

**The Cordilleran Region.**—The Cordilleran Region comprises the mountainous country bordering the Pacific Ocean and covers an area of 600,000 sq. miles. It is made up of three zones. On the east is the Rocky Mountain Range, on the west along the coast is the Coast Range, and between the two is a third belt made up of upland and mountainous country.

The Rocky Mountains have a maximum width of 100 miles and peaks and elevations of from 10,000 to 12,000 feet. The Coast Range varies in width from 50 to 100 miles and rises abruptly from the coast to peaks of from 7,000 to 10,000 feet.

The northern part of the interior belt, known as the Yukon plateau, is a gently rolling upland broken into a series of flat-topped ridges by valleys several thousand feet deep; the southern part, in British Columbia, rises from 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea-level. To the east between the upland and the Rocky Mountains are a series of mountain ranges, the Selkirks with peaks of 11,000 feet being the most important.

The geological history of the Cordilleran Region is complex but may be summarized as follows. In Precambrian time sediments which are now in the form of limestones, gneisses and schists were deposited in the interior belt. In Yukon, these strata are known as the Yukon group and in central British Columbia as the Shuswap group. These have been altered by intrusive rocks and included with them are the metamorphosed phases of much later rocks. In late Precambrian time argillites and related sediments accumulated on the site of the southern Rockies and in the region now occupied by the Purcell Mountains which are made up dominantly of quartzites of a thickness of over 20,000 feet. Sedimentation progressed during the Palæozoic era from Cambrian to Carboniferous time, and also during that of Mesozoic. Volcanism, the intrusion of granites, and mountain-building took place in the western part of the belt during the Jurassic period giving rise to the Selkirk and Coast Ranges. In late Cretaceous time and continuing over into the Tertiary, pressure from the west folded the rocks in the eastern part of the region giving rise to the Rocky Mountains.

The Cordilleran Region is a producer of gold (lode and placer), silver, lead and zinc, and contains deposits of mercury, tungsten and iron. Most of the known mineral occurrences are in the western Cordilleran belt and are related to late Mesozoic and early Tertiary granitic intrusions. Coal is widespread in the foothills of Alberta and oil and natural gas are also found in this area. Fluorite, gypsum, magnesite, hydromagnesite phosphate, saline deposits, and limestone form other valuable mineral occurrences.

Further details are given in the 1947 Year Book, pp. 19-29, and the 1951 edition, pp. 14-26.

### Subsection 2.—Hydrographic Features

**Lakes and Rivers.**—Canada's fresh-water lakes and rivers cover an area of 268,611 sq. miles. The outstanding lakes are, of course, the Great Lakes, though only part of these are in Canadian territory. The International Boundary between Canada and the United States passes through Lakes Superior, Huron, St. Clair, Erie and Ontario. Details are given in Table 2.