

between Prince George and Lillooet reduces totals to less than 20 inches. As the land rises again on the Cariboo Highlands precipitation increases to 44 inches at Barkerville and probably more in the Columbia Mountains, only to decrease again to 18 to 30 inches with the descent into the Rocky Mountain Trench. Precipitation is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year although spring is definitely the driest season and summer and autumn the wettest. Snow normally falls in all the months from September through May.

Northern British Columbia.—This section includes that part of the province lying roughly north of latitude 55°. West of the continental divide the region is one of varied relief including several distinct mountain ranges and associated valleys. The extreme northeastern portion of the province lying east of the Rocky Mountains comprises the Fort Nelson and Liard River basins in the north, separated from the Peace River basin to the south by a drainage divide rising to 4,000 feet. The whole area is characterized by long cold winters and short cool summers with only moderate precipitation. January mean temperatures are only slightly above zero in the northwestern section. Summer temperatures are among the lowest recorded in the province with July mean temperatures of 54°F. at Atlin and 57°F. at Finlay Forks. In the Peace River Valley, January temperatures average about 5°F. with mean July temperatures of 60°F. Northward in the Fort Nelson River Valley winter temperatures are ten degrees colder, while in July mean temperatures are quite similar in both valleys.

It is very difficult to assess frost data in northern British Columbia since an outbreak of polar air may occur at any time during the summer and produce freezing temperatures. The records also show striking differences between stations on the open plateau and those in mountain valleys. The available records show growing seasons ranging from 30 to over 100 days in northern British Columbia.

East of the Coast Range in northwestern British Columbia precipitation is light, averaging 11 inches at Atlin and 15 inches at Dease Lake, and increasing slightly eastward to 17 inches at Finlay Forks. Throughout the northeastern section of the province east of the continental divide available statistics indicate annual precipitation varying from 15 to 18 inches with a definite summer maximum.

Yukon Territory.—The Yukon Territory is a rugged land of plateaus and mountain ranges, cut off from the Pacific by the Coast and St. Elias Mountains which provide a strong barrier to the maritime influences from the Pacific. On the east the Mackenzie Mountains provide less defence against the winter cold waves from the Northwest Territories. Between these two mountain systems lies the Interior Plateau, a rough irregularly rolling upland with an average elevation of 4,000 feet but with large areas exceeding 5,000 feet and isolated mountains reaching 6,000 feet. Cutting through mountains and plateaus are numerous river valleys, some with flat bottoms and sloping sides; others are deep narrow gorges with the sides rising precipitously.

The whole region is north of latitude 60° and part is beyond the Arctic Circle. In winter even in the south the days are short with no effective sunshine. In summer long hours of daylight promote rapid growth where suitable soil is available. In comparison with the Mackenzie Valley, winters are remarkably mild in the Yukon Territory. Even though the oceanic influences are modified by the mountain barrier, winters are much milder in the southwest than in the interior. January mean temperatures are 5°F. at Whitehorse and -2°F. at Teslin. Comparative figures are -7°F. at Watson Lake and -16°F. at Dawson. On the other hand, topography favours extremely low minimum temperatures during Arctic cold waves. Snag holds the record for North America—-81°F. on Feb. 3, 1947. Other minimum records are -62°F. at Whitehorse, -63°F. at Teslin, -73°F. at Mayo and -74°F. at Watson Lake. Fortunately, periods of intense cold are usually of short duration. The Yukon Territory is subject to wide variations in temperature during the winter depending on whether the dominant influence is modified air from the North Pacific or intensely cold air from the Beaufort Sea. This is illustrated by a comparison of January mean temperatures at Dawson