

Germany and Spain, but a large part of the surface is made up of Precambrian rocks of the Canadian Shield, which renders it unsuitable for agriculture. The Gulf of St. Lawrence and the River St. Lawrence penetrate across the entire width of Quebec and divide the Eastern Townships and the Gaspé Peninsula to the south from the larger area of the Province to the north. North of the St. Lawrence the land takes the form of a ridge parallel to the river and rises from sea-level to the Height of Land at an elevation of from 1,000 to 3,000 feet from which it descends gently to sea-level at Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait.

With the exception of the treeless zone, extending north of latitude 58°, most of the Province supports a valuable tree growth varying from the mixed forests in the southwest to the coniferous forests in the east and north. In addition to extensive timber limits, which form the basis of a great pulp and paper industry (see Chapter IX), Quebec is the foremost of the provinces in the development of hydro-electric power (see Chapter XIII) and has available water-power resources, at ordinary minimum flow, almost equal to those of Ontario and Manitoba combined. Its asbestos deposits have long been known for their quality and extent and promise to become still more important as a possible source of magnesium as a by-product. Relatively recently, extensive developments of gold and copper in the western part of the Province have taken place and the mineralized area is being extended year by year. Quebec is in second place in mineral production among the provinces of the Dominion (see Chapter XII). Its fisheries in the St. Lawrence River and Gulf are an important resource. The climate and soil of the upper St. Lawrence Valley and of the Eastern Townships are well suited to general farming operations, including dairying and the production of vegetables on a commercial basis.

Ontario.—Lying between Quebec on the east and Manitoba on the west, Ontario is usually regarded as an inland province but its southern boundary has a fresh-water shore line on the Great Lakes of 2,362 miles while its northern limits have a salt-water shore line of 680 miles on Hudson and James Bays. There is a tidal port at Moosonee at the southern end of James Bay. The most southerly point in the Province is Middle Island at 41° 41' N. latitude (this is also the most southerly point in the Dominion) and the most northerly latitude of the Province is 56° 50'.

As in Quebec, the surface of Ontario follows the conformation characteristic of the Precambrian Shield except in the Ontario Peninsula where the surface is low and level. The highest point in Ontario is 2,120 feet, on the promontory at the northeastern corner of Lake Superior. Northwest from the Height of Land, the slope descends very gently to Hudson Bay where a large marginal strip (the Hudson Bay Lowlands) is less than 500 feet above sea-level.

Mining is a very important industry in the wide-spread Precambrian area; as in the adjoining Province of Quebec, Ontario, although lacking in native coal, is rich in other minerals and contributes almost half of the total mineral production of the Dominion. Gold, silver, nickel, copper, zinc, magnesium, dolomite, gypsum and other metals are mined commercially. Petroleum, natural gas and salt are also produced on an important scale in the Ontario Peninsula (see Chapter XII).

The geographic position of Ontario on the Great Lakes waterways system permits coal to be economically transported from Pennsylvania and iron ore from Minnesota to provide the basis of a large iron and steel industry. A rich iron-ore development in the Steep Rock district west of Port Arthur has recently come into production. An abundance of natural resources has made Ontario the foremost industrial province (see Chapter XIV).