



Passenger trains in transition

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Despite having pioneered use of the diesel-electric locomotive in North American intercity passenger service in 1929, when the Beardmore-powered No. 9000 operated between Montreal and Toronto, a quarter century passed before the CNR initiated the permanent replacement of steam with diesel on the company's premier long-distance passenger trains.

When the decision was made to equip the Montreal–Halifax *Ocean Limited* with diesels beginning in 1954, and to make the new Montreal/Toronto–Vancouver *Super Continental* a completely diesel-powered operation from its debut in April 1955, the railway divided its initial orders among three builders. The decision-making process had begun in earnest in 1949 and 1950, when sets of demonstrator locomotives provided by General Motors' Electro-Motive Division (EMD), the American Locomotive Co. (in conjunction with its subsidiary, the Montreal Locomotive Works), and Fairbanks-Morse (through its Canadian Locomotive Co. licensee) were evaluated in CNR passenger service by the railway's operations and mechanical staff (See Chapter 2).

On March 30, 1951, Starr Fairweather and Stanley Dingle issued their four-part *Canadian National Railways Economics of*

Dieselization report, in preparation through much of 1950 (in the wake of the three demonstrator tours) and in which they proposed to standardize CNR road-freight and mainline passenger operations with blocks of 1500-hp, four-axle diesels. The sole exception to this proposed uniformity involved the Montreal–Chicago passenger service — route of the *International Limited* and other fast, heavy trains — for which nine 2250-hp units were proposed (at the time, these could have been either Electro-Motive E8A or Alco PA-2 units).

Dieselization of CNR mainline freight service, begun with U.S.-built F3 units in 1948 (See Chapter 4), remained management's priority through the early 1950s. It was not until October 6, 1954, when FP9A No. 6500 and F9B No. 6600 led the *Ocean Limited* out of Montreal six days after their delivery, that CNR diesels were regularly assigned to a mainline passenger schedule.

In the United States, many EMD F2A, F3A and F7A locomotives (with the "A" denoting a cab-equipped unit, as opposed to a cabless booster, or "B" unit) were delivered with optional steam generators to provide train heat in passenger service. In 1949 EMD introduced the FP7A, essentially an F7A stretched four feet in length to accommodate additional water capacity

FPA-4 No. 6762 leads a Montreal–Halifax passenger train through northern New Brunswick in 1959. The CNR had acquired six FPA-2 and six FPB-2 passenger locomotives from MLW in 1955, but ongoing dissatisfaction with the builder's trouble-prone 244-series prime movers meant that GMD's competing FP9A and F9B locomotives became the mainstays of the railway's passenger diesel roster through the mid- and late 1950s. Introduction by ALCO and MLW of the more reliable and robust 251-series engine, combined with aggressive pricing, overcame CNR resistance to ordering additional MLW passenger diesels. CANADIAN NATIONAL