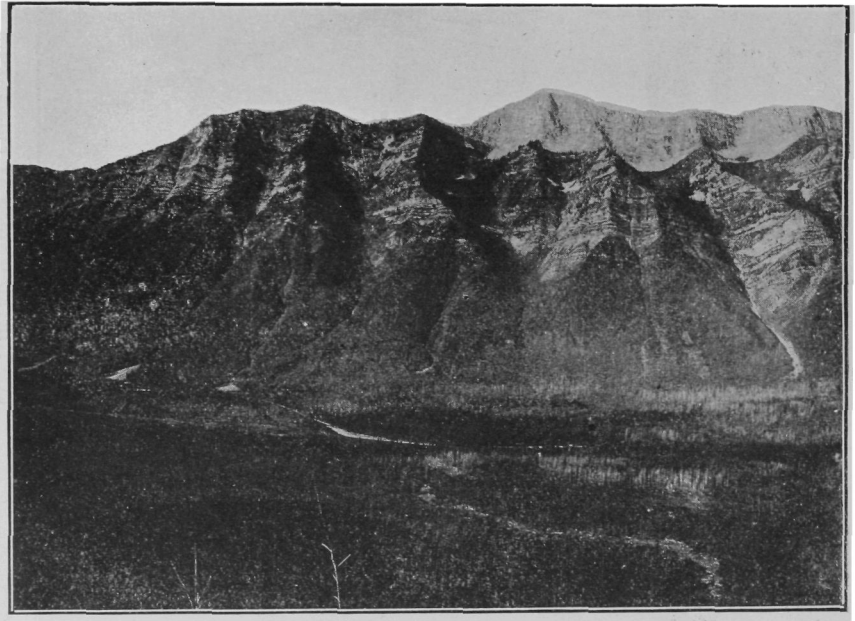


PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CANADA.

in the southwest. The lower sandstones of the Cretaceous along the Athabaska river, when they come to the surface, are for miles saturated with bitumen. These tar sands will probably average 12 per cent. in maltha or asphaltum. The lignites of the eastern plains are useful for local purposes, and highly bituminized coals are found as the mountains are approached. Vast areas underlain by lignite beds are found in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the reserves of bituminous coal in Alberta are enormous. Gold is found in a number of the rivers coming from the mountains. Clay ironstone occurs in many parts of the north-west, and will in time be utilized. Salt and gypsum also occur.

Cordilleran Belt.—The Cordilleran belt in South America, in Mexico, and in the western States, is recognized as one of the greatest mining regions of the world, noted principally for its wealth in gold, silver, copper and lead. The Cordilleras stand unparalleled in the world for the continuity, extent and variety of their mineral resources. In Canada and in Alaska this belt maintains its reputation, although in both for the greater part it is unprospected. In Canada the belt has



LIZARD RANGE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

a length of 1,300 miles and a width of 400 miles. It is pre-eminently a great mining region. Its rocks range from the oldest formations to the youngest; vulcanism and mountain building processes have repeatedly been active.

Although developed along the international boundary line on the south, and while some of the main streams have been prospected to some extent for placer gold, the greater part of the belt is as yet un-