

CHAPTER 8

FORESTS, FISH AND FURS

Forests, fish and fur-bearing animals were sources of shelter, food and clothing from the time of earliest habitation in what is now Canada. Development of these resources and the industries resulting from their use have played a continuing role in Canada's growth.

Canada is the world's leading exporter of forest products. In 1986, Canada's exports of forest products, valued at almost \$18.0 billion, accounted for 21% of the world total.

Canada maintained its status in 1987 as the world's leading exporter of fish products in terms of value for the tenth consecutive year. Preliminary statistics indicate that in 1987 Canada sent abroad \$2.77 billion worth of fishery products, up 14% from the previous year. Approximately 60% went to the United States, followed by Japan and the European Economic Community. On the volume scale, Canada exported almost three quarters of its production or 587 824 tonnes (preliminary figures). The most popular export items were cod, herring, crab, lobster and scallop from the Atlantic Coast, and halibut and salmon from the Pacific Coast.

In the fur industry, Canada's exports of raw furs in 1986-87 amounted to \$169.1 million, up from \$97.1 million in 1985-86 and up from \$101.7 million in 1984-85.

8.1 Forestry

The forest land of Canada supports largely coniferous forests and makes up 49% of the country's total land area. Of this forest land area, a little less than 3% is reserved: this includes parks and other reserves where, by law, the forest is not available for harvesting. In 1986, 177 million m³ of wood were cut. Timber harvesting and processing generated work for more than 277,300 persons with \$8.2 billion in salaries and wages. The value added by processing beyond the raw materials stage amounted to \$14.4 billion.

British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec are the leading timber-producing provinces. In 1987, British Columbia sawmills produced 60% of all

lumber in Canada and most of softwood plywood. Ontario and Quebec produced most of the wood pulp.

Forests are a vital part of the Canadian environment and are integral components of many essential ecological processes. These include hydrologic and atmospheric cycles, climatic amelioration, and nutrient and soil conservation. They provide habitat for a large number of animal and plant species, many of which have important economic and recreational values. The forest environment provides many other recreational opportunities, and plays a significant role in Canada's important tourism industry.

8.1.1 Forest resources

Canada's forests cover a vast area in the north temperate zone, and wide variations in physiography, soil and climate cause marked differences. Hence, eight fairly well-defined forest regions can be recognized. By far the largest is the Boreal region which represents 82% of total forested area. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region covers 6.5% and the Subalpine region, 3.7%. The Montane, Coast and Acadian regions each account for approximately 2%, while the remaining Columbia and Deciduous regions each represent less than 1%.

Inventories of Canadian forest resources are made periodically by provincial forest authorities and, with their co-operation, the lead federal forestry agency, Forestry Canada, compiles national statistics. The latest such statistics are for 1986.

The 1986 national forest inventory reported on an area of 3.98 million km² of inventoried forest land (see Table 8.1). Provincial Crown forest land constitutes 80% of the inventoried productive forest land of Canada, leaving 11% under federal jurisdiction and 9% in private ownership. Private ownerships are made up of small private woodlots and larger industrial free-hold parcels. Private lands are still an important source of timber production, as well as providing many opportunities for recreation and habitat.