

The forests of Canada contribute an important part of her total export trade. In 1926 the wood and paper group of exports amounted to \$286,305,842 or about 22 p.c. of the total export trade of \$1,268,581,976. This group was exceeded in this respect only by the agricultural and vegetable products, with 46 p.c. and followed by the mineral products, with 15 p.c. of the total. Forest products are also prominent among the individual items of exportation. Newsprint paper is second only to wheat on the list and sawn lumber and wood pulp come fourth and fifth. The gross contribution of the forest toward a favourable trade balance for Canada amounted to \$232,892,527 in 1926.

### Subsection 7.—Forest Depletion and Increment.

**Fire Losses.**—No accurate summing up of forest fire losses in Canada's forests has ever been made, but it has been estimated that 60 p.c. of the original forest has been burned, 13 p.c. has been cut for use and 27 p.c. remains. Though the loss of merchantable timber has been greatly reduced in recent years by forest protective services and the education of the public, it still constitutes a serious drain on our resources. At a low estimate fire destroys annually about 900 million cubic feet of merchantable timber and the young growth on 1,300,000 acres.

Since the historic Miramichi fire which burned along the valley of the Miramichi river in New Brunswick in 1825 there have been a number of disastrous forest fires. About 1845 vast areas were burned over west of lake Superior. Some years later a very extensive fire burned along the Height of Land from lake Timiskaming to Michipicoten. In 1871 a fierce fire swept more than 2,000 square miles of forest from lake Nipissing westward along the north shore of Georgian bay. About the same time the greater part of the Saguenay and Lake St. John district, in Quebec, was swept by one of the most destructive fires on record. Two other fires in 1891 and 1896 devastated over 2,000 square miles of country in the southern Algoma district. In Quebec, the country along the line of the Quebec and Lake St. John railway also suffered by a number of disastrous forest fires.

During more recent times, a series of disastrous fires swept over Northern Ontario. A number of isolated fires around the mining camp of Porcupine culminated, on July 11, 1911, in a conflagration which resulted in the loss of 72 lives and property damages estimated at \$3,000,000. In 1916, fires in the same general region were responsible for the deaths of at least 224 people. In 1922 a third fire destroyed the town of Haileybury and other centres. In 1908, a fire originating in the forest around Fernie, British Columbia, destroyed that city. Every year thousands of acres are devastated by fires of less individual importance, which in the aggregate are rapidly depleting our forest resources.

Speaking generally, there are two annual periods in Canada when the forest fire hazard is highest—in the spring, after the disappearance of the snow, when the forest floor is dry and the green underbrush has not yet developed, and again in the fall when the green growth is dead and the ground is covered with dry leaves. Statistics collected by the different government administrations and the Quebec protective associations show that over 95 p.c. of the fires of known origin are due to human carelessness and therefore preventable. Campers, settlers and railways are responsible for most of the fires whose origin is determined. Other causes, including lumbering operations, lightning and incendiarism, account for smaller proportions.