

# Canadian Pacific Railway

## Information sheet B7

Transcontinental railway passenger travel became a reality in Canada for the first time in 1886, shortly after the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed between Montreal and Vancouver. Upper and middle class tourists could now experience vast prairies, endless forests, towering mountains, dizzying canyons and roaring rivers, all inaccessible only a year before.

Towns and stations were built at frequent intervals along the CPR over the remote expanse of Western Canada. Mountain communities grew around these stops and in particular around the hot springs at Banff and scenic points. New CPR hotels often formed the nucleus of new communities. These hotels included the Banff Springs Hotel at Banff, Alberta, Lake Louise Chalet on the banks of this famous Alberta lake, Mount Stephen House at Field, B.C., Glacier House high in the Selkirks and hotels at Revelstoke, North Bend, Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia.

The completion of the CPR coincided with the development of Canadian travel photography. A generation of professional photographers became active along the railway, photographing the landscapes and people of western Canada. Most of their work during the 1880s and 1890s was undertaken close to the CPR mainline and emerging branch lines. Arriving at the beginning of the new century, Byron Harmon was among the first photographers to strike out into the remote wilderness. His post card slogan was “Along the line of the CPR,” but his vision was far broader than his predecessors.

As the CPR developed, Harmon photographed its new bridges, snowplows, snowsheds, locomotives, passenger trains and the ever-expanding hotels. All the scenes a tourist might see became part of his stock of hundreds of views.