

The Province has a considerable area of prairie land but is also a land of wide diversity combining 400 miles of sea-coast (on a rocky belt along its northeastern boundary, bordering Hudson Bay); great areas of northern mixed forests; large lakes and rivers covering an area of 26,789 square miles; a belt of treeless prairie extending to the southeastern corner of the Province; and patches of open prairie overlain by very fertile soil of great depth. The surface of the Province as a whole is comparatively level, the average elevation being between 500 and 1,000 feet; the greatest height of 2,727 feet is Duck Mountain northwest of Lake Dauphin.

About three-fifths of the Province, east and north of Lake Winnipeg, is underlain with Precambrian rock in which the presence of rich deposits of base metals has been confirmed, as in Ontario and Quebec (see Chapter XII).

The Province, although regarded as basically agricultural, possesses a wealth of water-power resources (Manitoba ranks after Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia in this respect) that, together with mineral and forest riches, have brought about an expanding industrial development.

Saskatchewan.—Saskatchewan lies between Manitoba and Alberta extending, like each of the Prairie Provinces, from the International Boundary on the south to the 60th parallel of latitude which divides it from the Northwest Territories. It has an area of 251,700 square miles.

The northern half of the Province is abundantly watered by lakes and rivers and the topography is one of low relief. The Precambrian Shield, which covers most of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, penetrates over the northern third of Saskatchewan and has given evidence of potential richness of mineral wealth. This area is also rich in timber resources while the southerly two-thirds of the Province is generally fertile prairie with soil of great depth. In normal years there is sufficient moisture for rapid growth and the abundant sunshine during the long summer season in this northern latitude quickly ripens the crops.

Alberta.—This Province, covering 255,285 square miles, lies between Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains. Like Saskatchewan, the southern part of the Province is comprised in the dry, treeless prairie belt, changing to the north into a zone of poplar interspersed with open prairie. This gives way to mixed forests covering the more northerly parts. The Precambrian rocks enter Alberta at its northeast corner, so that, excepting the fringe of mountainous country on its western border, practically the whole of the Province is overlain by arable soil of great depth. Alberta has two marked features: (1) the great valley of the Peace River, which has already resulted in the extension of settlement farther north than in any other part of Canada; and (2) the wonderful grazing lands in the foothills district which, rising sharply on the west, commence the ascent that continues to the very peaks 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 irriga-