

BRIEF

Submitted to

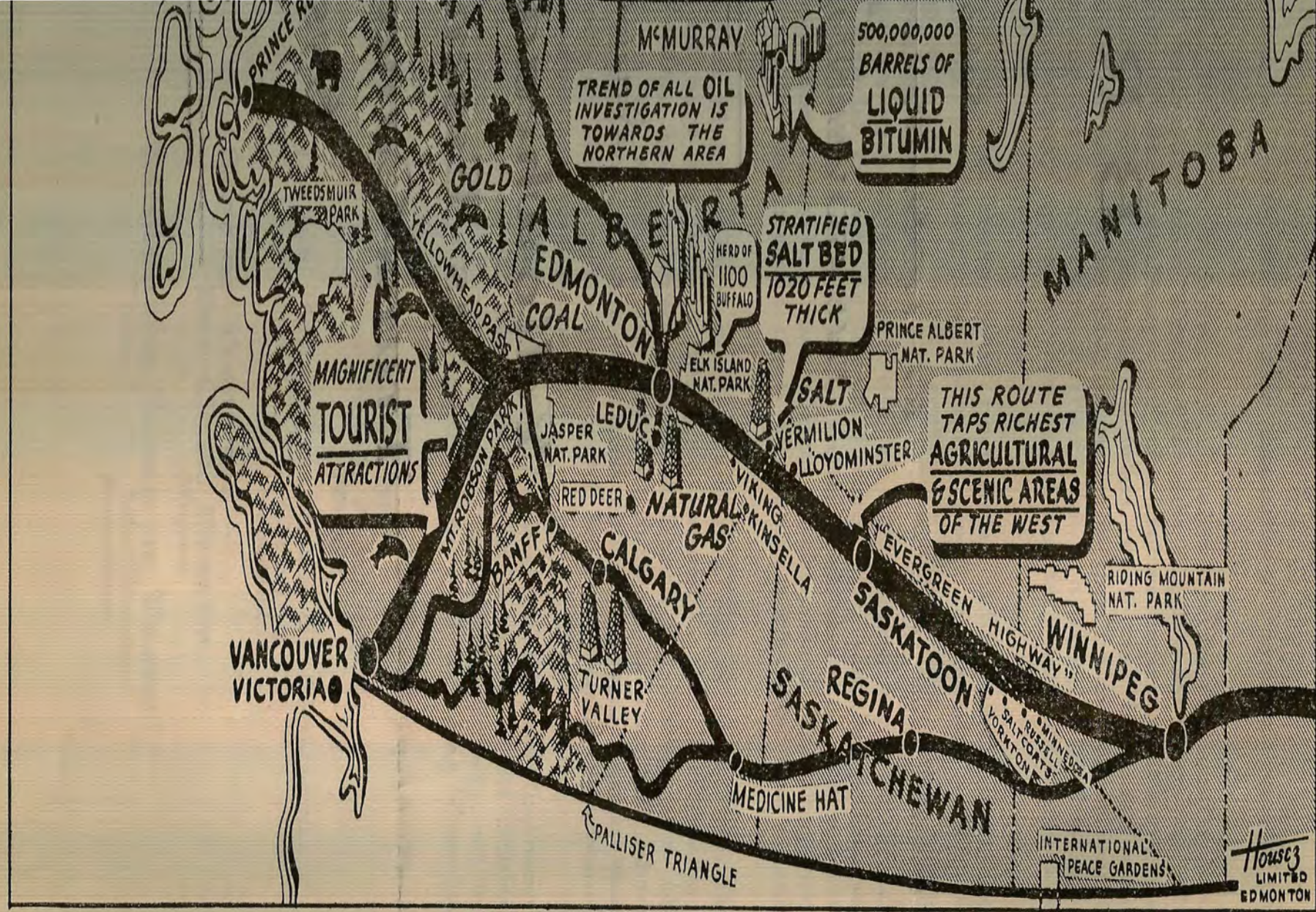
RT. HON. W. L. MACKENZIE KING

and

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Pertaining to the

*Yellowhead Pass Route
as Essential to a
Trans-Canada Highway
System*



The "EVERGREEN HIGHWAY"; Nature's strategic, commercial and scenic KEY to a Trans-Canada Highway System

RIGHT HONORABLE SIR:

Since the days of the earliest explorers and fur traders, the superior facilities of the northern overland routes from the Atlantic to the Pacific have been recognized by commerce and engineering alike. Not only have they been clearly defined by nature in the shaping of the courses of great river systems: they were followed and put into actual operation in early times by men who sought the most easy trade routes between the two great oceans. These men followed the most accessible waterways and found the lowest mountain passes. "The Athabasca Trail" became a commercial highway long before the engineer and the surveyor arrived, but, when they did arrive, they confirmed the wisdom of those who had preceded them and urged that the first trans-continental railway be routed through the Yellowhead Pass. Political expediency alone dictated otherwise but this did not alter in the slightest the wisdom of the ages and, when the time came for the building of a highway to follow the rail route which had been chosen, it was found that such a highway was impossible until a connection with the ancient overland route had been made by means of a lengthy detour.

However, it is a fact that the remarkable achievement of the Big Bend Highway did establish the idea in the public mind that a Trans-Canada Highway should follow that route. Quite erroneous though such an idea has always been, it has been rendered indisputably obsolete by the discovery of oil, the establishment of army and airforce headquarters and other developments in Northern Alberta. We now need a **Trans-Canada Highway System** for strategic as well as commercial reasons. Such a system should embrace at least two trans-continental highways especially through the prairies and the Rocky Mountains to the two principal tide-water outlets of Vancouver and Prince Rupert on the Pacific.

Edmonton, the only Canadian metropolitan centre with direct rail outlets to each of our Pacific ports; and with its rail and highway connections via Dawson Creek and Waterways; and the Alaska and Grimshaw roads with the strategically situated northland including Yellowknife and Port Radium is the logical pivot for such a highway system. The Yellowhead Pass is the natural and, consequently, the practical outlet from the prairies to the coast, not only because both of the established seaports are directly accessible through it but because it is centrally located and most convenient for the central and northern areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Yellowhead Pass is also nearest to the most densely populated and most productive agricultural and mineral areas of Alberta—those areas north of and eastward from the Nordegg-Red Deer line. The most densely settled areas of Alberta include and lie north and east of Edmonton.

The Winnipeg-Saskatoon-Yellowhead route would also make more accessible four great National Parks and four more provincial parks namely, Riding Mountain, Prince Albert, Elk Island and Jasper National Parks and Lake Manitou, Robson, Hamber and Tweedsmuir provincial parks which, presently, have no highway facilities. This route would also link all of these and many other tourist and commercial development opportunities with the densely populated, travel conscious and very wealthy centres of the American west coast by way of Vancouver.

Therefore, any future planning of a **Trans-Canada Highway System** must include the Yellowhead Pass route via Saskatoon and Edmonton. It has the decided advantage that it does not encompass any detour of 190 miles to traverse 90 miles of distance, such as that on the Big Bend Highway between Golden and Revelstoke, to render it strategically and commercially impractical. Furthermore, the Yellowhead route can, unquestionably, be kept open in winter because snowfall over its length is comparably light.

The time has certainly arrived when an energetic drive should be made by those in possession of the facts to awaken the Canadian public to the urgent need for a **Trans-Canada Highway System**

rather than a single highway and to urge immediate action in opening the necessary route through the Yellowhead.

Comparison of the various routes through the Rockies is, however, irrelevant to the main issue which involves all possible routes as contiguous and necessary to a **Trans-Canada Highway System**. The point is that the Yellowhead route is free from many of the handicaps of the other routes. Therefore it must command the earnest attention of all seriously-minded Canadians who have the best interests of the Dominion at heart and appreciate the necessity of sane planning now in order to prevent costly mistakes in the future. It is obvious that the planning of a **system** rather than a single highway is sound and necessary to the building of a future solid economy in the west and to the consolidation of our national strategic and commercial positions.

Many of us have been giving careful study to the numerous problems which are involved and we have concluded that Winnipeg might properly become the central fork in such a **Trans-Canada Highway System**. One fork would continue over the southern route to Medicine Hat where another fork would occur—one road proceeding through the Crow's Nest Pass and the other through Calgary and the Kicking Horse Pass. The northern section would branch off at Winnipeg toward Saskatoon, Edmonton and the Yellowhead. Another fork would occur at Tete Jaune, the southern branch going to Vancouver and the northern to Prince Rupert. We are reliably informed that modern construction methods would render the engineering and construction problems anticipated on the northern route less difficult and comparably less costly per average mile than those on either of the southern routes.

Finally, good transportation economy dictates that main transportation arteries must tap the central and most populous and the expanding areas of any territory. Unquestionably, the Yellowhead route would do this for all of the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta as shown on the accompanying map. Fully two-thirds of the population of Alberta and Saskatchewan is located along the proposed route. The future development of and expansion in Alberta and Saskatchewan must take place in the northern districts because those portions of these provinces lying in the south are already as fully settled as existing methods of agricultural production will permit.

We are well aware that, were only one route feasible and possible of immediate development, the Yellowhead route would undoubtedly be chosen because of its obvious advantages over all others, but we believe that Canada needs more than one highway outlet from the prairies to the coast and are willing and eager therefore, to work toward the maintenance of other routes as well as that through the Yellowhead Pass.

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April 25, 1947.