



Canada's Northland is rich in minerals and in ever-differing scenic beauty

## THE LAND

Only the Soviet Union exceeds Canada in size. Stretching almost 4,000 miles from east to west and close to 3,000 miles from north to south, Canada contains 1,500,000 square miles of forest, 500,000 square miles of arable land and one-third of the world's fresh water supply. Its southern boundaries dip down to the latitude of Rome, and its northern islands extend into the Polar ice cap. One of its Atlantic coastal cities, St. John's, is closer to Paris than it is to another Canadian city, Vancouver, on the west coast.

Yet, in spite of its size, Canada is sparsely populated, supporting (in 1957) only about 16,500,000 people on its 3,800,000 square miles of forest, rock, tundra, lake, muskeg, farmland, mountain and prairie. Half its population is clustered within one hundred miles of the Canadian-United States border. Ninety per cent lives within two hundred miles of the same border. On latitudes where European cities thrive (Oslo, Leningrad, Edinburgh) no similar Canadian community exists.

The existence of three great expanses of semi-barren territory—The Canadian Shield, the Arctic and the Western Mountain Ranges—helps to explain why more than three-quarters of the land is uninhabited save for a few tiny settlements.

In the north-east, girding Hudson's Bay, lies the Canadian Shield, a forbidding expanse of Precambrian rock, rounded hills, lakes and swamp, that blankets half Canada. Once a mountain region, it has been worn by eons of erosion. The glaciers of the Ice Age scraped away most of the soil and, except in one glacial clay belt in northern Ontario, little of the area is suitable for agriculture. Although the Shield contains innumerable lakes, navigation is not easy because the rivers are shallow and the natural drainage pattern was disrupted by the moving sheets of ice.

The rugged nature of the Shield makes road and railroad construction extremely expensive. One of the great continental feats of engineering was accomplished in the last century when the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway was blasted through the Pre-

A section of rocky coastline on Canada's east coast

