

HIGHWAYS AND AUTOS: Canadian expenditures on highways have risen steadily since the war but the number of motor vehicles per mile of surfaced road has increased even faster, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has reported in its annual review of highway statistics.

Postwar outlay on highways had reached almost \$2,000,000,000 by the end of March last year, and of this amount more than \$1,100,000,000 was put into building new roads and reconstructing old ones. As a result, surfaced road mileage increased by nearly 50,000 miles to 181,306 miles at the end of 1952. However, the number of motor vehicles per mile of surfaced highway had climbed to 17.4 by 1952, even more than the 1928 pre-depression peak of 16.7.

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WHEAT STOCKS: Stocks of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America on May 26 totalled 341,564,000 bushels, almost unchanged from 341,605,000 a week earlier but far above last year's corresponding total of 256,753,000 bushels. Farmers in the Prairie Provinces marketed 3,954,000 bushels of wheat in the week ending May 26, considerably less than the 6,976,000 marketed in the corresponding week last year.

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HOUSING RISE: After lagging behind last year in February and March, completions of new housing units picked up in April with 6,774 ready for occupancy, 449 or 7% more than in 1953, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has reported. January completions were up 36% and the four-month total of 27,101 was 2,384 or nearly 10% more than the number finished in January-April last year.

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LABOUR INCOME: Canadian labour income for March is estimated at \$941,000,000, down \$6,000,000 from February but \$17,000,000 or 2% higher than for March last year. The cumulative total for the first quarter is estimated at \$2,829,000,000, up \$57,000,000 or 2% over the 1953 first-quarter estimate of \$2,772,000,000.

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AUTO TAXES: In reply to a question in the House of Commons on June 8, the Prime Minister said that no consideration had been given to reduction of the excise and the sales tax on automobiles.

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AID FOR DISABLED: The legislation under which the federal Government will contribute up to \$20 a month toward pensions for those who are permanently and totally disabled was given final approval in the House of Commons on June 8. With the provinces paying half, a maximum of \$40 a month will be provided.

NATO JOURNALISTS' TOUR: The Department of External Affairs announced on June 4 that twenty-one newspapermen from thirteen North Atlantic Treaty countries were starting a three-week tour of Canada at Ottawa on June 6.

Seventeen of the journalists flew from Paris on June 5. They were met by officials of the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs and by representatives of their countries' Missions in Ottawa. The group was joined here by two United States correspondents, and by two Turkish correspondents at present accompanying the Prime Minister of Turkey on his United States tour.

This tour is one of a series arranged by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in member countries and is being sponsored by the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to journalists from NATO countries to observe Canada's defence installations, industrial projects and civic institutions. The group will travel approximately 8,000 miles in Canada in an RCAF North Star and will visit Ottawa, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria, Whitehorse, Calgary, Rivers, Churchill, London, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, Arvida, Sept Iles, Halifax, St. Johns and Gander. A number of Canadian journalists have participated in similar NATO tours in Europe.

During their two and one-half day stay in Ottawa the visiting journalists met with members of the Government, representatives of NATO Missions in Ottawa and officials of departments concerned with NATO.

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MARINE INSURANCE CUT: The Minister of Transport, Mr. Chevrier, announced on June 7 that marine underwriters in London, England, have agreed to a considerable modification in insurance premiums on ships trading to ports on the St. Lawrence River and the Atlantic Coast of Canada.

Formerly, additional premiums have been required when ships sailed to or from ports in the St. Lawrence and eastern Canada except Halifax and (for bunkering purposes only) the ports of Louisburg and Sydney. Under a new agreement, which does not apply to Labrador waters or waters west of Montreal, the extra premiums are abolished for the summer period, 1st June to October 31st, and reduced by approximately 50% during the remainder of the year, for vessels not over fifteen years old and which are equipped with radio direction finding apparatus.

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Commercial fisheries represent a great natural resource which has been yielding annually an ever-increasing harvest of protein food since the time of John Cabot. Currently the annual catch of fish is close to two billion pounds and is valued in the neighbourhood of \$180 million.