

The Trans-Canada Highway System.—The original federal-provincial agreement of 1949 for construction of the Trans-Canada Highway was given in outline, together with other data on specifications and proposed route across the participating provinces, in the 1951 Year Book, pp. 631-634. The original Act set the standards to be met: a hard-surfaced, two-lane highway, 22 to 24 feet wide with ample shoulder widths, bridge clearances and sight distances, low gradients and curvature, a maximum load capacity of nine tons for one axle, and the elimination, wherever possible, of railway grade crossings. The shortest practicable east-west route was to be designated by each province within its own borders, in agreement on terminal points with adjoining provinces. Those sections within the National Parks were to be the responsibility of the Federal Government.

Certain amendments to financial provisions and completion date were discussed at the Federal-Provincial Conference held at Ottawa in November 1955, and the Trans-Canada Highway Act was amended by Parliament in June 1956. The new Act gives authority for increasing federal expenditure from \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000 under a formula by which the Federal Government will pay 90 p.c. of the cost of building 10 p.c. of the mileage of the Trans-Canada Highway in each province in an effort to close gaps where no road at all exists or where certain portions are below standard. The basic 50-50 financial arrangement is still in force on the remaining 90 p.c. of the mileage in each province. A revised completion date is set at Dec. 31, 1960. New federal-provincial agreements were entered into by the participating provinces during the six months following passage of the amendments.

The Provincial Government of Quebec is not a party to a federal-provincial agreement but there is a paved highway across that province, linking the two ends of the Trans-Canada Highway route in Ontario and New Brunswick.

In the nine participating provinces the route as amended in 1956 will total 4,444 miles divided as follows: Newfoundland 554; Prince Edward Island 71; Nova Scotia 311; New Brunswick 390; Ontario 1,436; Manitoba 309; Saskatchewan 406; Alberta 282; British Columbia 568; and in the National Parks 117. Revisions in location have since altered some mileage totals. For instance, the mileage through Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks in British Columbia was shortened by a decision to use the Rogers Pass route, and the decision on the location of Terra Nova, the new National Park in Newfoundland, increased the mileage for which the Federal Government is solely responsible by 63 miles. Thus the National Park mileage is altered to 143. The sum of \$12,500,000 was allocated by Parliament for construction of the Highway through the National Parks during the year ended Mar. 31, 1959.

Contractual commitments of the nine participating provinces for new construction on the Highway during the period Dec. 9, 1949, to Aug. 31, 1958, amounted to \$428,682,880 of which the Federal Government's share, including the additional 40 p.c. under the amended Act, was \$255,587,158. Federal payments to the provinces during this period for prior, interim and new construction totalled \$162,081,563. On-site labour expended on the Highway up to Mar. 31, 1958, amounted to 6,694,235 eight-hour man-days of employment; off-site employment required for the provision of necessary material and services was estimated at 11,380,200 man-days.

In Saskatchewan, work was completed over the whole route of 406 miles, and the Highway was opened and dedicated at a ceremony on Aug. 21, 1957. In provinces more handicapped by problems of terrain and construction, progress was reported. At Aug. 31, 1958, contracts for 2,963 miles of grading had been approved and the equivalent of 2,647 miles built; contracts for base-course had been approved for 2,656 miles and the equivalent of 2,276 miles completed; paving to specified standard had been completed over a distance of 1,959 miles; 357 bridges, overpasses and other structures of over 20-foot span had been approved for construction.