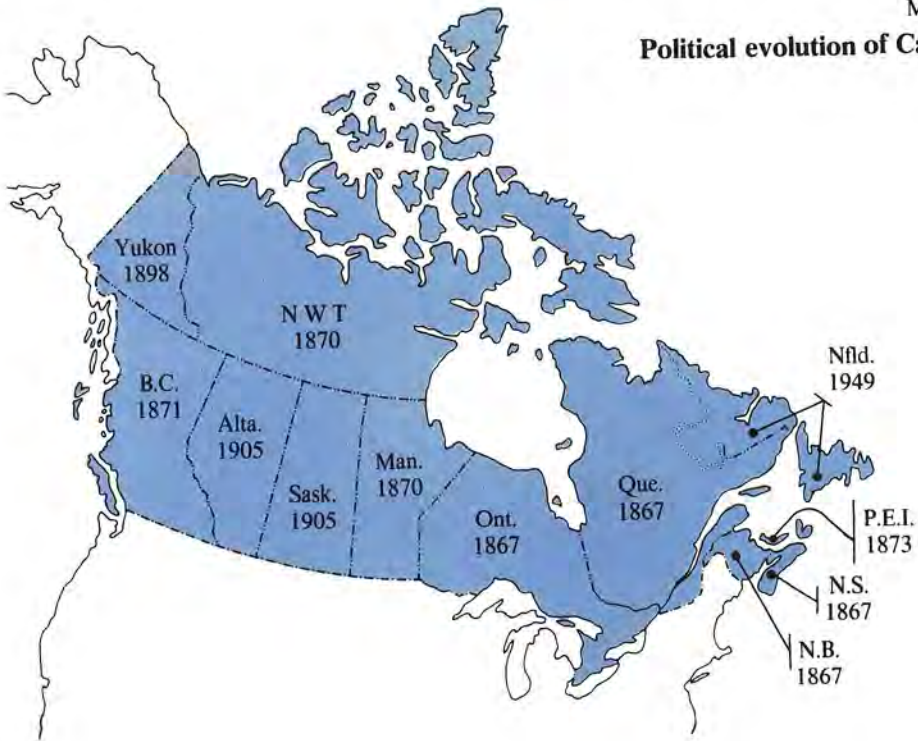


Map 1.1
Political evolution of Canada



distinct topographic forms, the largest part within the Canadian Shield. The demarcation line begins close to the southeast boundary and runs diagonally northwest through Lake Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan border. The northern area has heavily glaciated topography and deranged drainage. Its major rivers, Nelson and Churchill, flow into Hudson Bay. The southwestern portion is the lowest of three step-like formations across the great central plains. It is floored by deep fertile clay soils left by glacial lakes that once covered the area. It is separated from the Saskatchewan plain along its western boundary by the Manitoba escarpment, a narrow belt of hilly terrain.

Manitoba has the greatest water-power potential of the three Prairie provinces. The north is well forested but much of the productive area is so remote that forest industries are not highly developed.

Winnipeg, the capital (population 562,059), is the industrial centre of Manitoba.

Saskatchewan (population 968,313) is two-thirds prairie lowland, the great grain-producing region of Canada. The demarcation line between the lowlands and the Canadian Shield, crossing into Saskatchewan near the 55th parallel, continues northwest across the province although it becomes less sharply defined. The second step of the prairie formation, covered

with deep fertile soil, is exceptionally flat in some areas but elsewhere hummocky with innumerable sloughs. The next scarp is the Missouri Coteau from which extends the highest of the prairie steps. The Cypress Hills rise above this level. Cutting across the lowland are the branches of the Saskatchewan River which flow to Lake Winnipeg.

Saskatchewan's climate is continental with long cold winters and warm summers. The frost-free period in the fertile lowland areas ranges from 80 to 100 days. Precipitation is low with an average of less than 50 cm a year.

The urban centres — Regina, the capital (population 162,613), and Saskatoon (population 154,210) — serve mainly as distributing centres for their surrounding areas.

Alberta (population 2,237,724) lies mainly in the interior plains region. The southern part is dry, treeless prairie changing toward the north into a zone of poplar interspersed with open prairie and giving way to mixed forests.

The boundary follows the 49th parallel, strikes northwest following the ridge of the Rocky Mountains to a point close to the 55th parallel and then turns directly north to the 60th parallel. From the Saskatchewan border in the southern area the plain rises gradually as it merges into the Rocky Mountain