

EXCHANGE OF NOTES (MAY 4 AND 9, 1942) BETWEEN CANADA AND
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA RECORDING AN AGREEMENT
REGARDING THE SOUTHERN TERMINUS OF THE
ALASKA HIGHWAY.

I

*The United States Minister to Canada
to the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada*

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OTTAWA, May 4, 1942.

No. 668

Sir:

During the course of a conversation on April 24, 1942, Mr. Keenleyside, Assistant Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, raised the question of the southern terminus of the Alaska Highway now under construction, and inquired in particular if my Government felt that the stretch of road between railhead at Dawson Creek and Fort St. John fell within the terms of the American offer as contained in my note of March 17, 1942.

The wording of the pertinent recommendation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense, which was incorporated in my note of March 17th, dealt with "the construction of a highway along the route that follows the general line of airports, Fort St. John — Fort Nelson — Watson Lake — Whitehorse — Boundary — Big Delta, the respective termini connecting with existing roads in Canada and Alaska."

As there seemed from Mr. Keenleyside's query to be some ambiguity as to whether the word "termini" limited the length of the road to be constructed, or merely described where existing roads, irrespective of their size or carrying capacity, ended, the appropriate minutes of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense were consulted. These contain the following sentence:

"The proposed highway would have its southern terminus on the Edmonton, Dunvegan, British Columbian Railway, which has available carrying capacity substantially in excess of the possible carrying capacity of the road. Its northern terminus would be at a point about sixty miles south of Fairbanks on the Richardson Highway, which connects Fairbanks with Valdes".

In view of the foregoing, which clarifies the intent of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense, my Government believes that its offer to undertake the building and wartime maintenance of the highway does in fact include the stretch of road from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John. As a matter of record, it would welcome a confirmation of its belief from the Canadian Government.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT.