

Timber Areas and Timbers in Australia

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In the article appearing in the issue of the "Canadian Forestry Magazine" for March 15th of the current year, some of the references in regard to Australia are scarcely in conformity with the facts of the case, and the writer of the article has done but scant justice to some of the prime timbers of Western Australia. It is stated that "in Australia there are 70 million acres of timber of more or less commercial value." If in this estimate are included those areas on which a few trees sparsely segregated are to be found, possibly the figure is within the mark. Indeed it is safe to say that it is a good deal under the mark. But between Savannah timber land and forest land there is a wide gulf fixed and of forest lands, using the word in its proper sense, Australia unfortunately has no such area as 70 million acres. At an Interstate Conference on Forestry held at Perth in November, 1917, at which representatives of the Forest Administrations of every State were present, the questions of the forest area of the Commonwealth and of the minimum that was economically demanded if Australia were to continue to produce timber in the future as it has done in the past were discussed. One Chief Forester, in the course of discussion, put it this way:

"The position seemed to be somewhat as follows: Victoria had about 4,000,000 acres of State forest, New South Wales proposed to have 5,000,000, and might perhaps obtain 6,000,000. Queensland had 1,000,000 acres of State forest and 3,000,000 acres of temporary reserves. Much of the latter was of very little value for forestry, having been reserved many years

ago, because the land was considered not suitable for settlement. They could afford to alienate some of that, and must endeavour to find more forest land in other localities, but it appeared impossible to obtain more than 4,000,000 acres of forest land for Queensland. West Australia apparently cannot look forward to more than 4,000,000 acres, while South Australia's area is too small to take into account in the calculation. This makes a total of 18,000,000 acres exclusive of Tasmania."

Estimates Now are Lower.

These figures may be regarded as authoritative but, since they were published, a classification survey has been made of Western Australia forests, and it is doubtful at the present moment whether the total area of Crown forest will exceed 3,000,000 acres. The task towards which every Forest Department in the Commonwealth is now applying itself is that of increasing this area, and that this will be accomplished in time can scarcely be doubted. A good deal, of course, will depend on the extent to which land that really ought to be forest land may be alienated for other purposes, farming, etc.

The eucalypt, take the species all round, is a tree that attains dimensions much beyond the average obtaining in Europe or in America, and there are giants among the eucalypts. The karri of Western Australia, for instance, frequently reaches a height of over 250 feet and one measured not long before this article was written was found to be 278 ft. in height. In the Gippsland District of Victoria too, there are eucalypts of abnormal size, but no specimen has yet been found over 300 ft. in height. It may be, of course, that in the article in the magazine already referred to, in which it is stated that one variety of eucalypt found in Victoria reaches a height of 380 ft., this figure is a misprint for 300 ft. Certain it is that no tree in Victoria, or anywhere else in Australia for that matter, has been found of a height of 380 feet.

The jarrah and karri of Western Australia stand in a class by themselves. These timbers—particularly the former—have been exported in large quantities to Europe, Africa and Asia. It is admirably adapted for piling, as is stated in the article already referred to, but such a purpose does not by any means define the range of usefulness of the timber. It can be safely said that there is no purpose in building construction to which jarrah cannot be applied. In bridge, harbour and wharf work it is extensively used, but, in addition to what may be termed rougher

purposes, it can be utilized in other and superior ways. As a furniture and decorative timber, jarrah has scarcely any equal. In the Empire Forestry Exhibition held in London last year the display of high-class furniture and panelling in jarrah attracted a great deal of attention. Karri is a close relative to jarrah and it can be put to all the purposes to which jarrah is put, both rough and fine, with the sole exception that it does not possess the durable qualities of jarrah when in the ground.

Why Not Import these Hardwoods?

These two timbers are exported every year to a value close upon one million sterling, and during this year it is probable that the million limit will be again passed, as it was on one occasion before the war. One of the anomalies in inter-Dominion trading centres round Canadian softwoods and Australian hardwoods. The Commonwealth is a large importer of Canadian timber. The Australian knows the value of the Canadian product and he uses it for a great many purposes. But information does not seem to have reached Canada about the qualities of Australian hardwoods, or, if it has done so, it has been confined to a comparatively limited



Wolf pups, caught on the Cypress Hills Forest Reserve, Alberta, on the ranch of P. H. Armstrong. Eight pups were found in the den and two saved for "pets."



HOW COTTONWOOD GROWS.

A specimen at Senneville, Quebec, that measures 16 feet 2 inches in circumference. Photo by J. N. Stephenson.