



# Speaking Notes

**Toronto, May 24, 2012**

**MARC LALIBERTÉ, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**VIA RAIL CANADA**

**DELIVERED AT THE PANORAMA LOUNGE – UNION STATION – CITY OF TORONTO**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Some of you may know that this space housed a long lunch counter when Union Station opened in 1927 and, later, the well known Front Street Bar 'n Grill. Some of you may have even patronized those establishments, which were popular meeting spots for Torontonians and travelers for much of the last century.

The lounge covers 630 square-metres, has seating for over 200 people, ample space for the close to 170,000 Business and Sleeper class passengers per year that leave on VIA trains from this station. Space to relax and unwind, or space to connect or work.

The floors and walls sparkle with the same Mississquoi Grey Marble that was installed when Union Station was built. Although much of this marble withstood the stresses and strains of over 80 years, some needed replacing. To meet strict requirements for all restoration at this Heritage Railway Station, the new marble comes from the exact same quarry as the original — In St. Armand – Philipsburg, in Québec's Eastern Townships.

And, you probably don't know that four striking pieces of artwork hanging in the back were specifically commissioned from Canadian artists, in 1989, and proudly displayed on VIA's transcontinental flagship train, the *Canadian*. These works were created by Kenojuak Ashevak, Mary Filer, Liz Magor and Jean-Paul Riopelle.

The tall windows, looking directly out to Front Street, illustrate how our lounge blends yesterday's grandeur with the technological excellence of today. The new wood frames have been carefully crafted to replicate the original ones, while the thermally glazed panes incorporate key energy-saving features. With WiFi throughout, fully equipped workstations and these flat screen TVs above us, passengers can stay in the loop, with the office and with the family.

Trains have indeed played a pivotal role in uniting Canadians throughout our history. And they continue to keep us connected. This lounge clearly signals VIA's drive to further strengthen this vital link.

We invite you all to join us aboard our VIA Rail network, as we take Canadians across our vast land, and into tomorrow.

Thank you, Merci.