

portages never exceed two or three miles. The lakes vary in size from small ponds to great sheets of water hundreds of square miles in extent, the twelve largest being Mistassinni, Michikamau, Kaniapiskau, Minto, Clearwater, Attikonak, Apiskigamish, Ashuanipi, Mistassinis, Nichikun, Manuan and Pletipe.

The large lakes and most of the rivers of the interior contain an almost inexhaustible supply of food fishes of large size and superior quality. White fish averaging four pounds and running as high as fourteen pounds, are abundant; lake trout averaging eight pounds and up to forty pounds are plentiful; brook trout from one to seven pounds occur in many of the rivers; pike from two to fifteen pounds abound in the quiet flowing streams of the southern, eastern and western watersheds; pickerel and chub occur in many of the smaller streams; ling from two to fourteen pounds are common in all the deep lakes of the interior, and are an important source of food for the Indians; suckers are the principal food of the Indians of many parts of the interior; a species of sturgeon is taken in great quantities half way down the Rupert River; and Atlantic salmon ascend many of the rivers in great numbers. When access is had to them by rail, these fisheries will become immensely valuable.

Most of the soil being derived from the underlying Archæan rocks is a mixture of sand, clay and boulders of various sizes. Along the river valleys it has been greatly improved by the rearrangement of the till and an admixture of sediments. In the vicinity of Cambrian limestones and shales, it is of a heavier nature and better suited for the growth of timber. With the exception of the higher hills and ridges, the forest is continuous over the southern part of the peninsula, as far north as the fifty-fourth parallel. About latitude fifty-five only half the country is timbered. As we go north the trees become smaller, and about latitude fifty-eight they disappear altogether.

The forest is almost entirely coniferous, and is of the regular northern type, consisting principally of spruce, larch, balsam fir, scrub pine, poplar, and birch. The latitude, height above sea-level, distance from sea-coast, topography of the district and character of the soil, all play an important part in the distribution of each species.

The black spruce, (*Picea nigra*, Link) forms about ninety per cent of the forest, and grows freely, either in cold sphagnum swamps or on high hills covered with sand or heavy glacial drift. As a rule it occurs in dense thickets, with long naked stems, and on the southern watershed these thickets are so dense that the trees seldom reach a large size. Northward the stands are not so dense, and the stout trunks are often clothed to the ground with branches. In all cases the branches have a characteristic droop which enables one to recognize the tree almost as far as he