

The configuration of Kootenay District, thus, is an isosceles triangle with its base on the 49th parallel (United States boundary) and its summit at the head of the Big Bend, or, more familiarly, it may be likened to a pointed horseshoe enclosing a smaller one—the latter running the central Flatbow Lake depression above-mentioned.

The heights visible from the valleys and great waterways of Kootenay District are less than the traveller expects from the general mountainous character of the surface. The snow peaks, as a rule, are hidden behind hills except in the northern parts of the Bend. Some of these peaks probably reach a height of 7,000 to 10,000 feet, but the hills that commonly meet the eye are from 1,000 to 2,500 feet above the surface.

All the way up the Columbia River from the boundary through Arrow Lakes to above Eagle Pass the hills have an easy slope, and their average height is not over 2,000 feet above the surface—the valley itself being about from 1,400 to 1,500 feet above the sea. The same, except that they have a sharper slope, may be said of the hills that border the Lower Kootenay in its course into the great Flatbow or Kootenay Lake, and I think also of the foot-hills around that lake itself, but I could not get a good view of Kootenay Lake at any time owing to the thickness of the smoke which for several months this year covered the country from Puget Sound to the Rocky Mountains.

In the view north from Upper Kootenay Lake, low rolling hills are the principal feature. So are they in travelling along the eastern valley of the district from Tobacco Plains at the United States boundary up the Kootenay River and along the upper waters of the Columbia River to beyond Kicking Horse Pass, except in parts where a stern rocky face comes high in view or appears through gaps.

That valley is one of the most remarkable topographical features in North America. It is deep sunk and runs in a nearly straight N. W. and S. E. course for more than 400 miles, edging for the most part the foot-hills of the Rockies. To the north-west it is occupied by the river Fraser and to the south-east by the Canoe River to Boat Encampment and thence, within the district of Kootenay, by the Upper Columbia and Kootenay Rivers. The valley stretches beyond the international boundary line. The portion of this singular valley or wide trough that is within Kootenay District may be regarded as Kootenay proper. It has mining, arable, and grazing areas. The valley of the western leg of the Columbia with its woods of commercial value and the secluded Flatbow or Kootenay Lake region with its promising silver mines and periodically submerged fertile lands, are adjunctive areas to Kootenay proper above-mentioned.

On the eastern side of this valley (Kootenay proper) the foot-hills of the Rockies do not rise above the surface more than 2,000 feet along the Upper Columbia River, but they are higher to the southward along the Kootenay River. Contrariwise on the west side of the valley, the bordering Selkirk foot-hills along the Upper Columbia are higher than the opposite foot-hills of the Rockies, but the Selkirk foot-hills, like the main mass of the Selkirks, lessen in height to the southward, permitting a gentle ascent from the Kootenay River through Joseph's Prairie, over an indistinctive summit to Mooyie Lake, and a comparatively low surface thence over to the Lower Kootenay flowing north in its reversed course.

The whole surface of the district is mountainous or hilly, without any extensive plains, level uplands or undulating plateaus.

Most of the snow peaks are sharp, regular cones, though some have flattish summits with broad shoulders. Some stand out like great square castles, while others resemble gigantic chimneys. I noticed several interesting lofty mountains with shattered rocky tops—muscle-testers for the Alpine club of young Canada. Bare, high serrated sections are not uncommon in the peeps one gets of the main Rocky range.

The hills are of all shapes, with pleasing diversities of form as if to satisfy the eye. Their outline generally is soft, and vegetation, such as it is, covers them. I have seen more sternness and wildness in a ten days' excursion in the Scotch Highlands than during my whole visit to Kootenay. A long regular succession of low, shapely, uniform, linked hills with blind ravines between them, and now and then, a lateral glen running along a saddle-back, is most noteworthy in the foot-hills of the Rockies on the Upper Columbia, and also on the Lower Kootenay above the great lake, particularly on the west side of the valley of the latter.

The Selkirk foot-hills on the west side of the Upper Columbia are massier and less uniform than on the opposite side, opening the views oftener to the bulky mountains behind.

From the boundary up to the Arrow Lakes, the low foot-hills have no noticeable feature. The Arrow Lakes' hills have very varied forms. Though having, as a rule, little low ground between them and the water, they slope gently back, more so on the upper than on the lower lake. They are cut by passes more or less wide. Gable-roof spurs often come down to the lake,