

The rocks of this Region include sediments, volcanics and intrusives chiefly of Palæozoic age with rocks of Precambrian age in local areas on the Island of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Cape Breton Island and southwestern Quebec. Ordovician strata in Newfoundland contain important deposits of iron. Rocks of Carboniferous age have large coal deposits and also gypsum. Zinc, lead and copper are mined at Red Indian Lake in Newfoundland and other mineral occurrences are known.

The Interior Plains Region.—The Interior Plains are part of the great plains region in the interior of the Continent and, in Canada, extend through Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta northwest to the Arctic Ocean. Other areas, such as the St. Lawrence Lowlands stretching from Lake Huron northeasterly to Anticosti Island and the Hudson Bay Lowland bordering the west side of Hudson Bay, are regarded as outliers of this Region.

The Plains of Western Canada fall into three divisions. The most easterly division is known as the Manitoba Lowlands and has an elevation of about 500 feet. It is underlain by flat-lying Palæozoic strata. The second division consists of horizontally lying Cretaceous beds. The border where they overlap on the underlying Palæozoic sediments is a steep face known as the Manitoba escarpment rising 1,000 to 2,000 feet above the lowland to the east. West of the escarpment the Plains Region rises gradually to an elevation of 4,000 to 5,000 feet in Alberta where the flat-lying beds of the plains change into the folded strata of the foothills. The third division consists of areas of flat-lying rocks of still younger age such as the Wood Mountain Plateau of Tertiary sediments. The steep topographic rise from the central Plains Region to their summits is known as the Missouri Couteau.

Bituminous coal, lignites, petroleum, natural gas and bituminous sands are found in the strata of the Plains Region of Alberta and Saskatchewan and gypsum and salt in the Palæozoic strata in Manitoba. The oil in the important fields of Alberta and Norman Wells in the Mackenzie Valley, N.W.T., is from Devonian beds.

The St. Lawrence Lowlands fall into three subdivisions, the first and most westerly includes Manitoulin Island and that part of Ontario facing on Lakes Erie and Ontario. It shows a prominent topographical feature, the Niagara Escarpment, an abrupt rise of 250 to 300 feet extending from the Niagara River to Bruce Peninsula. The second subdivision extends from the east side of the Frontenac axis (a southward projection of the Canadian Shield that crosses the St. Lawrence River between Kingston and Brockville, Ont.) east to Quebec city, and the third subdivision comprises Anticosti Island and the Mingan Islands.

The strata of the entire belt of the St. Lawrence Lowlands are of Palæozoic age. They lie horizontally or with low dips, are mainly of marine origin, and were deposited in seas that swept over a large part of the Continent. Vertical movements caused these seas to advance and retreat so that the sediments deposited vary considerably. On Anticosti Island the rocks are of Upper Ordovician and Silurian age. The mineral occurrences in the St. Lawrence Lowlands are petroleum and natural gas, salt, gypsum, limestone, dolomite and also clay that can be used for the manufacture of bricks, tiles and cement.

The Hudson Bay Lowland, the other outlier of the Interior Plains, is underlain by flat-lying rocks mostly of Palæozoic age ranging from Ordovician to Devonian. It rises from sea-level with a very gradual gradient to a height of 400 feet. Lignite occurs in the Moose River Basin in beds of Upper Jurassic or Lower Cretaceous age overlying the Devonian beds.