

A brief historical sketch of the development of steam railways in Canada is given in the 1940 Year Book, pp. 635-638, and a special article dealing with the wartime role of the railways appears in the 1945 Year Book, pp. 648-651.

Subsection 1.—Mileage and Equipment

Construction was begun in 1835 on the first steam railway in Canada—the short link of 16 miles between Laprairie and St. Johns, Que.—but only 66 miles of railway were in operation by 1850. The first great period of construction was in the 1850's when the Grand Trunk and the Great Western Railways were built as well as numerous smaller lines. The building of the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific Railways contributed to another period of rapid expansion in the 1870's and 1880's. In the last period of extensive railway building from 1900 to 1917, the Grand Trunk Pacific, National Transcontinental and Canadian Northern Railways were constructed.

1.—Steam-Railway Mileage, 1900-51

NOTE.—Corresponding figures of total mileage of single track for the years 1835 to 1899 and for the intervening years 1901-1909 are given in the 1941 Year Book, p. 546.

Total Mileage (Single Track)						Mileage, by Provinces				
Year	Miles in Operation	Year	Miles in Operation	Year	Miles in Operation	Type of Track and Province	1941	1949	1950	1951
	No.		No.		No.		No.	No.	No.	No.
1900....	17,657	1922...	39,358	1937...	42,727	Single—				
1905....	20,487	1923...	39,654	1938...	42,742	Nfld.....	...	705	705	705
1910....	24,731	1924...	40,059	1939...	42,637	P.E.I.....	286	286	286	285
1911....	25,400	1925...	40,350	1940...	42,565	N.S.....	1,396	1,396	1,397	1,396
1912....	26,840	1926...	40,350	1941...	42,441	N.B.....	1,836	1,835	1,835	1,835
						Que.....	4,789	4,791	4,795	4,789
						Ont.....	10,476	10,462	10,458	10,440
1913....	29,304	1927...	40,570	1942...	42,339	Man.....	4,854	4,836	4,834	4,834
1914....	30,795	1928...	41,022	1943...	42,346	Sask.....	8,777	8,739	8,739	8,739
1915....	34,882	1929...	41,380	1944...	42,336	Alta.....	5,747	5,643	5,643	5,647
1916....	36,985	1930...	42,047	1945...	42,352	B.C.....	3,883	3,888	3,890	3,889
1917....	38,369	1931...	42,280	1946...	42,335	Yukon.....	58	58	58	58
						In U.S.A.....	339	339	339	339
						Totals.....	42,441	42,978	42,979	42,956
1918....	38,252	1932...	42,409	1947...	42,322	Second.....	2,499	2,494	2,498	2,487
1919 ¹	38,329	1933...	42,336	1948...	42,248	Industrial.....	1,551	1,925	1,979	2,068
1919 ²	38,495	1934...	42,270	1949...	42,978	Yard and sidings.	10,210	10,437	10,541	10,639
1920....	38,805	1935...	42,916	1950...	42,979	Grand Totals.	56,701	57,834	57,997	58,150
1921....	39,191	1936...	42,552	1951...	42,956					

¹ As at June 30 for this and previous years.

² As at Dec. 31 for this and later years.

Construction of the Newfoundland Railway was begun in 1881 but it was not until 1896, after many difficulties, that the transprovincial line was completed from St. John's to Port aux Basques. The railroad is of narrow gauge track—3'6" compared with the standard gauge of 4'8½" in use in the other provinces. Its operations also include coastal steamer service and a dry dock. The Canadian National Railways took over the operation of the Newfoundland railway facilities on Apr. 1, 1949, thus adding about 4,200 personnel to its payroll.

There has been a tendency for railway mileages to decline slightly during the past decade because of the abandonment of unprofitable lines. Of the 42,956 miles of single track operated in 1951, over 50 p.c. were Canadian National Railway lines.