

Land and Timber Resources of British Columbia

Information Given By Minister of Lands Shows Resources of Land and Timber, Revenues and Nature of Holdings.

In a recent speech of the Hon. W. R. Ross, Minister of Lands, some valuable information and statistics were presented relative to the land and timber resources of British Columbia.

There is in British Columbia a vacant and unoccupied area of 192,870,720 acres (301,360 square miles), or about the same area as France—with a population of about forty million people. The total area deeded for all purposes, pre-emption, purchase, mineral claims, railway, South African war or other grants—for every purpose, since Governor Douglas signed the first grant—is about 8,000,000 acres, and the pre-emptions, purchase land, mineral, coal claim, and other holdings in process of disposition to date amount to about 5,000,000 acres—a sum total of 6 per cent. of the land of the Province.

For the past decade the greatest expansion in all its development, the total area involved in land sales, was 4,799,584 acres, of which 1,922,733 acres have been deeded, the balance being held with payments not completed, and a large percentage is likely to be added to that which has already reverted. The total area is about 2 per cent. of the Provincial land, and it was shown that \$12,301,426 was received in cash on account of land sales and a balance of \$9,667,617 was due at the beginning of this year, with yearly interest of \$580,057. If the whole 2 per cent. is acquired, the people will receive upwards of 22½ million dollars on account of land sales. Land revenue during the period amounted to 17½ million dollars, and forest revenue to 22 millions, as compared with less than 1¼ millions during the preceding ten years.

The business of the Province has increased 380 per cent. in the ten years. Agricultural production increased over 500 per cent. in the period, lumbering 420 per cent., and other industries from 200 per cent. upwards. In the various productive industries, from 53 to 74 per cent. of the total production in the history of the Province took place since 1904.

The increases shown were:

	From	To
Agriculture	\$ 5,954,648	\$30,184,000
Lumbering	7,500,000	33,560,000
Fisheries	4,748,365	14,445,488
Mining	17,495,494	30,296,398
Trade	28,615,416	88,073,222

The total amount disposed of, or in course of disposition, for all purposes since 1904 in this Province amounts to 3.8 per cent. of the total Provincial land.

In the Northwest Provinces, railway companies and the Hudson's Bay Company have grants from the Dominion totalling 31,964,074 acres, and in the ten years these companies alone sold 10,261,681 acres—much over twice the area involved in sales and agreement to sell in this Province in the same period.

The area deeded since 1904 in British Columbia was 3,398,026 acres—1¼ per cent. of the Provincial land. This was made up as follows:

Land Sales	1,922,737	acres
Pre emptions	695,713	"
Mineral Claims	122,465	"
S. A. War Grants	86,508	"
Railway Grant	553,705	"
Malcolm Island Colony	4,124	"
Free V. I. Settlers	3,988	"
Auction	3,905	"
Miscellaneous	4,882	"

The area in process of disposition includes 2,876,851 acres of purchase land, about 1,250,000 acres held in pre-emptions, and 879,750 acres in coal leases and licenses.

An inventory of the land resources of the Province to date shows as follows: The area of Provincial land, namely, the total area, less the C. P. R. and E. & N. belts and Peace River block, which are under jurisdiction of the Dominion Government, and the lake area, is 219,859,116 acres.

	Acres	%
Total area of Provincial land.....	219,859,116	
Deeded and in course of disposition	13,006,601	6
Remaining in possession of Crown.....	206,852,515	94
Under lease or license	9,310,000	4
Under various reserves	4,671,795	2
Balance, vacant and unoccupied	192,870,720	88

The receipts per head of population from lands and forests, based upon the returns for the fiscal year ending in 1914 and the population as shown by the last census, compare as follows:

British Columbia	\$11.86	per head
Northwest Provinces	2.42	" "
Quebec88	" "
Ontario71	" "
United States96	" "

Some interesting figures were also given with relation to the forest holdings. The area in private hands is 992,948 acres. The bulk of the timber land temporarily held is under license—the system adopted in 1905, which has proved to be one of the best known modern methods of dealing with timber lands. The total area under license is 8,300,000 acres, and 945,000 acres is under old leases still in good standing. The holdings in Canada compare as follows:

Province	Lease or License
British Columbia	9,245,000 acres
Quebec	44,376,960 "
Ontario	37,000,000 "
Northwest Provinces	5,342,177 "

The Dominion Government has an area under license in the railway belt of 12½ per cent. of the acreage of the timber holdings under jurisdiction of the Province outside the belt. The total area licensed by the Dominion in the Northwest as timber land amounts to 58 per cent. of the acreage held in timber leases and licenses of British Columbia. The area of the national forests of the United States is about 180 million acres, and the timber revenue—of which a great proportion is made up of grazing fees—is less than half that of British Columbia. Based upon the last census returns, the revenue per capita for the fiscal year ending in 1914 in Canada compares as follows:

British Columbia	\$7.64	per head
New Brunswick	1.80	" "
Quebec79	" "
Ontario66	" "
Alberta41	" "
Manitoba21	" "
Saskatchewan13	" "

The following is a comparison of the receipts per acre of timber holdings in the various provinces:

Under Provincial Administration—	Cents per Acre
British Columbia	32.44
New Brunswick	9.76
Ontario	4.52
Quebec	3.58
Under Dominion Administration—	
Railway Belt, B. C.	10.52
Alberta	10.09
Manitoba	7.61
Saskatchewan	4.18