

The increase in value of production from \$2,700,000 in 1946 to \$25,000,000 in 1953 was achieved from rich deposits that were known and at least partly developed before the War. In the Dawson Mining District of the Yukon where individual miners once stood knee-deep in the swirling streams and panned free gold from the gravels, great hydraulic dredges now operate: indeed, so prolific has this area been that one creek, Bonanza, has been worked over three times. The base-metals deposits of Mayo and Keno Hill were developed rapidly under the stimulus of high prices. The Yellowknife gold field was encouraged to bring its richer mines into production. The mining of radioactive ores at Great Bear Lake was stimulated when uranium, formerly a by-product in the output of radium, became vital as a source of atomic energy.

Though all this was highly satisfactory, it was quite clear that the true potential of the Canadian North could be realized only by opening up new fields, of which there are so many. That this was clear to those working in the North is shown by the fact that, since 1946, activity has been healthily divided among the three traditional stages of mining—prospecting, development and production. Inspired by the ground-breaking work of government geologists and topographers, hundreds of prospectors have penetrated the Northland, staking out the areas from which they hope the future wealth will pour.

Transportation Facilities.—Any great increase in the production of mineral wealth in the North will depend on the provision of expanded and cheaper transportation facilities. Transportation is necessary, first to discover ore bodies, then to bring in the equipment to develop them, and finally to take out the minerals. Present facilities consist of air, water and road transport; the only railway is the 110-mile White Pass and Yukon Railway, which connects the port of Skagway in the Alaska Panhandle to Whitehorse in Yukon Territory. A summary of existing services and their limitations will perhaps serve to point up the scope of the problems that must be overcome in giving the North a reasonably low-cost transportation system.

Of all the innovations that the twentieth century has brought to the Canadian North, the aeroplane has undoubtedly been the most revolutionary. It has performed perhaps its most important service in the exploration phase of mining, particularly in the Northwest Territories. From an uncertain mode of travel in the 1920's, when the skills of pilot and mechanic were often the only guarantees against disaster, it has developed into a means of transport of great reliability. Equipped with skis in winter and pontoons in summer, an aircraft has little trouble in finding a safe landing place in that lake and muskeg dotted country. It can deliver the geologist and prospector to a chosen spot, adding months to the short working season. The northern traveller no longer has to walk fifty miles to the west in order to get ten miles to the north. And those who wish to work in spring or early summer no longer need to sail north the previous year and spend a profitless winter of waiting.

In the second phase of mining—the development of the prospect—the aeroplane is playing an increasingly important role. As airstrips multiply, larger and larger commercial planes are penetrating the remote places of the North. To-day, one of the first jobs undertaken on a promising claim is the building of an airstrip so that equipment and supplies may be flown in.