

# Canada and the Timber Trade of France

**While France Is Usually a Small Importer of Lumber, Rebuilding of Devastated Areas After the War Will Make for a Heavy Demand Which Should Benefit Canada and British Columbia in Particular.**

Mr. H. R. MacMillan, Provincial Chief Forester and now acting as Special Trade Commissioner for the Dominion Government, reports in the Weekly Bulletin published by the Department of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa, on the timber trade of France, which holds considerable interest for the lumber export trade of Canada.

Compared with Great Britain, France does not import large quantities of timber. The per capita importation of Great Britain for 1914 amounted to \$3.60 per head. The annual consumption of timber in Great Britain for the year amounted to 14 cubic feet per head, of which 16 per cent. was grown at home and 84 per cent. imported. For the same year France imported timber valued at \$37,380,000, an average of 93 cents per head, just one-quarter the per capita importations of Great Britain. The reasons for France's smaller importations of timber are:—

## 1. France is a timber producing country.

About 18 per cent. of the area of France, or 24,021,587 acres, is under forest, all of which is carefully managed by the Government to prevent over-cutting and secure the maximum permanent timber production. The quantity of timber cut each year approximates to 910,740,000 cubic feet, of which 225,920,000 cubic feet are suitable for saw timber; the remainder consists of rough wood. The timber production of the country, added to the imports, which in 1913 were 177,551,000 cubic feet, give an annual per capita consumption of timber for the country of about 27 cubic feet.

## 2. France is not so great an industrial nation as Great Britain.

Although the per capita consumption of timber in France is twice that of Great Britain, a large proportion of the timber used is rough wood, which under the system of utilization of the forests, can be secured in the country. Out of 27 cubic feet of timber used per head per year only seven cubic feet is saw timber, the remainder is fuel, poles, pickets, used in rural operations. Whereas in Great Britain, of the 14 cubic feet per head used annually 12.8 cubic feet is saw timber and only 1.8 cubic feet firewood and rough timber.

The importations of timber into France for 1913 amounted to about 1,775,000,000 feet board measure, reckoning all commodities in this measure. The varieties are not clearly separated in the Customs statistics, but the most important classes are shown approximately below:—

Classification of Imports.	Quantity M feet board measure.
Softwood, logs, deals, boards .....	844,724,000
Pitchpine .....	65,529,000
Oak .....	37,793,000
Railroad sleepers .....	12,131,000
Douglas fir .....	5,000,000
Other varieties .....	29,160,000
Softwood logs less than 7½ ft. long.....cu. ft.	12,943,000
Rough poles, props, faggots .....	9,525,000
Match splints .....	253,000

The chief countries supplying timber to France are given herewith, with the approximate quantities supplied by each, in 1913:—

	Quantity of timber imports into France.
Russia .....	1,020,552
Sweden .....	654,169
United States .....	194,281
Germany .....	102,269
Austria-Hungary .....	96,128
Belgium .....	25,578
Japan .....	23,978
Switzerland .....	23,062
Norway .....	14,232
Rumania .....	12,875
Turkey .....	8,091
Canada .....	529

An overwhelming proportion of timber imports into France are from European countries. That this should be so is due to the care paid to forest protection and management in Europe.

The only products of importance purchased by France outside Europe are pitchpine and oak from the United States, oak from Japan, and Douglas fir from Canada and the United States.

The most important product imported into France is softwood from Russia, Scandinavia, Germany and Austria-Hungary. This timber is imported for general building purposes.

The lumber imported into France is chiefly cut in inch sizes; it is classified in the Customs statistics, however, for duty purposes according to the metric system.

Over 60 per cent. of the softwood lumber imported into France is between 1 2-5 and 3 1-5 inches in thickness, being 1 1-2, 2 and 3-inch deals; 30 per cent. is lumber less than 1 2-5 inches in thickness and the remainder is timbers and logs.

The average price of this class of material imported was, before the war:—

Less than 1 2-5 inch.....	34 cents per cubic foot
1 2-5 inch to 3 1-5 inch.....	36 " "
Over 3 1-5 inch .....	23 " "
Rough logs .....	25 " "

The sale of Eastern Canadian deals in the market would depend entirely on price.

When freights again become normal Douglas fir will also be able to compete in France for general building purposes. Up to the present it has been used only in comparatively limited regions where large timbers are required and as a building timber is not well known. The prospects for use in France will be improved by the great demand likely to be made on European forests after the war and the increased prices to be expected. The fact that during the war Douglas fir common lumber has been extensively used in trenches, military and commissariat buildings, railroads and temporary buildings will also prove an argument in its favor.

Pitchpine has long been used in large quantities in France. The United States is the only country supplying it. About 69 per cent. of the pitchpine is imported in timbers 6 inches by 6 inches and larger, 18 per cent. is 1 2-5 inches by 3 1-5 inches thick, and 13 per cent. is in the form of boards less than 1 2-5 inches in thickness.

Pitchpine is the timber commonly imported for industrial purposes, for public works, harbor and naval works, and has held the market to the exclusion of Douglas fir because it was cheaper.

The shipping of Douglas fir through the Panama Canal will alter the situation. Douglas fir will, when conditions become normal, be cheaper than pitchpine. It will have the further advantage of greater freedom from defects, a consideration highly appreciated in France.

The sales of pitchpine to France are handled chiefly by brokerage houses and timber dealers in London, some of whom have branches in France. The shipments are handled both by parcels in liners and by full cargoes.

Should any of the regular lines operating between the Pacific coast and Europe arrange calls at French ports, business would be facilitated.

Oak is used chiefly in industries, furniture and house trim. The important purchases are from the United States, Russia, Japan and Austria-Hungary. The importations of oak have been on the increase during the past three years. Large quantities of oak clapboards are imported to France.

Oak is a very popular wood in France and is used for purposes both in building, manufacturing and as finish where other woods are now substituted in other countries. This may be due to the fact that two-fifths of the forest of France are oak (10,000,000 acres in all) and oak is a very common and highly-prized wood throughout the country.

The Hon. Philippe Roy recently gave very full particulars concerning the sleeper specifications on France railroads. (See Weekly Bulletin No. 608.)

There are 25,471 miles of railroad in France, in which are over 60,000,000 sleepers. Sleepers are used at the rate of 2,400 to the mile.

Five thousand six hundred miles of railroad are owned and operated by the State; the remainder is owned and operated by five different companies.

Hardwood sleepers are preferred. Beech and oak are the most commonly used. Maritime pine, Scotch pine and spruce are also used. No sleepers are used without creosoting. The average life of creosoted beech and oak is twenty to twenty-five years. The pines give a life of fifteen to eighteen years, and spruce eight years.

Very rough sleepers are accepted, particularly in oak, many of which are crooked, half round, irregular in shape and size.

The annual requirements of the French railways are 6,000,000 sleepers. About 5,500,000 are produced locally and 500,000 imported. The imported sleepers are chiefly beech from Austria-

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