

The most important economic minerals of the Appalachian and Acadian regions are coal, asbestos, and gypsum. Reference has already been made to the occurrence of coal and gypsum. Asbestos occurs in altered peridotite in southeastern Quebec. These are the most productive deposits of the world. Chromite also occurs in the peridotite. Auriferous quartz veins, mainly of the interbedded type, are found on domes and pitching anticlines of the gold-bearing series of Nova Scotia. Zinc-lead deposits occur in the Devonian shales and limestones of Gaspé peninsula, zinc-lead-copper sulphides in the southern part of Cape Breton island in a series of lava flows, and copper deposits in southern Quebec.

Interior Plains.—The Interior Plains are underlain by a series of nearly horizontal sedimentary rocks of Palæozoic, Mesozoic and Tertiary age. The Palæozoic rocks, consisting mainly of limestone, dolomite and shale of Ordovician, Silurian and Devonian age, form a belt extending north throughout Manitoba and northwest through Saskatchewan and northeastern Alberta down the basin of the Mackenzie river. East of the Mackenzie, rocks of Cambrian age are exposed in an area of limited extent. The Palæozoic formations rest upon the gently-sloping shelf of the Canadian Shield and pass westward with a dip of a few feet a mile beneath the shales and sandstones of Cretaceous age. The Cretaceous formations occupy nearly the whole of the plain from western Manitoba to the Rocky mountains and extend northward nearly to the Mackenzie river. There are also large parts of the Mackenzie basin, particularly of the lower half, in which the Devonian limestones are overlain by Cretaceous sediments. The Cretaceous sediments vary from shales predominantly of marine origin in the east to sandstones predominantly of continental origin in the west. Between the two are alternations of shales of marine origin with sandstones of brackish water or fresh water origin.

The Cretaceous beds are overlain in places by sediments of Tertiary age. The most extensive Tertiary formations are found in the hills of Southern Saskatchewan and in a belt running north through central Alberta, where they lie in a broad syncline. Glacial till is widespread and clays were deposited in large lakes formed on the retreat of the ice-sheet. A large part of southern Manitoba formed the bed of glacial lake Agassiz.

The Interior Plains region is the great wheat-producing area of Canada. The mining of coal is one of the important industries; bituminous coal and lignite are produced in large quantities in Alberta and lignite in smaller quantities in Saskatchewan. The Cretaceous sediments are the reservoirs of great quantities of natural gas, and these and underlying formations are the source of the oil of the Turner Valley and Wainwright oil fields. Oil has also been struck in the Devonian rocks north of Norman on the Mackenzie river. Gypsum is obtained from the Palæozoic rocks of Manitoba.

Western Cordillera.—In the western Cordillera is a fairly complete succession of sediments of Precambrian, Palæozoic, Mesozoic and Tertiary age.

The mountains to the west of the Rocky Mountain trench in southern British Columbia are composed of a series of late Precambrian quartzites, slates and magnesian limestones of great thickness. The area underlain by these widens near the international boundary and extends east beyond the Rocky Mountain trench and west beyond the Kootenay Lake valley. On Kootenay lake there is a series of mica schists, quartzites and crystalline limestones penetrated by pegmatites and other plutonic rocks of Mesozoic age. This is the Shuswap series, which