



TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION: 2007

The Confederation Train

On New Year's Day morning 1967, hours after Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson had lit the Centennial Flame on Parliament Hill at midnight to launch the nationwide observance of the 100th anniversary of Canada's nationhood, a ceremony was held at the new Ottawa Station. Madame Pauline Vanier, on behalf of her husband Governor General Georges Vanier, dedicated the train to reacquaint Canadians with their history during that momentous year of celebrations.

The train included a diesel locomotive and eight coaches loaned by Canadian National Railway. The exterior facades of the coaches were walled over and given a colourful "super graphics" treatment. The diesel had the Centennial symbol emblazoned on its nose under the headlight and the locomotive horn sounded the first four notes of O Canada. The train made its public debut in Victoria on January 9. It crossed the nation, arriving at the Atlantic coast in Nova Scotia by October and ended its itinerary in Montreal on the evening of December 5.

Over the intervening months, some 60 cities and towns, and hundreds of thousands of Canadians, visited the train. The Confederation Train was funded by the Government of Canada through the Centennial Commission. It operated under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State. The project was designed and coordinated by the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, an agency of the then Department of Trade and Commerce.