

Alaska Highway an example of Canada/U.S. co-operation

During the celebrations of the United States Bicentennial, many stories of friendship, co-operation and joint achievements with Canada are being recounted. While most of these memorable events are concentrated on the 49th Parallel, there are some interesting northern examples, one of which is the construction of the Alaska Highway, long considered an epic in road building.

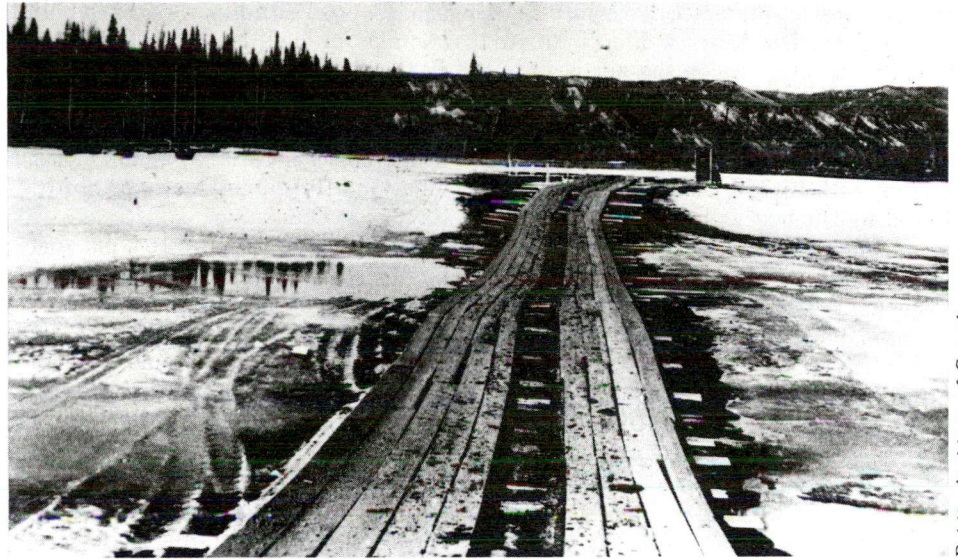
Started during the Second World War to provide a land route for war material and equipment to Alaska from the Canadian provinces and American states, the Alaska Highway was hammered through more than 1,500 miles of mountains, muskeg and mosquitoes. More than 11,000 U.S. troops, 16,000 civilian workmen from both countries and some 7,000 pieces of equipment were thrown into the Herculean task of penetrating a vast untamed wilderness. The construction bill for the 1,523-mile route was about \$140 million, which included 133 major bridges and more than 8,000 culverts which, if placed end to end, would stretch over 57 miles.

Then, on a bleak, cold November 29, 1942, a little more than nine months after the construction began, 250 shivering soldiers, civilians and Royal Canadian Mounted Policemen watched as officials from the United States and Canada cut the ribbon to officially open this major road link.

The ceremony took place at Mile 1061, known as "Soldiers Summit" and it crowned an event that has gone down in history as one of the construction triumphs of the world.

Since then, the Alaska Highway has developed into one of the most important transportation arteries in North America, stretching from Mile 0 at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, through the Yukon Territory, Canada and into Alaska at Fairbanks, U.S.

Jurisdiction over the Canadian section of the highway was turned over to the Canadian army in 1946 and all reconstruction and upgrading was carried out under Canadian army supervision until April 1, 1964 when the federal Department of Public Works took it over. On April 1, 1971, the maintenance of the Yukon section of the Alaska Highway was turned over to the



Alaska Highway construction across the Peace River, British Columbia, 1942.

Public Archives of Canada

Yukon Department of Highways and Public Works by the Federal Government.

Ever since the Alaska Highway was completed in the 1940s, a continual program of upgrading, widening and straightening has been under way. The Alaskans have paved their portion of the highway, while the Yukon section has been developed into one of the best all-weather gravel roads to be

found anywhere.

The Alaska Highway, once an emergency wartime road, has developed into a vital link between the giant industrial regions of the U.S. and Canada and the rich natural resources of Alaska and the Yukon. But, aside from the economic aspects of the highway, it also represents a permanent monument to the durable and warm friendship between two nations.

Immigration, first quarter

The 32,359 immigrants who came to Canada during the first quarter of 1976 represented a drop of 25.5 per cent from the number who came during the same period last year, according to statistics released September 3 by Manpower and Immigration Minister Robert Andras.

"This year's immigration has been

declining in all categories of immigrant and from all world areas," the Minister explained. "The drop reflects the effect of the regulation changes, announced in February and October 1974, that link the immigrant flow more closely to the needs of Canada's labour market."

Mr. Andras said that about 55 per cent of independent immigrants had pre-arranged employment, whereas the rate

	Total landings		Destined to labour force	
	1975	1976	1975	1976
Britain	9,124	5,248	4,718	2,683
U.S.A.	3,835	3,149	1,634	1,386
Hong Kong	2,198	2,449	1,036	1,050
India	2,372	1,817	713	362
Jamaica	1,967	1,583	756	439
Philippines	1,974	1,513	1,079	684
Portugal	2,672	1,071	375	270
Guyana	1,132	850	519	281
Italy	1,008	834	369	371
France	723	829	468	520
Total	27,005	19,343	11,667	8,046
World total	43,448	32,359	19,877	14,111