

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 58/8

RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

An address by Mr. George Hees, Minister of Transport, at the luncheon of the Prospectors and Developers Convention, Macdonald Hotel, Edmonton, Alta., February 24, 1958.

Prospecting and the development of natural resources in Canada have gone hand in hand throughout the period of Canada's growth as an industrial nation but full realization of our inheritance is largely dependent on transportation. Whereas the early prospector was compelled to proceed afoot to carry out his search for mineral deposits and was only able to bring back small samples of his find, the modern prospector uses aircraft and the latest scientific instruments in his work. Likewise, modern surveys are mostly carried out with the help of both fixed wing aircraft or helicopters. However, it avails us little to know that an area is abundantly rich in mineral wealth or other natural resources unless it becomes feasible to provide the necessary transportation to move the ores to processing plants, logs to saw mills or paper mills or produce to the consumer.

Not only must we constantly expand our railway facilities, improve water navigation and extend the range of our commercial airlines, but we must embark on a network of northern roads as a preliminary step to the overall development of our north country and indirectly the whole of Canada. In fact the whole national development program as the Federal Government sees it can only reach fruition as communication and transportation lines are built to enable the raw material to be collected, processed and distributed. As has been already stated, the national interest may possibly require the construction, with federal participation, of a second trans-Canada Highway in the West further north than the one now being built.

Opening up our northern areas by roads would appear to be a natural objective in the development of districts which are rich in resources but are practically inaccessible except by air. In considering our northern requirements, it is obvious that the easiest and quickest approach to the Arctic is through the Yukon, where roads are already available for part of the way; where oil and mineral resources are known to exist, and are the object of determined exploratory work; and where it becomes more and more necessary for Canada to extend its national sovereignty.