

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 53/44 THE STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTRY IN CANADA

An address by the Minister of Resources and Development, Mr. Jean Lesage, made at the Fourth American Forestry Congress, Washington, D.C., October 29, 1953.

... The widespread interest with which the deliberations of this Congress are being followed and the calibre of the people who attend it both attest to the importance that the United States attaches to its forests as a factor in the national well-being. I can assure you that we in Canada have an equally lively recognition of our responsibilities to our forests as being one of the world's great producers of forest products. It has always been a source of great comfort to us that your country and ours have followed so closely the same objectives; we have been able to benefit on many occasions from your experience and we like to hope that from time to time we have been of assistance to you.

Value of Canada's Forests

Canada has the largest reserves of potential forest products in the free world outside of the tropics, with a total area of some 1,300,000 square miles in all classifications. Only Brazil and Russia exceed this figure. Our productive forest area, however, is now estimated at 764,000 square miles, which is about the same as that of the United States. Of this area, some 500,000 square miles is classed as accessible.

Our forest industries indirectly touch almost every Canadian everywhere in Canada, and about one out of every 14 Canadians is directly dependent on forestry and its industries for a livelihood. These industries account for 15 per cent of the annual net value of production of all Canadian industries.

Almost all types of forest industries are important in Canada, but pulp and paper is paramount. It stands first in value of production, in employment, in total wages paid -- and by a substantial amount, first in capital invested. It is the largest industrial buyer of goods and services in Canada. It uses one-third of all the electric power generated for industry and Canada is the second largest producer of hydro-electric power in the world.

I might mention that we have added nearly 1,100,000 tons to our productive capacity since 1946, an increase which is almost exactly the same as your own newsprint capacity today. Moreover this expansion was accomplished by private producers who successfully responded to the opportunities of an expanding market, without subsidies, special tax concessions, official floor prices, or any other form of government intervention.