

cambrian barrier north of Lake Superior. Even as late as 1957 there was no railway and only one short all-winter highway within the borders of Canada's vast Northwest Territories, largely because of the nature of the terrain. Only on the southern margins of the Shield has there been any real metropolitan settlement.

And yet the Shield is one of Canada's greatest assets. It contains most of the nation's mineral, forest and water resources and contributes largely to the country's prosperity.

To the north are the Barren Grounds or tundra covering an area that stretches from the Arctic Ocean almost as far south as the latitude of Copenhagen. Here only a few Eskimos live.

On the west is the great belt of mountains, five hundred miles wide.

Some of these peaks rise to twelve thousand feet, giving interior British Columbia an alpine climate. The best known of these ranges are the spectacular Rockies.

### Climate

The poet Kipling called Canada "Our Lady of the Snows", and, in fact, most of Canada has a continental climate with a long, cold winter. However, even as far north as the Yukon the summers can be almost tropical in their intensity, and there are places on the Pacific Coast that seldom experience the traditional Canadian white Christmas. Semi-tropical plants, such as magnolias and azaleas, flourish in some Canadian cities, and a stalk of wheat has been known to grow as much as five feet in

a single month as far north as the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories.

The eastern coastline is chilled by the Labrador current which sweeps down from the Arctic Ocean to bring sub-Arctic conditions as far south as the latitude of London. St. John's, the salty capital of Newfoundland, is actually farther south than Paris, but, because of the icy waters surrounding it, its climate is very different. Spring does not reach it any earlier than it reaches Fort Simpson, a fur-trading post in the Northwest Territories, a thousand miles closer to the North Pole.

Another climatic influence is the great inland ocean of Hudson Bay, a cold expanse of Arctic water, larger than France, that penetrates the heart of the continent. The mean tempera-

The rugged nature of the Canadian terrain makes road and railroad construction difficult and costly



Section of the Georgian Bay Islands National Park

