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The Lumber Industry in British Columbia in 1916

Production Exceeds Any Year Since 1913, and Amounts to \$35,528,000—Log Scale Totals 1,280,263,000 Feet Board Measure—Great Increase in Activity During Latter Half of Year.

The report of the Forest Branch of the Provincial Government for 1916, just made public, is always an interesting and valuable document as showing the state of an important natural resource, and an industry that enters

into more phases of Provincial activity than that of any other industry in British Columbia.

The lumber cut of 1916 totalled 1,280,263,000 feet board measure, as against 991,780,200 in 1915 and 1,151,903,000 in 1914. The estimated value of the cut in 1916 was \$35,528,000, and the corresponding figures for 1915 and 1914 are, respectively, as follows: \$29,150,000, \$28,680,000. The value of 1913 cut was \$33,650,000.

The lumber industry in the Province has not received any direct war prosperity, as have other producers nearer the scene of hostilities. The only direct demand for war purposes was for aeroplane spruce, which is found at its best in British Columbia, and for shell boxes. The shell box production in 1915 was \$750,000, while in 1916 it was \$1,833,000.

The increase in value of 1916 over 1913 is chiefly attributable to an increased production of shingles and boxes. The manufacture of boxes was stimulated by contracts placed by the British War Office. The two excellent crops of the Prairies in 1915 and 1916 created a good demand for lumber and shingles, which increased production and bettered prices. This is to a large extent the cause of the increase in value over 1915 of over \$6,000,000.

Timber scaled in 1916 is presented in three tables in the report. The tables show, first, the amount scaled in each district by months and classes of material; second, the legal classification of the land from which the timber was cut; and, third, the proportion of each species.

The most noteworthy feature is that the total scale of 1,280,000,000 feet B.M. is over 25 per cent. greater than the 1915 total, most of this gain taking place in the last six months of the year. Moreover, the increase was general, as every district reflected the better conditions in an increased cut. No other resource is so generously distributed over the entire Province and wields such a tremendous influence on

the every-day economic life of its people. Slightly better conditions in the lumber industry immediately shows itself in greater activity in practically all the communities throughout the Province.

The table showing the source of timber brings out the fact that very old Crown grants supply the largest amount of saw-logs, with timber licences a very close second, followed by later Crown grants, timber leases, and timber sales. Practically no timber was used in railway construction, so the classification "Railway Permits" used in previous years has been omitted.

Of the species of lumber cut, Douglas fir and cedar of course predominate. Together they constitute nearly three-quarters of the cut. This table is approximate only, but serves as a guide to the proportion of the different species making up the year's cut.

There was a marked increase in the timber-sale business in 1916 over the previous year. One hundred and thirty-three sales were awarded, which will return an estimated revenue to the Province of nearly \$260,000, whereas the 1915 timber-sales amounted only to \$152,000. This increase is partially explained by the increase of 16 cents per 1,000 obtained over the average price of 80 cents per 1,000 for 1915, but is mostly due to the greater quantity of timber sold. A total of 136,354,000 feet B.M. of saw-timber was sold, which is nearly a 50 per cent. increase over the quantity sold in 1915. The average area of sales was 175 acres, which shows that the great bulk of the timber sold was in small fractions adjoining existing operations and could

be logged to the best advantage at the same time.

War demands for spruce may again be noticed in the fact that in 1916 nearly three times the amount of spruce was sold as in 1915. Cedar was also in strong demand throughout the year, 8,000,000 feet more cedar being sold than Douglas fir, and for 16 cents per 1,000 more.

The value of sales remained almost the same in the Vancouver District for the two years, the greatest increase coming in the Cranbrook District, where the value of the sales jumped from \$3,500 in 1915 to \$47,600 in 1916. Prince Rupert, Vernon, and Nelson Districts also made large gains.

In spite of the fact that a large number of mills have been shut down during the year, a number of new mills have been built. Others have been moved and capacity

THE LUMBER INDUSTRY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA IN 1916.
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