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# Reference Papers

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## THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

(Prepared by Information Services, Department of Public Works)

The story of Canada is in many ways a record of the solving of problems presented by the country's vastness. Distance, however, has not been the only obstacle to overcome; there have also been such formidable barriers to transportation and communication as the Rocky Mountains and the Canadian Shield. Besides, the lines of geographical similarity and economic interest run north and south across the boundary between Canada and the United States, not east and west across Canada.

It is obvious, therefore, that the Canadian nation could attain its full development only with the help of an extensive and costly system of communication. From the beginning, Canada's growth has depended on the growth of water, rail, road and air transportation. A web of communications has been spread across the country, opening the way to new resources and stimulating economic development. Only against this background can such an achievement as the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway be fully appreciated.

The building of roads in Canada is primarily a provincial responsibility. Since 1919, however, the Federal Government has, for various reasons, participated in the construction of highways. It is, of course, wholly responsible for building and maintaining the roads that serve the national parks and the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and for the upkeep of the Alaska Highway. In the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway, however, the Federal Government, in co-operation with the ten provincial governments, has made its largest contribution to road-building. Since the passage of the Trans-Canada Highway Act in 1949, provincial and federal authorities have pushed steadily toward the realization of a 4,796-mile paved, all-weather route from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Victoria, British Columbia.

While the provinces undertook the actual building of the Highway (except those stretches that cross the national parks), the procedures governing design and construction were subject to review and approval by federal authorities and federal engineers inspected the work as it proceeded.

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