

The river systems of Canada, excluding the Arctic islands, are best studied by segregating the main drainage basins as shown in Table 4.*

4.—Drainage Basins in Canada.

Drainage Basin.	Area Drained. ¹ sq. miles.	Drainage Basin.	Area Drained. ¹ sq. miles.
Atlantic Basin.		Arctic Basin.	
Atlantic or Maritime Provinces.....	61,151	Great Slave lake.....	370,681
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence river....	359,312	Arctic.....	559,676
Total.....	420,463	Total.....	930,357
Hudson Bay Basin.		Pacific Basin.	
Northern Quebec.....	343,259	Pacific.....	273,540
Southwest Hudson bay.....	283,997	Yukon river.....	127,190
Nelson river.....	368,182	Total.....	400,730
Western Hudson bay.....	383,722	Gulf of Mexico Basin.....	10,121
Total.....	1,379,150	Canada, Less Arctic Archipelago.....	3,149,831

¹ Areas are approximate and are exclusive for all rivers of those portions of their basins which lie in United States territory.

It is noteworthy that the greater part of the Dominion drains into Hudson bay and the Arctic ocean; the Nelson River drainage is exceptional in running *through* the most arable and the most settled part of the West, but, otherwise, the rivers run *away* from the settled areas towards the cold northern salt waters and this adversely affects their industrial utility. The Mackenzie, which drains Great Slave lake is, with its headwaters, the longest river in Canada (2,514 miles) and its valley constitutes the natural transportation route through the Northwest Territories down to the Arctic ocean. From Fort Smith, on the Slave river, large river boats run without any obstruction down to Aklavik in the delta of the Mackenzie, a distance of 1,292 miles. In Eastern Canada it is the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence drainage basin that dominates all others and has undergone the greatest development. The St. Lawrence river and the Great Lakes provide a water route from the Atlantic as far as Fort William and Port Arthur, twin cities situated on lake Superior and only 419 miles from Winnipeg, the half-way mark in distance across the Dominion. The main tributaries of the St. Lawrence all flowing south (most of which have lakes available for reservoiring), together with the main river itself, have developed and undeveloped water powers whose economic value it would be difficult to over-estimate. Apart from the plains region of the West, the rivers of Canada have a vast power potentiality well distributed over the country, as may be seen by reference to the water-power map at the beginning of Chapter XIII. A table at p. 15 of the 1938 Year Book gave the lengths of the principal rivers with their tributaries classified according to the four major drainage basins.

Section 3.—Islands.

The islands of Canada are among its most remarkable geographic features. They include the very large group lying in the Arctic ocean, the fringe of both large and small islands off the Pacific coast, those of the Maritime Provinces and Quebec in the Atlantic ocean and the gulf of St. Lawrence, together with the islands of the Great Lakes and other inland waters. The Arctic islands are of vast extent, Baffin,

* This classification is that of the Dominion Water and Power Bureau, Department of Mines and Resources.