

The administration of the Great Slave Lake fisheries is the responsibility of the Federal Department of Fisheries. Field administration is centred in the office of the Chief Supervisor of Fisheries for the Central Area, located at Winnipeg, Man.

Lumber and Agriculture.—The existence of a thriving lumber industry at such a high latitude seems somewhat unique. The northernmost limit of tree growth extends from the mouth of the Mackenzie River on the Arctic Coast southeast to a point near Churchill, Man. Though the eastern portion of the Northwest Territories is almost completely lacking in forests, in the Mackenzie District and in the whole of Yukon Territory there are many areas of forested land important from an economic viewpoint. Because of the slow rate of growth, it is unlikely that lumbering will ever be an export industry but to whatever extent native timber can eliminate expensive imports and provide a living for the people it should be reckoned as an economic gain.

In the Yukon, local lumber supplied all the needs of the gold rush of 1898 and for 30 years after. Sawmills operating at Dawson and points along the Yukon River turned out vast quantities of lumber for buildings, flumes, sluice boxes, boats, and for thawing the frozen gravel so that the work of extracting gold might go on the year round. After 30 years, timber resources in this area were almost exhausted. To-day, however, small sawmills operate at Mayo, Dawson and various points along the Alaska Highway to manufacture building lumber and to provide fuel for steamboats on the Yukon River. In the Northwest Territories, small sawmills operate at various spots along the Slave River, at Great Bear Lake and along the Mackenzie River.

To protect the forests for the future, the Federal Government has established protection services. Headquarters for the Yukon Forest Protective Service is at Whitehorse; the Mackenzie River valley is the main centre of forest protection in the Northwest Territories, with warden stations located at Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Liard, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Norman, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson and Aklavik. Fire wardens, employed during the fire-hazard season, emphasize fire prevention publicity in addition to their other duties.

Although the climate and soil conditions of the Northwest Territories preclude the large-scale development of agriculture as an industry, small-scale farming operations have been carried on in the more favourable localities for more than 100 years. The missionaries and fur traders were the pioneers in this field and all down the Mackenzie River valley the rewards for this effort were, if not high, at least soul-satisfying. The long hours of sunshine make up for the short season of warmth.

The Government has carried out a series of extensive tests on the agricultural prospects of the Canadian North. Soil and horticultural surveys made in 1944 and 1945 led to the establishment of an experimental substation at Fort Simpson and a smaller one at Yellowknife. The soil surveys uncovered the fact that thousands of acres of potential fertility exist in the Liard, Slave, and upper Mackenzie River valleys. Even at Yellowknife, where the soil is sandy, it is possible to grow crops by using commercial fertilizer extensively.

In the Yukon, at the height of the Klondike gold rush, thousands of acres were under cultivation to supply the needs of the miners and others who swarmed into the gold fields. As the rush dwindled, agriculture also declined; to-day, however, there are few families that are not almost self-sustaining on a horticultural basis.