

Transportation and Communications

THE sea has always been an essential highway for Newfoundland, both for contact between coastal communities on the Island and for reaching the outside world. Railways were developed later than on the mainland, largely because the sea was available, and it was not until about the close of the last century that the east and west coasts of the Island were linked by rail. The extension of roads has been relatively slow, partly for the same reason, and there is as yet no trans-insular highway. The development of air transport, although it has provided rapid transportation for mail and passengers to and from other territories, has not fundamentally altered Newfoundland's dependence on sea transport for marketing its products abroad. The sea is still the dominant transport factor in the economic life of the Province.

Railways

The history of railway construction in Newfoundland is outlined on pp. 28-29.

Under the Terms of Union the Railway and its steamship and other services were taken over by the Canadian Government. In April, 1949, the Newfoundland Railway became part of the Canadian National Railways. Henceforth the operation of the Railway and its subordinate services will be under the control of the Parliament of Canada.

The main railway line runs from St. John's to Port aux Basques in a northward irregular semi-circle, cutting heads of bays and passing through Grand Falls and Corner Brook on its way. Together with the four branch lines, it extends to about 705 miles of narrow-gauge road. Since 1897 it has been linked with the Canadian continental system by a steamship service between Port aux Basques and North Sydney, Nova Scotia. In summer the Railway has run one train daily in both directions on the cross-country line and about three trains a week in winter. It performs essential services in carrying mails, moving pulpwood to the mills, transporting fish and other produce, and especially newsprint in winter, to the exporting centres, and food and other supplies to consuming centres. Fuel is supplied to Gander Airport by rail.

The provision of railway and steamship services has been costly. Between 1923 when the Government acquired the Railway and 1934, the year when Government by Commission began, the deficit on the Railway and its associated service was about \$4,340,000. The Amulree Commission assessed the total cost to 1934 to the Government at \$42,000,000, represented in the national debt by perhaps