

The Wood Wealth of Czecho Slovakia

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The wooded districts in Czecho Slovakia comprise 29.5 per cent of the total area of the Republic. It is one of the most heavily forested countries in Europe. Switzerland has only 23.5 per cent.

In the Czech Provinces (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) the forests have an area of 2,340,900 hectares (5,782,245 ac.); in Slovakia and "Sub-Carpathian Russia," of about 2,000,000 hectares (4,940,000 ac.). It is in Silesia, Slovakia and sub-Carpathian Russia that the proportion of forest area is highest (34.5 per cent); Bohemia comes next with 29.6 per cent, and Moravia has 28.0 per cent.

The Republic of Czecho Slovakia, whose forest production exceeds its consumption, is thus an exporting country in forest products. Hence it is natural that, in the interest of the State, the government should have some control (conceivably a complete one) of the export trade in wood. The geographical position of the country and its navigable rivers cannot be favorable to exportation unless several of the States adjacent to Czecho Slovakia (e.g. France, Belgium and Italy) suffer from a deficit in forest production.

Shortly after the conclusion of the armistice, the country was overrun by foreign buyers who caused a veritable fever for exportation and brought about an enormous rise in the price of wood.

With regard to the question of the annual production of material in the Czecho Slovak forests a forest engineer, Mr. A. Prokes, has given information in the "Gaette de Prague." The basis of his statistics is the production in 1910, which is accurately known for the three Czech provinces (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia).

Figures are given separately for (1) wood suitable for construction and (2) for fuelwood.

(1) Construction Wood.—Of wood suitable for construction purposes, Bohemia has 3,563,750 cubic feet (100,913 cubic metres) of hardwood, and 110,952,800 cubic feet (3,141,804 cubic metres) of coniferous wood, a total of 114,516,550 cubic feet (3,242,717 cubic metres). Moravia has 5,051,460 cubic feet (143,040 cubic metres) of hardwood and 44,050,600 cubic feet (1,247,364 cubic metres) of coniferous wood, a total of 49,102,120 cubic feet (1,390,404 cubic metres). Silesia has 1,242,523 cubic feet (35,184 cubic metres) of hardwood and 25,380,043 cubic feet (718,676 cubic metres) of coniferous wood, a total of 26,622,566 cubic feet (753,860 cubic metres). The entire republic has thus a grand total of 9,857,723 cubic feet (279,137 cubic metres) of hardwood construction timber and 180,383,510 cubic feet (5,107,844 cubic metres) of coniferous building timber, a total of 190,241,233

cubic feet (5,386,981 cubic metres) of construction timber of all kinds.

(2) Fuelwood.—For fuelwood the figures are as follows: Bohemia, 8,983,677 cubic feet (254,387 sterer,* i.e. cubic metres, of hardwood fuelwood, and 70,063,830 cubic feet (1,983,968 sterer) of coniferous wood, a total of 79,047,507 cubic feet (2,238,355 sterer) of fuelwood of all kinds; Moravia, 23,378,036 cubic feet (661,986 sterer) of hardwood fuelwood and 37,967,192 cubic feet (1,075,101 sterer) of coniferous fuelwood, a total of 61,345,228 cubic feet (1,737,087 sterer) of fuelwood of both kinds. Silesia, 3,801,307 cubic feet (107,640 sterer) of hardwood fuelwood and 7,718,870 cubic feet (218,572 sterer) of coniferous fuelwood, making a total of 11,520,177 cubic feet (326,212 sterer) of fuelwood.

The grand totals for the three provinces are, thus, 190,241,234 cubic feet (5,386,981 cubic metres) of construction timber, and 151,912,911 cubic feet (4,301,654 sterer) of fuelwood.

Allowing one stere as the equivalent of 0.65 cubic metre, the total volume of fuelwood exploited in 1910 amounts to 98,740,740 cubic feet (2,796,000 cubic metres, or, say, 1,097,120 cords). The total amount of the exploitations in the three Czech provinces in 1910 was 288,982,645 cubic feet (8,183,000 cubic

metres) or, on the average, about fifty cubic feet per acre (3.5 cubic metres per hectare). Mr. Prokes allows for the forests of Czecho Slovakia an average production of forty-three cubic feet per acre (three cubic metres per hectare), or about 211,890,000 cubic feet (6,000,000 cubic metres).

Allowing pre-war prices, Mr. Prokes estimates the value of this annual production at 250,000,000 crowns, or at the pre-war value (20.26 cents) of the crown, \$50,650,000. He estimates, on the other hand, that when the forests are better managed this production of material can be increased to 175 cubic feet per acre (five cubic metres per hectare) in the Czech provinces, giving a total of 423,780,000 cubic feet (12,000,000 cubic metres), and 140 cubic feet per acre (four cubic metres per hectare) in the rest of the country, which will thus yield 282,520,000 cubic feet (8,000,000 cubic metres).

This will give a total of 706,300,000 cubic feet (twenty million cubic metres), of which the value may be put at 29 cents per cubic foot (fifty crowns per cubic metre), or a total of \$202,600,000 (1,000,000,000 crowns).

*A stere is a cubic metre in the same sense that a cord is 128 cubic feet. But just as the actual volume of solid wood in the cord will occupy, say, seventy per cent of the stacked contents (128 cubic feet), giving some ninety cubic feet of solid wood, so the actual volume of solid wood in the stere is taken as 0.65 of a cubic metre.



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