



The Frontier

If there is variety in the thin strip of populated land that runs for four thousand miles along the Canada-United States border, there is even more contrast in the unsettled areas

South Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories, the winding route of the Alaska Highway, the storied goldfields of the Klondike, the blue expanse of Great Bear Lake, the bald Arctic islands imprisoned in the frozen sea—all these form part of the Frontier.

Here one senses again the vastness of Canada. A single Arctic island, Baffin, is twice the size of New Zealand. A single river, the Mackenzie, is half as long again as the Danube. Two northern lakes, Great Bear and Great Slave, are each larger than The Netherlands. One system of mountains, the Mackenzies, covers an area as large as Great Britain.

This frontier country extends to the very margins of some of the principal cities and Canadians are always conscious of its presence. The Laurentian hills form part of it, and these can easily be seen from Parliament Hill in Ottawa or from Dufferin Terrace on the ancient citadel of Quebec City. In Edmonton, Alberta's capital, bush pilots and uranium prospectors arrive with bales of fur or sacks of ore samples. In Vancouver, a schoolboy sunning himself on the beach is only a few hours away from ski slopes in the coastal mountains where the snow can be four feet deep even in June.

Along the southern edge of the

that comprise four-fifths of the country. The mountain regions and the northland contain within them several separate worlds, each quite different. The treeless tundra or Barren Grounds, the knife-sharp peaks of the great St. Elias Range in the Yukon, the dizzy canyons of the