

Section 3.—Forest Depletion

General information on forest depletion and increment as well as statistics on forest fires and fire losses are presented in this Section. The scientific control of the influences that account for wastage, such as forest fires, insect pests, etc., is dealt with in Section 5.

The average annual rate and cause of depletion of reserves of merchantable timber during the ten years 1952-61, together with annual data for 1961 and 1962, are given in Table 4. Of the total depletion of the forests in the ten-year period, 86 p.c. was utilized and 14 p.c. was destroyed by fire. (Information on the extent of damage caused by agencies other than fire, such as insects, disease and natural mortality, is not available.) The average annual utilization of 3,209,711,000 cu. feet comprised 49 p.c. logs and bolts, 40 p.c. pulpwood, 9 p.c. fuelwood, and 2 p.c. miscellaneous products. About 5 p.c. of the total utilization was exported in the form of logs and bolts and pulpwood.

The productive forests of Canada covering an area of 967,946 sq. miles constitute the reserve from which forest production will be obtained for many years to come. The supply of merchantable timber on this area is estimated at 751,883,000,000 cu. feet and the utilization in 1962 of 3,424,000,000 cu. feet therefore represented less than one half of one per cent of the supply. However, it should be noted that utilization does not occur evenly throughout the productive forest area but is concentrated on the relatively small area of occupied forest land (land under lease, licence or private ownership). Thus, overcutting may occur on many of these occupied areas, emphasizing the need for orderly management of all commercial forests if the forest industries are to maintain their important position in the Canadian economy.

The more efficient utilization of cut timber is an important factor related to forest depletion, for there is little doubt that in the past too high a percentage of the sawn log was discarded. However, changes of great significance have taken place recently in the uses of wood, permitting the utilization of sizes, qualities and species previously considered unmerchantable. The development and manufacture of rayon, cellophane and other products of the cellulose industry have extended the use of wood and the increasing production of plastic-wood products, fibre board and laminated wood has resulted in greater use of inferior grades of wood and species of trees and therefore in the more complete utilization of forest resources and the elimination of much waste.

4.—Forest Utilization and Depletion, 1961 and 1962 compared with Ten-Year Average 1952-61

| Item | Usable Wood | | | Percentage of Total Depletion | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Average 1952-61 | 1961 | 1962 | Average 1952-61 | 1961 | 1962 |
| | M cu. ft. | M cu. ft. | M cu. ft. | | | |
| Products Utilized— | | | | | | |
| Logs and Bolts— | | | | | | |
| Domestic use..... | 1,567,877 | 1,667,239 | 1,848,145 | 41.9 | 28.0 | 52.1 |
| Exported..... | 8,241 | 17,752 | 11,855 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Pulpwood— | | | | | | |
| Domestic use..... | 1,143,622 | 1,217,439 | 1,170,881 | 30.5 | 20.5 | 33.0 |
| Exported..... | 140,021 | 97,875 | 104,119 | 3.7 | 1.6 | 2.9 |
| Fuelwood..... | 287,038 | 239,508 | 232,000 | 7.7 | 4.0 | 6.6 |
| Other products..... | 62,912 | 63,476 | 56,907 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 1.6 |
| Totals, Utilization..... | 3,209,711 | 3,303,289 | 3,423,907 | 85.7 | 55.5 | 96.5 |
| Wastage— | | | | | | |
| By forest fires..... | 535,048 | 2,650,341 | 125,532 | 14.3 | 44.5 | 3.5 |
| Totals, Depletion..... | 3,744,759 | 5,953,630 | 3,549,439 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Forest Fire Statistics.—There were 6,285 forest fires reported in Canada during 1962 but, although the number was 6.6 p.c. higher than the annual average for the previous