

Just north of Edmonton a height of land turns the waters to flow north into the great Mackenzie river, over 2,500 miles long, whose valley with its low elevation above the sea is the outstanding feature of the Northwest Territories. In this watershed the terrain becomes less smooth with prominent elevations in the Caribou, Horn, and Franklin mountains and the clay soils of the prairies give way to more of sand and gravel. Great Slave and Great Bear lakes, each half as large again as lake Ontario and less elevated above the sea than lake Erie, are notable features; north and east of these two great lakes the country comes within the Canadian Shield* and the rock with some shallow overburden slopes gently down to the Arctic ocean without any large uplifts to break the monotony.

Going east again, in the more northerly part there is encountered the orographical influence of Hudson bay which, indenting the continent so deeply and with rivers running in from west, south, and east, has an enormous drainage basin mainly in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. Practically all of this great basin, excepting the Nelson River drainage, is included in the Canadian Shield, the surface characteristic of which is hard rock either exposed or overlain with shallow soil generally confining agriculture to the valleys or small basins. With only small areas in northeastern Quebec rising above 2,000 feet in elevation, there are no great eminences, but the surface is generally accented by many hills and hollows with countless numbers of lakes and streams. On its west and south sides, Hudson bay is bordered by a strip of low land under 500 feet in elevation and varying in width from one to two hundred miles; in the southerly part of these flat, low lands the rock is overlain with a considerable depth of soil sometimes referred to as the clay belt of northern Ontario.

South and east of Hudson bay the predominating feature, both orographically and economically, is the very extensive depression containing the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence river which connects them with the Atlantic ocean. The bulk of the drainage basin of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence lies within the limits of the Canadian Shield with the same characteristics as already described. The very important exception is the valley of the St. Lawrence river from Kingston to Quebec and the peninsula of Ontario formed by the Great Lakes which together are generally known as the St. Lawrence Lowlands, about 35,000 square miles in area. At present, containing the greater part of the population of Canada, this industrial area is of great economic importance; the climatic conditions and fertile soil combine to make it most suitable for mixed farming.

The Maritime Provinces, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, together with the southeastern portion of Quebec, embrace an extension northward of the Appalachian mountains but, excepting the Notre Dame mountains of Gaspé peninsula, the comparatively low elevations are better described as hills. The whole area may be regarded as a peninsula jutting out with bold and broken coast-line to separate the gulf of St. Lawrence from the Atlantic and it is this situation that dominates the orography; with the exception of the St. John, the rivers are of no great length in their courses down to the sea. It is a beautiful country of diversified character with areas of good farm lands; the broken coast provides many good harbours and the only ocean ports open throughout the whole year that Canada possesses on the Atlantic seaboard.

* Excepting the St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Maritime Provinces, and the Hudson Bay Lowland, the Canadian Shield embraces all of Canada east of a line commencing at Darnley bay on the Arctic coast and running south and east through Great Bear lake, Great Slave lake, lake Athabaska, lake Winnipeg, and Lake of the Woods on the International Boundary.