

of the Rocky Mountains. The southern half of the Province, rising towards the west, lies at a general elevation of from 2,000 to 4,000 feet; but in the northern half, the slope descends until elevations of well under 1,000 feet are reached at Lake Athabaska in the northeast corner.

Alberta has the most extensive coal resources of any province of the Dominion and has become the leading producer of petroleum and natural gas. Lumbering is important in the more mountainous western parts and in the north, but ranching is still pursued in the less populous sections. In the southern prairies there are considerable areas where the quantity and distribution of the natural precipitation makes permanent agriculture precarious and, in these areas, a number of large irrigation projects have been developed, taking their water supply from rivers rising in the mountains which form the western boundary of the Province. The climate of Alberta is a particularly pleasant one, cooler in summer than more eastern parts of the country and tempered in winter by the Chinook winds.

The coal and oil resources have provided the basis of an industrial development and Edmonton has become the railhead for the north country.

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 shore line 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. 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 Crownsnest 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 about 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.