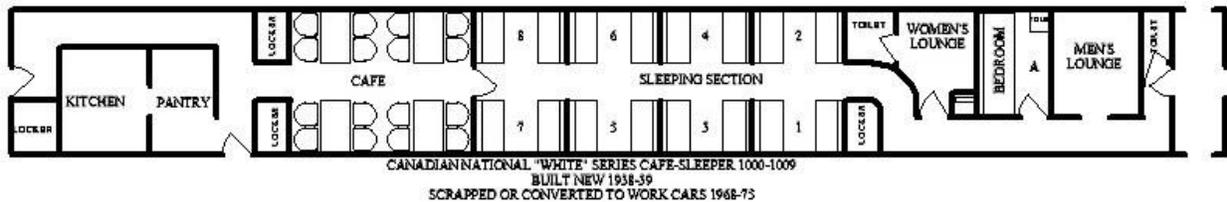


**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**  
**WHITE SERIES CAFÉ SLEEPING CARS**

**Cal Sexsmith April 27, 2022**

Canadian National Railways purchased a large number of heavy weight steel sleeping cars from the time of its creation in 1919 until 1931 when reduced ridership due to the depression and increased private automobile ownership eliminated the need for new sleeping cars. In fact with few exceptions the CNR did not purchase large quantities of sleeping cars until the massive 1954 orders for streamlined cars of all types. The exceptions were the **20 "I" series sleeping cars** in 1950, the 56 sleeping cars formerly operated by the Pullman Company on CNR lines in eastern Canada and in the US, the 13 sleeping cars purchased secondhand from the Pullman Company during World War II and the 10 White Series Café Sleeping cars purchased new in 1938 and 1939.



The White series cars were purchased for use on secondary trains where the need for food services and sleeping accommodations was not high enough to warrant a full car for either purpose. These cars had a small kitchen, pantry and 16 dining table seats in the café. The sleeping car portion had eight open sections and one double bedroom accommodating a total of 18 passengers.

The kitchen measured only about six by seven feet and the adjacent pantry about four by seven feet. The kitchen was the domain of the cook, while he was working a drop down counter was in place between the kitchen and the pantry where the cook would set the cooked food for the waiter(s) to pick up for delivery to the passengers. The pantry also had food storage and work space for the steward who had overall charge of the café. The steward handled the money, seated the passengers, served alcohol (if available) and supervised the staff. In a small car such as this he would also wait on tables if necessary.

In the sleeping car portion each open section consisted of two facing seats during the day that were converted to the lower berth at night. The upper berth folded down from the wall above the window. Bedding for both berths was stored in the upper berth during the day as were the heavy curtains that provided privacy for the berths. There was space under the seats for carry one baggage. Convention held that the lower berth passenger had the forward facing seat during the day and that the upper berth

passenger roade facing backwards. The upper and lower berths in a section could and were sold to passengers not travelling together. The CNR would also sell single occupancy sections where a passenger would book the entire section and not have to share the space with another passenger at a fare more than that to book just the lower but less than that to book a passenger into each berth. As far fewer upper berths were booked single occupancy sections usually rated more revenue.

Double bedrooms were a relatively new accomodation in the late 1930s. CNR's first double bedrooms were four each in two "Port" series cars built in 1931. The double bedroom in a "White" series car was known as a Type "A" bedroom (Note: The "A" on the diagram does not refer to the bedroom type but rather it is the room number). Type "A" bedrooms had a transverse sofa which converted to a lower berth at night and a folding upper berth. Although not shown on the diagram there was generally a small wardrobe between the sofa and the corridor wall. The toilet is actually a combolet. A combolet looked like a small upholstered seat. The seat itself was hinged and could be lifted up and locked in place revealing the hopper (toilet). A panel above the seat back contained a folding wash basin and above that was a mirror. Although the combolet was a miracle of packaging its main problem was that it was exposed. If two people were travelling together one would need to leave the room if the other wished to use the toilet in privacy!

The women's lounge contained wash basins, vanity tables and movable individual chairs. The toilet stall accessed off the lounge contained only a toilet, no wash basins. The lounge was also where women could smoke. The men's lounge had was basins and a long sofa and was sometimes called the men's smoking lounge and was where men could smoke. There would be co-ed smoking areas in the adjacent coaches. There was no door on the men's lounge, only a heavt curtain. You will also note that the men's toilet stall was accessed directly from the corridor, not from the men's lounge. Again there is no wash basin in the men's toilet stall.

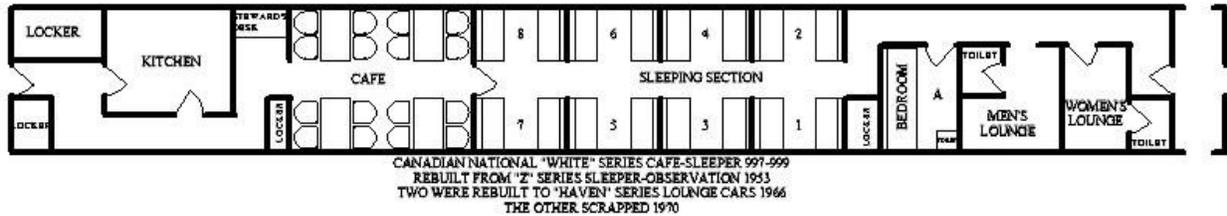
The various lockers were used to store a variety of items. The large locker adjacent to the kitchen was refrigerator. Lockers near the café would be used for plates, cutlery and table cloths while lockers in the sleeper end would be used for extra bedding. On longer runs extra table cloths and bedding would be kept in the baggage car.

In the 1950 Official Guide the White series cars are shown as being assigned to Trains 5&6 (the Capital Cities Express) and Trains 9&10. Trains 5&6 went from Winnipeg to Edmonton via Btandon, Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Lloydminster and Vegreville taking 36 hours and 10 minutes one way. Trains 1&2, 3&4 and 11&12 also linked Winnipeg to Edmonton but took a shorter route via Rivers, Melville, Watrous, Saskatoon, Biggar and Wainwright. These trains took 21 hours and 50 minutes, 21 hours and 30 minutes, and 27 hours and 15 minutes respectively. This time difference

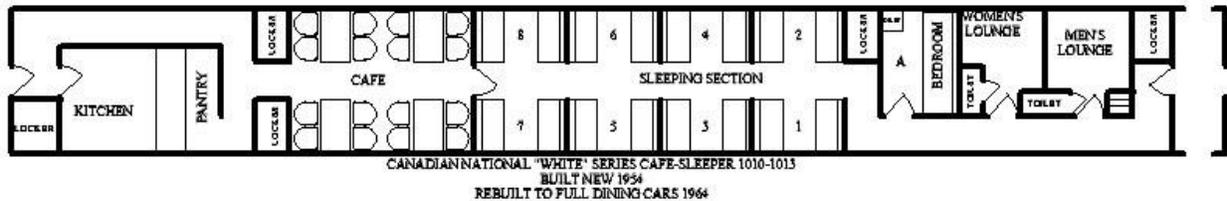
means that there was little reason for through traffic to use Trains 5&6 making them strictly long distance local trains. Similarly Trains 9&10 took 36 hours and 20 minutes. Canadian Pacific trains between Winnipeg and Edmonton took less than 24 hours.

A total of four cars were needed for each pair of trains to provide daily service. This would account for eight of the ten cars with the other two likely held as spares.

In 1953 CN rebuilt three "Z" series Sleeping Observation cars as "White" series cars. This second



group of "White" series cars did differ in some details from the first group. Most notably the corridors past the kitchen and the lounges were on the opposite side of the car. The kitchen was larger but there was no pantry. The steward's desk was adjacent to the main aisle while other pantry functions were handled in the kitchen. In 1954 CN purchased four more new "White" series cars. These cars again



differed in details, but was closer to the first group. The biggest change was with the men's lounge which now had a door.

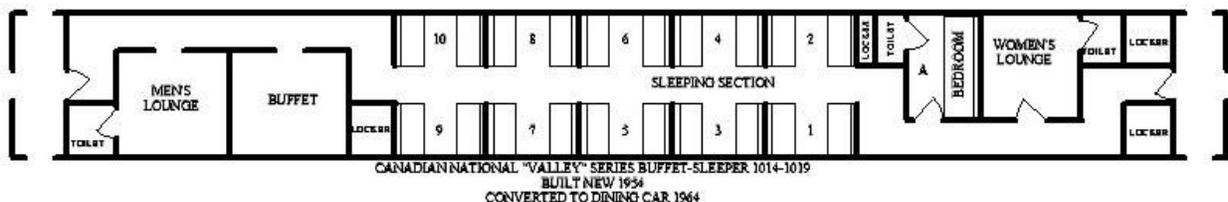
What were the seven new cars used for? Unfortunately, the next Official Guide that I have is 1957, although I do have equipment lists for the original Super Continental in 1955. From this information it appears that "White" series cars were added to Trains 61&62 between Regina and Flin Flon. This was a 20 hour 25 minute trip and would need two cars. Also, the Super Continental Trains 1&2 used a "White" series car as a Coffee Shop and crew sleeper between Winnipeg and Vancouver needing another four cars. By 1957 the "White" series cars were removed from Trains 5&6 and 9&10. They were still used on Trains 1&2 and 61&62 and added to the Continental Trains 3&4 between Toronto and Vancouver. On Trains 1&2 and 3&4 they were advertised as Coffee Shop and Eight Section Tourist Sleeper. On Trains 61&62 they were advertised as a Buffet Sleeper with eight sections and one double bedroom.

By the time of the 1960 Official Guide Coffee Shop cars are advertised on all or part of the run for The Super Continental, The Continental (both Montreal/Toronto to Vancouver) and the Ocean (Montreal to Halifax). This may have been the “White” series cars with the sleeper section possibly being used as a crew sleeper. In the mid-1960s both the second and third group of “White” series cars had been rebuilt to other purposes leaving only the original ten still in service. The 1965 Official Guide shows a Coffee Shop on the Scotian between Montreal and Halifax and a Buffet Sleeper operating between Jasper and Prince George. The Official Guide by this time was not giving as detailed description of the cars, but these may have been “White” series cars. The 1970 Official Guide does not show any details for car assignments so it is unknown what the final assignments were for the remaining “White” series car. Car number 1009 the White Star was the last to leave the roster when it was converted to a work car in August 1975.

Similar to the café sleeping cars were CNR’s buffet sleeping cars. Buffet sleeping cars had a small kitchen, called a buffet, and sleeping accommodations. Unlike the “White” series cars they did not have any café seating. Buffet sleeping cars were usually used on overnight trains that departed in the early evening and arrived mid to late morning. The buffet was used to prepare drinks and snacks in the evening and breakfast in the morning. The passengers were normally served at their seats. Alternatively, tables could be set up at the sleeping sections adjacent to the buffet if these spaces remained unsold.

CNR had several groups of buffet sleeping cars. Three groups, totaling 13 cars, were acquired from its predecessors, the last of these cars were scrapped or converted to other purposes by 1943. Another 19 sleeping cars were converted to buffet sleeping cars by CN between 1931 and 1949. These converted cars were either scrapped or converted again between 1944 and 1963. All of these cars had 10 sections and 1 drawing room in addition to the buffet. A drawing room is larger than a double bedroom and has sleeping accommodation for three.

In 1954 along with four “White” series cars CNR purchased six “Valley” series 10 section 1 double bedroom buffet sleeping cars. The double bedroom in these cars was a Type C, which is similar to the



Type A in the "White" series cars except that the toilet is enclosed in an annex for greater privacy. The wash basin was still located in the bedroom proper. All of the "Valley" series cars were converted to dining cars in 1964.

Buffet Sleeping cars were used on Trains 15/61&62/16 between Prince Albert and Flin Flon and Trains 79&80 between Nipigon and Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay) in Ontario. A buffet sleeping car was used on Trains 61&62 between Regina and Flin Flon before it was assigned a "White" series car in the mid-1950s. At about the same time sleeping car service on Trains 5&6 was cut back from Winnipeg to Edmonton to Winnipeg to Regina and on Trains 9&10 from Winnipeg to Calgary to Saskatoon to Calgary. The "White" series cars were then replaced by buffet sleeping cars.

See next page for listing of the cars:

### Canadian National “White” and “Valley” series cars

Number	Name	Notes
997	Whitepool	Converted from car 1193 Zeneta in 1953 scrapped 1970
998	White Glen	Converted from car 1194 Zephyr in 1953 converted to buffet lounge 2350 Happy Haven in 1966
999	Whitebeech	Converted from car 1195 Zealandia in 1954 converted to buffet lounge 2351 Happy Harmony in 1966
1000	Whitebear	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 retired 1973
1001	White Brook	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 converted to work car 59348 1974
1002	Whitechurch	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 sold for scrap 1975
1003	Whitecourt	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 converted to work car 59340 1973
1004	White Hall	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 converted to work car 59349 1974
1005	Whitelaw	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 destroyed by fire 1968
1006	White Otter	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 sold for scrap 1975
1007	White Plains	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 converted to work car 59346 1974
1008	White Point	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 converted to work car 59347 1974
1009	White Star	Built by Canadian Car and Foundry 1938/39 converted to work car 59210 1975
1010	White Rock	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1303 1964
1011	White Rapids	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1359 1964
1012	White Oak	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1358 1964
1013	White Sands	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1357 1964
1014	Valleyfield	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1352 1964
1015	Valley Mills	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1356 1964
1016	Valley Park	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1354 1964
1017	Valley River	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1353 1964
1018	Valley Road	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1355 1964
1019	Valleyview	Built by Pullman Standard 1954 converted to dining car 1351 1964