

Thousands of trainloads of construction materials, machinery and equipment have been moved, raw materials and war materials transported to ocean ports, troops carried across the country, army camps and air training depots supplied, loaded cars hauled from industrial yards, trains kept moving at high efficiency. As traffic increased, unit costs went down, and thus it was proved that, given the traffic to carry, Canadian railways would pay their way. After two years of war, the Canadian National Railways were able to pay interest in full on outstanding obligations to the public and to the government, and after meeting all tax requirements, showed a surplus for the first time in 13 years. Canada's railway "problem" became one of its greatest war assets. Canada is now the second greatest exporter among all the United Nations. It is difficult to see how Canadian industrial production, so greatly expanded to meet the demands of war, could have been serviced by a transportation system which was adequate to handle only the needs of its peacetime economy. It is difficult to build railways in wartime. It might well be argued that Canada's maintenance of excess transportation capacity during peacetime was one of its wisest defence measures.

TRANSPORT CONTROL

During the last war Canadian railways encountered serious difficulties because of congestion at seaports and railway terminals caused by shippers loading and billing shipments before space was available. This time both the government and the railways profited by past mistakes. Immediate steps were taken to insure that vital transportation requirements would be met. In November, 1939, the office of the transport controller under the Department of Transport was established to facilitate the orderly transit of war materials, and troops and to prevent congestion at terminals. The controller regulates the movement of all goods between points in Canada and supervises the movement of civilian passengers and military, naval and air force personnel.

Under transport control, freight cannot be shipped unless provision has been made for its prompt unloading. Before export freight is accepted, all contractors or shippers must obtain an export permit, and the export permit is not issued until it is known that space on a ship has been allocated for the freight. The export permit shows the date on which shipments will be accepted. Confidential information is furnished as to dates when vessels are available to accept cargo at the seaboard, and a schedule of running time allowances is set up for the number of days required to move freight from point of origin to the seaboard. The permit system is now considered a vital feature in the handling of export freight traffic.

Since materials can be transported overseas only as convoys sail and as permits are granted, they must be stored in the meantime where they will not interfere with the flow of traffic. To speed the movement of freight in the industrial yards of the numerous new war production plants, additional trackage was laid out. These industrial yards had to be kept clear of war materials awaiting overseas shipment, and freight cars also had to be released for immediate service. Hence it was necessary that storage yards or supply dumps be established where all such materials could be held while awaiting shipment. In these storage yards vast quantities of war supplies are kept under constant guard until shipping instructions and permits are received. This clears factory space of all but the materials required for production. Bottlenecks and congestion experienced in the last war have thus been eliminated, and the flow of munitions overseas has been vastly speeded up.

In 1941 the controller set up a carloading division to facilitate the loading of raw materials and war supplies. Carloadings of the Canadian railways have at times reached 75,000 a week, a sharp increase over immediate pre-war peaks.