

Section 2.—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 4.

The latest information available on the rate and cause of depletion of reserves of merchantable timber is given in Table 4. Of the total depletion of the forests in the ten-year period 1953-62, 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. Losses from insects and diseases alone are estimated to be in excess of 1,000,000 M cu. ft. of merchantable timber annually.) The average annual utilization of 3,232,353 M cu. ft. comprised 50 p.c. logs and bolts, 40 p.c. pulpwood, over 8 p.c. fuelwood and almost 2 p.c. other products. A little over 4 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 M cu. ft. and the average annual utilization in 1953-62 of 3,232,353 M cu. ft. 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. Also, efficient utilization of cut timber is an important factor related to forest depletion.

4.—Forest Utilization and Depletion, Ten-Year Average 1953-62

Item	Usable Wood	Percentage of Total Depletion
	M cu. ft.	
Products Utilized—		
Logs and Bolts—		
Domestic use.....	1,608,424	42.8
Exported.....	8,399	0.2
Pulpwood—		
Domestic use.....	1,153,597	30.7
Exported.....	128,933	3.4
Fuelwood.....	276,731	7.4
Other products.....	56,269	1.5
Totals, Utilization.....	3,232,353	86.0
Wastage—		
By forest fires.....	526,220	14.0
Totals, Depletion.....	3,758,573	100.0

Forest Fire Statistics.—There were 6,944 forest fires in Canada during 1964, 10 p.c. fewer than in 1963. Although the area burned over was more than six times larger than that burned in the previous year, only a little over one fifth of it was classed as merchantable timber land; the amount of saw timber lost was actually lower than in 1963 and amounted to only 5.8 p.c. of the 1954-63 average. The amount of small material lost was more than four times higher than in 1963 and was also considerably higher than the ten-year average. In monetary terms, the estimated total damage was almost 53 p.c. higher than in 1963 but was less than half the ten-year average.