

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. The southern part of the Province is 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, that has 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 of the provinces and has become the leading producer of petroleum and natural gas. The new fields of Leduc and Redwater together with the older Turner Valley field produce the bulk of Canadian oil; other fields such as Lloydminster, which is partly in Saskatchewan, and Princess are also being developed. 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 make 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 that form the western boundary of the Province (see Chapter XI). The climate of Alberta is a particularly pleasant one, cooler in summer than the more eastern parts of the country and tempered in winter by the chinook winds.

The coal and oil resources provide the basis of Alberta's industrial development and Edmonton is the railhead for the north country.

**British Columbia.**—British Columbia, the third largest and the most westerly province of Canada, includes many islands of the Pacific, notably Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands, the area of the former being about 12,408 sq. miles. The total area of the Province is 366,255 sq. miles.

The predominant feature of the Province is the parallel ranges of mountains that cover all 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. Generally 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 harborage and has wonderful scenic aspects.