

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, The Honourable Don Jamieson, is pleased to announce the signature today of an agreement between Canada and the United States for a highway rebuilding and paving project in northern British Columbia and the Yukon. The agreement took the form of an exchange of notes signed by the American Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Thomas O. Enders, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs on behalf of the Government of Canada.

In making the announcement today, Mr. Jamieson said that this agreement is another example of the excellent and varied cooperation between Canada and the United States on a wide range of issues.

The terms of the agreement between Canada and the United States call for the United States to provide funds for the reconstruction and paving: British Columbia, as its contribution, will provide the additional right-of-way required and the use of natural construction materials within its boundaries. The Department of Public Works will manage the project and will set up and administer the committees required to define construction schedules and procedures. When the roads are completed the Yukon Territorial Government will carry out the maintenance under agreement with the federal government. The United States Federal Highway Administration will review the program for the United States.

Before any construction begins, an environmental impact study will be carried out and appropriate follow-up public meetings will be held.

This program will provide an improved and safer road from Haines, Alaska, the northern terminus of the Alaska Ferry System, to the Yukon-Alaska border, which will be accessible to American, as well as to Canadian traffic. The total highway distance involved is 322 miles, with 52 miles of the Haines Road in British Columbia, 65 miles in the Yukon plus 205 miles of the Alaska Highway between Haines Junction and the Alaska-Yukon border.

The federal government's negotiations with the United States and other levels of government have been handled by an interdepartmental committee made up of members from the Departments of Public Works, Environment, Transport, External Affairs, Indian and Northern Affairs, Justice, as well as the Privy Council and the Treasury Board.