

from the Rockies proper by the pronounced gap of the Liard River. The Rockies are composed partly of highly folded beds and partly of nearly flat beds that have been uplifted to great heights. They are split by faults and have been attacked by rivers so successfully as to give way to low passes such as Finlay Forks, Pine, Yellowhead, Kicking Horse and Crowsnest. Three clusters of peaks occur, dominated by Churchill Peak (10,500 feet) in the north, Mount Robson (12,972 feet) in the centre and Mount Assiniboine (11,870 feet) in the south.

The interior basins and plateaux are considerably lower than the Rocky or Coast Ranges. On the east they begin at a well-marked break called, in part of its course, the Rocky Mountain Trench. This carries the headwaters of the Liard, Peace, Fraser and Columbia Rivers. The Yukon Plateau in the north, lying between Dawson and Selwyn Ranges, has flat summits separated by deeply cut rivers. Southward it passes to the Cassiar Mountains, strongly intruded with igneous masses. Thence the Stikine Plateau runs as far as the Skeena-Hazelton Ranges, which are again largely of intruded igneous rock. South of these is the Interior Upland of British Columbia, a wide area of flat-topped uplands from 3,000 to 4,000 feet high with deep, many-terraced rivers flowing between. The gorge of the Fraser River is one of the most spectacular in Canada. The river basins afford considerable fertile land for cultivation and the plateau tops provide excellent pasture. Toward the United States border are the Columbia Mountains, a complex system of folded and intruded rocks and fault-line depressions rich in minerals and with productive river and lake terraces.

The Coast Range has the highest peaks in Canada—Mount Logan (19,850 feet) in the Yukon Territory and Mount Waddington (13,260 feet) in British Columbia. The Canadian portion starts in the high, partly volcanic, partly folded mass of peaks known as the St. Elias Range. Here active glaciers have cut deep troughs and sharp ridges. South, the Coast Range has some large batholiths. The crystalline rocks have frequently become exposed by the very active erosion caused by heavy precipitation from oceanic airs. Consequently most of the Coast Range, despite its massive structure, consists of a saw-like series of sharp peaks and ridges.

The Inner Passage along the coast comprises the Georgia, Queen Charlotte and Hecate Straits. It is a continuation northward of the string of great depressions occurring in the United States, such as the Sacramento and Willamette Valleys, but it became drowned by the sea and there is little plain left. The mainland and island coasts rise very steeply to lofty mountains. The Passage has a very large number of arms, most of which are ice-cut fjords or fault depressions giving a highly indented shore. The outer insular arc is made up of outlying ridges that have become partially submerged under the sea, forming a number of hilly or mountainous islands enclosing small fertile basins. The Queen Charlotte group in the north and Vancouver Island in the south are the most important.

The Western Cordilleras are very complex in structure and consequently have a wide range of resources. In some of the narrow plains, sedimentary rocks are underlain by coal fields as at Fernie and Nanaimo in British Columbia and at Carmacks in the Yukon Territory. Oil is purported to lie under plateau sections in the Yukon. Gold made the Cariboo district of British Columbia and the Klondike area of Yukon Territory world-famous in their time but of greater importance are the large mineral masses usually associated with igneous intrusions, of which copper, lead and zinc are the most significant. To this wealth of metals, the Cordilleras add vast hydro-electric potential and dense, extensive coniferous forests. Agriculture is limited except on the Fraser delta and in one or two of the interior trenches.

The Innuitian Region and the Arctic Coastal Plain.—The Innuitian Region is an extensive belt of fold mountains 800 miles long, involving rocks from Silurian to Cretaceous times. Folding started in Appalachian times in Silurian and Devonian beds. It overlapped that of the Cordilleras in Cretaceous and Cenozoic beds. Two sub-regions exist—the Ellesmere Island system and the Parry Islands folded belt. The Ellesmere Island system seems to indicate a double orogeny, in Silurian and then again in Cretaceous times.