

7. Statement to the Press: - Report of British Columbia-Yukon-Alaska Highway Commission (Canada), November 12, 1941

The Report of the British Columbia-Yukon-Alaska Highway Commission was tabled today in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister. This Commission was appointed by Order-in-Council of December 22nd, 1938. It was instructed to enquire into the engineering, economic, financial and other aspects of a proposed highway to connect the Pacific Northwest of the United States with Alaska by way of British Columbia and the Yukon.

This project had been under consideration by various official and unofficial bodies in Canada and the United States for some twelve years or more, and reports had been made by a United States Commission in 1933 and by a Canadian Inter-departmental Committee in 1938. This latter report was not published. In 1938 representations were made to the Canadian Government by the Government of the United States with regard to the desirability of providing for the construction of such a highway, and the Canadian Government was informed that the President of the United States had appointed a Commission of five members "to cooperate and communicate directly with any similar agency which may be appointed in the Dominion of Canada in a study for the survey, location and construction of a highway to connect the Pacific Northwest part of continental United States with British Columbia and the Yukon Territory in the Dominion of Canada and the Territory of Alaska".

In the spirit of these instructions to the United States Commission by the President, the Canadian Commission, which also consisted of five members, was instructed by the Canadian Government "to meet for the purpose of discussion and exchange of information with the United States Commission appointed for that purpose".

The Canadian Commission, which consists of the Hon. Charles Stewart, Major General Thomas L. Tremblay, Mr. J. M. Wardle of the Department of Mines and Resources, Mr. Arthur Dixon of the Department of Public Works of British Columbia, and Mr. J. W. Spencer of Victoria, with Mr. Stewart as Chairman, held a series of public hearings in British Columbia and the Yukon in the summer of 1939, and, under the direction, reconnaissance surveys were carried out by Dominion and Provincial engineers, both by air and on the ground.

The substance of these hearings and surveys was communicated to the Government in a Preliminary Report in April, 1940. The Commission at that time felt that further ground work by engineers would be necessary before it would be in a position to give a reasoned opinion on the respective merits of different routes that had been proposed for a highway. These additional surveys were carried out in the summer of 1940, and when the reports of the engineers had been received the Commission proceeded to consider and digest all the available information. It also, in accordance with the instructions of the Order-in-Council, held meetings from time to time with the members of the United States Commission, and discussed with them various problems arising out of their respective investigations.

The Commission, having completed its investigations and