

mean summer high of 58.5.

Outside interest in the NWT has grown enormously in recent years, as an energy-short world has become aware of the reserves of oil, gas and minerals that lie beneath its chill surfaces. In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI we will present a few basics about the NWT and its natural resources, including its flora, its fauna and its people.

[THE LAND AND THE WATER]

Part of the NWT is a frozen desert; yet it has large fresh water resources. It also has herds of animals, flights of birds, summer clouds of mosquitoes and endless fields of spring flowers.

It is a desert because little rain falls there — about as much as in Egypt: Holman Island has

2.51 inches of rain a year and about 31 inches of snow. Since ten inches of snow equals one inch of rain on the average, that adds up to only a bit more than the equivalent of five and a half inches of rain annually. Using the same scale, Inuvik has the equivalent of 10.8 inches, Tuktoyaktuk 6.15 inches, Yellowknife 10 inches and Frobisher Bay 16.11 inches.

It is able to support an abundance of wildlife and plants because the rain (and snow) that falls remains cradled on the surface, above the impenetrable permafrost and in the great, granite basins of the Precambrian Shield. If the permafrost were to melt the water would drain down through the porous earth and the land would be as dry as the Sahara. If the basins were drained no one now alive would ever see them filled again.

The permafrost is the significant feature of part

