



Rail

Canada, as a land of vast distances and extremes of climate, has a vital interest in transportation. Railroads, for example, were essential to Confederation, linking Canada's provinces from coast to coast.

Today, Canada has two major railroad systems, the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National (publicly-owned), several smaller systems run by the provinces and the privately owned Algoma Central Railway. From a short trackage between Laprairie and St. Jean, in Quebec in 1836, Canada's main track now measures 70,176 km. With secondary, industrial and yard lines, the track measures 96,632 km.

On April 1, 1978 the VIA rail system was inaugurated in an attempt to improve passenger service in Canada.

Sea

Shipping played an important part in Canada's history. Ships built in Quebec and the Maritimes led the British fleets by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

A Canadian ship made the first Atlantic crossing by steam, in 1833. A Nova Scotian, Samuel Cunard, founded in 1839 the shipping line which bears his name.

Perhaps the most famous of all Canadian ships is the schooner *Bluenose*. Launched at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia in 1921, it was the sailing champion of the Atlantic fishing fleets for 20 years. Its likeness appears on the Canadian 10-cent piece. Canada has also been a pioneer in icebreaker design, and it was the Canadian icebreaker *John A. Macdonald* which prepared the path for the U.S. tanker, *Manhattan* during its Arctic voyage in 1969.