

British Columbia.—British Columbia, the third largest and the most westerly province of the Dominion, includes many islands of the Pacific, notably the Queen Charlotte Group and Vancouver Island, the area of the latter being about 12,408 square miles.

The predominant feature of the Province is the parallel ranges of mountains which cover all of it except the northeast corner and produce a conformation characterized by high mountain ranges interspaced with valleys many of which are extremely fertile, with climatic conditions well adapted to mixed agriculture or fruit growing. As a rule the agricultural areas of these valleys are relatively small and broken but there are two large areas in the Peace River Block and the Stuart Lake District that are rich and have great agricultural possibilities. The shoreline of the Pacific is deeply indented with many inlets ideal for harbourage and has wonderful scenic aspects.

The wealth of forest resources supports the lumbering and pulp and paper industries and places British Columbia ahead of the other provinces in the production of lumber and timber (see Chapter IX). The Province also excels in fishery products, chiefly on account of its catches of the famous Pacific salmon. The mineral resources are remarkable for their variety and wealth. The production of the metals, gold, copper, silver, lead and zinc has played an important role in the economic life of the Province since its early days, while valuable coal deposits on Vancouver Island, and at Crowsnest and Fernie in the interior, have been worked for many years. In regard to water-power resources, British Columbia ranks after Quebec and Ontario (see Chapter XIII).

Yukon and the Northwest Territories.—North of the western provinces the Dominion of Canada extends over an area of 1,516,758 square miles. This is largely an undeveloped domain, and for administrative purposes is divided into Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories: the latter is subdivided into three Provisional Districts. This vast area is over twelve times the area of the British Isles and nearly half the area of the United States. Great rivers, like the Mackenzie and the Yukon are found there, as well as great inland bodies of water, such as Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes. There are many indications of mineral wealth and the radium mines of Great Bear Lake yield the only radium produced on the Continent.

The Yukon-Alaska Highway, recently completed, links the entire northwest, through Edmonton, with the cities of the Prairie Provinces and the United States. Airports and other facilities have been provided over wide sections of the Mackenzie Valley and in future it is likely that travel and transport by air will have a great influence on the development of the Territories. In Chapter XXIX, Section 1, details regarding the resources and administration of these areas are given.

Section 1.—Orography

At pp. 2-4 of the 1941 edition of the Year Book a textual treatment of the predominant orographical features of Canada is given. This material is not subject to wide change and is not repeated here. At p. 10 of the 1940 edition the principal peaks exceeding 11,000 feet in elevation, classified by provinces and in tabular form, are given.

Section 2.—Lakes and Rivers

Lakes.—The fresh-water area of Canada is unusually large, constituting over 6 p.c. of the total area of the country. The outstanding feature is the Great Lakes; particularly notable are the depth of Lake Superior and the shallowness of Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie.