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Since its main topographic barriers extend in a north-south direction, whole sections of the country are separated by topographical obstacles, including water barriers on the coasts, rough, rocky terrain between the Atlantic seaboard provinces and Quebec (the earliest settled lands), and vast stretches of rock, water and barren muskeg north of Lakes Huron and Superior over the 800 miles between Eastern Canada and the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Finally, there is the Rocky Mountain barrier separating the prairies from the Pacific province of British Columbia. If the means to bridge these great natural barriers had not been found, Canada would probably never have achieved nationhood.

The highlights of transportation development and progress in Canada include the construction of the St. Lawrence canal system prior to 1867; the linking of the various sections of Canada by the railway systems; the coming of the motor-car; early exploration of the North by air; and the founding of national airlines. The Second World War was followed by the growth of truck transportation, the building of pipelines for oil and gas, the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the completion of the Trans-Canada Highway -- not to mention the addition of major causeways, bridges, tunnels and ferries.

Canada has developed one of the finest transportation systems in the world. The publicly-owned Canadian National is North America's largest railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company is the world's largest stockholder-owned railway system.

The two major airlines, publicly-owned Air Canada and Canadian Pacific Airlines, which is stockholder-owned, provide exceptionally high standards of service and between them connect Canada with most of the world by regularly-scheduled passenger and cargo services over a total of more than 100,000 miles of air-routes.

The St. Lawrence Seaway, penetrating deep into the heart of North America, over 2,000 miles from the Atlantic, brings ocean shipping to the doorsteps of major industries, providing economical transportation for many of the continent's goods, thus greatly strengthening Canada's position as a major trading nation.

Pipelines have also been important in making it possible for Canada to develop its oil and natural-gas resources economically. One of the world's longest pipelines, for instance, runs from Edmonton, Alberta, over 2,000 miles to Port Credit, near Toronto, Ontario. More than 15,000 miles of main transmission-lines have been built since the first oil discoveries in the late 1940s.

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