

Vancouver in southern British Columbia and Whitehorse in Yukon Territory provides the shortest crossings of the North Pacific Ocean between continental North America and the Far East. Canada thus stands at the crossroads of contacts with the principal powers and some of the most populous areas of the world.

In size, Canada is the largest country in the Western Hemisphere and the second largest country in the world. Its area of 3,851,113 sq. miles may be compared with that of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 8,649,821 sq. miles,* the United States of America (including Alaska), 3,608,790 sq. miles,* and Brazil, 3,287,204 sq. miles.* It is more than forty times the size of the United Kingdom and eighteen times that of France. The immense size of the country, while encompassing many resources and seeming to afford much scope for settlement, imposes its own burdens and limitations, particularly because much of the land is mountainous and rocky or is under an arctic climate. The developed portion is probably not more than one-third of the total; the occupied farm land is only 7.7 p.c. and the currently accessible productive forested land 18.1 p.c. of the total. The population of Canada, estimated at 16,589,000 on June 1, 1957, may be compared with 165,271,000† for the United States (1955) and with 58,456,000† for Brazil (1955).

1.—Approximate Land and Freshwater Areas by Province and Territory

NOTE.—A classification of land area as agricultural, forested, etc., is given at p. 18.

Province or Territory	Land	Freshwater	Total	Percentage of Total Area
	sq. miles	sq. miles	sq. miles	
Newfoundland (incl. Labrador).....	143,045	13,140	156,185	4.1
Prince Edward Island.....	2,184	--	2,184	0.1
Nova Scotia.....	20,743	325	21,068	0.6
New Brunswick.....	27,473	512	27,985	0.7
Quebec.....	523,860	71,000	594,860	15.4
Ontario.....	333,835	78,747	412,582	10.7
Manitoba.....	211,775	39,255	251,030	6.5
Saskatchewan.....	220,182	31,518	251,700	6.5
Alberta.....	248,800	6,485	255,285	6.6
British Columbia.....	359,279	6,976	366,255	9.5
Yukon Territory.....	205,346	1,730	207,076	5.4
Northwest Territories.....	1,253,438	51,465	1,304,903	33.9
Franklin.....	541,753	7,500	549,253	14.3
Keewatin.....	218,460	9,700	228,160	5.9
Mackenzie.....	493,225	34,265	527,490	13.7
Canada.....	3,549,960	301,153	3,851,113	100.0

Section 1.—Physical Geography

Subsection 1.—Physiographic Regions

Canada includes each of the major characteristic structures of the North American continent with the exception of the Atlantic coastal plain. Structure tends to dominate relief to a remarkable degree even though its effects have been modified by glacial and river erosion or deposition. Consequently, structural regions have become main physiographic divisions. Basically Canada consists of a central rocky upland, or shield, sloping down to flanking basins filled with sedimentary strata and rising again at the margins to mountains of folded rocks, interspersed with igneous intrusions.

* United Nations Statistical Yearbook 1966.

† United Nations Population and Vital Statistics Reports, January 1957.