

mountain ranges oriented in a north-south direction with a set of parallel linear valleys.

The Rocky Mountains on the East present a continuous range of wall-like ridges, cut up by glaciation into sharp peaks, knife-like edges and deep hollows. Some of the highest peaks in the Canadian Rockies rise to 3 500 m or more.

The central section is marked off by the Rocky Mountain Trench which contains the headwaters of the Kootenay, Columbia, Fraser, Peace and Liard rivers. Westward, relief is lower and broader and the effects of glaciation are not as spectacular. This section consists of several mountain ranges, with plateaus and lake basins between them.

In the western section the Coast Mountains extend southward from the St. Elias Mountains where the loftiest peaks on the continent thrust up out of glistening icefields.

The inner passage adjacent to the coast — the Strait of Georgia, Queen Charlotte Strait and Hecate Strait — is one of the finest natural waterways in the world. Vancouver Island rises steeply from a rocky coastline; in the Queen Charlotte Islands, individual mountain ranges are separated by deep, narrow valleys.

Prevailing westerly winds and the warm Pacific waters result in mild wet winters in the coastal area, warm summers and the longest average frost-free season in Canada. Inland, there are greater ranges of temperature and much less rainfall. Semi-arid conditions occur in some of the plateau areas of the interior. The North has long cold winters, short cool summers and moderate precipitation.

Vancouver is the largest city, a rapidly growing industrial complex and seaport. Victoria, the capital, is on the southern tip of Vancouver Island.

Yukon, north and slightly west of British Columbia, is a triangular area of plateaus and mountain ranges bounded by Northwest Territories and Alaska. Its only seacoast extends along the Arctic Ocean west of the Mackenzie River delta. Between the Coast Mountains on the West and the Mackenzie Mountains on the East lies a plateau of rough, irregularly rolling upland. Numerous river valleys cut through mountains and plateaus. In the southwest many peaks of the St. Elias Mountains reach heights of over 4 000 m. The highest point in Canada, Mount Logan (5 951 m), is located in this mountain range.

The whole region is north of latitude 60° and part is beyond the Arctic Circle. In summer, long hours of daylight promote rapid growth where there is suitable soil. In winter, the days are short with little effective sunshine. Despite wide variations in temperature, winters are remarkably mild for the latitude and periods of intense cold are of short duration.

The Alaska Highway provides a transport link with British Columbia and Alberta. The capital and main urban centre is Whitehorse.

Northwest Territories includes all Canadian territory north of the 60th parallel of latitude except Yukon, the northwestern tip of Quebec and Labrador, and all islands south of the 60th parallel in Hudson Bay and James Bay. This vast area, more than one-third of Canada, is one of extremes in topographical characteristics, flora and fauna, and climate with permafrost throughout. East of the mountain fringe along the Yukon boundary, the mainland plains slope east to Hudson Bay and northeast to the Arctic Archipelago. The interior plains of the central continent extend to the Arctic Ocean. Across the low-lying mainland area flows the Mackenzie River, draining Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake and emptying into the Arctic Ocean, a distance of about 4 240 km. The whole northeastern portion of the mainland is treeless tundra studded with countless lakes, swamps and muskeg. In southern areas summers last for about three months with temperatures above 10°C. North of the treeline, freezing temperatures may occur during any month and winters are long and bitterly cold. In the Archipelago, high mountain ranges lie in a general north-south direction across Baffin, Devon and Ellesmere islands. Climates are moderated by the sea so that extremes are not as severe as in a continental area of the same latitude. Temperatures in the Archipelago are generally below -18°C for six months or more. Occasional mild periods occur during the winter, particularly in the western Arctic. Summers are short and cool. Winter nights and summer days are long, reaching a maximum of 24 hours. Precipitation is extremely light and falls mostly in late summer.

The capital, Yellowknife, is situated on the north shore of Great Slave Lake. Road access to the rest of Canada is restricted to the Mackenzie Delta and Great Slave Lake areas. In the eastern Arctic, the focal point is Frobisher Bay.

1.1.2 Economic geography

Newfoundland. The economy is based largely on natural resources and their processing. Pulp and paper and food processing are the main elements of manufacturing. Iron ore is the largest component of the substantial mineral production with zinc and asbestos having some importance. Cod forms over half the value of landed species in the extensive fishing industry.

Prince Edward Island. Agriculture is the principal occupation. Almost 70% of the land is cultivated, producing mixed grain crops but specializing in potato growing. Dairying and livestock raising are also important. The lobster catch accounts for