

a wide valley over 1,700 miles long before reaching the Bering Sea. On the east side of the mountains and their foothills, the land slopes gently away to the east and to the north.

The fundamental geology of this Region is of highly disturbed rocks ranging in age from Precambrian to Recent. The Rocky Mountain Belt is composed of great thicknesses of Precambrian, Palæozoic and Mesozoic sediments, in most places unaccompanied by plutonic or volcanic rocks. The Coast Range consists essentially of complex batholiths of granite of late Jurassic or early Cretaceous age, cutting and enclosing sediments and volcanic rocks of earlier Mesozoic age, and fringed on both sides by pre-granite rocks and by isolated basins of younger rocks. The Interior Belt, of plateaus and mountain ranges, is underlain by Palæozoic, Mesozoic and Tertiary sediments and volcanic rocks. The pre-Tertiary beds are cut by numerous bodies of plutonic rocks and in several districts strata of Precambrian age are exposed. The Precambrian rocks of the Region are almost entirely quartzites, argillites, limestones, conglomerates and gneisses and schists derived from sedimentary rocks.

The Arctic Archipelago.—This remarkable archipelago lying in the Arctic Ocean sits like a cap on the northern shore line of the mainland and extends northward as a great triangle with its apex at Ellesmere Island in latitude 83°05' and in longitude almost due north of Ottawa, the capital city of the Dominion. These treeless Arctic islands are of vast extent. Baffin, Victoria and Ellesmere, are approximately 197,754, 80,340, and 77,392 square miles, respectively, in area. Other large islands are: Banks, 25,675; Devon, 21,606; Melville, 16,503; Prince of Wales, 13,736; Axel-Heilberg, 13,583; and Somerset 9,594 square miles. There are some high mountains in the northeastern islands and in Ellesmere Island an elevation of 10,000 feet has been recorded.

Little is known of the geology of the islands and the economic potentialities, beyond deposits of coal and other minerals, have not been fully established. Precambrian schists and granitoid gneisses occur on Baffin and Ellesmere Islands and probably elsewhere. Palæozoic strata occur on most of the islands and Triassic and Tertiary rocks on a few. Linked with the Archipelago is the Hudson Bay Lowland underlain by flat-lying Ordovician, Silurian and Devonian strata. An area of Mesozoic rocks also occurs along the Moose River.

Gold has been reported from the head of Wager Inlet; native copper has been brought back from Baffin Island; mica and graphite have been found on the north side of Hudson Strait; bituminous coal is known to occur in Carboniferous strata on the islands north of Lancaster Sound and lignite occurs in Tertiary beds on the northern and eastern shores of Baffin Island as well as on Bylot Island. Lignite has been found in the Mesozoic rocks of Moose River. The possibility of finding oil in the Palæozoic strata of the Hudson Bay Lowland has been considered, but the probability is that the formations are too thin and lack the structure necessary for the accumulation of oil.

Subsection 1.—Hydrographical Features*

The oceanic areas immediately surrounding the northern half of North America play a vital role in the national life of Canada. The immense navigable waterways which extend into the heart of the continent have been of greatest importance to the discovery, exploration and mercantile development of the Dominion. The energizing

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