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DEPARTMENT OF
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FOR RELEASE

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MAJOR ROAD PROGRAMME FOR THE NORTH

Northern Affairs Minister Alvin Hamilton today announced details of a major development road programme for the North.

Work has begun, the Minister said, on projects in the Yukon and Northwest Territories involving over 1,200 miles of roads and six major bridges at an estimated cost of over \$31,000,000.

In the Yukon plans call for the construction of a development road from the existing Yukon road system at Flat Creek, about 25 miles southeast of Dawson, running northeast some 170 miles to the southern edge of the Eagle Plain Oil Reservation, where large-scale exploration is now going on for oil. At this point the road will fork; one branch running northwest 70 miles into the drilling area, the other running northeast some 160 miles to Fort McPherson. Cost of the 400-mile road is estimated at about \$8,000,000.

Supplies for this major Arctic project have already been taken in by winter tractor train and cached along the first 170-mile portion of this road. Detailed surveys will be made this year and contracts for construction of the 170-mile stretch will be let late this year or early in 1959 for completion in 1960.

A reconnaissance survey of the second section, to Fort McPherson, will be made this year with a detailed survey in 1959. Construction of the second will follow immediately after the first 170 miles have been

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completed. Target date for completion of the entire road is 1962.

It is planned to construct three bridges in the Yukon during the next two years where the Keno-Whitehorse highway crosses the Pelly, Yukon and Stewart Rivers. Plans have been completed for the Carmacks bridge across the Yukon, which will be built in 1958; the other two will be built next year. These will replace summer ferries and winter ice bridges and open this important ore-hauling road to year-round traffic. At present freeze-up and break-up on the rivers interrupts traffic for about three months each year. These three bridges will cost \$3,500,000.

About \$270,000 will be spent this year to re-open the Canal Road as far as the Ross River. The Canal Road was built during the war to service a pipeline running from Norman Wells on the Mackenzie River to a refinery at Whitehorse. After the war the refinery was removed and the road abandoned. For several years prospectors have urged the rehabilitation of the southern 130 miles to assist mineral exploration in the Ross River area, highly promising for base metals (lead, zinc, copper, nickel). This renovation programme, including re-building of bridges, was begun last year and will be completed this year.

In addition, the sum of half a million dollars is provided for a new road westward from Dawson to Clinton Creek, a promising base metals and asbestos area.

In the Northwest Territories, Mr. Hamilton said, the major road project is the 550-mile Great Slave-Great Bear road, now to be built in two stages. Construction work on the first stage - 300 miles around the west end of Great Slave Lake to join Yellowknife with the Mackenzie Highway - will be completed in 1960 at a cost of \$10 million. In addition, bridges will be built over the Kakisa River and the northwest Arm of Great Slave Lake, and either a bridge or a ferry will be provided to cross the Mackenzie

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River. In the second stage the road will go on another 250 miles to Great Bear Lake, at an estimated cost of \$5 million. From Marian Lake near Fort Rae a road now runs some 30 miles north to serve local mining developments, and this section of road will become part of the development road system. Further north, it will follow the boundary of the Precambrian Shield to Sawmill Bay on Great Bear Lake where an airstrip already exists. The route will be surveyed in 1959 and construction will begin in 1960 or 1961.

This road will provide all-year communication with Yellowknife and will assist exploration and development in the richly mineralized areas lying between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes.

Other development road expenditures in the Northwest Territories will provide \$1,500,000 for the hard surfacing of the Fitzgerald-Bell Rock Portage Road on the Slave River transportation route where waterborne freight, transported in and out of the Northwest Territories along the Mackenzie River system, must be trucked over a 24-mile portage due to rapids on the Slave River at the Alberta boundary. The sum of two and a half million dollars will be provided for a new 78-mile road from Peace Point to the west boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park. This will assist in developing the timber resources of the area, and when the Province of Alberta constructs a road from North Vermilion, will provide the first year-round overland communication between Fort Smith and outside points, and greatly facilitate the economic development of north eastern Alberta.

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