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CONTENTS

Yukon - Development for the Future	1
Control of Hides and Leathers	3
Safety Measures for St. Lawrence.....	3

Mining Flourishes.....	3
Employment Figures.....	4
Highway Safety Grants.....	4

YUKON - DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The following are excerpts from a recent address by Mr. Arthur Laing, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, to the Second Northern Resource Conference, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory:

...A source of major concern to the Yukon throughout its history has been the problem of improved access to the outside world. Long before the Alaska Highway was built, the main route to the rest of Canada was via the sea. The Alaska Panhandle has always been viewed as a barrier by Yukon residents; it lies between them and the sea, and this has been a factor in shaping the course of their trade, growing and development. The Panhandle was first effectively bridged by transportation routes at the turn of the century, when prospectors from all over the world rushed into the Klondike in search of gold and personal fortune. A railway was built between Skagway and Whitehorse via the White Pass, one of the easiest mountain passes, and this railway... still continues to render valuable service today. The next permanent route built through the Panhandle was the Haines Road, built by U.S. army engineers during the Second World War; and this is virtually where developments have stopped.

The question of transit across the Alaska Panhandle has attained its greatest prominence during very recent years. The U.S. Battelle Report, prepared for the Alaska International Rail and Highway Commission, proposed that overland routes might be carved into the Canadian interior from the Wrangell-Petersburg area, and also from Juneau. Mining discoveries in Canada behind the Panhandle have led to other enquiries concerning access to the ocean and thence to world markets. Our Alaskan neighbours are vitally interested in the question of

corridors. The Alaska State Legislature, within the past year, passed a resolution concerning the construction of the proposed Skagway-Carcross Road.

ACCESS TO THE SEA

The Canadian Government is interested in the question posed by the problem of access to the sea, from many points of view. You may recall the announcement made by the Prime Minister at about this time last year concerning studies of the access problem....

We learned that the problem of access to the sea is indeed complex. We considered matters such as the physical character of the Panhandle region, resource endowment and potential, settlement and land use, forms which additional access might take, and the many political and legal problems arising out of the existence of the Canada-Alaska boundary. As our work has progressed, it has become increasingly apparent that only a few routes or facilities warranted further attention. There are many possible routes through the Panhandle but for a variety of reasons - economic, geographic, or engineering - many can be ruled out as being impractical without much study. Some, however, are truly deserving of a very close look, and could conceivably become the subjects of joint development by Canada and the United States if the necessary groundwork were laid....

ALASKA HIGHWAY

I shall now leave the many questions concerning access to tide-water and turn to another matter having to do with transportation to and from the Yukon, and the question of the paving of the Alaska Highway. You are all aware that the Federal Government has had this matter under particularly intensive