

air chilled by the Labrador Current. June and July are the foggiest months and the period October to March is the least foggy. During the winter months, the east and west coasts are normally closed by sea ice which begins to form over the shallow coastal waters during December. It spreads southwards during January and reaches its greatest extent by March. The Strait of Belle Isle is closed to navigation from December to the beginning of June, but the south coast is ice-free all the year and its harbours remain accessible. Drift ice from Davis Strait is carried southwards by the Labrador Current and spreads over the Grand Banks during February and March. Icebergs, which originate from land ice in the far north, and in particular from the glaciers of West Greenland, are also drifted south by the Labrador Current. Normally they disintegrate before reaching the Grand Banks, but many are observed off the shores of Newfoundland particularly in the months of April, May and June.

Although Labrador lies in the same latitude as the United Kingdom, it has an extremely rigorous climate. The temperature may range from 60°F. below zero to 60°F. above. The summer is short, and snow usually covers the ground from September to June. In winter the whole coast line is blocked by ice.

Soils and Vegetation.—The soil cover and vegetation of pre-Pleistocene times were entirely removed from the Island of Newfoundland during the Wisconsin glacial period. When the ice melted it left a thin layer of silts, sands, and gravels mixed with boulders and stones. Owing to the recency of glaciation, true soils have had little time to develop and the cool, moist climate has tended to retard their formation. As the rainfall is heavy and the evaporation rate low, water is continually percolating through the soil, leaching out the soluble mineral salts, and rendering the soil very acid. The vegetation cover of coniferous trees also tends to increase acidity. These soils are known as Podsolis and are characteristic of the northern forest-lands.

Better soils are found in the valleys where morainic sands and clays were deposited and where alluvial soils have formed. Round the coasts and at the seaward end of many valleys there are marine sands and clays deposited during the post-glacial submergence of the Island.

Newfoundland lies within the Northern Coniferous Forest Region. The trees are mainly coniferous but include some hardwoods, such as birch and maple. The climate is better suited to the conifer—the long cold winters and short growing seasons restrict the spread of deciduous trees. The conifers grow well under the humid climate conditions of Newfoundland but do not attain large proportions and are inferior to the trees of southeastern Canada.

Only about two-fifths of the Island is forested, the remainder being a waste of barren-lands, bogs and lakes. The most important factors in the distribution of forest are drainage and altitude. The main forest areas lie within the watersheds of the principal rivers—the Humber, the Exploits, the Gander and the Terra Nova. At