

The length of Canada's southern border adjoining the United States is 3,986.8 miles and the length of the Yukon-British Columbia border adjoining Alaska is 1,539.8 miles.

Section 1.—Physical Geography

Subsection 1.—Main Physical and Economic Features of the Provinces and Territories

Politically, Canada is divided into ten provinces and two territories. Each province is sovereign in its own sphere and administers its own natural resources, and upon such resources, as related to topography, position and climate, is based the economy of the province. The resources of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, because of the remoteness, the great extent and the meagre and scattered populations of these areas, are administered by the Federal Government.

The main physical and economic characteristics of each province and territory are described in the following paragraphs. However, it should be mentioned that the economic development of the country as a whole, based in the first instance on physical features and later on other factors, has formed regions quite distinct from the political divisions. These economic regions are described in an article appearing in the 1962 Year Book at pp. 17-23. It should also perhaps be noted that physical features and natural resources influence economic development only up to a point. In a pioneer area and as long as that area is dependent upon primary resources this is the case but as growth continues and industry develops and diversifies, as the problems of transportation and communication are mitigated and public services become increasingly important, the dependence shifts to demand and markets and large agglomerations of population become magnets drawing unto themselves with less and less relation to the geography of their location. This has become particularly true of the heavily populated areas of southwestern Ontario and southeastern Quebec and to a lesser extent of other urban centres across the land.

Newfoundland.—Newfoundland, Canada's most easterly province, has a total area of 156,185 sq. miles. The larger part of this area, 112,826 sq. miles, known as the Coast of Labrador, is on the mainland and is separated from the Island of Newfoundland at the narrowest point by the Strait of Belle Isle. Labrador is a roughly triangular area bordering the north Atlantic Coast from the Strait of Belle Isle to Ungava Bay, its rounded apex extending inland about 450 miles. The surface of this remote region is mostly a barren mosaic of rocks, swamps and lakes; its rugged coastline has promontories rising up to 3,000 feet directly from the sea and the extreme northern area is dominated by the Torngat Mountains, summits of which rise to over 5,000 feet. Although it lies in the same latitude as Britain, Labrador has an extremely rigorous climate and is usually snow-covered for more than half the year. Many of its river valleys are well forested, the accessible timber stand being estimated at 6,755,000,000 cu. feet, its rivers, particularly the Hamilton, have numerous falls suitable for the development of hydro power, and its coastal waters abound in fish which, until recently, were its most valuable resource. However, the great mineral potential of its Precambrian rocks is beginning to be exploited and iron ore is now Labrador's greatest source of wealth. The high-grade hematite deposits on the Labrador-Quebec boundary near the headwaters of the Hamilton River account for almost half the Canadian shipments of iron ore and the nearby Wabush Lake area, now under development, will greatly increase this production. To serve the latter, the first use of Labrador's hydro-power potential has been made by the installation of a 120,000-hp. plant on the Unknown River. Labrador in 1961 had a population of only 13,500, about half of whom were located in the area of Goose Bay, a Royal Canadian Air Force station. Close to 800 were in the new townsite of Labrador City at Wabush Lake and the remainder were scattered along the coast, supporting themselves by fishing and hunting. Indians and Eskimos numbered about 1,200.