

SINGLE COPY \$3.00 (GST IN)

MARCH, 2011

The Nipawin Bridge

"The magazine of memories"



Starting a road to nowhere, 1946

Story begins on Page 2 Photo by Weese

Decades of dithering

Robison: It was a classic case of political gamesmanship that lasted more than 30 years.

At issue was proposed construction of a highway linking Nipawin – White Fox to Flin Flon, the Manitoba mining town that had no road link to the “outside” on either side of the provincial border.

Over the decades there were flurries of discussion and lobbying, followed by inexplicable lulls that sometimes lasted for years before the subject was revived.

Many community leaders at both ends of the proposed road were determined to have it built. In 1939, two cabinet ministers of the Saskatchewan Liberal government went to Ottawa seeking financial assistance to build the road, but apparently came back empty-handed.

In 1945, the upgrading and re-routing of Highway 35 between Tisdale and Nipawin may have been the catalyst for a better organized, more vocal and more determined effort by the citizenry – the envisioned link to Flin Flon would be a northward extension of Highway 35 from Nipawin and White Fox.

Optimism ran high when, in the spring of 1946, Highways Minister J.T. Douglas announced the road would be built at a cost of \$1 million. The CCF government recognized the dire need for the road and would build it with or without financial help from the federal government, he said.

By the fall of 1949, about 35 miles of road had been

extended north from White Fox, and about 33 miles had been built at the Flin Flon end. Between those end strands lay about 97 miles of wilderness. Then, construction was halted, as *Nipawin Journal* editor Jack Fraser wryly noted, “approximately in the middle of nowhere”.

Six years later, in 1955, CCF MLA Bill Berezowski opined that the Flin Flon road would never be completed, revealing that there never had been any arrangements made for completion since the original proposal.

The locals would not give up. In 1957, the citizens’ organization “Nipawin – Flin Flon Winter Road Association” had a contractor bulldoze a “winter road” to join the north and south ends of the uncompleted Highway 35. Citizens and businesses contributed \$20,000 in cash and voluntary labour, hoping that if a north-south traffic flow could be established, the recalcitrant government would see the value of completing the highway.

All of their efforts were to no avail.

The following newspaper excerpts provide a timeline of incidents related to the people’s desire to open the northland:

March 8, 1928 – O.D. Hill, Liberal MLA for Melfort constituency, has been putting up a strenuous fight in the provincial legislature this session for a government highway from Nipawin to the Flin Flon area.

March 11, 1936 – Wm.

Connell, R.M. Mitchell and D.C. Kyle left for Regina, via Armley, where they were to be joined by J.D. MacFarlane, MLA. They will represent Nipawin on the delegation of boards of trade [meeting] the provincial government with regard to a proposed new road connecting Nipawin and Flin Flon.

It is suggested that the work could be carried out as an unemployment relief scheme.

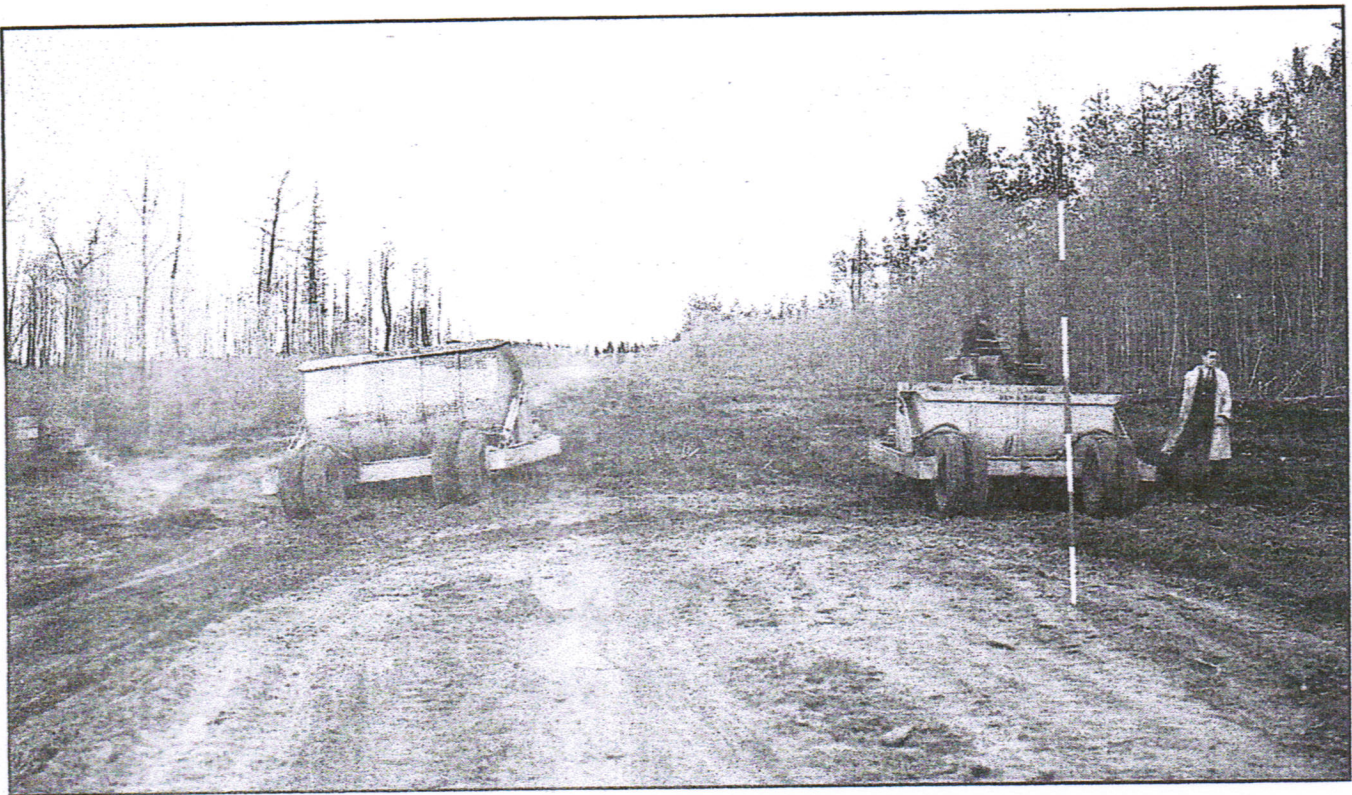
February 28, 1939 – A public meeting called by the Nipawin Board of Trade was held in the Nipawin Theatre for the purpose of forming a “Saskatchewan On To Flin Flon Association”.

Representatives were present from White Fox, Codette and Garrick boards of trade.

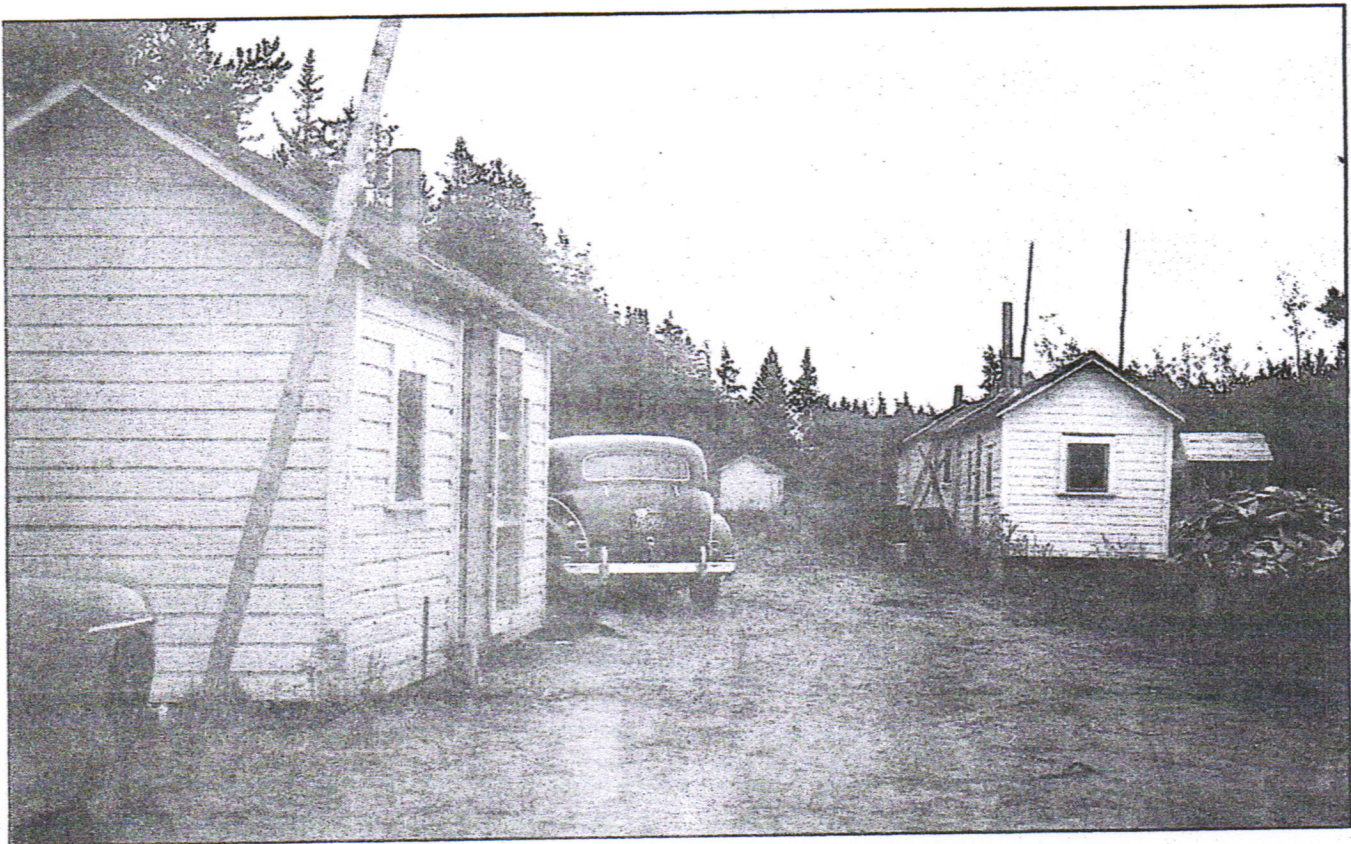
Its purpose is to enlist as much support as possible throughout this province in petitioning the Dominion and provincial governments on the necessity for this road.

April 18, 1939 – The Saskatchewan On To Flin Flon Association is glad to learn that during the visit of its representative, C.F. Robinson, to the City of Flin Flon, a new organization was formed at that point to cooperate with the Nipawin body in its efforts to secure a highway outlet for Flin Flon. Its staunch support is assured.

April 13, two Saskatchewan cabinet ministers travelled to Ottawa to lay carefully before the Dominion authorities the various arguments in favour of having the highway undertaken this year. Our own MLA, →



The top photo, made in 1946, shows heavy equipment pressing ahead through the forest to extend Highway 35 north from White Fox, observed by someone looking somewhat out of place, dressed in suit and tie. The bottom photo is believed to show a workmen's camp [well stocked with firewood, at right] for the crew. The government's plan at the time was to have No. 35 link Nipawin/White Fox to Flin Flon. Photos by Weese



Dr. J.A. Kiteley, reports they intended to ask for a \$100,000 appropriation for this road.

August 22, 1945 - It is felt by the local Board of Trade that a good road to Flin Flon would be of immense benefit to the local farmers, vegetable and fruit growers. There is a population of 10,000 people within easy trucking distance that would provide a good market for the produce grown here.

October 24, 1945 - One of the largest highway contracts let this year in Saskatchewan provides for the widening and re-routing of Highway 35 between Nipawin and Tisdale. The new highway is not to follow the old route between Codette and Armley, but is to continue straight through without the jog. It is to have a 100-foot surface and when completed will be one of the finest highways in the province.

October 31, 1945 - A news report emanating from Flin Flon states that "Saskatchewan Highways Minister J.T. Douglas said in a letter to the CCF association here that Flin Flon highway construction will begin in the spring of 1946 and is expected to be completed in the fall".

May 29, 1946 - Construction of the 150-mile-long highway from Nipawin to Flin Flon, estimated to cost \$1 million, is expected to begin shortly, Highways Minister J.T. Douglas announced. Work is expected to be done from both Flin Flon and Nipawin ends of the highway which, when completed, will extend from White Fox to Torch River, Beaver Lake, Windy Lake and Sturgeon Weir River.

Realizing the dire need for the road the provincial government will proceed despite the lack of expected assistance from the federal government, Mr. Douglas said.

This will be the first highway into the mining town of Flin Flon, which has had to rely on rail and airlines in the past.

September 4, 1946 - The display of fruit, flowers and field crops sponsored by the Nipawin Board of Trade at the Flin Flon Exhibition created much interest. The population of the mining city viewed the vegetables and fruit with longing eyes and watering mouths.

The realization that these commodities would be theirs in the fresh, raw state as soon as the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway is completed brought forth much praise for our provincial government.

Flin Flon is a city of over 10,000 population, mostly hard working miners and children with real healthy appetites. Their local tillable acreage would not amount to more than 10 acres of land. The result is that many of the homes go short of fruit and vegetables in the raw form. These people are looking longingly forward to the day when trucks from the Nipawin Garden of Eden can supply their needs.

Flin Flon merchants are also interested in availability of meat, honey, flour, milk and cream, lumber and fuel.

We at Nipawin must face the question of supply if we are going to fill the demands made on us in 1948 when the highway is completed. We must harvest many times as much fruit as we have in the past, milk more cows, produce more poultry products, market more hogs and keep more bees. Let us put our shoulder to the wheel and be sure that Nipawin is not found wanting when the time comes.

October 8, 1947 - J.L. Phelps, Saskatchewan minister of resources and industrial development, promised that the two ribbons of road being

pushed simultaneously from the north and south would be linked together by next winter, by bulldozer clearance if necessary, so that there would be a winter road by 1948. It will link Flin Flon with the outside by highway for the first time. There was no hope of a winter road this year.

Mr. Phelps was speaking at a ceremony to mark 25 miles of progress at the Flin Flon end of the road. The party was treated to coffee and doughnuts at the road camp and after the ceremony adjourned to Elmer Thompson's cottage at Beaver Lake for stew made by Bill Kent.

March 17, 1948 - Leslie Lee of Choiceland, MLA for Cumberland, erupted when fellow CCFer Jacob Benson, member for Last Mountain, suggested that work in the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway should be suspended for a year.

Mr. Benson said he felt the highways department should concentrate more on roads in settled parts of the province, instead of the northern road.

This brought Mr. Lee to his feet to say many members in the house didn't know anything about the north half of the province. It was rich in natural resources which, in wealth, would someday compare to the south's agricultural yield.

The northern road, he claimed, would pay for itself in five years after completion. It would attract tourists, would help development of the area - even mineral development would be stimulated.

April 29, 1948 - Highways Minister J.T. Douglas said road construction will resume as soon as weather permits. He said Premier T.C. Douglas is now in Ottawa, seeking federal financial aid for the project.

The minister was responding to reports that equip- ➔

THE NIPAWIN BRIDGE

"The magazine of memories"

Published monthly at Nipawin, Saskatchewan, by Little D Holdings Ltd.

Publications mail registration number 08014.

Oren Robison, publisher and editor

Phone
[306] 862-2590

Mailing address
Box 2380, Nipawin, SOE
1E0

E-mail:
o.robison@sasktel.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In Canada, \$35 per year, GST included.

United States, \$47 (Cdn.) per year.

Other countries, \$65 (Cdn.)

All subscriptions expire in June of each year.

LETTERS

Letters and stories by our readers are the lifeblood of The Nipawin Bridge. Contributions are welcomed. All submissions are subject to editing.

Letters and stories must include your handwritten signature, complete address and phone number.

Ladies please include your maiden name, if applicable, for the benefit of your friends.

Complete address will be published with correspondence, unless the writer specifies otherwise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund [CPF] for our publishing activities.

Canada

ment was being withdrawn from the project and rumours that further construction this year was postponed.

May 27, 1948 - During question period at a poorly attended CCF meeting in Nipawin, Co-operatives Minister L.F. MacIntosh said any withdrawal of equipment from the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway project was only temporary.

The Saskatchewan government intended to build the road even if there was no aid from the Dominion.

June 17, 1948 - Continued press reports from Flin Flon that the Saskatchewan government was abandoning the Nipawin - Flin Flon road link have brought a direct denial from Highways Minister J.T. Douglas.

Work on the north section will proceed as early as soil conditions permit, he said. Work on the southern section has been temporarily delayed until the department could investigate a reported rise in water levels. Excessive flood conditions in the northeastern part of the province have "greatly delayed" progress on the south end.

The minister regretted the federal government's refusal to grant any assistance for "this much needed road", but emphasized that the province had no intention of abandoning the project.

September 2, 1948 - Roy Dodds returned from Flin Flon with a report to the Nipawin Board of Trade about progress of the highway.

At present one dragline, two Bee-gees [earth movers] and five caterpillar tractors are in operation - hardly sufficient to get the road completed for years.

Progress at the Flin Flon end is about 32 miles; at the Nipawin end, about 40 miles.

The crew at the north end

will soon terminate its present contract [1.5 miles] and unless the contract for at least the next 20 miles is let this fall, no work can be done next year. They are entering stretches of marsh that can only be cleared of trees in the winter.

The problems are numerous on the highway at both ends, however this is no time to stop. A great tourist and summer vacation area awaits development around Beaver Lake. The possibilities of natural wealth are unlimited.

September 1, 1949 - A group of Nipawin citizens plans to press for completion of the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway.

R.M. Mitchell, recently returned from Flin Flon, said citizens there had been very disturbed at a report the Saskatchewan government was contemplating selling material intended for a bridge across the Sturgeon Weir River on the highway.

Frank Hastings said he thought a winter road should be pushed through to Flin Flon so that some traffic could get through. Then, he said, there would be much greater support for the building of a full-scale highway. He thought the winter road could be built for \$18,000.

John Denike of Nipawin, CCF MLA for Torch River, reported that 34.5 miles had been built from White Fox north and that on the Flin Flon end, 32.8 miles had been built. Of the 67.3 miles now built, about 47 miles had been gravelled. Cost of the portion already built was over \$400,000.

The mileage still to be completed totalled 96.5 and the cost might run into a further \$1 million.

Mr. Denike read correspondence that had been exchanged between provincial and Dominion cabinet ministers. According to correspon- →

dence read, federal reconstruction minister C.D. Howe had promised aid but had later withdrawn it.

Provincial highways minister J.T. Douglas, in a letter to Mr. Denike, said the province could not at present spend the necessary money to complete the road to Flin Flon while roads through more populous sections of the province were worn out and in need of repair. The province would do its share, he intimated, if federal help was forthcoming.

September 29, 1949 - A resolution urging the Saskatchewan and federal governments to complete the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway was given unanimous approval by a group of more than 200 representatives of Saskatchewan boards of trade and the Flin Flon board of trade.

Highways Minister Douglas placed the onus squarely on the federal government, asserting that although his government was wholeheartedly behind the northern road project, it could go no further without assistance from Ottawa.

The Flin Flon delegation presented a brief that stated, "We, your delegation from Flin Flon and surrounding territory in Manitoba and Saskatchewan have travelled here by air in three aircraft because we could not come by road, to tell you that every man, woman and child in the north is behind you in your efforts to have this road completed."

October 6, 1949 - MLA John Denike of Nipawin wrote that he supports completion of the Flin Flon highway but would first like to see a good market road built straight east of Nipawin into the Smoky Burn district.

Of the Flin Flon project, he wrote, "One of the principal complaints we hear is that the road does not go anywhere.

"In the opinion of your MLA that is a condition which should be rectified first. He suggests that we set as an objective some lake that would provide good fishing and serve as a summer resort and a spot that could be developed . . .

"It must be clearly understood that this is in no way an attempt to deter people from their main objective, but is an alternative that might be worthwhile looking at for the time being. So far your member has not indicated whether he is or is not in favour of building a highway to Flin Flon. He is, but the road to Flin Flon is not first on his project list."

October 20, 1949 - *The Regina Leader-Post* says reports that material brought to Flin Flon to build a bridge over the Sturgeon Weir River is to be sold are true. However, there has been no change in government policy with regard to construction of the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway, which is to be completed as quickly as possible.

Reason for sale of the bridge construction material is lack of funds for completion of the project this year. It was decided it would be less expensive to sell the material than hold it for another year.

October 27, 1949 - *The Flin Flon Daily Reminder* reports that the local chamber of commerce has proposed formation of a new committee to push for completion of the Nipawin - Flin Flon highway.

The new group, with the proposed name "No. 35 Highway Association", would spearhead a drive to raise the funds to complete the road. It would also send a delegation to the Saskatchewan legisla-

ture to lobby MLAs to support the project.

November 10, 1949 - The Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce continues to press for completion of the highway.

Its secretary, Harry Miles, said Manitoba had received \$250,000 from the federal government to partially fund a road to Flin Flon from southern Manitoba.

Saskatchewan was asking for three times that amount, but if it were to receive the same amount as Manitoba the onus would then be "fairly and squarely placed in the lap of the Saskatchewan government".

Rumours of a scheme to tie together market roads across to The Pas were seen as an attempt by the Saskatchewan government to evade responsibility for the Flin Flon road.

Such a scheme, Mr. Miles said, "Would leave as a dead issue a partly built road which had already cost the taxpayers half a million dollars."

February 3, 1955 - W.A. Berezowski, CCF MLA for Cumberland, told the Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce that in his opinion, No. 35 Highway linking Nipawin to Flin Flon will not be built.

He said there never had been any arrangements made for completion of the road since the original proposal and drafts were submitted. Further, the government was not justified in spending money on a road that would pass through no particular natural resources area. Much of the uncompleted portion would pass through muskeg.

However, he did predict a highway would be built in the not distant future, using one of two different routes.

Either of these routes →

offered far more incentive than completion of Highway 35, he said.

February 17, 1955 – Dr. R.E. Partridge, president of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Mines, called for completion of Highway 35 by the end of the year. The highway link had “already been paid for, many times over, out of royalties from the Flin Flon mine”.

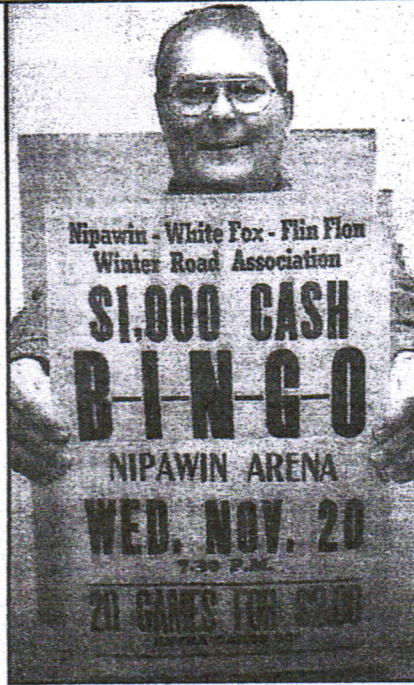
“The provincial government has been promising the completion of No. 35 highway from White Fox to Flin Flon for over 10 years,” he said. “It is time that members of the government realize that we will never get development in our northland unless we have adequate means of access, and that we cannot have development, we cannot drive trucks, on promises.”

He cited the annual report of the Department of Natural Resources that the Saskatchewan government had received between \$12 million and \$18 million from the Flin Flon mine in the past 10 years and could expect to continue to receive over \$2 million a year from the same source.

March 10, 1955 – Harry Fenster, president of the Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce, said the mining town did not care which route was chosen for a road to link that town with Saskatchewan. All it wanted was a road.

In addition to royalties paid to the Saskatchewan government, the federal government had taken about \$50 million in income and corporate taxes out of Flin Flon in the past decade. It could well afford to put a little back into a new road in the area, he said.

January 17, 1957 – A group spearheaded by Vaughn Hayes, president of



In 2001, Brian McLeod found the poster he's displaying here in a back room in his Torch River Agencies office at White Fox. Resisting the impulse to throw it away, he instead gave it to the White Fox Homecoming committee as a bit of memorabilia. The poster shows a bingo date of Nov. 20, but did not show a year. Yer Ed's research of newspaper files indicates that the event took place Nov. 20, 1957, when intensive fundraising efforts were in progress as the Nipawin, White Fox and Flin Flon Boards of Trade pursued the dream of having Highway 35 completed. At 20 games for \$2, the bingo would be held indoors at the Nipawin arena, "weather permitting".

the White Fox Board of Trade, revived a suggestion made by Frank Hastings in 1949 – push through a “winter road” from the north and south ends to create a seasonal road link to Flin Flon.

Mr. Hayes said after viewing the proposed route from an aircraft, it appeared there

would be about 40 miles of easy going for construction machines, and some 39 miles of “fair to heavy going”. He estimated the job could be done for \$3,000 [later revised to \$5,000].

If a winter road could be pushed through, and a measure of traffic established north and south, it might be possible to get action to complete Highway 35.

January 17, 1957 – Jack Fraser, editor of *The Nipawin Journal*, wrote:

“The Saskatchewan Department of Highways, after its initial enthusiasm for building a Flin Flon highway back in 1946, apparently cooled off after it had reached a point approximately in the middle of nowhere and a beautiful dream gradually faded away. Despite the efforts of the No. 35 Highway Association, Highways Minister Douglas remained definitely chilly toward the completion of the highway and it now remains as the road which goes nowhere.”

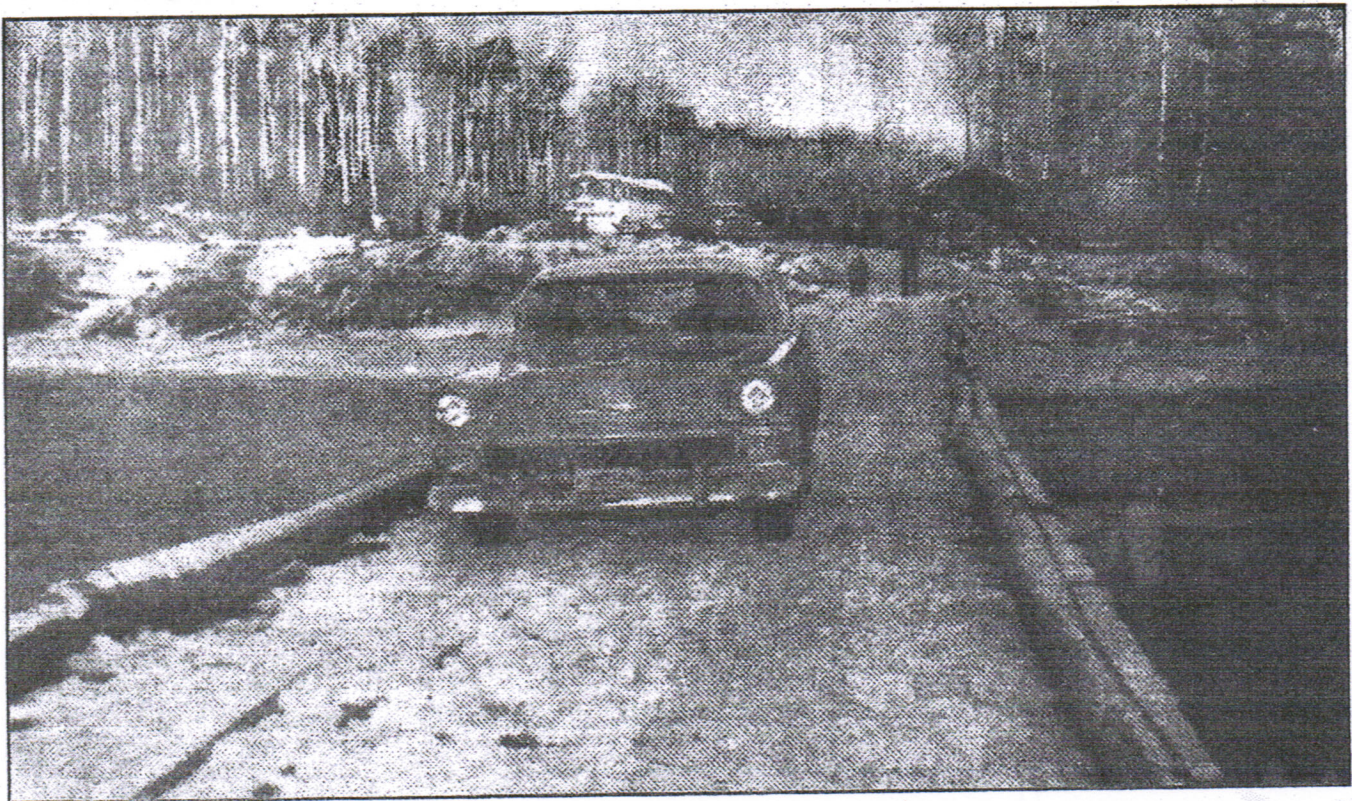
The editor endorsed the notion that if a “trail” link were made and traffic flow established, it might cause the Saskatchewan government to reconsider and complete Highway 35.

January 24, 1957 – Vaughn Hayes is president of the newly-formed “Nipawin – Flin Flon Winter Road Association”. Stan Holloway of Nipawin is vice-president and Art Logan of White Fox is secretary-treasurer. Buck Witney and Palmer Larson of Flin Flon are also on the executive.

Art Lanz of Nipawin has been awarded a contract for bulldozing the trail from the south end [north of White Fox]. A canvass for funds is already under way. Flin Flon will cover half the cost, to a →



It was nothing fancy! Top photo shows a vehicle making the first river crossing [the Torch] north from White Fox during the March, 1957, "Northward ho!" cavalcade to Flin Flon. If it wasn't much of a road, neither was the structure in bottom photo much of a bridge. The 14-foot-wide span over the Sturgeon Weir River was 250 feet in length, "flanked by sturdy guardrails". It was built by volunteers from the Creighton/Flin Flon area, supervised by a retired bridge builder.



Flin, including an opportunity to watch a hockey game pitting the Flin Flon Bombers against the Prince Albert Mintos.

Cars that made the trip actually suffered very little damage, although a couple took a bad beating including one that was making the trip from The Pas to Nipawin.

October 3, 1957 - J.H.

Brockelbank, Saskatchewan's minister of mines, said that his government favours construction of the Hanson Lake road and that hopes for the completion of Highway 35 were indeed very dim.

October 10, 1957 - Pre-meeting sentiment of Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce members was that the organization should switch its support to the Hanson Lake road, in view of vast resources potential along that route.

But chamber president C.H. Witney pleaded to keep the dream of Highway 35 alive. In spite of scattered opposition from some of his previously staunchest allies, he got the membership's agreement to "keep banging away at the highways department" for completion of Highway 35.

October 17, 1957 -

Representatives of chambers of commerce from Nipawin, White Fox, Flin Flon, Prince Albert and Melfort have decided to re-open the winter road linking the north and south ends of the uncompleted Highway 35.

It was also announced that a temporary bridge would be constructed across the Sturgeon Weir, to eliminate crossing the ice of Amisk Lake.

It has been estimated that \$4,000 will be required to build temporary bridges across the Sturgeon Weir and Torch Rivers, re-open the road and pay the balance on last winter's work.

A petition was sent to the federal government urging it to complete Highway 35, with or

without provincial assistance.

This plea was prompted by the new Diefenbaker government's creation of a "Roads to Resources" program, whose objective was to complete transportation infrastructure to remote areas.

November 14, 1957 - *The Flin Flon Daily Reminder* says it is claimed that all the recent talk about the Hanson Lake road is just another stall by the Saskatchewan government. Those who express this thought claim that every time there is any action taken to promote No. 35 highway the Saskatchewan government immediately starts talking about another route. This, it is claimed, only divides the public and nothing is accomplished.

November 28, 1957 - The mighty Sturgeon Weir River has been bridged for the first time in history by a group of Flin Flon and Creighton volunteers who worked long hours for four weekends to accomplish the feat. Jack Russell, a retired bridge builder, was in charge. The bridge is 14 feet wide and is flanked by sturdy guardrails. Mr. Russell says it will hold 16 tons dead weight and 22 tons moving at 15 miles an hour.

Yesterday afternoon a truck and half a dozen cars drove across the 250-foot bridge that passes over fast rapids at this end of No. 35 highway that was built in 1948 for some 35 miles out of Flin Flon. Around 60 miles of the highway was built at the same time out of White Fox, leaving about 90 miles to be completed.

The highway was abandoned, however, at the time the Manitoba government received financial help from the federal government to extend No. 10 highway from The Pas to Flin Flon. Since that the people of this area and those in northeastern Saskatchewan

have tried without success to persuade the Saskatchewan government to complete No. 35.

Meanwhile, A.G. Kuziak, Saskatchewan's minister of natural resources, said he "personally cannot see Highway No. 35" being completed to link Nipawin and Flin Flon.

He confirmed that the Saskatchewan government has formally requested federal assistance for the Hanson Lake road. It would run southwest of Flin Flon through Hanson Lake territory to the Deschambault Lake region, then turn south to connect with a road between White Fox and Prince Albert.

December 12, 1957 -

Vaughn Hayes told the Nipawin and District Board of Trade that the original cost estimate for bulldozing work on the Flin Flon winter road had been about \$5,000 - but this had been for a roadway only eight feet in width.

However, the trail broken had been twice that width and costs had therefore been proportionately higher, so about \$3,200 is still owed on last year's operations. Every effort would be made to liquidate this debt and cover the cost of opening the road this year.

Mr. Hayes said he expected the road could be re-opened in about two weeks, provided there was colder weather. Opening the road to traffic would cost in the neighbourhood of \$1,000.

January 23, 1958 - The winter trail to Flin Flon is now open for traffic. On Jan. 18, Charlie Hayes and Gordon Chambers of White Fox set out with a jeep and drag to put the road in condition. They arrived back the morning of Jan. 22 and say the road is in "pretty fair" condition. It should be possible to traverse the trail in about nine hours. →

January 30, 1958 - A cavalcade of at least 50 cars from Flin Flon and Creighton will travel over the winter road to White Fox and Nipawin Feb. 1. Arrangements are being made to have dinner served to the visitors at the Nipawin Legion Hall. Friendly curling games will be offered and there will be an intermediate hockey game. There is also the regular square dance on Saturday night at the Legion Hall.

[It was later estimated that 25 or fewer vehicles actually made the trek.]

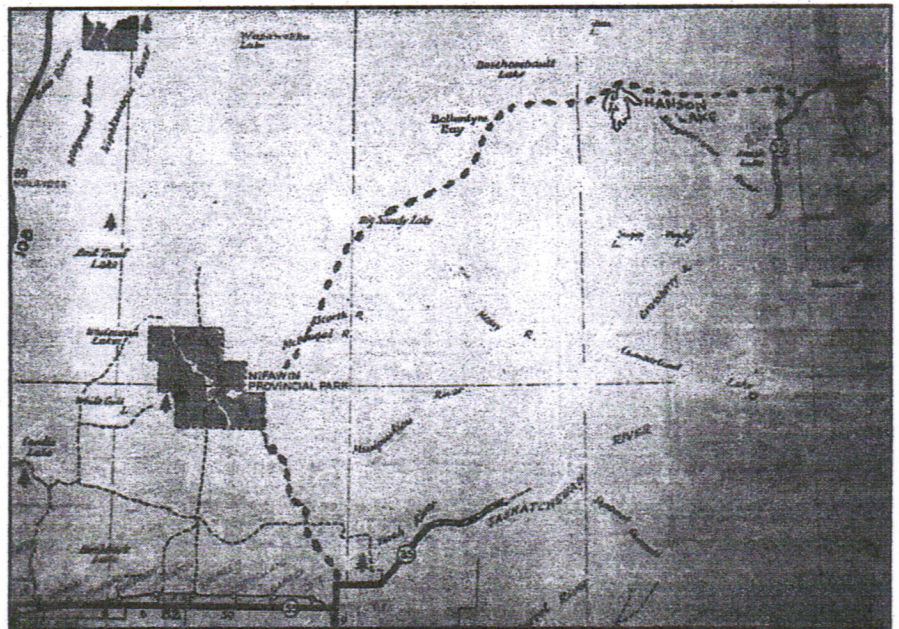
February 6, 1958 - Saskatchewan Highways Minister J.T. Douglas, supported by cabinet colleagues Alex Kuziak and L.F. McIntosh, turned thumbs down on a request to have Highway 35 completed between White Fox and Flin Flon.

Asked if he would build the road if he could get federal aid, Mr. Douglas replied, "Why should we pull Mr. Diefenbaker's election promises out of the fire? He is the one who made the promises, let him fulfill them."

Asked if he would consider financial assistance for a "winter road", Mr. Douglas said, "Certainly not. You people proceeded against our advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for the expense."

The minister also said the people of Flin Flon had tried to play one province against the other, with the result that Manitoba had finished No. 10 from The Pas into Flin Flon. At that point, Mr. Douglas said, the Saskatchewan government felt that there was no point in completing No. 35.

January 15, 1959 - Resources Minister A.G. Kuziak said 100 miles of grade on the Hanson Lake Road has been completed, north from Smeaton. It is part of a five-year, \$15 million federal-provincial "Roads to



The dotted line on this map shows White Fox as the starting point for a new highway to Flin Flon, as announced in February, 1958. The government had abandoned the original Highway 35 project after citizens' groups funded a "winter road" link in 1957 and 1958. Its plans later changed again, apparently without explanation to the public, when the southern terminus of this new road was changed to Smeaton, where it joins Highway 55 about 30 miles west of White Fox. Completed in 1962, it's known as the Hanson Lake Road.

Resources" program.

When completed the Hanson Lake Road will be about 220 miles long. In addition to facilitating mineral, forest and tourist development, it will be an important "shortcut" between Saskatchewan's main urban centres and the boundary towns of Creighton and Flin Flon.

Yer Ed sez: In February, 1958, Highways Minister Douglas finally worked up the gumption to announce that the extension of Highway 35 to Flin Flon was being abandoned.

A week later came the surprise announcement that a different government department - Natural Resources - had decided to build a road north from White Fox to Flin Flon, but on a different route from that of the original Highway 35 scheme.

It was to start about eight miles north of White Fox, where Highway 35 turns east, and go northwesterly into the Nipawin Provincial Park, then northeast to Big Sandy Lake, pass along the south shore of Ballantyne Bay, east to Hanson Lake, and from there to Flin Flon.

In essence, it was describing the Hanson Lake Road, but contrary to the original announcement that White Fox would be its south-end "Mile Zero", the Hanson Lake Road joins Highway 55 about 30 miles further west, at Smeaton.

Nevertheless, its completion in 1962 finally provided the long-sought link for Flin Flon and Creighton to Saskatchewan's highways system.

As for Highway 35 north, it remains the "highway to nowhere", dead-ending in man-made Tobin Lake.