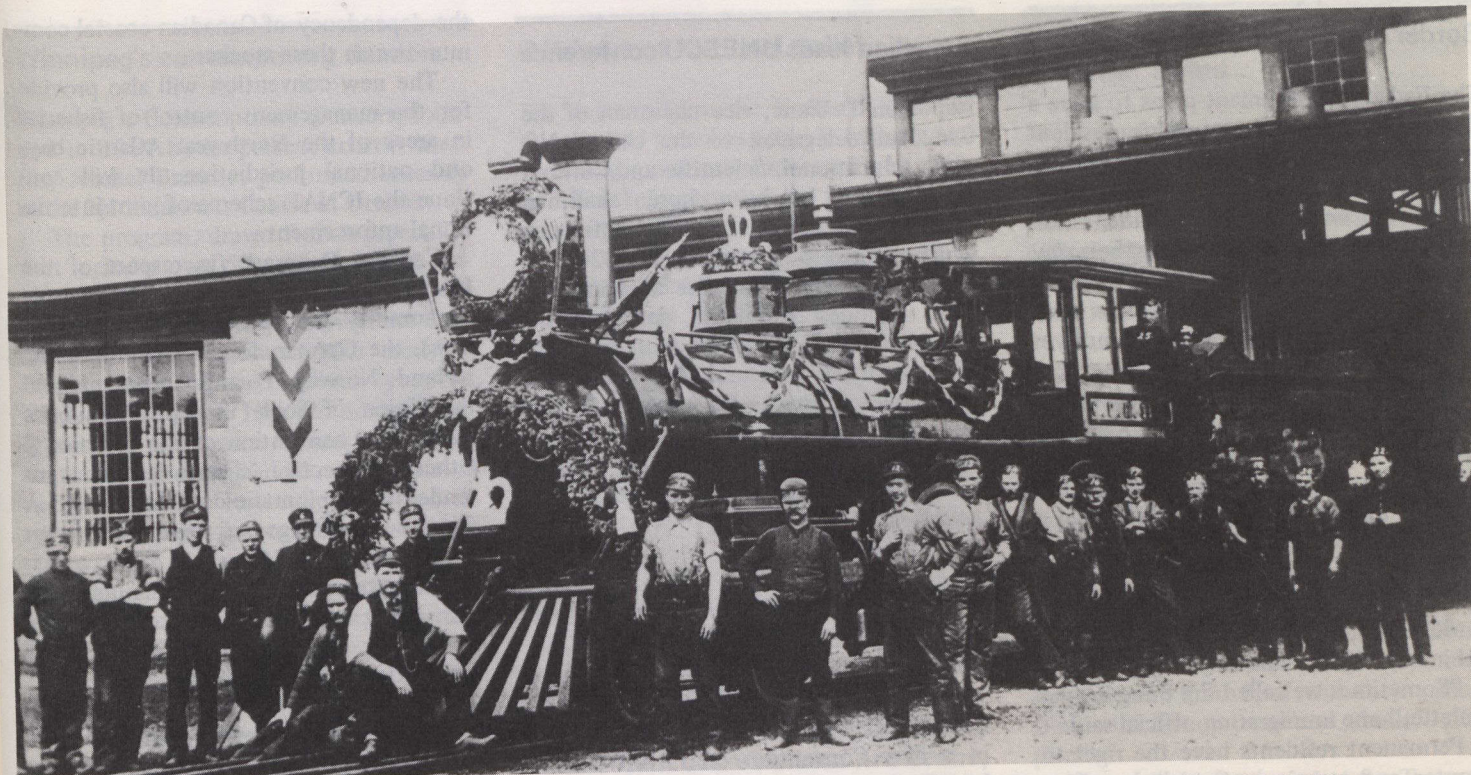


News of the arts



Flags and evergreens decorate the first through transcontinental train as it arrives in Fort William, Ontario, June 30, 1886.

disappeared into the swamp and the whole job had to be started all over again.

Eight miles of the line west of Banff, Alberta, known as the "Big Hill", turned out to be a nightmare for 25 years after its completion in 1884. There were stretches that had a grade between 3.5 and 4.4 per cent, one of the steepest

grades in the world at that time. The first work train to go down the hill lost control and jumped the tracks. Three men were killed.

Hundreds of miles of stubborn granite, miserable bog, valleys and, finally, the unyielding Rockies presented architect, engineer and builder with a task that op-

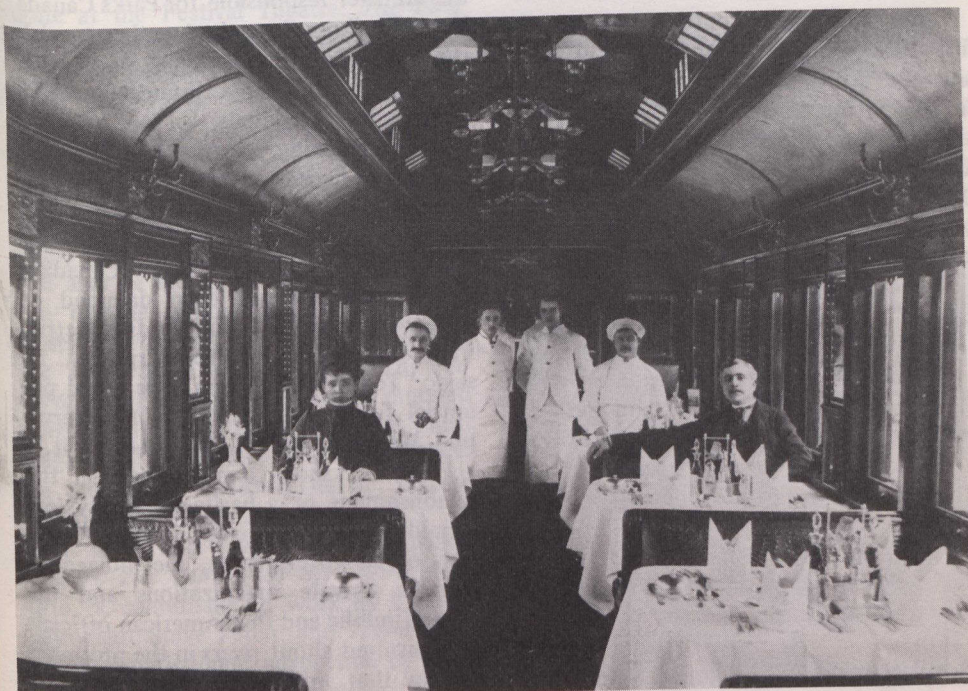
position party members labelled "preposterous".

Construction materials were carted the full length of the line while workers persevered under hostile conditions and politicians debated the wisdom of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's promise to unite Pacific and Atlantic communities.

But the combination of an economic upswing, of Macdonald's driving energy, and of the founding of the Canadian Pacific Railway company under financiers of the vision of Stephen and Smith, and technical experts of the stamp of Van Horne, made the seemingly impossible a reality. The Federal Government had to find funds three times to keep the project going, but on November 7, 1885, after close to six years of work at breakneck speed, the last spike was driven home by Donald Smith in Canada's first transcontinental line.

The railway today

CP Rail currently maintains a fleet of about 73,000 freight cars, 3,800 pieces of service and maintenance equipment, 1,270 diesel locomotives and some 320 passenger cars. It takes more than 36,000 employees to keep this vast operation going 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



The interior of the dining car Holyrood on one of its first journeys.