



NEAR Summit, Mont., on the Great Northern line along the south edge of Glacier National Park, *Empire Builder* passengers see a statue. It is of John F. Stevens, and well might he be immortalized in stone, for it was he who discovered Marias Pass at whose highest point the statue stands. With an altitude of only 5213 feet, this is the lowest and easiest railway crossing of the Rockies north of New Mexico. It was after Stevens had discovered the pass in December, 1889, that James J. Hill began the Pacific extension of the Big G from Havre, Mont., on the Milk River, which had previously been the western terminus.

Shortly after noon on the second day out from Chicago the *Empire Builder* passes through Summit. This is the *Empire Builder's* big day, a day when it not only crosses the Continental Divide, but also runs for nearly 60 miles along the southern edge of the only national park on a railroad line, with matchless mountain scenery in constant view. It is a day of watching the crystal-clear streams of the western slope grow into rivers, a day of lakes and canyons and of snow-capped peaks.

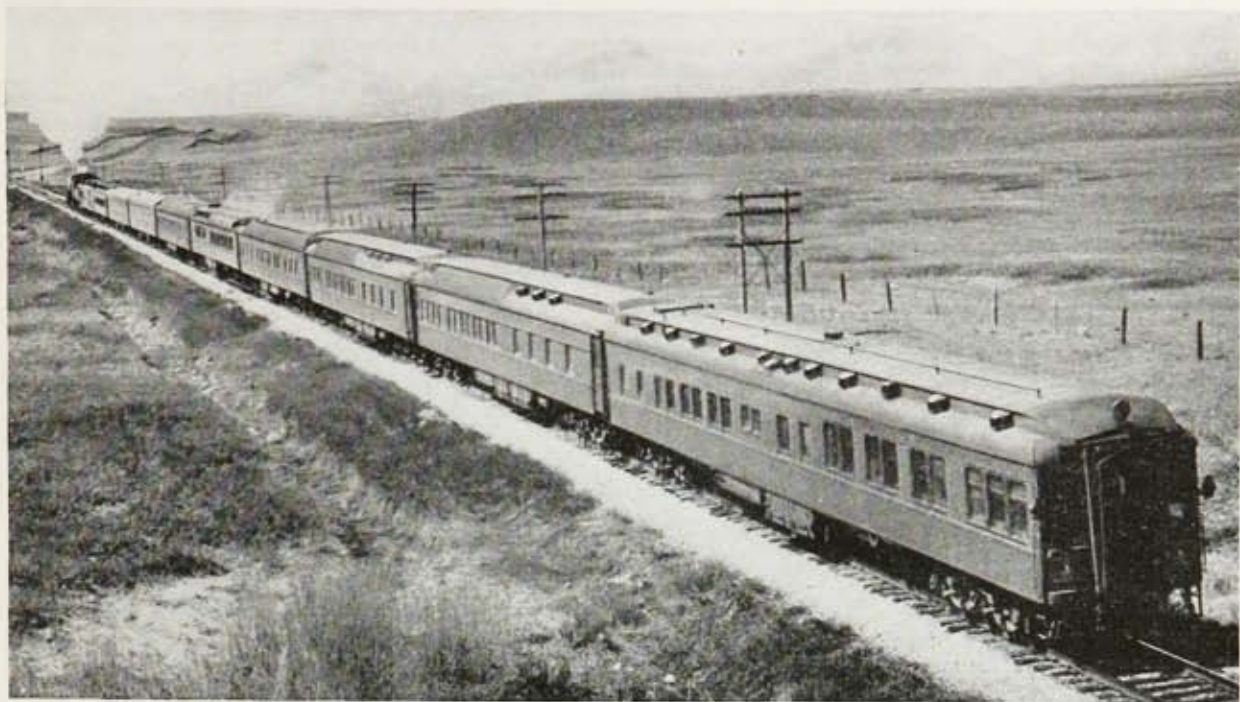
At breakfast time the train is stopped at Havre, where the 2500-series 4-8-4 is serviced, or perhaps changed. (Under present traffic conditions, *Empire Builder* engines may be changed at Minot, Havre, or Whitefish, or may even run through from St. Paul to Spokane.) Until lunch

## Empire Builder

An action sequence, following  
over the lowest northern

Illustrated by W. R. McGee.





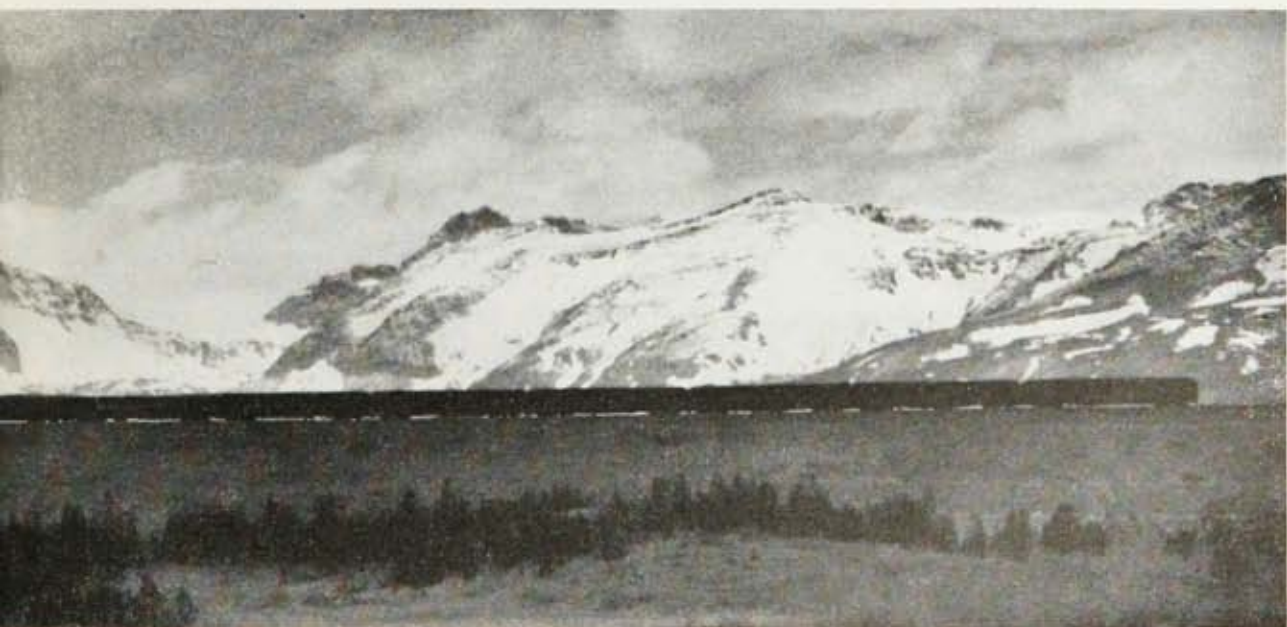
## at Marias Pass

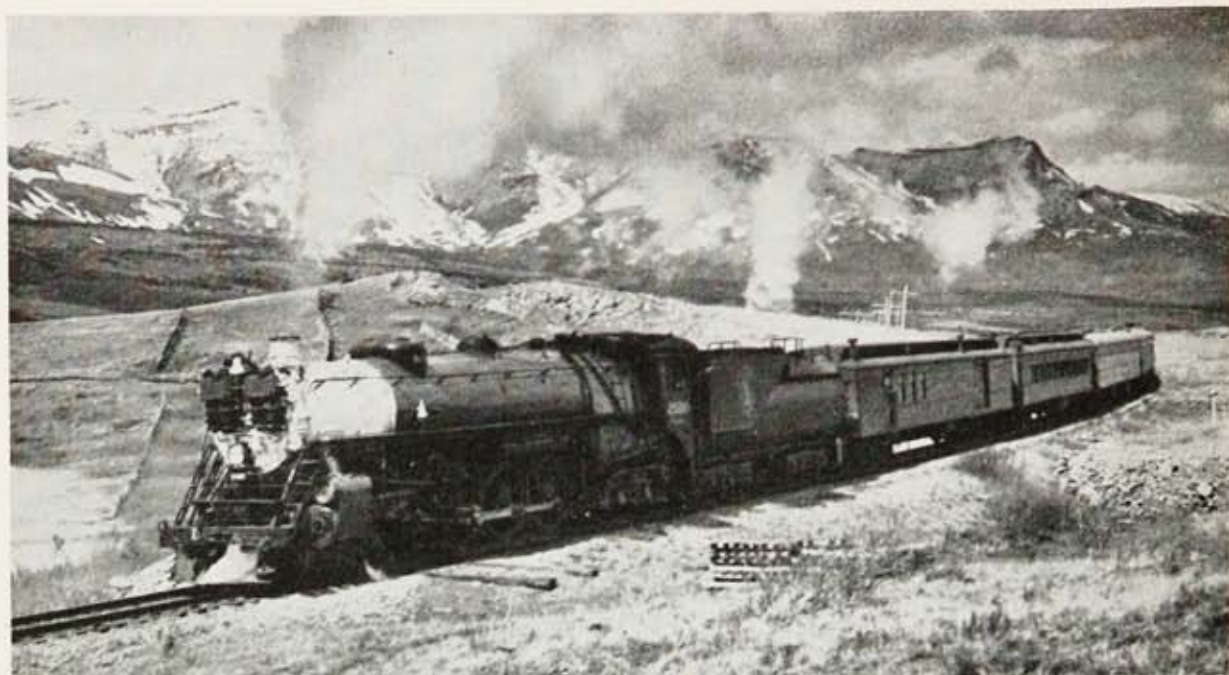
Great Northern's Coast train  
crossing of the Divide.

Commentary by A. C. Kalmbach.

**12:05** With snow-capped peaks deceptively close ahead, Great Northern's train No. 1, the *Empire Builder* westbound, bites into the foothill grades near Browning, 14 miles east of Glacier Park. The "going" and "coming" views were taken at the same spot. Engine 2588 is pulling the train today, and the makeup is 10 cars, including a postal-baggage car, standard coach, two de luxe coaches, a tourist Pullman, diner, three standard Pullmans, and the observation-club car with barber shop, shower baths, and valet service which was a feature of No. 1 before the war.

**12:39** At Rising Wolf, five miles west of Glacier Park station, the snow-capped peaks are close to the right of the train as it works up the last seven miles to the Continental Divide.

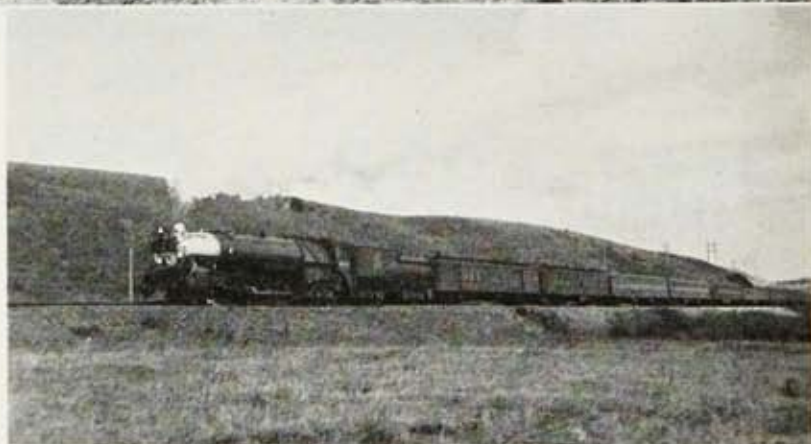




time the 80-inch drivers pull the string of R. P. O. car, coaches, diner, tourist and standard Pullmans easily up the gentle slopes to Summit, over a ruling grade of only 1 per cent. After lunch comes the run down the west slope, ruling grade 1.8 per cent, through the delicious green of western Montana, northern Idaho, and into Washington, following the Flathead, Stillwater, Tobacco, Kootenai, and Clark Fork rivers and skirting the edge of Whitefish Lake. At 9:30 in the evening the *Empire Builder* is in Spokane, ready for the overnight run to Seattle. Those who wish can stay in a Spokane hotel and take the day train, No. 5, across the Cascades and through the continent's longest railroad tunnel.

Of the three northern transcontinental railroads, Great Northern is the closest to the Canadian border. Northern Pacific, the earliest northern route, and the Milwaukee, newest of the three, cross and recross each other 50 to 100 miles to the south.

Of all the Great Divide crossings, Marias Pass



is farthest west. The only other major summit on the Great Northern main line is at Cascade Tunnel, where it crosses the Cascade Mountains east of Seattle. The affiliated Spokane, Portland & Seattle avoids even this on its water-level line down the Columbia River Valley from Spokane to Portland.

**12:40** Still working steam on the upgrade to Summit, the *Empire Builder* is shown at top of opposite page a short distance west of Rising Wolf. The peaks beyond are in Glacier National Park, of which the railroad forms the approximate southern boundary.

**12:43** Two miles west of Rising Wolf the mountain view is momentarily obscured as the train hugs the edge of a hill. It is crossing a minor saddle which deceived early explorers and gave the place the name of False Summit.

**12:51** Summit, and the climb is ended.

**12:53** No longer working steam. No. 1 starts downgrade from Summit (top photo, below). Bear Creek is already beginning to grow alongside the left-hand car windows, and Summit Mountain rears its bulk in the background.

**1:08** Near Singleshot, 10 miles west of Summit, the *Empire Builder* glides downgrade along ledges carved out of the rocky south reaches of Snowslip Mountain. Reason for only one head-end car on this train is that most mail and express is carried on the *Fast Mail*, No. 27, which leaves St. Paul five minutes ahead of the *Empire Builder* and in this part of the run is some four hours ahead. No. 27 carries coach passengers only, arrives in Seattle at 5 a. m.

*Continued on next page.*







**1:59** Typical of the *Empire Builder's* second day out of Chicago is the scene on opposite page, between Red Eagle and Belton along the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. The water is so fresh and clear that train passengers can readily see the rocky bottom, and the deep pools are a constant temptation to disembark and go fishing. The north bank of the river is in Glacier National Park. The canyon is named after Stevens, discoverer of the pass.

**2:25** At Coram No. 1 crosses the Flathead River on a steel viaduct.

**2:30** With the afternoon still young, the *Empire Builder* traverses Bad Rock Canyon, between Coram and Columbia Falls, junction of the branch to Kalispell. Ahead lies more scenery, until nightfall. In another half hour, near Whitefish, the traveler will see, from the right side of the car, a marvelous panorama of half a dozen 10,000-foot peaks ranged beyond the far shores of bright-blue Whitefish Lake.

*End.*

