

# REFERENCE PAPERS

WARTIME INFORMATION BOARD, OTTAWA

No. 20.

April 8, 1944.

## CANADA

The Dominion of Canada covers an area of 3,694,863 square miles and extends over the whole northern half of the North American continent, with the exception of Alaska to the northwest and Labrador to the northeast. Divided from the United States by the 49th parallel of latitude in the west, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River in the centre, the 45th parallel (except for the northern hump of Maine) in the east, the southernmost point in Canada is Middle Island, Lake Erie, at 41° 41'. Across Canadian territory lie the shortest air routes from the United States to Europe and Asia, and directly across the pole is Russia.

Canada is the third largest country in the world, smaller only than Russia and China. It is one-fifth larger than the United States, or about the same size as the United States and Alaska, and it constitutes 27% of the total area of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

About 65% of Canada, however, is covered by the Laurentian, or Canadian, Shield - a vast area of ancient rocks, bush, and swamp surrounding Hudson Bay and frozen solid for a good part of the year. Although almost useless agriculturally, its vast natural resources, especially in minerals and hydro-electric power, are still in the early stages of development.

The nine provinces of Canada may be divided into four geographical sections:

- 1) The Maritime Provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick) -- a geographic continuation of the United States Atlantic seaboard states, possessing the only Canadian Atlantic ports open the year around, and depending mainly on lumbering, coal mining, fishing and mixed farming.
- 2) Central Canada (Quebec and Ontario) -- the Laurentian Shield in the north, rich agricultural lands and a concentration of industry in the southern Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region.
- 3) The Prairie Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta) -- formerly used almost entirely for wheat production, now supporting mixed farming, livestock raising, and the production of oil and coal.
- 4) The West Coast (British Columbia) -- separated from the rest of Canada by the Rocky Mountains and predominantly mountainous, with salmon fishing, fruit raising, and lumbering among the main industries.

In addition to the nine provinces, there are two "territories" - the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, both lying north of the 60th parallel of latitude. Covering over 41% of the area of Canada, the resources of these territories are administered by the Department of Mines and Resources.