

1958 to 1962 period, the Yukon itself was able to pay only 3 to 5 per cent of the cost of its highway and rural road construction and maintenance programme. The N.W.T. could not even contribute 1 per cent. In contrast, British Columbia and Newfoundland each contributed an average of about 75 per cent per year....

FREIGHT TRANSPORT

It is in terms of the transport of freight that roads leading to and from the territories, as well as internal roads, have been most useful. Though the use of the private automobile is growing, and there are bus services along the Mackenzie and Alaska Highways and within the Yukon, air transport is the principal means whereby territorial passenger traffic moves.

Trucking services are now quite well developed to and from both territories. There is a good trucking system within the Yukon, operating along the various territorial roads from the railhead at Whitehorse. Highway vehicles are also used on winter roads, particularly in the N.W.T. Mining centres such as Tundra (formerly Taurcanis) and Discovery rely on winter trucking for the bulk of their supplies. The only alternatives are the aircraft or cat train, neither of which are satisfactory....

The problem of getting a "backhaul" has not proven quite as severe for northern truckers during recent years as one might imagine it to be. The fish caught in Great Slave Lake, about 3,000 tons yearly, move south by truck on the Mackenzie Highway. While this provides backhaul during only part of the year, it is better than nothing - virtually the only other alternative in this region. Some asbestos fibre from Cassiar, and mineral concentrates from the Canada Tungsten Mine in the southeastern Yukon, regularly move south on the Alaska Highway. In recent years scrap oil-pipeline derived from the dismantling of sections of the Canol line have been moved from the Yukon to the oil fields of Alberta. In view of this, one might say that, while the backhaul situation may be highly uncertain, it has not been altogether hopeless....

SUMMATION

There is no question but that road transport is now an important means of transport in the north. It replaced water transport as the dominant method of moving freight in the Yukon during the mid-fifties, and it has also played a growing role in linking the Yukon with Southern Canada. Truckers using the Alaska Highway have greatly diminished the remoteness of the Yukon and have had a favourable effect on the cost of living in that region....

Road transport has also had a considerable impact on the southern fringes of the Mackenzie District of the N.W.T. With the exception of petroleum movements from Norman Wells to Yellowknife, and

some dry-cargo movements to small, out-of-the-way points, it has made seasonal water and tractor-train operations almost obsolete in the vicinity of Great Lake since the Mackenzie Highway was extended to Yellowknife in 1961. Consumer-goods prices and business costs - particularly inventory costs - fell markedly in this community with the advent of road access. This was a consequence not so much of a fall in transport rates as of a great improvement in speed and regularity of service, plus the fact that good surface transport was available the year round.

Road transport has become increasingly important relative to water transport in carrying freight destined for communities along the Mackenzie River and Arctic Coast. During the postwar years, a number of routes have been used to move freight to the Mackenzie River, but two have been of particular importance. One is the Mackenzie Highway and the other is by means of rail to Waterways, Alberta, and beyond the railhead by tug and barge via the Athabasca and Slave Rivers and Great Slave Lake. Although the Waterways route has been the most important historically, in recent years the volume of freight moving to the Mackenzie River and Arctic Coast via the Mackenzie Highway has exceed it by a factor of approximately three times.

Trucking has recently been combined with air transport in moving freight north. One interesting venture, which must still be regarded as something of an experiment, is a truck-airlift to points along the Arctic Coast. Freight is trucked to Yellowknife and there loaded onto aircraft as large as the DC-4 for destinations such as Cambridge Bay and Holman Island. The main advantage of this system is an almost airtight guarantee that goods will be delivered rapidly and in an undamaged state. But it is costly. It is also highly seasonal since flying can be done only when there is sufficient daylight and also strong enough ice for landing.

The Great Slave Lake Railroad, which is now virtually complete, should have a profound effect upon the routing of freight into the Mackenzie River region. It is still too early to tell what the precise impact on road transport will be, although it means quite likely that the railroad could, if it wanted to, almost completely displace long-haul trucking as a means of moving freight to the water terminus of Hay River. The railroad likely will have excess north-bound capacity for a long time, and, therefore, the marginal costs of moving traffic north on it will be very low. The degree to which rail rates will reflect this remains to be seen. There is at least a good possibility, however, that trucking will be increasingly forced to confine its operations to the region beyond the Hay River railhead, and to develop services with which the railroad cannot compete because of its inflexibility.

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