

Railway to despair and almost to bankruptcy. It was the construction of the railway through this territory that opened western Canada to settlement and economic development and thereby brought the far-flung colonies into union. Today there are over 16,000 kilometres of track and some 155,000 kilometres of roads throughout Ontario, making it the transportation hub of the country.

The province's two international airports are at Toronto and Ottawa. Light aircraft remain, in some cases, lifelines to remote northern communities. The provincial government has built a network of all-weather landing strips throughout Ontario's north.

While air transportation remains vital in northern Ontario, the principal means of passenger transportation in the south remains the motor vehicle. In 1979, new motor vehicle registrations averaged approximately 40,000 a month.

The waterway from Montreal to Lake Superior links the heart of North America with the Atlantic and the world beyond. The St. Lawrence Seaway is one of the world's busiest shipping routes. It opened in 1959 and extends approximately 3,800 kilometres. Ships making a complete passage of the Seaway must pass through locks in the St. Lawrence section, eight more in the Welland section and must use one of four

parallel locks at Sault Ste. Marie. Special "lakers", designed to fit snugly in the locks, carry the two staple cargoes of the Seaway — iron ore and grain. General cargo is also shipped to and from the industrial ports served by the Seaway, which is icebound for about four months of the year.

Energy

Cheap energy has been a major factor in Ontario's prosperity. Hydroelectric power is essential to the industrial processing of the province's natural resources. Ontario uses more electric power than any other province and has almost reached the limit of its hydroelectric capacity. Thermal power now accounts for 60 per cent of the province's electricity and this percentage will probably increase. Power stations burning fossil fuels like coal and oil provide extra power at time of peak demand.

In the years following the Second World War, the National Research Council and subsequently the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., developed the technology for the CANDU nuclear reactor. Ontario has two major nuclear power plants in operation. The Pickering station, 28 kilometres east of Toronto, which opened in 1971, has four reactors and is the world's largest commercial nuclear power facility.