



The St. Lawrence Lowlands are the heart of Canada. More than half of Canada's people make their homes in this region of fertile farms and orchards and thriving industrial and commercial centres. Here are found Montreal and Toronto, the two largest cities in Canada, Ottawa, the nation's capital, and two-score other cities.

THE PRECAMBRIAN SHIELD

Encircling Hudson Bay in a giant horseshoe is the vast Precambrian (or Canadian) Shield. It covers almost two-thirds of Canada's mainland and extends from the northern bank of the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mackenzie River on the Western Arctic coast. The prehistoric withdrawal of glaciers and the erosion of ages have produced this expanse of rounded hills, forest and rock with thousands of lakes, rivers and bogs.

Rich deposits of mineral ore, including gold, silver, nickel, copper, platinum, cobalt and uranium, lie within its ancient rocks. There are great stands of timber; and these forest resources of spruce and pine are admirably suited for the production of lumber, pulp and paper.

The Precambrian Shield is drained by many swift-flowing rivers—the Saguenay and the St. Maurice in Quebec, the Ottawa flowing southwards into the St. Lawrence from the centre, the Moose, Albany, Nelson and Churchill flowing into Hudson Bay, and thousands of smaller rivers. Numerous falls provide a wealth of potential hydro-electric power.



Farm lands border the St. Lawrence River.



Canoes provide sport and transportation.

During the past three centuries the wild regions of the Precambrian Shield have provided one of the world's chief sources of luxury fur—beaver, otter, fisher, muskrat, fox, mink, ermine, marten and lynx. The maze of rivers and lakes enables trappers to go far into the wilds by canoe.

With the exception of the arable Clay Belt in northern Ontario and Quebec, little of the Precambrian Shield is well adapted for agriculture. The climate is rigorous. In spite of its great resources, the adverse factors of soil and climate have limited the population of this region.

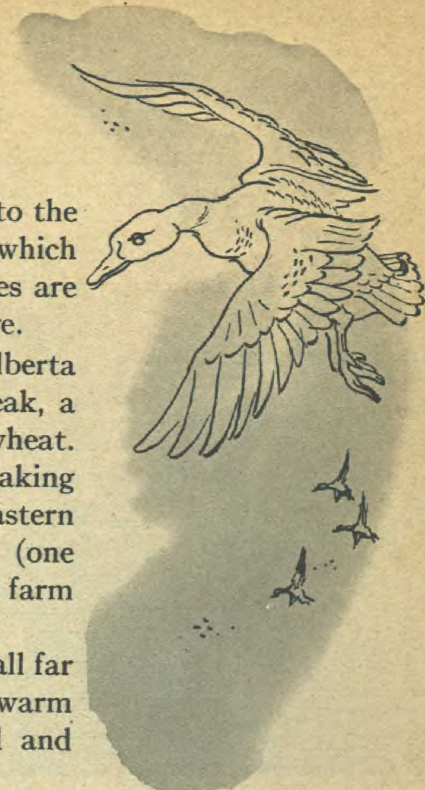
THE GREAT CENTRAL PLAIN

Extending westward from the edge of the Precambrian Shield to the Rockies are the broad meadow lands of the Great Central Plain which covers the greater part of the three Prairie Provinces. The prairies are largely treeless but soil and climate are favourable for agriculture.

From southern Manitoba through Saskatchewan and central Alberta northward to the Peace River district stretches, with but one break, a broad belt of soil productive of the world's finest high-protein wheat. Prairie wheat is exceptionally hard and possesses excellent bread-making characteristics. Prairie farms are much larger than those in eastern Canada: in the wheat-growing areas many cover a full "section" (one square mile) or more. In the southern grazing districts the average farm is several "sections" in size.

The climate tends to extremes. Winter temperatures sometimes fall far below zero; summer days are long and hot. In southern Alberta, the warm Chinook winds blowing from the Rockies break the winter cold and produce early springs.

Both snow and rainfall are generally light and crops depend largely upon rains during the growing season. In summer long hours of sunshine provide ideal conditions for rapid growth. In "dry belts" irrigation projects have turned the fields green with alfalfa and sweet clover.



Cattle on the western prairies.



Boom men burl logs on B.C. river.

The lakes of the Prairie Provinces, notably Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis, yield fish of high quality—whitefish, pickerel, trout and the renowned "goldeye" which, lightly smoked, is a famous breakfast delicacy.

Great river systems drain the prairies: to the east, the Red and the Assiniboine, in the central plains the Saskatchewan and its tributaries. The waters from the northern parklands flow down to the Arctic through the Mackenzie River system, which includes the Peace and Athabaska Rivers, Lake Athabaska, Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes. It is the