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APPENDIX I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IN CANADA

TRANSPORTATION IN RELATION TO PHYSICAL FEATURES AND POPULATION

Transportation in Canada—whether by water, road, rail or air—is, and always has been, dominated by the physical geography of the country. The position of mountains, lakes and rivers; the distribution of mineral wealth; the location of good agricultural land; and the varying nature of the climate have dictated both the placing of settlements, and the lines of communication. With an area of 3,684,723 square miles Canada is a very large country; thirty times as large, for example, as the British Isles. While a large portion of this area has at present no need for established transportation services, the main lines of communication are required in the most heavily populated districts, which stretch in a broken and comparatively narrow fringe along the four thousand miles of the southern boundary.

Of necessity, then, the principal transportation routes are of relatively great length. In addition, they pass at intervals through country which by its character creates natural obstructions. In relation to roads such obstructions take the form of mountainous areas or water barriers; and, in relation to water routes, falls and rapids or complete breaks in the chain. The most significant obstacles, however, are those in the path of the transcontinental railways. The maritime provinces of the Atlantic Seaboard are separated from direct access to the central industrial areas of Quebec and Ontario both by the northern part of the State of Maine and by the sparsely settled upland forest that runs towards the St. Lawrence.

Near where the vast waterway formed by the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes makes its contact with the edge of the western plain, two thousand miles inland from the Atlantic, occurs the second major obstruction to communication overland. Reaching north from lake Superior to Hudson's bay, a stretch of country broken by rock and lakes, nearly eight hundred miles in width, divides Eastern Canada from the prairie. That this sparsely inhabited region forms part of the great pre-Cambrian shield, which is now beginning to provide an important source of mineral wealth, makes it none the less a continuing hindrance to the economical operation of transportation overland.

These largely undeveloped and sparsely settled lands north of lake Superior form, in fact, not only the central, but the chief obstruction to the east and west channel of communication upon which depends the political no less than the economic vitality of Canadian Confederation. For while the third great barrier, the mountain range, or rather the four ranges, five hundred miles in width, of the Cordillera System which separate the western plain from the Pacific ocean, present, as an obstacle of nature, by far the most imposing appearance, they do not present, from an economic point of view, as serious an obstruction as does the vast area, wooded and mineralized, that cuts Canada in two. This region, largely barren from the transportation standpoint, constitutes an unproductive traffic bridge of exceptional length and ruggedness.

While the physical conditions in Canada thus create serious problems for the construction and operation of railways, the waterways offer a ready method of transportation. Disposed by nature for east and west communication, the rivers and lakes are, and always have been employed for this purpose; but

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their use is limited by a comparatively severe climate. Navigation, even in the most southerly districts, can be maintained for less than two-thirds of the year. As a further limitation there have already been mentioned the presence of rapids and falls, and the lack of natural communication between one waterway and another.

Thus the fundamental problem of transportation in Canada may be traced to two principal and related factors: the population is relatively small, and is spread over a long stretch of territory; and to connect the settled areas, railways must overcome great obstacles reared by nature.

EARLY METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION

The water routes which led the French explorers, settlers and fur-traders into Canada, remained throughout the French regime the chief means of communication for men and goods. The birch-bark canoe, the river boat and the lake sail-boat were all suitable to a land of rivers and lakes, on the shores of which began the limitless forests. Roads, however, were also necessary to connect the settlements, and these were early begun. In 1734, the first continuous road between Quebec and Montreal was opened, and the mails followed this route.

The loyalists of the American revolution, the first British immigrants to enter Canada in any large numbers, followed, too, the St. Lawrence route. Passing beyond the French settlements on the river, they gradually opened districts on or near the shores of lake Ontario. For half a century the building of roads was continuous, but the results were far from satisfactory. The rough "corduroy" road was, whenever possible, superseded by planked or macadam roads, but these, being expensive, remained rare. In all settled parts of Canada through roads were opened, though the surfaces were bad and the grades heavy. Many of the roads were little more than forest trails. The Kempt Road, connecting the Saint John, New Brunswick, with Quebec, traversed 455 miles, but as late as 1840 it was often impassible over long stretches. In 1817 a stage service was begun between Montreal and Toronto, but the discomfort was considerable, and the cost was high—from Toronto to Kingston alone the fare was \$18. This high cost of transportation affected freight as well as passenger traffic, with the result that, though roads were built for military purposes and to connect inland districts in all the provinces, road travel long remained slow, uncomfortable and expensive. But, with all their weaknesses, the roads were constructed as a necessary means of communication between localities, between provinces, and with the ocean ports and the United States. By 1830 there were some 6,000 miles of post road. Up to 1841 the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada alone had spent two million dollars in aid of road construction, and had also guaranteed interest on the obligations of some of the many turn-pike trusts.

In all parts of Canada in which it was feasible, transportation by water was used as an alternative to that by road. On the St. Lawrence and on the waterways used by the Hudson's Bay Company, *bateaux*, Durham boats and York boats were an ordinary method of travel. On the Great Lakes sailing boats of various types continued to increase from the days of French rule. In the maritime provinces, coastal schooners were, of course, common.

INLAND LAKE AND RIVER STEAMERS

Though sail-boats continued to flourish for many years the invention of the steamboat greatly added to the comfort of travelling. In the year 1809, the steamer *Accommodation*, with some assistance from horse towage at difficult

MEIGHEN PAPERS, Series 5 (M.G. 26, I, Volume 189)

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