

The Mid-Canada line is being built in spite of awesome difficulties, with the same kind of persistence, endurance and ingenuity which in earlier days pushed Canadian railroads across unmapped territories and through formidable mountains.

It is a sombre thought that such costly and elaborate arrangements are required today and are indeed essential for purposes of defence.

But we can hope that because the invader is being closely watched for, he may never come. In any event, we all can be sure that this activity in our northland will have its peace time usefulness too.

In solving the many, many problems of supply and construction on difficult terrain and in a climate of extremes, Canadians are learning how to build, how to work and how to live in the rigorous north. We are learning that by adaptation, by effort and by skill, the sub-Arctic can be made habitable.

The old concept of the "frozen" north as an inhospitable forbidding wasteland of snow and ice is giving way to the new concept of the north as a land of opportunity, of challenge and of hope. Vistas of great promise are opening for a sturdy, enterprising people, and I envision a new era of promising expansion for Canada -- a surge of development perhaps as spectacular as that which opened the west at the turn of the century.

Canada's northland yields much wealth but it can yield far, far more. In recent years there has been a wave of mineral exploration and extraordinary development. Recent discoveries have included such a variety of minerals that it appears the northland may prove to be very rich indeed in mineral wealth.

Development has been hindered up to now by problems of distance, transportation, climate and terrain but, as I have said, the ingenuity of man is overcoming those problems. We are mastering the hitherto untameable north. And the establishment of the northern early warning lines, which are designed to meet the threat of thermonuclear war, is providing air transport bases, tractor roads, communications systems, and even community centers which will be of incalculable value to peaceful pursuits and industrial development.

In conclusion may I say that while I have been talking of defence, all our efforts are really being directed solely to the preservation of peace. Canadians have no aggressive designs against any other country or its people. We love our land, but we do not covet any other's territory. We will never attack anyone. We wish only to live at peace and help the rest of the world to live at peace.