



The Wood Industries of Canada.

(By our Special Correspondents).



THE Dominion of Canada is the largest British colony, and it is also the nearest. It covers an area of 3,456,383 square miles, of which 3,315,647 are land and 140,736 water surface. It is washed by the Atlantic Ocean on the east and by the Pacific on the west, and is 3,500 miles across. On the north it stretches to the "Frozen Sea," and on the south to the chain of lakes and the United States.

It is difficult to convey an adequate conception of the extent of such a vast territory. It is forty times the area of Great Britain, which is only 88,000 square miles, and it is 30 per cent. of the total area of the British Empire.

There is a considerable misconception in England as to the climate of Canada. Many persons associate the name in their minds with perpetual frost and snow. In reality the climate of Canada is dry, healthy, and invigorating, and, owing to the great area of the country, extending over 20 degrees of latitude, or from the latitude of Constantinople to the North Pole, it has a wide range of temperature. The extreme dryness of the atmosphere, however, makes both cold and heat less acutely felt than the readings of the thermometer would lead one to expect. In the Maritime Provinces the climate resembles that of the British Isles; in Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba the summers are warm and the winters cold, but the cold is pleasant and bracing, and the snow is of the greatest benefit alike to the farmer, the lumberman, and the merchant. In the North-West Territories cattle graze at large through the winter months, and on the Pacific slope, west of the Rocky Mountains, the climate is milder than in any other part.

The Dominion is so vast that one part may be charged with perpetual snow while the other is bathed in almost perennial heat and sunshine. One part receives the cold atmosphere of the "Frozen Sea"; another the humid air of the Atlantic; another the mild, genial breezes of the Pacific, and still a fourth has the surface of its soil baked by the heat of tropical waters. In the extreme northern parts vegetation is so stunted that the highest tree is not as tall as a two-year old child; in the southern parts vegetation is so luxuriant that fruits and flowers grow with as much vigour as in Italy or the South of France.

Instead of 'six months' winter and six months' cold

weather" being the normal condition, the fact is that the average winter is about four and a half months, and though the spring may begin two or three weeks later than in England, the conditions for rapid growth—warm sunshine and rain—are so favourable that the crops of the two countries are about equally advanced by the middle of July. The marine currents are singularly favourable to Canada; along the Atlantic Coast the Gulf stream exerts an influence so beneficial that on Sable Island are troops of wild ponies, whose progenitors, two centuries ago, were shipwrecked and cast upon the island, where three successive generations without shelter of any kind, have lived and multiplied. Along the Canadian shores of the Pacific Ocean the Japanese current produces the same effect on the climate as the Gulf stream does in England. Vancouver Island is like the south of England, except that it has a greater summer heat, with less humidity.

The system of government established in Canada under the Union Act of 1867 is a Federal Union (the first of the kind in the British Empire), having a general or central Government controlling all matters essential to the general development, the permanency and the unity of the whole Dominion, and a number of local or provincial Governments having the control and management of certain matters naturally and conveniently falling within their defined jurisdiction, while each Government is administered in accordance with the British system of Parliamentary institutions. By this Act the Imperial Parliament practically gave to the Dominion Parliament the largest possible rights which can be exercised by a dependency of legislating on at matters of importance to the Union generally. The position that Canada consequently occupies is that of a semi-independent power.

Canada, as a matter of fact, has been much neglected by Englishmen, but the vast mineral wealth of the country is just beginning to be appreciated. Forty years ago our adventurous young men made their way to the Australian and Californian goldfields, and later they have rushed to the diamond and gold mines of South Africa, but now they are beginning to realise that Canada is a country worth prospecting.

The mineral wealth of Canada, as might be expected from her vast extent of territory, and very various geologic formations, is very diverse in character. The greater part of it is still totally undeveloped, the entire mining population at the present time being only about 14,000—or 0.4 of