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Meagre Forest Resources Bordering James and Hudson Bays



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THE "Canadian Forestry Magazine," for November, 1920, contains an article by Dr. W. T. Grenfell about the forests of the Labrador Peninsula. It treats mainly the east coast and tributary rivers, though there is a short reference to the observations made by Dr. A. P. Low and others in the western half of the peninsula. From the point of view of the northward distribution of the different trees making up the forests in the northland of Canada the east coast of James and Hudson Bays is particularly interesting; and as I made a four months trip here, to beyond lat. 56°N., in the summer of 1920, a short article about this region may be of interest to the readers of this periodical.

As the main purpose of my trip was marine investigations, on behalf of the Biological Board of Canada, and I therefore spent most of my time upon the sea, the observations of the forests made were more of a general nature, supplemented by the collecting of forest-insects and a number of photographs, some of which are reproduced here.

First as to the different species of trees occurring there:

While the Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) does not reach the shores of James Bay, and has its northern limit just south of the mouth of Rupert River, the two species of poplar occur all the way north to the neighbourhood of the boundary between James

and Hudson Bays, Cape Jones. One of them, the Balsam Poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) has its northern limit at "Bishop Roggan River," and is limited to the heavy, marine clay-soil in the river-valleys, until about 100 miles from the coast. The other the Aspen (*P. tremuloides*) extends north to the vicinity of Cape Jones, and inland to between the upper and lower parts of Big River. It is mainly found as second growth, together with the white birch, or in clumps in the original forest.

The Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana*) does not come down to the coast, but is found in the interior north to the south branch of Great Whale River.

The Canoe Birch (*Betula papyrifera*) occurs along the coast north to near the mouth of Great Whale River, and is found inland at the head waters of the south branch of the same river. The most northern representatives of it are clumps of small trees, and north of the vicinity of Lake Mistassini they are not big enough for canoe-making, so birch-bark has to be imported from farther south, for the use of the Indians there.

The Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*) is the typical tree around the larger streams and lakes, and extends north to the vicinity of Great Whale River.

The three other species of trees occur throughout the wooded part of the peninsula.