

CHAPTER IX.—FORESTRY*

CONSPECTUS

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The forests of Canada cover a vast region in the north temperate climatic zone, reaching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific; they extend northward from the International Boundary to beyond the Arctic Circle. Wide variations in climatic, physiographic and soil conditions cause marked differences in the character of the forests in different parts of the country, hence more or less well-defined forest regions may be recognized. The principal regions are: Acadian, Great Lakes-St. Lawrence, Deciduous, Boreal, Sub-Alpine, Columbia, Montane and Coast.

Section 1.—Forest Regions

At pp. 184-188 of the 1941 edition of the Year Book the forest regions of Canada are separately described, together with the dominant and associated tree species common to each.

Section 2.—Important Tree Species

In Canada there are over 130 distinct species of trees. Only 33 of these are conifers or softwoods, but they comprise over three-quarters of the standing timber and supply nearly 80 p.c. of the wood used for all purposes. Of the deciduous-leaved or hardwood species, only about a dozen are of commercial importance as compared with twice that number of conifers.

A short description of the individual tree species is given at pp. 247-249 of the 1940 Canada Year Book. More detailed information on this subject is given at pp. 283-286 of the 1936 edition of the Year Book and in the Dominion Forest Service Bulletin No. 61, "Native Trees of Canada", published by the Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa.

Section 3.—Forest Resources

The forested area of Canada is estimated at 1,290,960 sq. miles, or 37 p.c. of the total land area. In comparison, only 16 p.c. of the land area is considered to be of present or potential value for agriculture, and only 7 p.c. is now classed as "improved and pasture" The forested area within the boundaries of the nine provinces totals 1,167,960 sq. miles, or 58 p.c. of the provincial land area. About 478,000 sq. miles of the existing forests are classed as "unproductive". They are made up of small trees which cannot be expected to reach merchantable size because they are growing on poorly-drained lands, or at high altitudes, or are subject to other adverse site conditions. These unproductive forests, however, perform valuable functions.

* Sections of this Chapter that deal with forestry and forest administration have been prepared by the Dominion Forest Service, Department of Mines and Resources. Sections dealing with forest utilization and forest industries have been revised by L. J. Pouliot, B.A., Chief of the Forestry Branch, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The Forestry Branch collects and compiles statistics relating to forest production. For a detailed list of publications of the Forestry Branch, see Chapter XXXII.