

CHAPTER I.—PHYSIOGRAPHY AND RELATED SCIENCES

CONSPECTUS

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*The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book
will be found on the facing page.*

PART I.—GEOLOGY*

North America comprises six main natural regions which are both physiographic and geological because the ages, kinds and structures of the underlying rocks determine the natures of the land surfaces. Knowledge of these regions is important because their geological characteristics have much influence on the suitability of different areas for such activities as agriculture, mining, petroleum production and sports, and contribute as well to the varied scenery of the country. The six regions are: the Canadian Shield, a vast area of ancient rocks that is mainly in Canada; the Interior Plains and Lowlands, the largest area of which extends throughout the mid-Continent from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean; the Appalachian Region, mainly in the United States but also forming an important part of Eastern Canada; the Cordilleran Region, extending along the entire west coast of the Continent; the Atlantic Coastal Plain along the eastern seaboard of the United States; and the Innuitian Region, a mountainous belt in the Arctic Archipelago. Canada includes parts of four of these regions and all of the Innuitian Region, but none of the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

The Canadian Shield, embracing about one-half of the total area of Canada, is a roughly horseshoe or shield shaped terrain of some 1,850,000 sq. miles, having Hudson Bay at its approximate centre. The Shield continues into the United States west and south of Lake Superior, and east of the upper St. Lawrence River where a belt of resistant rocks called the Frontenac Axis forms the Thousand Islands and, to the south, broadens to form the Adirondack area. Far back in Geological time the Shield contained many ranges of high mountains

* Prepared by Dr. A. H. Lang and published by permission of the Director, Geological Survey of Canada, Ottawa.