

189. The forest wealth of the country is very great. The forests formerly extended in an almost unbroken stretch from the Atlantic Ocean to the head of Lake Superior, a distance of 2,000 miles. The great plains of the North-west have always, within the memory of man, been sparsely timbered, but on the Pacific slopes of the Rocky Mountains down to the shores of the ocean there are mammoth trees that can compare favourably with the growth of any region on the globe. From the earliest days of its occupation by the French the forest wealth of the country washed by the St. Lawrence engaged the attention of the Government of France, who saw therein vast resources available for their naval yards. They drew from these forests large numbers of masts and spars, and issued stringent regulations for the preservation of the standing oak. When the country was first ceded to Great Britain, but little attention was paid at first to its vast timber supply, owing to the fact that almost the whole of the Baltic trade was carried in British bottoms and that the timber of northern Europe provided an unfailing and convenient return freight for the shipping thus engaged. When, however, the troubles of the Napoleonic era commenced, and especially when the continental blockade was enforced, the timber supplies of the Baltic becoming uncertain and insufficient, attention was directed to the North American colonies, with the result of increasing the quantity of timber which reached Great Britain from 2,600 tons in 1800 to 125,300 tons in 1810, and to 308,000 tons in 1820.

190. The following figures will show the development of the trade :—

1850	Exported to the United Kingdom	1,052,817 tons.
1859	“ “	1,248,069 “
1872	“ “	1,211,772 “
1881	“ “	1,301,301 “
1891	“ “	1,051,091 “
1892	“ “	1,406,350 “
1893	“ “	1,255,773 “
1894	“ “	1,381,816 “

191. A noticeable feature in the returns is the steady decline in the quantity of square timber exported to England, and the increasing quantity of sawn or manufactured wood. The decrease in hewn timber sent from Canada in 1894 compared with 1893 was 39·3 per cent and the increase in sawn lumber for the same year was 4·3 per cent. This is in favour of the Canadian forests, as the square timber involves great waste, and the debris left in the forest increases danger from fires.

192. The Census of 1891 shows the following forest products for the preceding year :—