beneficent effect of the tree growth on the waterflow which is so much needed in the irrigation schemes on the prairie below. But it is understood that sooner or later an extensive policy either of government cutting or of leased milling will be adopted, so as to make sure that the forest performs its true function and is used to the utmost value for the community.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Resources.

Of the vast territory of British Columbia, estimated at 370,000 square miles, not more than 30,000,000 acres or 12 per cent. is by well informed land lookers considered merchantable, according to present standards, and it is doubtful whether under any change of standards the acreage of actual and potential commercial forest could be increased beyond 50,000,000 acres. At present to be sure, the lowest standard at the Coast mills is as a rule 14 inch in 32 feet logs, and, as a rule, no trees under 26 inches in diameter, breast high, are cut. Of such timber, now pretty nearly all located by timber licenses, not more than six million acres are supposed to exist, which may be swelled to fifteen million of commercial character when standards are lowered, and both the northern extension and timber of higher altitudes are added, which at 15 M feet average may indicate a stand of over 225,000,000,000 feet.

In the mountain mills the average log sawed at the mill is 12 inches. Of this description some 15 million acres may be found in the southern Rocky Mountain type, which figures at 5 M feet, gives another 75 billion feet, or altogether for the western Canadian forest, 300 billion feet. One might easily double these estimates without finding the supply inexhaustible.

Fires, as everywhere, have made great havoc, especially in the mountain timber. While, on the western humid slopes in the heavy timber fires do not do much damage, the drier mountain country has suffered severely, not only along the line of travel, but wherever prospectors were careless. The northeastern section, but little explored, is probably without timber of other than local interest.

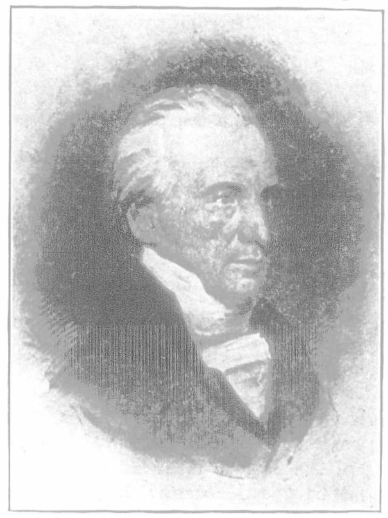
Early Industry and Legislation.

The milling industry in British Columbia began with the earliest settlers. A great deal of shipping and exploration was being carried on by the North West and X. Y. Fur Companies, and by the British Government. Victoria, founded in 1842 was soon the scene of cutting operations. On the mainland Fort Vancouver and Port Moody were later the centres of extensive milling. The securing of timber was practically a repetition of what was the rule in the earliest days in the East—the trees nearest the water were dropped into the stream and floated to the mill.

One of the first government measures regarding timber lands adopted the practice of issuing "handloggers" licenses' under which any one could cut logs anywhere in the province on payment of an annual fee of $10. This procedure gave rise to the great handlogging craze which lasted for many years, but it was found wasteful, and the legislation was revised to allow cutting only in certain parts of the province. The use of steam power was restricted, and the annual fee was increased to $25.

Previous to 1888 there was no restriction or regulation governing the cutting of timber, and timber lands were sold and leased on the same terms as other classes of lands. In that year the Legislature reserved a royalty of 50 cents per thousand feet on all timber cut on lands thereafter granted. It was not until 1896 that timber lands were reserved from sale and defined, as lands carrying 8,000 feet of merchantable timber to the acre west and 5,000 feet to the acre east, of the Cascade (Coast) range. Timber leases were issued as early as 1870, and up to 1888 the leases were held on such terms as seemed expedient to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. In 1888 the life of leases of timber was fixed at thirty years, at an annual rental of 10 cents per acre, with a royalty of 50 cents per thousand feet, and a ground rental of 5 cents per acre, was imposed on all timber leased lands from December, 1879. Lessees were also required to build and operate a mill of not less than 1,000 feet per day for each 400 acres. In 1891 a deposit equivalent to 10c. per acre was required from applicants for leases; that all timber cut from provincial lands must be manufactured within the province; that renewals or leases should be for twenty-one years, and that the area covered by a single lease should be 640 acres. The granting of special timber licenses of 640 acres at an annual fee of $100 was also provided for.

Various other changes were made from year to year in the law regulating timber leases until 1905, when the granting of leases was abolished, and the system of special timber licenses as the only means through which timber could be acquired was permanently adopted. New licenses were made transferable and renewable each year for twenty-one years, and existing licenses were made transferable and renewable for sixteen years. In 1910 it was enacted that special licenses might be renewed annually as long as there is merchantable timber on the land, subject to such terms, conditions, regulations and restrictions as may be imposed by statute or order-in-council then in force or made at any time thereafter. The annual fee for each license covering 640 acres was fixed at $140 west of the Coast range, and $115 east of the Coast range.



PHILEMON WRIGHT,
Pioneer Lumberman of Ottawa Valley

The amendment of 1905, abolishing leases, stimulated the demand for special licenses, and from then till the end of 1907 over 15,000 representing over 8,600,000 acres, were issued. These, renewable annually, give the province an annual revenue of nearly $2,000,000, as the average annual fee is about $130 per license.

On December 24, 1907, an order-in-council was passed reserving all unalienated timber in the province, pending the inquiry by a Royal Commission.

The many changes in the laws and regulations between 1888 and 1910 render the conditions under which Crown granted and leased timber is held rather complicated. For instance, timber lands Crown granted prior to 1888 are not liable to royalty or stumpage dues, and leases granted at various periods contain different provisions; some are renewable indefinitely and the lessee must operate a mill; others are renewable indefinitely and need not operate a mill; and the same terms apply to unrenewable leases, some must operate a mill, while others are free from that obligation.