

with mining and the smelting and refining of metals. Only a few of the larger operations are mentioned here: the Sudbury area produces some 65 p.c. of the world's supply of nickel, as well as copper, gold, cobalt and a variety of other metals; the area from Timmins to Val d'Or has long been famous as Canada's 'gold belt'; the Steep Rock Lake area west of Lake Superior accounts for a large proportion of Canada's iron ore shipments; the Elliot Lake camp is the largest uranium mining camp in the world; the copper resources of Chibougamau have recently come into prominence; and the smelters at Arvida have placed Canada in the forefront of aluminum production. The region is crossed by transcontinental railways, air routes and highways, and the use of the hinterland for recreational purposes is becoming increasingly important.

The Ecumene

The fourth tier of regions is the area referred to as the Ecumene of Canada, but even within this more intensely occupied belt the population distribution is far from regular. The major centres of the Atlantic Provinces are separated from those of Quebec by the Appalachian Highlands. The densely populated portions of Ontario and Quebec are separated from the prairies by sparsely populated northern Ontario, and the densely populated portion of the Far West is separated from the remainder of the country by the mountains of the Canadian Cordillera. Thus this zone falls into four parts.

Southern British Columbia.—This is part of the series of high parallel ranges of mountains and the resulting system of parallel linear valleys that forms the Canadian Cordillera. Under natural conditions these were very difficult of access, but the construction of railways and highways, often following the same routes, have made travel easier. It is this relative ease of travel that sets aside, as a separate region, the roughly triangular-shaped area bounded by the Canada-United States border, the Rocky Mountains, that portion of the transcontinental railway between Yellowhead Pass and Prince George, and the line from Prince George to North Vancouver; included also is part of Vancouver Island. The mountain ranges give southern British Columbia a variety of climates, ranging from marine west coast (almost Mediterranean) in the extreme southwest to semi-arid in the interior plateaux and deep interior valleys. The mountainous country and the variable climate limit the amount of land suitable for cultivation to narrow strips along the valley floors where specialized crops are grown, sometimes with the aid of irrigation using water from the snow-fed rivers and numerous lakes, as is exemplified by the fruit and vegetable farms of the Okanagan Valley. The best areas of all are the post-glacial delta lands of the lower Fraser Valley, which are intensively utilized, especially for vegetable-growing and dairying. On southern Vancouver Island intensive berry-farming, bulb-growing and dairying are carried on. In the plateau sections of the region, cattle and sheep farming dominate. Lumbering is important throughout the area, the greatest number of sawmills being found in the Vancouver, Victoria and Prince George areas. The region also accounts for nearly 80 p.c. of the lead and 50 p.c. of the zinc produced in Canada, most of it from the Sullivan mine near Kimberley, from which the ore is shipped to Trail for smelting; gold, nickel, copper and silver are also obtained in significant commercial quantities. Almost all of the people of British Columbia live in this region, the greatest concentrations being in the Vancouver and Victoria areas. Much of the processing of the raw materials of the sea, forest, mine and farm are carried on in these two areas; the administrative and educational services are centred there, and they are also the foci of land, sea and air transportation routes.

Prairie Region.—This region forms the southern part of the Interior Plains of Canada. The southeastern portion is a lake-strewn lowland within which lies the Red River Valley, an area covered with some of the most fertile soil in Canada. The eastern limit of this portion is the Manitoba escarpment and west of these hills lie the Saskatchewan plains,