

# Canada Weekly

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## Canada's forest — prime source of national wealth — can be saved

*Forest products, and related services, have grown into Canada's largest industry. Shipments total about \$13 billion a year and the industry's contribution to the trade balance is approximately \$7 billion — nearly as much as that of mining, agriculture, fishing and fuels combined.*

*The forest, "the greatest source of national wealth" and the danger of it being harvested without adequate regeneration measures, is the subject of the Royal Bank of Canada's July Monthly Letter, passages from which follow:*

...As the industry has grown, so the forest has been harvested faster...Mammoth new machines, weighing as much as 40 tons, now snip off trees at the trunk two or three at a time, strip them of their branches, cut them into lengths, stack them and haul them away — all, as it were, in one bite. Such methods enable woodsmen to clear-cut a stand of timber more thoroughly than ever. They have also brought about a significant expansion in the total cut.

In the past few years the cut has reached two million acres annually. In statistical terms this may seem rather small. Almost 800 million acres — an area roughly equivalent to the land mass of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan combined — is classified as "productive forest". These figures tend to bolster the comforting assumption that, with such a vast reserve on hand, the harvest will always be more than balanced by net growth.

Hence as late as last year, the Federal Government agency, Statistics Canada, reported in its annual year book: "A large surplus of timber exists in Canada although there are shortages in some regions and species which could be overcome by increased silvicultural and management techniques. In addition, greater utilization of individual trees and of certain species could further extend the resource."

\* \* \* \*

### Abundance an illusion

It is therefore surprising to be told by experts that this picture of seemingly limitless wood is largely an illusion. The Na-

tional Forest Regeneration Conference held in Quebec City in October 1977, concluded that adequate forest renewal was nothing less than an urgent economic need. The conference was attended by 250 representatives of government, industry, the forestry profession, universities, and environmental protection organizations. They agreed unanimously that, as they put it in their *communiqué*, inadequate forest regeneration is "indeed a serious and fundamental forestry problem. This concern is not yet felt by the general public or by politicians, and there is a real need — as demonstrated by the



*Thirty-five per cent of Canada is covered by forests.*



Seventy-two years ago today...

Canada's transatlantic wireless, transmitting messages from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia via Poldu, Newfoundland to Cornwall, England and back, opened for limited commercial service.

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