

Section 2.—Main Physical and Economic Features of the Provinces

Politically, Canada is divided into ten provinces and two territories. Each of the provinces is sovereign in its own sphere, as set out in the *British North America Act, 1867, and its amendments*. As new provinces have been organized they have been granted political status equivalent to that of the original provinces. The Yukon and Northwest Territories, with their present boundaries, are administered by the Federal Government. The chief physical and economic features of each of the provinces and of the territories are reviewed in the 1954 *Canada Year Book*, pp. 13-19. Details of resources and their development are given in the different chapters of this volume (*see Index*).

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 42 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 may be regarded as falling under the definition of physiography used in its wider interpretation. Detailed information relating to 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, to the extent of agricultural lands under forest, between the totals of present and potential agricultural land and the totals of forested land. Figures of total land area and forested area are obtained from the Geographical Branch of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys; those of agricultural lands are based on the 1951 Census.