

Nova Scotia's Forestry Opportunities

Peculiar Situation and Advantages in the Bluenose Province

Those who travel extensively in Nova Scotia for the first time are struck by the large proportion of the soil which is still under woods, and which, to all appearances, is fit only to produce wood crops. In addition to this, the visitor is struck by the suitability of the climate for tree growth. Such a large proportion of the province is absolute forest land (authorities estimate it at from 65 to 70 per cent.) that to allow this to be neglected is not economy, but waste. Highways and railways must be kept up through it to get from place to place, and on the very lowest plane of economy it should be producing freight. Of course, nearly all of it is producing some freight, but, like the cut-over timber land of the rest of North America, it is not producing to the acre anything like it should.

Another thing that strikes the visitor is that the fertile spots are very fertile, and very beautiful as pictures of farming scenery. So much of the land is not fit for farming that Nature seems to have balanced things by making the good parts very rich. Again, the visitor from inland Canada is struck by the presence of two important industries, coal mining and sea fishing.

This produces a state of affairs which is, in many respects, unique. Here there is a naturally good timber country, and right along side of it, and mixed in with it, is territory which requires timber. The mines require pit props, hundreds of miles of them, the fisheries require barrels and kegs and fishing craft, while the farms and orchards need boxes and crates and baskets and barrels. This is in addition to the houses, barns,

sheds, fences, and other structures which all need. This very fortunate circumstance has been, in a way, a bad thing for forest industries. The fact that the market is so near at hand, and will use up so much inferior material, has led the people to underestimate the value of the forest. Frequently the man who makes barrels, or kegs, or crates, gets the material off his own property, or from that of his neighbors, and the amount used never gets into the statistics of the province. The Bulletin of the Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior on the Wood Using Industries of the Maritime Provinces has gathered statistics from six hundred factories and shops in the three provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, but even this large number, more complete than ever before, one feels sure does not take in all the men, who, for a part of the year, make staves, or hoops, or some other product used locally. This fact has kept, and still keeps, the people of the province generally from realizing the full value of the forest industries, and what it will mean when these industries disappear for want of material. Then the fact that much inferior and small timber can be utilized has led to much closer cutting of the forests than where only lumber of the standard sizes was made.

The apple growers are just beginning to realize that, whereas, ten years ago they paid only for the labor in a barrel or box, they now have to pay as much more for the material; so that the price has about doubled. The same state of affairs exists in regard to fish barrels and mine timbers.