



Pipeline Research near Inuvik

National Film Board of Canada

*Here is an excerpt from Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's address to a public meeting in Edmonton on April 28, 1972. The subject was the development of the Far North.*

**T**HE North has relied to this date primarily on air and water transportation links. Some roads exist, as in the case of the Dempster Highway in the Yukon, but much more has to be done in order to meet the desires of the Indian population and to ensure the rational impact of development. The obvious primary need is for an all-weather highway along the full length of the Mackenzie Valley.

This road has been a dream until now. Its length—some 1,050 miles north of 60 degrees, and its cost—between 70 and 100 million dollars, have appeared as overwhelming obstacles. The benefits to be gained are now so obvious, however, and the prospects so encouraging, that I

am able to announce tonight that the Government will begin building this highway this summer.

Work will commence simultaneously at both the southern and northern ends—at Inuvik and Fort Simpson—and proceed towards the middle. Survey work to fix the whole route will get underway shortly, and be finished before the end of this year. When completed, this highway will stretch from the Alberta border north to the Arctic Ocean at Tuktoyaktuk. It will bring to an end the isolation for much of the year of the communities along the river and will meet the expressed desires of many of the Indian people who live there. It will improve the economic opportunities for the residents of these communities and will place them in a better position to benefit from other activity and developments.

The route will be carefully selected so that it will be of use should oil or gas pipelines be built along the Mackenzie Valley. It will be built ahead of any pipelines and will therefore offer considerable cost savings to them during the construction period. For this reason, the Government intends to recover some of the highway construction costs from the pipeline companies.

Well within this decade, Edmontonians, who have long regarded this city as the southern terminal of the Alaska Highway, will be able to drive on an all-weather, all-Canadian highway from here to the Arctic Ocean, and to choose from two different routes.

The economic benefits of these transportation links can as yet only be imagined. That they will be immense, no one doubts. The roads will

also assist Canadians to visit the majestic new national parks created earlier this year for the preservation of huge areas of northern splendour.

Canada's northern communication system, already the most extensive and sophisticated in the world—indeed the only one to make use of a domestic communications satellite—will soon be matched by a northern transportation system more elaborate than that in any other country of equivalent area and climate. And in the process the need for goods and services will increase dramatically. Projects of the magnitude of the Mackenzie Highway will create economic opportunities of considerable proportions to add to the already well-stimulated business climate of this part of Canada. The demand for technically trained and skilled workers in the North will rise and continue to rise. □