

The Trans-Canada Highway Act was passed and assented to on Dec. 10, 1949. A second Federal-Provincial Conference was held on Dec. 15-16, 1949, at which sufficient details were discussed and agreed upon to enable the drafting of a uniform agreement to be completed.

Under the terms of the Trans-Canada Highway Act the Minister of Resources and Development* is authorized to enter into Agreements with the provinces for the construction of this Highway. Contributions may be paid to a Province for new construction up to 50 p.c. of the cost of that construction to the province as determined by the Governor in Council. Similar contributions up to 50 p.c. of the cost to the province as determined by the Governor in Council may also be paid to a province for work done between April, 1928, and the date of the passing of the Act if such work is later incorporated as part of the Trans-Canada Highway. Before contributions can be made for either new or prior construction an agreement must be signed. The total federal contribution is limited to \$150,000,000.

The Trans-Canada Highway is the largest federal-provincial joint project initiated to date and is a major step in the development of a national highway system in Canada. The Act calls for the Highway to be completed by December, 1956.

A third Federal-Provincial Conference was called on Apr. 25, 1950, for the purpose of signing the Agreement. Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Alberta signed at the conference table. Nova Scotia indicated its willingness to sign at a later date but Quebec declined to sign because, in that province's opinion, the Agreement did not include sufficient guarantee for the protection of the rights of the Province of Quebec. New Brunswick and Newfoundland, respectively, signed on May 27 and June 23, 1950.

Under the terms of the Agreement each province designates the route of the Highway within its own borders, provided that adjacent provinces agree on locations where it crosses provincial boundaries and that routes selected are the *shortest practical east-west routes*.

The standards will be such as to produce a hard-surfaced two-lane highway, with pavement widths of 22 and 24 feet; ample shoulder widths, bridge clearances and sight distances; low gradients and curvature; eliminations of railway grade crossings wherever possible; and a load-bearing capacity of 9 tons for one axle.

The Special Projects Branch of the Department of Resources and Development is charged with the responsibility of the Trans-Canada Highway from the federal standpoint. It administers the Trans-Canada Highway Act and the federal engineering work relating thereto. It deals with details of routes, after these have been designated by the provinces, and advises the Minister if the definition has been complied with. The Branch is responsible for dealing with and checking all specifications for new work including grading, bridges, and paving; it inspects prior construction to determine the extent of federal contribution and, if appraisals are necessary, arrives at figures of final cost; it passes on all tender calls issued, and after examination, recommends the Minister's approval of contracts awards by the provinces.

The Special Projects Branch in all cases sees that federal interests are protected. At least one field office is maintained by the Branch in each of the provinces that have signed agreements.

* The Department of Resources and Development was established after the reorganization of the Federal Government Departments on Jan. 18, 1950.