

Since the Klondike gold rush near the close of the nineteenth century, the Yukon Territory has been an important producer of placer gold. Rich deposits of lead-zinc-silver ore occur in the Mayo area from which a substantial production of these metals is obtained. Interest in the mineral possibilities of the Yukon has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Mineral production in the Northwest Territories is still relatively small considering the size of the region but the prospects for a substantial increase seem to be bright. Oil from the Norman Wells area, pitchblende products from deposits at Port Radium on the east shore of Great Bear Lake, and gold from the Yellowknife area are the chief minerals produced.

The agricultural land of the Territories lies almost entirely in the extension into the Mackenzie Valley of the central plains of the Prairie Provinces and crops are confined to vegetable gardens. In the northern regions the flora and fauna have their own peculiar patterns. There are immense areas of lichens, which at first sight appear to be stretches of broken greyish rock. These, along with sedges, grasses, crowberries, ground-willow, etc., provide food for the caribou and muskoxen.

The winters along the Mackenzie River are bitterly cold, averaging 16° to 25° below zero, but in Yukon they are surprisingly mild and vary from 2° below to 21° below zero.

Hunting of caribou, seals, walrus and whales and fishing and trapping form the principal basis of existence for the native Eskimos, providing food and hides for the manufacture of clothing, sleeping bags, etc. The introduction of reindeer by the Federal Government in the Mackenzie District of the Northwest Territories has provided an important local industry to serve the people's needs.

PART II.—LAND RESOURCES AND PUBLIC LANDS

Section 1.—Land Resources

Extensive areas of arable and forested land, together with vast water-power resources, are the basis of Canada's industrial and commercial life. Agricultural land has been developed on a substantial scale and is well distributed from east to west. It is characterized by a diversity of contour, soil and climate and is thus capable of producing a great variety of crops in a volume well beyond domestic requirements. Of the total land area, 15.5 p.c. is estimated as suitable for cultivation and of this area a little less than 50 p.c. is, at present, occupied. Most of the unoccupied land considered potentially suitable for agriculture is now under forest. Altogether, about 37 p.c. of the total land area of the country is forested. This vast extent is of immense importance, not only in the production of lumber, pulpwood and fuel, but also in tempering the climate and conserving the water supply.

This Section of the Year Book is concerned only with those summary phases of the subject that can be regarded as falling under the definition of physiography used in its wider interpretation. Detailed information regarding individual natural resources and their development will be found in later chapters, together with data concerning the efforts directed to conservation of those resources.

Table 1 classifies the land resources as agricultural, forested or unproductive. Duplication is unavoidable between the totals of present and potential agricultural land and the totals of forested land to the extent of agricultural lands under forest. The figures of agricultural lands are based on the 1951 Census; those on forested land are obtained from the Department of Resources and Development while those for total land area of Canada and the provinces are supplied by the Surveyor General.