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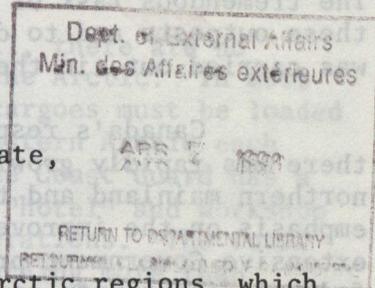
# REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION  
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## TRANSPORTATION IN NORTHERN CANADA

(Prepared by the Public Affairs Directorate,  
Ministry of Transport, Ottawa.)



The opening of Canada's vast and inhospitable Arctic regions, which may be termed, roughly, the mainland north of the 60th Parallel and the islands of the Arctic archipelago, hinges principally upon the availability of transportation.

The federal Ministry of Transport has the continuing task of deciding upon or recommending to the Government how far it should go in providing transportation and communications facilities in the North, which must exist if private enterprise is to take any part in developing the available natural resources. The Department each year carries out the supply by sea of the northern settlements, and it is also largely responsible for the provision and maintenance of air-fields and other aviation services throughout the North.

It was in 1880 that the British Government granted the Arctic islands to Canada, and there was a relatively short-lived outbreak of interest in the Western Arctic when the Yukon gold-rush occurred in the 1890s. The matter of providing transportation facilities for the opening of the North did not become of particular urgency, however, until the advent of the Second World War focused attention upon the need for defence installations in the North and the urgency of making the known oil and mineral resources of the Mackenzie River basin available to Canada and its allies.

As the demand for transportation in the Northwest developed, there was a marked growth in both air and water transport. Today there is a network of air services throughout the North, supported by navigational aids and meteorological and communications facilities.

Barge traffic is still the principal means of moving heavy cargo down the Mackenzie River system to the Northwestern Arctic shoreline. The river and its navigable tributaries are marked with buoys and other aids to marine navigation and buoy vessels of the Canadian Coast Guard operate along it from headquarters at a Ministry of Transport district marine agency at Hay River, Northwest Territories.