

unknown to most Canadians, in the north east, have mountains and icecaps 2,000 to 3,000 metres high. Here, there are only small isolated communities.

Shaping the map

Canada's shape on the map and patterns of settlement also reflect the last 400 years of its history. But long before what might be called the "official discovery" of Canada in the sixteenth century, Europeans knew of its existence. About the year 1000 A.D. Scandinavians were felling timber on the east coast; in the fifteenth century English, French, Spanish and Portuguese were fishing off Newfoundland.

Whether these early European visitors made contact with what was probably a small and scattered native population is not known. The people called Eskimo, but who call themselves Inuit (people), had taken perhaps some 5,000 years to cross the desert of ice from west to east as far as
10 Greenland, but confined themselves to the far north.

