

*Reconstruction of Banff-Windermere Road*

The National Park highways in the mountains connect with provincial highways which are, in the main, hardsurfaced. Travellers entering Canada from the United States journey on bituminous pavement to the park gateways. In the case of Banff Park, the road is hardsurfaced from the gateway to Lake Louise, nearly forty miles west; otherwise, the park highways are gravel roads of varying standard which have been constructed over the years and which have been short of adequate maintenance during the period of the war. The outstanding drives in the mountains are:—

1. The Banff-Jasper Highway.
2. The Banff-Windermere Road.
3. The road from Banff to Golden.

Jasper is the largest park and needs development of many facilities which help to make a park more enjoyable for visitors. However, when funds, equipment and labour are limited, priority is given first to the protection of the forests and wildlife; second, to the provision of safe and convenient access. The road which connects Jasper with Lake Louise should be hardsurfaced but as it is impossible to undertake the task this year the general maintenance of the road is being improved by application of dust-layer road oil and calcium chloride. The road from Lake Louise to Banff is hardsurfaced but the Banff-Windermere road, which leaves the Banff-Lake Louise road near Mount Eisenhower is not in good condition and must be rebuilt. This road provides access to Banff and Jasper from the United States Pacific Coast area. It is extremely important from the tourist standpoint and it is also of great interest to Canadian motorists who desire to make a circle tour taking in mountain parks on both sides of the line. The distance from Jasper to Lake Louise on the Trans-Canada Highway is about 150 miles. The distance from Mount Eisenhower junction on the Trans-Canada Highway to Radium Hot Springs is about 70 miles. Mount Eisenhower junction is about 20 miles west of Banff. Lake Louise is about 40 miles west of Banff.

During the depression, the National Parks Vote was considerably reduced. In fact it was less than the amount which was provided in the days before Riding Mountain Park, Cape Breton Highlands Park and Prince Edward Island Park had been established and when we had a great deal less road mileage and fewer park facilities to maintain. In 1946-47 we were able to secure some additional funds to overcome arrears in maintenance and to replace as far as possible obsolete and worn out equipment. Much of what we need is still in short supply. We hope to overcome some of the arrears of maintenance during the current year.

In addition to the public funds already expended, private interests have many millions invested in the varied installations, without which our parks would be greatly handicapped.

The parks are now in better shape to receive visitors. Our principal difficulty is the lack of accommodation for travellers. Some additional bungalow camp concessions have been let but building operations are handicapped because of lack of materials and skilled labour. We cannot in fairness ask priority for the erection of seasonal accommodation when returning service personnel are without homes. However, there will be more accommodation this year and we are improving the facilities on the camp-grounds and encouraging those who can to bring their tents or trailers with them, to camp out under the favourable conditions that are provided in these improved areas. Concessionaires on the camp-grounds rent camping equipment and provide lunch or snack bar service at some places. Preference has been extended to ex-service personnel in the granting of concessions.