

In water power resources the Prairie Provinces are not so well endowed as the more highly industrialized provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. At the end of 1953 power installation in the three Provinces totalled only 1,034,695 h.p. or about 7 p.c. of the Canadian total. Manitoba had 716,900 h.p., Saskatchewan 109,835 h.p. and Alberta 207,960 h.p. With the present developments of natural gas and oil, the Prairie Provinces will in large measure be able to overcome a lack of water power resources which is so vital to industrial development. Manitoba has more water power resources and has developed them to a greater extent than either of the other Prairie Provinces. Practically all the developed sites are located on the Winnipeg River. These supply not only Winnipeg and its suburban areas but, through the transmission network of the Manitoba Power Commission, power is distributed to more than 400 municipalities and a large part of rural areas of southern Manitoba where farm electrification is a primary objective. In Saskatchewan water power development is confined to the northern mining districts. The southern portions of Saskatchewan and Alberta are lacking in water power resources but have large fuel reserves. In Alberta present developments are located in the Bow River basin and serve Calgary and numerous other municipalities between the International Boundary and the area north of Edmonton.

In the Prairie Provinces the nature of developments vary from one province to another. Alberta has moved to the forefront, especially since 1950. There the emphasis has been more on the manufacture of machinery and equipment, including products like drill bits and tanks, heat exchangers and other bulky equipment for the burgeoning oil and gas industries. Chemicals, and especially petrochemicals, have made striking gains; second in terms of new growth, they now embrace various rayon intermediates and polythene plastics, as well as fertilizers and the manufacture of other inorganic products like caustic soda and chlorine. Sizable gains have been made by the expansion of food-processing plants and the construction of additional factories for making building materials.

Manitoba, next to Alberta, has made the best showing on the Prairies, a surprisingly large number of small and medium-sized firms having located in the Winnipeg area since 1945. The clothing industry has outstripped electrical apparatus in employment gains; food processing, building materials and machinery manufacture following in that order. Plantwise however the largest single increase has been in meat packing, although three large electrical apparatus concerns and a sizable new oil refinery have also been established in the Province.

Postwar developments in Saskatchewan by contrast have continued on more or less traditional lines. The largest gains for instance have been recorded in food processing. Notable in this respect has been the establishment of three new fresh water fish-packing plants. The manufacture of building materials, including non-metallic mineral products and lumber, has also increased. However the largest single gain in employment has been in the refining of prairie oil for local use.

Despite the recent rapid development in the Prairie Provinces manufacturing production did not keep pace with the developments in the more industrialized provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. This is indicated by the slight drop in the Prairie Provinces' share of the Canadian total which declined from 8.1 p.c. in 1939 to 7.9 p.c. in 1953. There was an increase of 105 p.c. in number of employees as compared with an increase of 102 p.c. for the whole of Canada, and factory shipments were 398 p.c. higher as against 412 p.c. for Canada.