

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS:
BACKGROUND AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

An address by Donald Gordon, C.M.G., Chairman and President, Canadian National Railways, to the Canadian Club and Empire Club of Toronto April 21, 1958.

In today's newspapers it is commonplace to find such headlines as: Flight to Moon to Take Four Days -- Vanguard Cap Land Marker on Moon -- Two and a Half Million m.p.h. Flight Possible. Anything seems possible in this age of scientific marvels, but the amazing feature is that the possibility of space travel no longer raises the flicker of an eyebrow. Against the contrast provided by these new entrants into the field of movement there will be some who will feel that railroading has become pretty mundane and "old-fashioned". For example, you hear from time to time that the railway industry is unimaginative, and to quote one critic, "tardy in its efforts, apathetic in its attitudes, and belated in a drive towards extensive technological development". Let me say at once that most of such talk turns out upon analysis to be based either upon fundamental misconceptions or upon wisecracks made by newcomers to the transportation industry who suffer from the delusion that what is new is glamorous and what is glamorous is always better.

My intention in talking to you today, therefore, is on behalf of the railway industry to disavow and deprecate such attitudes, to impress upon you that we are efficient and modern in our outlook, that we are and will continue to be a national asset, a vital and influential force in the economy of Canada.

For this purpose, I felt that it might be well to describe some of the dimensions of the organization known as the Canadian National Railways, to reflect on its history, to examine its fabric, and to record some of its accomplishments.

The Canadian National Railways is the largest railway in North America. Its assets total over \$3 billions. It operates a network of nearly 25,000 miles of first main track, serving all ten Canadian Provinces, and reaching into twelve of