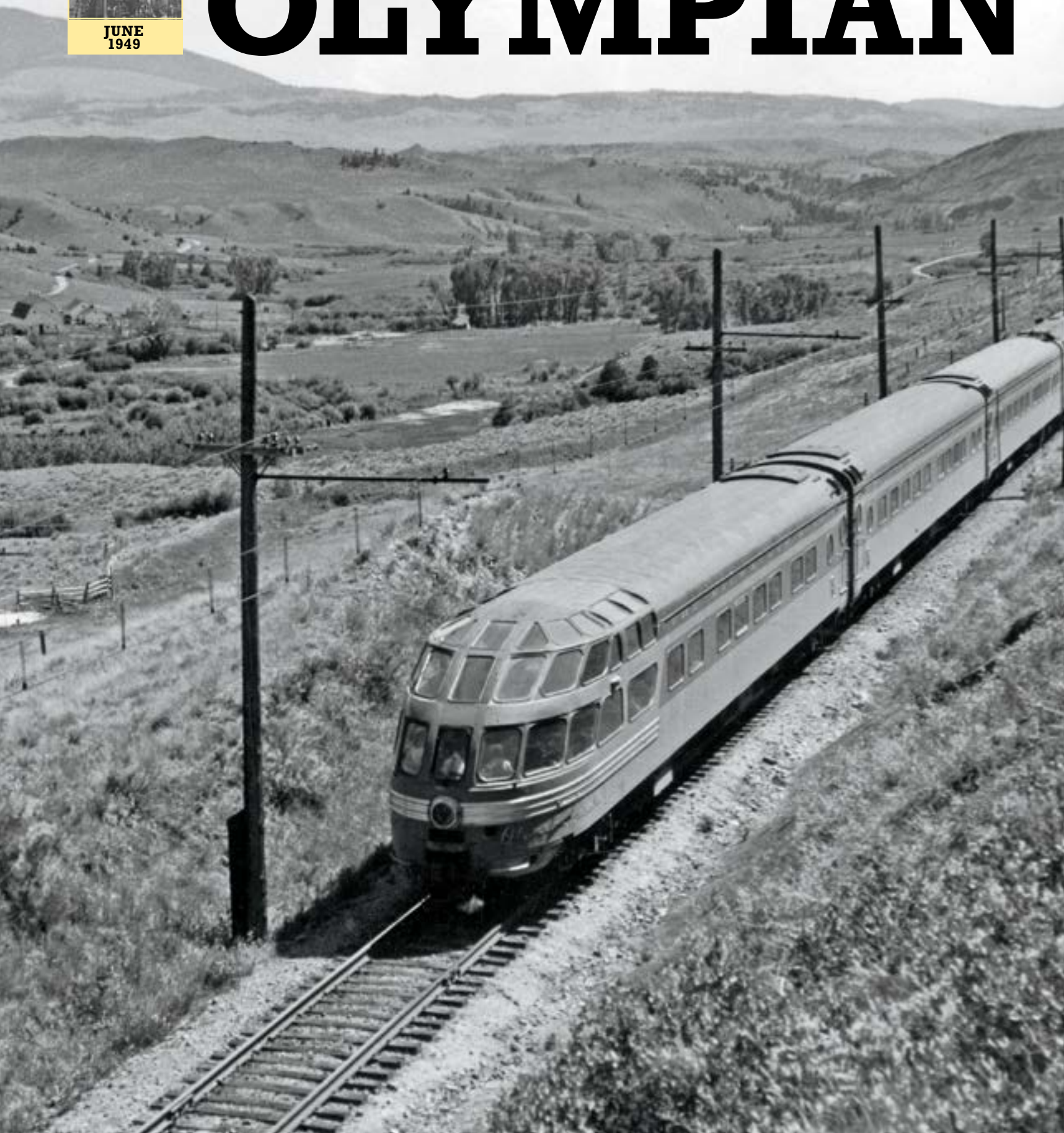
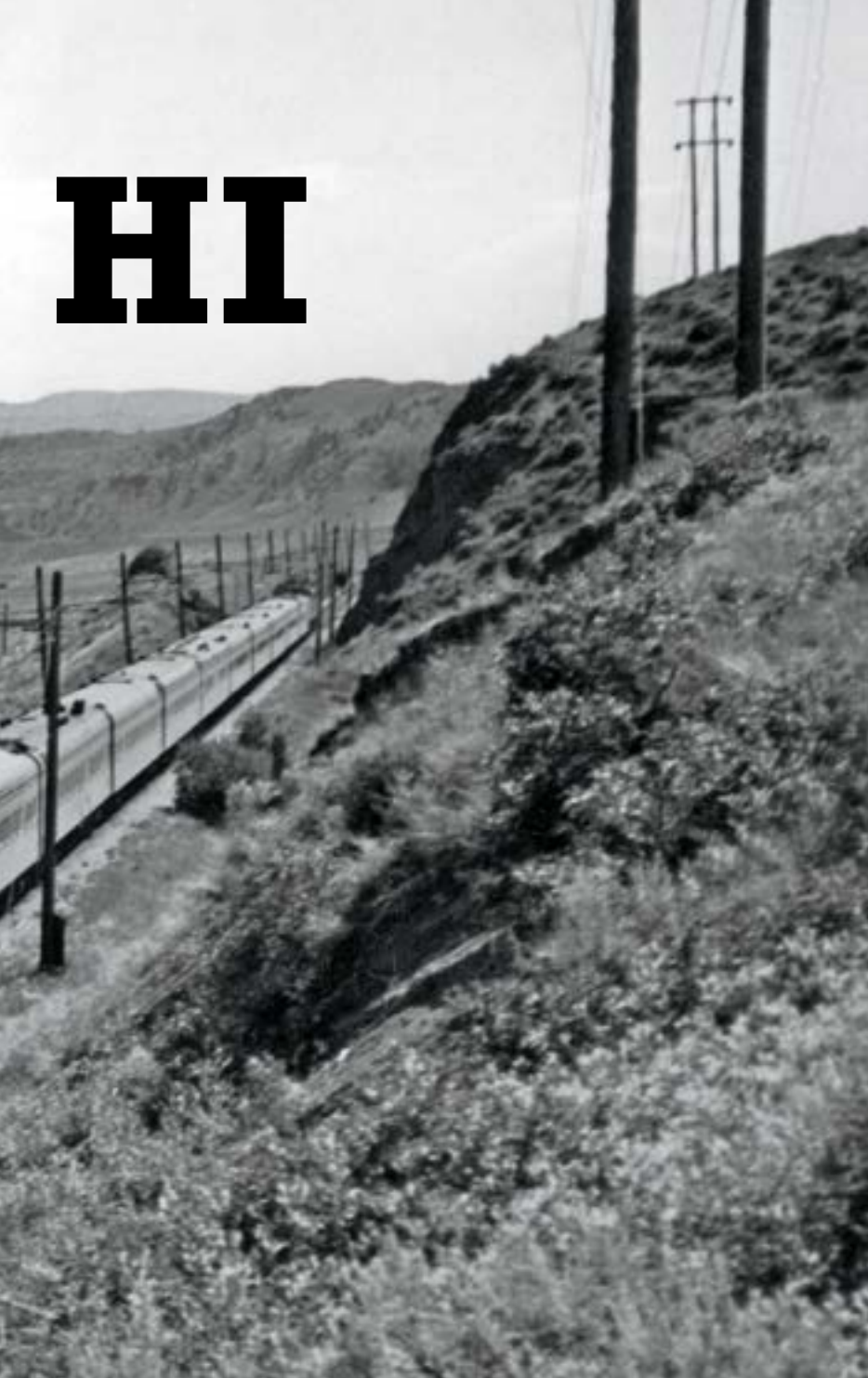




To Seattle on the **OLYMPIAN**



HI



You'll enjoy viewing the glorious Pacific Northwest scenery from the Skytop lounge as Milwaukee Road's crack transcontinental train runs 2,189 miles to Seattle

BY A. C. KALMBACH

It is a quiet hour of early afternoon beneath the gaunt steelwork of the Chicago Union Station concourse. The midday crowds have been drawn away on the *Midwest* and *Afternoon Hiawathas* or have melted into the upstairs offices, the corridor to the Elevated, or out via the taxi ramp. The loading for the train on Track 11, north side of the concourse, is more leisurely. These people are going a distance, and there isn't the informal crush that accompanies the departure of the short-run coach streamliners. A handful of passengers who missed the *Afternoon Hi* may be going to the Twin Cities, but most of us are bound for Puget Sound, two-thirds of a continent away. This is the *Olympian Hiawatha*, and we're going to ride it from the industries and dairylands of the Midwest across the historic Mississippi Valley, through the rolling wheat of Minnesota and the Dakotas, over four mountain ranges, and down the pine-covered slopes of the Cascades to Seattle.

The check-in table at the gate reminds us that all space is reserved — coach, tourist sleeper, or Pullman. In spite of the Milwaukee Road's enterprise in providing brand new "Touralux" sleepers at much lower rates, we've invested in first-class transportation. The reason is apparent, just across the platform beyond the train gates. It's the "Skytop lounge" observation car — not a Vista Dome,

One of the six 8-double-bedroom/16-lounge-seat Skytop observation cars brings up the rear of the *Olympian Hiawatha* near Francis, Mont., 100 miles east of Butte, in an early 1950s publicity photo. Milwaukee Road





Much of the *Olympian Hi*, including the famous Skytop cars, was the work of Milwaukee-based industrial designer Brooks Stevens (center, with associates Anthony Reed at left and James Floria). The streamliner's six trainsets cost \$1.5 million each. Harry Coleman & Co.



Aft of the bedrooms in the *Olympian Hi*'s sleeper-obs cars, which had *Creek*-series names, was a stunning, sun-filled lounge. Milwaukee had four similar Skytop parlor cars, with *Rapids* names, on the Twin Cities–Chicago *Morning* and *Afternoon Hiawathas*. MILW

not an open car, but a lounge with curved end, curved sides, and a ceiling of glass. Where the scenery is on a horizontal plane such a car might mean little, but this evening along the bluffs of the Mississippi River and tomorrow afternoon in Montana Canyon we'll appreciate the upward view.

As the Pullman conductor checks off our room on the diagram, we reflect that this is one of the country's newer streamliners, inaugurated June 29, 1947. In fact, parts delays kept the Milwaukee Road shops from finishing the coaches, tourist cars, diners, and tap-grill cars until the last minute, and mechanics rode some of the cars making finishing adjustments even as they were deadheaded to their starting points. The Pullman-built room cars for the rear end were finished only a year or so ago, and so the trains ran for nearly their first year with standard cars for room accommodations, including open-platform observation cars. This was probably the fastest open-platform run in the country.

Now the train is complete as planned. As we walk to our car we notice that, new as this train is, it has already undergone a change in its red-and-orange color scheme. Originally each car had the central window group blocked out in red, with the red tapering off at the ends to make each car stand out as a unit. Now, although you occasionally see one of these cars in the consist, most of the train is painted in the traditional streamline pattern, with the red band running the full length of the train.

It's a special treat to see everything along the right of way while running out of Chicago, so we don't take time now to look over the train. We'll have plenty of time for that later. With coat, hat, and luggage safely in our room, we head for the Skytop lounge and manage to get a good seat from which we can see the track behind. As the train starts to move, we can see the unusual Union Station platform arrangement — one on each side of every track so that baggage and mail can be unloaded from one side while passengers get out the other side on a platform without baggage trucks in the way.

Now we are across the double slip switches of the station throat, with the Chicago Daily News Building straddling the tracks, and past the Lake Street interlocking tower that controls the north end of the station tracks. Above and to the left is the throat of North Western's Chicago terminal, and to the right we get a glimpse of the Chicago River, with the Merchandise Mart, world's largest building, reflecting in the water. Then we are around a sharp curve, under the C&NW, and squarely away on our trip.

For a few minutes the North Western's Galena Division, the main line to Omaha, parallels the Milwaukee to the north (we're running due west now), and likely as not we'll see the streamliner *City of Denver* being

readied in the coach yard.

Just after we swing northward toward Milwaukee and cross the North Western at Western Avenue, we have a grandstand seat to see the Milwaukee's Chicago coach yard on the right. Many of the cars are in the midst of the regular scrubbing that's needed to preserve their bright appearance. Others are being switched into suburban trains for the afternoon rush.

100 MPH OUT OF CHICAGO

By now we've really begun to roll, and we don't even slow for such things as the Pacific Junction interlocking, where the Milwaukee's Omaha line branches off, or for Mayfair, where we cross the North Western's route to Janesville and Madison. By the time we've passed through the light industrial area and hit the city's residential Edgebrook neighborhood, the *Olympian Hiawatha* is batting off an even 100 mph behind its two 2,000 h.p. Fairbanks-Morse opposed-piston diesel units that will stay right up there pitching until we pull into Seattle day after tomorrow, 2,189 miles from Chicago. That's one of the longest locomotive runs in the country.

The line from Chicago to Milwaukee is fast track, and it's not hard to imagine the

unexpected thrill given the passengers on No. 29, a Milwaukee express, when the business car *Wisconsin* was coupled on the rear one summer day in 1934 and the engineer was given orders allowing him to run to Milwaukee as fast as he could. The 67½-minute run set a record for standard steam locomotives and opened the new era of speed that led to the streamliner schedules of today. With diesel power on the front end, we won't equal the top marks set by the Milwaukee's high-drivered 4-4-2s and 4-6-4s, but we don't need to, for the diesel's quicker acceleration keeps it at a consistent 100 for more of the run.

This is excellent track, but it looks much the same as tens of thousands of miles of other high-speed main line, and so now's a good time to see the train. Smiling Ernie Haddock, the train's conductor, has worked his way to the rear, and he offers to show us some of the high spots. Milwaukee Road trainmen always seem to take great pride in their road and its equipment. Perhaps that's because of the road's long tradition of building most of its own rolling stock. Or perhaps it's because the Milwaukee is such a family road, with many second- and third-generation men. At any rate, no other

place except on New York Central's *20th Century Limited* have I found such a spirit.

Except for the Skytop lounge, the Pullmans are like many others — but they do have one special feature that is mighty convenient on a transcontinental run: a radio in every room. The diner has oddly shaped tables, the four-somes narrower toward the aisles so it's easier to get into and out of the window seats. Extra space is created in the center of the dining room by a pair of triangular tables for two.

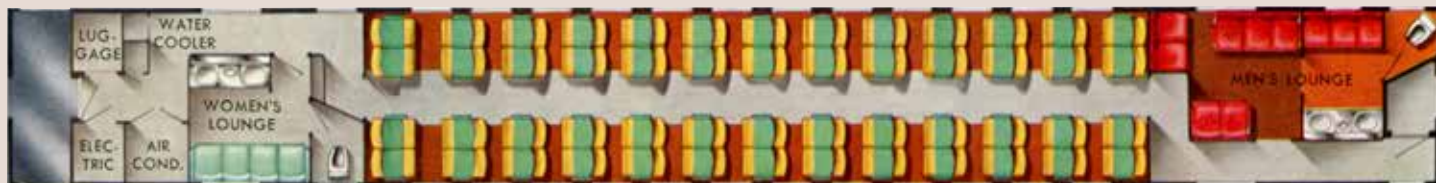
Haddock shows us the microphone from which announcements can be made over the train's public address system, then shepherds us into the Touralux sleepers. These tourist sleepers are nothing like the connotation given the name when some western roads took off this intermediate-class accommodation. Nor are they even like the clean, comfortable standard 14-section tourist sleepers of prewar days. They are slickly modern in light wood finish, and the section walls come clear to the aisle, giving a good degree of privacy. The berths are a new type, with the beds made in advance as in roomettes so they can be lowered into place in a minute, ready for occupancy.



COACHES



Olympian Hi coach passengers enjoyed reclining Sleepy Hollow seats and wood-paneled window areas that echoed the cars' initial exterior livery.



Built in the road's West Milwaukee Shops, the coaches had seats for 52 passengers. Milwaukee Road booklet, CLASSIC TRAINS collection



Initially, stylish Fairbanks-Morse “Erie-built” diesels powered the *Olympian Hi* through from Chicago to Seattle (where No. 6 was photographed). In 1949, GE and Westinghouse motors took over on the two electric districts, with steam in between. Dan Pope collection

Main lighting in the Touralux cars is fluorescent. Washrooms and lounges are clean, light, and modern. It’s said that the Milwaukee considered the trend of western roads to eliminate the tourist class, but decided there might come a time when travelers would again be economy-minded. So it built these streamlined Touralux sleepers to create a reputation as the economy route to the Pacific Northwest.

In one of the tourist cars we meet Al Marxan of Chicago, train passenger representative this trip. He’s arranging details of a connection for a passenger, and he’ll keep busy all the rest of the trip doing all he can to make the journey more pleasant for those aboard. Instead of assigning regular men to the new *Olympian Hiawathas*, Milwaukee took various passenger agents, both on-line and off-line, and had each make one round trip acting as train passenger representative. This way the agents got a sample of the ride they’re selling. One duty of the train representative is to read prepared announcements about points of scenic interest. They’ve taken all this in stride, except for a certain reticence about reading poetry — a stanza of Longfellow’s “Hiawatha” scheduled for reading as the *Olympian Hi* speeds along the west bank of the Mississippi.

Now the train is slowing for the outskirts of Milwaukee, and we slide into a vacant section and watch out a right-side window as we pass the innards of Milwaukee Harbor. A Chesapeake & Ohio carferry is backed up to

a loading apron not far east of our track, and across the river is an older Grand Trunk Western ferry. We run alongside a row of coke ovens, then swing to the west, across the Menominee River, and around a sharp curve into Milwaukee Road’s ideally located downtown station.

The stop here is brief, just long enough to change crews and check the train. Most short-run passengers use No. 23, 20 minutes later out of Chicago, so there is a minimum of loading and unloading. As the train pulls out from under the high, dark trainshed, we walk ahead through the combination coach-tourist sleeper for women and children only, and enter the tap-grill car. Here’s a good place to find a seat on the left side of the train and to stop for a bit of refreshment.

Look fast, now, for only 4 minutes out of the station we’re going past the famed

West Milwaukee Shops where this railroad builds freight, passenger, and diesel motor cars and where it has built many of its steam locomotives.

This same side of the car is a good place for the view of broad Pewaukee Lake some 20 miles west of Milwaukee.

This is a winding railroad now, through part of Wisconsin’s lake country. But it’s also fast, with curves beautifully spiraled and elevated, though still nothing like the speedway we rode from Chicago to Milwaukee. We make the 93 miles from Milwaukee to Portage in 80 minutes. Portage takes its name from the old land-bridge point between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, one of

the connection points between the Great Lakes and Mississippi waterways. As we slow for the station, the train crosses a drawbridge over the old Portage Canal, now used only by a few small pleasure craft.

Beyond Portage the line dips into the Wisconsin River valley, and we catch glimpses of the broad river on a high bridge. If one is quick enough in looking to the right, one will see the beautiful dells of the Wisconsin spread out below and far beyond. These sandstone formations, worn by the river through the ages, attract tens of thousands of tourists every year. Except in summer, when the foliage is too heavy, passengers can see the dells for miles beyond the river crossing as the rail line still follows the river valley.

MORE FAST RUNNING

The country flattens out into a high plateau over which we speed on some of the fastest track on the Milwaukee system. We hardly slack speed at New Lisbon, the junction where the *North Woods Hiawatha* leaves the main line. Now the horizon is broken with odd rock formations, like the battlements of medieval castles, where the glaciers never reached. Past Tomah comes the first big surprise of the trip — a whoosh of rushing air as, at Tunnel City, we enter a 1,330-foot bore at more than 1,000 feet elevation, in otherwise flat dairy state Wisconsin. Thus we cross the divide between the Wisconsin and Mississippi valleys and start down the long grade to the river crossing at La Crosse. We are riding along the edge of a broad valley bounded by hills and bluffs, and alongside us is a single-track railroad, the North Western line used by the *Minnesota 400*. Signaling our approach to La Crosse is the biggest cliff of all, Granddad Bluff, towering over the city.

After a rather long division-point stop, the train pulls out onto a single curving track, centralized traffic controlled, that takes us across the Mississippi. The first bridge, over the Black River, is a fooler, for the opposite bank proves to be only an island, a rather big one with a power plant. Then we cross water three more times, over French Slough and then two spans over Mississippi waters proper, the last one a longer structure with a drawspan. Finally we reach the west bank and a wye junction with the line south to Marquette and Davenport, Iowa. In some seasons the river seems unimpressive; at other times a flood stage takes it over its usual banks, covers some of the islands, and makes it quite the Father of Waters indeed.

By this time we’ve gone back to the rear-end Skytop lounge, for now we are on the scenic River Division. From here to St. Paul, with only a few interruptions, we’ll look out across wide panoramas of river and wooded bluffs. The waning twilight adds to the impressiveness of this scene. The view is all to the east across the open valley. Bluffs rise immediately from the track on the west.



Across the river is the Burlington Route. On the river, boys are fishing from small boats, *à la* Huck Finn; "towboats" push their barges; pleasure cruisers and other craft are evidences that the waterway is still useful, although no longer the sole mode of transportation that it once was.

Beyond Winona the river widens out into Lake Pepin, wide, open, and green. Then it narrows again, the train swings away for a bit, and we are through Red Wing and on to Hastings, where we cross the Mississippi for the second time. Daylight is gone now, but a bright moon helps us spot landmarks.

At St. Croix interlocking we come to an unusual paired track arrangement. The Burlington and the Milwaukee both once had single-track main lines from here into St. Paul, but years ago they got together on joint use of the trackage to create a double-track road for both. Because the grades work out best that way, we leave Hastings on the left-hand track, which is the Burlington's. Part way into St. Paul the lines used to cross, so, still on the left track, we find ourselves on the Milwaukee again.

After climbing a steep rock bluff, we've landed atop a flat plateau, across which we approach St. Paul. Almost before we realize



After unloading at Seattle Union Station, the *Olympian Hi* was towed south behind steam, backward and with diesels still attached, to a wye, where the train was turned to head for its ultimate destination, Tacoma. Eastbound, the process was reversed. *Stuart B. Hertz*

TOURALUX SLEEPERS



MILW bucked the trend toward private sleeping accommodations with the Touralux sleeper, which was more luxurious than traditional section Pullmans.



The Touralux cars had 14 extra-roomy sections; an 8-section/32-seat sleeper/coach version for women and kids was soon dropped.



Four types of electrics would haul the *Olympian Hiawatha* through the years. Bipolar E-2 (GE, 1919) is at Seattle in September 1950. GE box-cab duo E-23 is at Deer Lodge, Mont. E-2, H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Archive; E-23, Wade Stevenson, Milwaukee Road Historical Assn. coll.

it, the big neon numeral “1” on the tall tower of the First National Bank comes into view. It’s a landmark that guides us right into St. Paul Union Depot. We run past freight yards, watch the lights of St. Paul Airport across the ribbon of river shimmering in the moonlight, and catch a glimpse of the Great Northern wye approach as we move slowly under the loudspeakers that direct switchmen in the station throat. The station is full

of hustle and dim moving shapes as mail cars are loaded and switched for night trains. As we leave “SPUD,” we cut back from the river and climb a hill that taxes the diesels and once required helpers on heavy steam trains. This is the Short Line, so called because it replaced a longer route once used by the Milwaukee between the Twin Cities. There’s a brief flash of beauty as we cross the high bridge, our third time to span the Mis-

issippi. Then we’re crossing street after street, and soon we stop in Minneapolis. The station here is a stub-type terminal, and the wye where the line west diverges is several miles back toward the river, so some unusual operations are called for. We get out, catch a feel of the close summer air we’ve been missing in the air-conditioned cars, then get back on the train. Presently the highball is relayed down the platform. Back-

TIP TOP GRILL



Continuing a tradition begun with the 1935 *Hiawatha*’s Tip Top Tap lounge, the new Seattle train featured a Tip Top Grill for drinks and light meals.



The tap-grill cars had seats for 18 in the dining area, 26 in the lounge. Like most *Olympian Hi* cars, the Milwaukee built them itself.



Black 2-C-1+1-C-2 box-cab E-12 (Baldwin-Westinghouse, 1919) is at Butte, Mont., in September 1950. "Little Joe" 2-D+D-2 E-21 (GE, 1946) is at Fish Creek, Mont., near Gallatin Gateway, in May 1953. E-12, H. M. Stange; E-21, George Krambles; both from Krambles-Peterson Archive

wards we go, past the grade crossings and the brightly lighted neighborhood streets, to a stop next to the shops. With the train properly headed west on the main line and the highball passed, we go to bed, confident that the railroad will carry on till morning.

THE WIDE-OPEN WEST

The second day out on a transcontinental train is always a day of getting acquainted.

People who would never think of speaking to strangers under any other conditions finally break down and become friendly. The young man across from us at breakfast turns out to be a student at Butte High School, on his way back from a student congress in Washington, D.C. It's the first time he's ever been east of Montana, and he is full of his impressions of the "East," as he calls everything beyond the Missouri River. It's fun listening, but at an

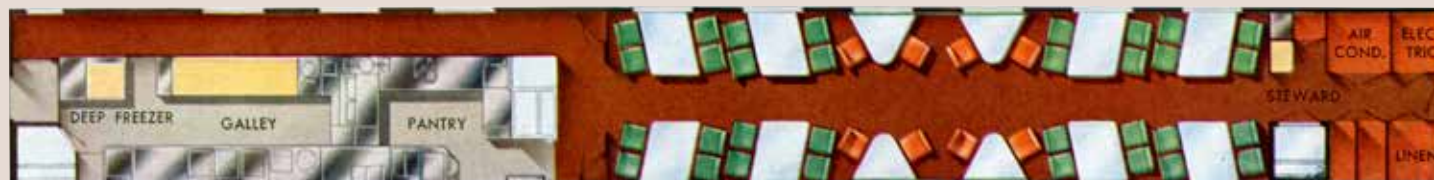
appropriate break we head again for the rear end to look at the track.

We're in Montana now. While we slept we crossed Minnesota, most of South Dakota, and a corner of North Dakota. That's why we had an early breakfast, to leave time to see something of the line along the Yellowstone River east of Miles City — and we're due there at 9:45 a.m. So we sit in the Skytop lounge and watch the muddy, swirling river.

DINING CAR



Brooks Stevens' decorative scheme for the interior of the diners divided the car into thirds to reduce the "tunnel effect" of the elongated space.



The diner's unusual tables, shaped to make it easier to access or exit the seats beside the windows, had spaces for 40 people.



The *Olympian Hi* has come 2,178 miles from Seattle as it tears through Edgebrook, Ill., in August 1950. H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Arch.

A searchlight signal flashes by and changes to green, which means something else is on the railroad, since this is CTC territory. Sure enough, it's a work train in siding for us. A bit beyond, a power shovel is widening a cut.

The man across from us has the clear, far-seeing eyes and sunburned neck of the civil engineer, and he's been keeping a practiced eye on the right of way. So we ask, "Burrowing, or improving the cut?"

"Widening the cut to improve drainage," he replies.

"You with the division engineer's office?" "I'm it," he says with a grin.

"Have trouble with the river?" Right now the Yellowstone looks relatively tame, but the eroded banks and gullies show what it can do. The rip-rap at points where the railroad comes close to the river indicates the concern about Mr. Yellowstone in his wilder moments.

"I should say we do have trouble," says the engineer. "It's a hard river to live with. Never know what it's going to do. I've seen a lot of rivers, and I don't think there's any comparable except maybe the Yellow River in China."

We are impressed by the comparison of this muddy water with another river thousands of miles around the earth, and we watch it with new respect. We also watch a line of rails that was on our side of the river but is now across the valley. This, we realize, must be the Northern Pacific, and as if to prove it we overtake and pass a freight with

an NP caboose and steam locomotive. The engine's exhaust hangs low in the still morning air, and for miles we can look back and locate that freight.

The brakes take hold as we pass ends of sidings and signs of habitation. This is Miles City, a major division point and service station for the transcontinental fleet. Look at the crew of men and the piles of apparatus all along the platform! Windows are washed, water added, and trucks and brake rigging are checked. Then we are off across more of eastern Montana's bleak miles.

This, we reflect, is the last of the northern transcontinentals — and of all the major transcontinentals only the Western Pacific is later, and that by only half a year. The Milwaukee had been for 50 years a powerful granger road before it decided to extend west from Mobridge, S.Dak., on the Missouri, to the West Coast. It sent surveying crews through all the territory between the established routes. One party ended up at Eureka, Calif. Another struck across the desert to the south of Great Salt Lake. Others followed the Snake and the Clearwater, coming out on the Columbia. Finally the engineers evolved the alignment we are following today.

The Milwaukee was new in still another way. It was the first American railroad to try long-distance electrification. In the era when electricity was regarded as a means of overcoming special obstacles such as tunnels,

terminals, or heavy suburban traffic, Milwaukee strung catenary over 656 miles of main line, farther than from New York to Cleveland.

Now we are approaching Harlowton, the east end of the longer electrified segment. And the train on which we approach, running behind its diesels, may well be spelling the end of the electrification.

It's not long after we've passed under the beginning of the catenary at Harlowton, and made the division-point stop without changing engines, that the labors of the diesels and the slow speed tell us that we are on the 2 percent grade up to Loweth, summit of the Belt Mountains. A little computation from the timetable tells us that somewhere near here we should pass the eastbound *Olympian Hiawatha*, and sure enough we do. The Belt Mountains are particularly unimpressive, but the eastbound streamliner is striking enough to make up for it as it swings past us.

ROCKS AND MORE ROCKS

Now we start down toward the Missouri River valley, and ahead of us lies one of the key scenic wonders of the entire trip: Montana Canyon. Rolling hillsides gradually give way to rocks and more rocks, and finally we are in the depths of a genuine rock gorge. Its sides are not the gentle slopes of a well-worn rock valley, but rather are the steep cliffs of a new formation, more like Royal Gorge than anything else. The rear-end brakeman looks upward at the rock walls just as if he'd never





Miles City, Mont., was an important division point, MILW shop town, and train servicing stop, evidenced by the fuel and water hoses connected to the Erie-built diesels on eastbound train 16. Note the OLYMPIAN HIAWATHA lettering on the lead unit. Don E. Wolter

ROOMETTE-BEDROOM SLEEPERS



Pullman-Standard's *Lake*-series sleepers, the first non-MILW-built cars for any *Hiawatha*, contained 10 roomettes (left) and 6 double bedrooms (above).



P-S's backlog of orders delayed the *Olympian Hi's* 10&6s until November 1948, a full 16 months after the train was inaugurated.



Rugged Montana Canyon was a natural spot to pose the *Olympian Hi* for a publicity photo. Here the A-B-A set of Erie-built has been airbrushed into an A-B-B set. MILW

seen them before, then explains that he's looking for some mountain goats that occasionally graze into view.

Seven tunnels carry us through the various configurations of the rock, and an eighth pops us through a ridge and out into the Missouri River valley at Lombard. Just before crossing the river we cross the Northern Pacific main line, which parallels us on the other side of the stream. This is a believe-it-or-not track situation — two railroads running together but in opposite directions. Should we come across an NP train going our way it would be eastbound, while we're obviously going west.

Three Forks, next stop, is the place where the Jefferson, the Gallatin, and the Madison rivers join to form the Missouri. It is also Milwaukee Road's station for Yellowstone National Park. In season the train both drops and picks up many passengers here. Bus connections are used instead of a branchline train. We step off with the brakeman, and he has time to tell us that the Milwaukee Road branch to the Gallatin Gateway

leads off southeast in the general direction of the NP's main line east. From here, he tells us, NP has two main lines west. One is the track we followed along the Missouri River. It goes west via Helena. The other goes via Butte, and we shall see much of it later today.

Now the Milwaukee follows the Jefferson through fairly level grazing country to Piedmont, where the climb to the Continental Divide begins. Here our two diesel units really begin to work as they hit the 2 percent. We notice that all grades are steeper westbound than eastbound, a normal procedure for western transcontinentals where the predominant normal tonnage is eastbound.

At the next station we pass an eastbound freight in the siding, and we notice it still has its electric helper in the middle as well as the electric road engine on the front. Since the electrics can hold back by regeneration approximately the same tonnage they can pull upgrade, helpers are left in the trains across the summits instead of being cut off at the top and sent down light.

So far the line has struck boldly straight

into the foothills, but now it twists to the right in the beginning of a huge hairpin. Far to our right down in the foothills we see the straight line of railroad over which we've just come, and, moving at snail's pace, the freight with its motors at front and middle. Now we round the end of the hairpin. The left window will offer the best view from here to the Continental Divide tunnel at Pipestone Pass.

This is a spectacular piece of mountain climbing, well worth the entire trip. The gods threw stones as big as houses here and there, and then the railroad builders just as recklessly cut through and between and over them. First we are behind a wall of rock, then we break out into the open looking hundreds of feet almost straight down. Once past the Divide signboard and through the tunnel, we shift to the right-side windows and soon can look across the valley floor at Butte and its tall smelter smokestack.

The Butte station is a stub-end affair. We pull past the wye and back in. The tracks of the station all look alike, even as to overhead trolley, but woe to the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific motor that strays from its own appointed trackage onto those assigned to the Milwaukee! The big road uses 3,000 volts D.C.; the shorter line, 2,400. We shall run beside the BA&P through Silver Bow Canyon west of Butte. Beyond the canyon the BA&P veers westward toward the giant 584½-foot stack of the Anaconda smelter, but the NP, which also shares the canyon, stays with us.

Now we have easy downgrade running on freshly ballasted track, with mountains always in view but not right upon us. The next station is Deer Lodge, a long stop for major servicing. A long stop with this streamliner means 15 minutes, time enough for us to walk up and down the length of the train and look at the mechanical features such as the outrigger bolsters that minimize side-sway. We get on the train at the front end and walk back through the coaches, which are tastefully decorated even to prints on the washroom and lounge walls.

The river we are following now is the Clark Fork of the Columbia. This is Lewis and Clark country, with many reminders of that intrepid pair of explorers. Near Silver Bow we pass the eastbound *Columbian*, the old non-streamlined *Olympian* with the name revived from the Milwaukee's secondary West Coast train of pre-Depression days.

Look to the left of the right of way. About 15 minutes west of Deer Lodge is a huge replica gold spike and signboard marking the place where Milwaukee Road's Pacific extension was completed on May 19, 1909.

From the rear end we see a beautiful panorama of distant mountains, while the foreground is fresh and green. The fertile floor of the valley is broken, however, by a rock formation of striking beauty: Hell Gate Canyon. Then we are in Missoula, home of the University of Montana.



Westward from here we follow the Bitter Root Valley, fruit-growing country and also the path by which we climb toward the last mountain summit for tonight, the crest of the Bitter Roots at St. Paul Pass. About 20 miles out of Missoula we seek a left-side window for a gorgeous moonlit valley view. The scenery never stops, but deep nightfall closes in and sends us to bed.

SECOND NIGHT ON BOARD

During the night, we miss Spokane and the Columbia River. We miss the terrific 2.2 percent grade, electrified, by which the line climbs into the Saddle Mountains, an eastward branch of the Cascades. But we leave word with the porter to wake us early, for it may be a clear sunlit morning.

It is. The view as we tentatively raise the shade makes us fling it quickly all the way up. Those sharp fairy-tale peaks, the evergreen forests thick with mist, the gentle downhill motion of the train, draw us to the rear end just as soon as we can clothe ourselves. No one is in the lounge except the rear-end brakeman and a fellow passenger who turns out to be from Springfield, Ill., and a friend of a friend of ours.

“Should have been here a few minutes



Crowds gather at Tacoma, Wash., on June 29, 1947, to witness the departure of the *Olympian Hiawatha* on its first run to Seattle, Minneapolis, and Chicago. John F. Endler Jr.

ago,” says the trainman. “It was even better.” We are threading along a slope, over steel trestles directly above the treetops.

The slopes taper off, the forests thin, lumbering camps appear — and now a highway. We are approaching the end of a real Journey, not just a trip on the train. Soon we are across the Tacoma junction at Black River

and go the last 9 miles into Seattle. Our train will soon pass here again, being pulled backward by a steam engine to its ultimate destination of Tacoma, but we’ll be getting off at Seattle. We roll up to a platform at Seattle Union Station 3 minutes ahead of the advertised 10:45 a.m.

Northwest Passage? This is it! ■

SKYTOP SLEEPER-LOUNGE



Most striking of the *Olympian Hi*'s cars were the *Creek-series Skytop* observation cars, which also housed 8 double bedrooms (left, 2 rooms *en suite*).



Like the 10&6s, the Skytops were built by Pullman-Standard; they arrived in January 1949, when the train was 18 months old.