



NFB FILM

STUDY GUIDE

RAILROADERS

Black & White — 22 minutes
Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, 1959.

Suggested Uses: Social Studies classes in junior and senior high schools.

SYNOPSIS

RAILROADERS, filmed during the heaviest snowfalls of a mountain winter, shows an almost unknown aspect of the Canadian scene — how railroaders of the Rockies battle the elements to keep open a vital link between the Pacific and Atlantic shores of Canada. It also shows how the people of the isolated community of Glacier are very much a part of Canadian society — for out of their isolation and loneliness has grown a courage and determination that makes itself felt in your life every day of the week.

CONCEPTS

The following are the main learning concepts presented in the film. These points should be checked before showing the film because by knowing them an accurate judgment may be made of the extent to which the film will be of use in the class. Some of these concepts are more difficult than others and their degree of application will be governed by the grade level at which the film is used:

1. The railway shown was the first to link Canada from sea to sea.
2. Railways have been vital to the development of Canada.
3. Revelstoke, B.C. is a typical railroad town in which more than half the population work for the railway.
4. Correct time is vital to safe railway operation.
5. Through-trains are taken through the division by crews living in Revelstoke.
6. The railway community is actually the subdivision extending 125 miles each way from Revelstoke.
7. Train orders must be given, recorded and carried out with great care.
8. This section of railway lies in one of Canada's snowiest regions. Extra care and maintenance are necessary on this section of the line.
9. The railway station is a social focal point.
10. Section crews are always on the alert to take care of weather emergency.
11. Railway section maintenance is not always apparent to the passenger but without it trains could not operate.



CLASS PREPARATION

a) Introduction:

This film can be used both as part of a study of Canadian transportation's effect on local environment and of the work people do. It should fall naturally into place as an integral part of these larger topics. A picture of a train passing through the Rockies would serve as an immediate focus for class attention. Students should be able to locate the Rocky Mountains (as distinct from other ranges in the Canadian Cordillera), Kicking Horse Pass, Revelstoke, Field, Kamloops, Glacier, and Illecillewaet.

b) Words Which May Cause Difficulty:

railway subdivision
despatcher

meticulous
destined

nomad
tradition

c) Directive Questions Answered in the Film:

1. How have railways played a vital role in the development of Canada?
2. Why does the town of Revelstoke exist?
3. Why is the local jeweller such an important person in Revelstoke?
4. Where is the remainder of the railway community if it does not all live in Revelstoke?
5. Why are railway orders so vital along this stretch of track?
6. What is the major weather problem in this railway subdivision? How is it handled?
7. What are Laurie Sheds and what is their purpose?
8. What important extra service is provided the railway community by the station at Glacier?
9. Do you think that the section worker and the passenger have different opinions on the importance of section maintenance? How may their opinions be different and how alike?

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Take up and discuss the directive questions. Relate them as much as possible to the various concepts presented in the film.
2. Discuss the effect of working for the railway in a mountainous region on the life of the railroaders and their families. Compare and contrast this life with your own.
3. Prepare a map of the railway subdivision which centers on Revelstoke. Indicate its relationship to the rest of the transcontinental line and mark on the names of the towns and villages mentioned in the film.
4. Prepare oral and written compositions in the first person describing what you think it would be like to be a worker or a dependent in this particular railway community.

RELATED VISUAL AIDS

Films:

MOUNTAINS OF THE WEST (NFB — 20 minutes)

THE ROMANCE OF TRANSPORTATION IN CANADA
(NFB — 11 minutes)

STATION MASTER (NFB — 15 minutes)

Filmstrips:

TRANSPORTATION BY RAIL — PARTS I AND II (NFB — B&W)

RAILWAY CITY (NFB — Color)

