

FOREST WEALTH

The forest belt of the Western Plain has often been swept by fire, owing to the carelessness of Indians and traders, and consequently only a small proportion of the trees are very old. It is only in places where trees have escaped the ravages of fire that an idea can be formed of the possibilities of growth. It is the general opinion of explorers that if there had never been any fires the greater part of the forest belt would be covered with good-sized trees. There are enormous quantities of timber large enough for pulpwood or for fuel, but comparatively small quantities large enough for sawmill purposes. The dominating trees are spruce and jack pine, but there are also considerable quantities of tamarack, poplar and birch.

That part of southern Manitoba lying between the Lake of the Woods and lake Winnipeg is largely covered with forests. West of the Red river in southern Manitoba there are several hill districts, locally called "mountains," that were well wooded when settlement of the prairies began, and although a great deal of the timber has been cut and fires have done some damage they still have a considerable quantity of standing timber. They have all been set aside as Government forest reserves. There is also a swamp forest reserve.

In southern Manitoba, in the river valleys, there are a few elm, oak, basswood and white cedar trees of fair size. In southern Alberta, near the British Columbia boundary, the Douglas fir grows well.

Mr. Elihu Stewart, formerly Superintendent of Forestry, testified before a committee of the Dominion Senate that he thought the tree growth extended ten degrees farther north in the Mackenzie river basin than in Labrador. Aspen poplar, white poplar, balm of Gilead and birch grow as far north as Fort McPherson, in latitude $67^{\circ} 29'$, the natives at Fort McPherson making their canoes out of birch bark. Even in the delta of the Mackenzie, north of Fort McPherson, the islands are heavily wooded. The birch trees about the delta of the Mackenzie attain a size from twelve to sixteen inches and are used at Fort McPherson in building log houses. Mr. Malcolm McLeod, testifying before a committee of the Dominion Senate, in 1888, said: "As to the wood of that far north I would observe that it is remarkably hard. I have a pair of snowshoes of peculiar shape made right and left of birch for frames, like iron in texture, and though perhaps about 100 years old, perfectly sound."

British Columbia is noted for the enormous size of its trees, the superior quality of its timber and the fact that it has the largest compact area of forests on the North American continent. It has often been stated that British Columbia has over 180,000,000 acres of forests—and this is perhaps not an exaggeration if trees of all sizes are included—but the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Timber and Forestry of British Columbia, published in 1910, stated that only a small proportion of this extensive area was covered with timber of merchantable size. It was estimated that there were in the province from 240,000,000,000 feet to 300,000,000,000 feet of merchantable timber—probably the higher quantity. However, as trees grow rapidly in British Columbia, and the Provincial Government has adopted measures for the protection of the forests, the timber not yet of merchantable size is an asset of great