

Travel Outlook

Higher speeds on Eurail



Travel
VINCENT EGAN
Thomson News Service

Many Canadians won't consider any mode of travel but their own car when on vacation in Canada - but, nevertheless, gladly tour by train when they visit Europe.

Compared to Canadian streets and highways, Europe's roads are so congested that the railways are a pleasant, less stressful alternative. (Then again, European roads seem almost empty when contrasted with those in the populous countries of Asia, such as Japan and Thailand).

Visitors who plan to travel extensively by rail on the Continent should consider buying one of the varieties of Eurailpass that are sold only in North America, and are valid for unlimited travel on the rail systems of 16 European countries.

(Information on Eurailpass and Europe's trains is available from travel agents and from Eurailpass Distribution Centre, C.P. 300, Succursale R, Montreal, H2S 3K9).

In most of those 16 countries, projects are under way, or planned, to upgrade service during the next few years. Here's a partial rundown:

EUROCIITY NETWORK

The recently inaugurated EuroCity system linking 200 major cities on the Continent now consists of 128 first-class international trains, and will grow substantially by 1990, according to Eurailpass spokesman Andrew J. Lazarus.

Several other multinational high-speed networks are planned, including one that will link France, Belgium, the Netherlands and West

Germany with 290 km per hour train service by the mid-1990s. It's planned to have the cross-Channel rail tunnel linking the British and French railway systems in service by 1993.

French National Railways will introduce a super first class on a number of its high-speed and conventional trains by the end of this year. A total of 100 deluxe passenger cars and 10 high-speed trains will be upgraded.

The first high-speed Atlantique trains will operate between Paris and Brittany next year, at a top speed of 300 km per hour. A similar train will go into service from Paris to Bordeaux and on to Spain in 1990, with wider cars and many new amenities.

RAIL 2000

In Switzerland, a new rail link has been opened between Geneva's Cointrin airport and the city's Cornavin rail station, with capacity for 102 trains per day. By the end of the century, when the Swiss "Rail 2000" project is completed, trains running at about 190 km an hour will connect all major cities of the federation, using newly built track and tunnels.

West Germany plans to be operating Intercity Express trains by 1991 between Hamburg and Basel, Hamburg and Munich, and Frankfurt and Munich, with top speeds of 250 km an hour. Construction of high-speed rail lines between Mannheim and Stuttgart, and Hanover and Wurzburg, is near completion, and work is under way on another such line connecting Rastatt (south of Karlsruhe) and Offenburg.

DISTANCE CUT

In Italy, new construction on the Direttissima will reduce the distance between Rome and Florence by

nearly 50 km, and by 1992 this line will be extended 260 km north to Bologna and Milan. In the meantime, passengers travelling between Rome and Milan have the choice of four new all-first-class trains that make the journey in under five hours.

A long-term project for a 260 km railway line from Rome south to Naples has been approved and given funding in the order of about \$4.8 billion. It will permit speeds of up to 290 km an hour.

Spain is building a new high-speed route from Madrid to Seville, to be ready by 1992, with speeds of up to 240 km per hour a possibility. A second new line, giving a more direct link between Madrid and Medina del Campo, will permit speeds as high as 190 km an hour when completed.

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Here are notes on news of current interest to travellers:

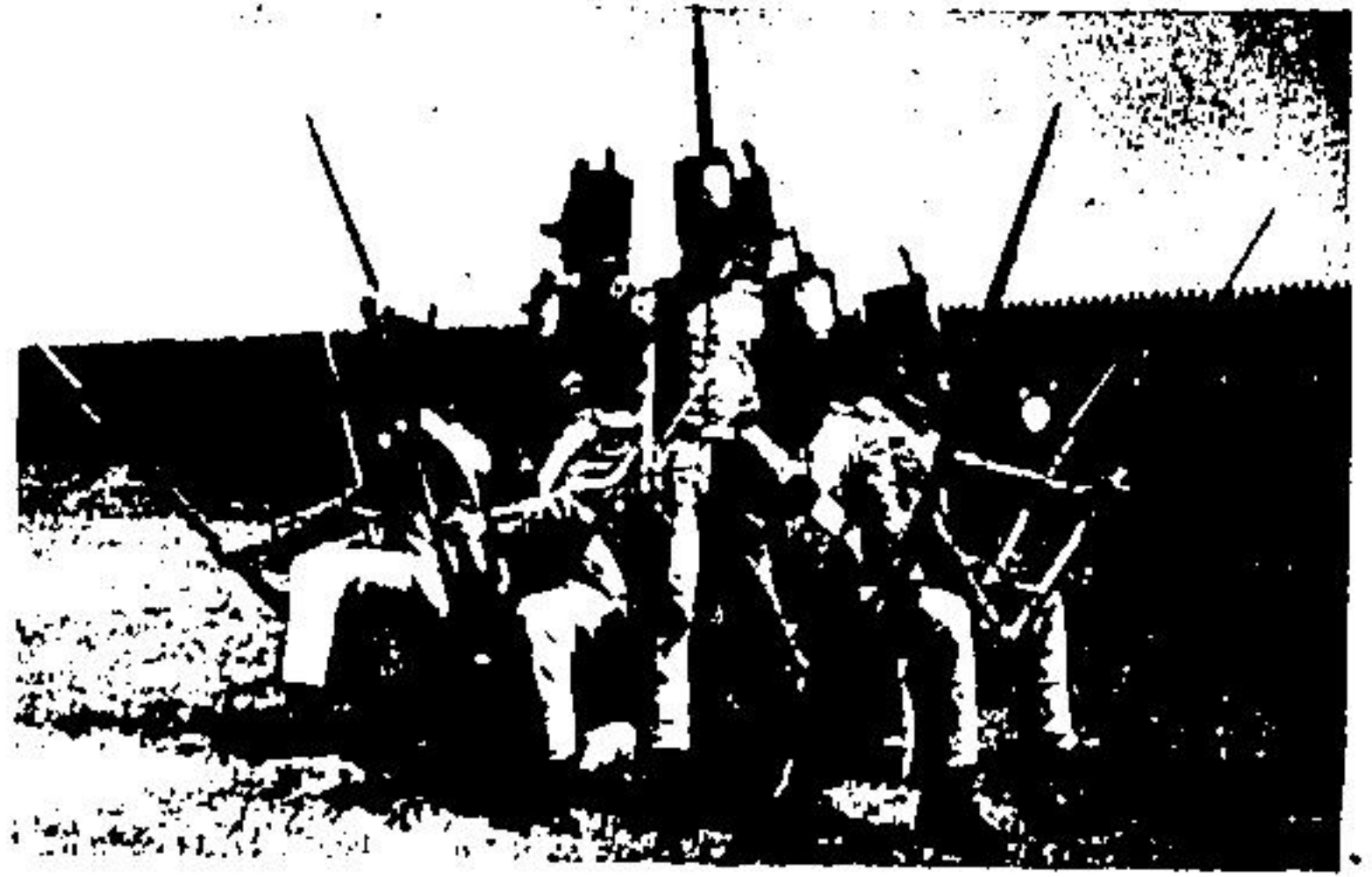
This winter's tourist arrivals in Hawaii are down five to 10 per cent from last winter's. Visitors have a broader selection of hotels, and some price-cutting is taking place by both hotels and airlines.

In Mexico, the value of the peso has fallen so low (recently worth roughly one-twentieth of a cent, Canadian) that centavos are no longer used in quoting of prices.

The British Tourist Authority, P.O. Box 504, Station F, Toronto, M4Y 2L8, is offering a list (entitled Let's Go) of more than 200 British hotels with special prices for stays of two nights or more.

Another BTA brochure, Arts Festivals 1988, is a comprehensive listing of this year's festivals, musical and otherwise.

Fort George



In the early 19th century, the British military took on the dangerous task of defending the Niagara frontier from American invasion. The troops were quartered at Fort George, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, within the range of enemy guns.

Partially destroyed during the War of 1812, Fort George was then abandoned as a military post. The original plans of the fort were used in its reconstruction in the 1930s.

Now tens of thousands of people

visit Fort George National Historic Park each year. They discover a portrayal of everyday life in the old garrison, through period restorations and modern displays. On the parade ground, soldiers in period uniform demonstrate drill exercises, musketry and cannon fire.

For more information about Fort George National Historic Park, write to Environment Canada, Parks Service, 111 Water Street East, Cornwall, Ontario K6H 6S3.

Stroll through floral haven

Beautiful Andromeda in Barbados is a must-see for people who love flower gardens.

Overlooking scenic Bathsheba on the east coast, Andromeda boasts a world-class collection of exotic flowers and trees.

Iris Bannoche, one of Barbados' foremost horticulturalists and owner of Andromeda, started the garden in 1954 on land that had belonged to her family for over 200 years. Although it began as a hobby, the garden's fame quickly spread. Today, many thousands of plants from around the world have been planted here and visitors are invited to enjoy their beauty.

In Greek mythology, the fair maiden "Andromeda" was banished and chained to a rock. At Andromeda, sculptured rock boulders surround the garden, forming part of its striking landscape.

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FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM REGISTRATION

The Halton Roman Catholic School Board is offering an optional French Immersion Program to its English language students entering Grade 5 in September 1988.

Registration is scheduled as follows:

HALTON HILLS: Saturday, March 5, 1988
9:00 a.m. to 12 noon
Holy Cross School
222 Maple Avenue
Georgetown

For further information, please contact:

Mrs. Michelle H. Longlade
Program Consultant
French as a Second Language
632-6300, ext. 214.

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Welcome Wagon

BRIDES to be You Are invited to the 6th Annual:

BRIDAL PARTY

Date: Sun. March 6/88
Time: 12:30 p.m.
Place: St. Andrew's United Church

9 Mountainview Rd. South
For a FREE Invitation Call:
Dobbie: 877-8591, Cathy: 877-8653