

Ottawa territories, leaving the Upper Ottawa territory to be considered separately for statistical convenience.

This great division, containing an area of 81,128 square miles, is distinctly different from the foregoing; lumbering operations having for many years been successfully carried on in various parts of it; in its forests pine of the best quality is, or in some parts may be said has been, more abundant, and they adjoin the rear of the older or are associated with the advancing new settlements of the province.

Great Central division, including the Saguenay, St. Maurice, and Lower Ottawa territories.

The north-westerly line from the mouth of the Manicouagan is arbitrarily assumed as the eastern boundary of this great division as (though imperfectly) indicating the general position of the gradual and irregular transition to the better wooded country, whose forests have already been more or less lumbered upon or are, to a considerable extent, held under license from the Crown for that purpose.

This great central division embraces the Saguenay, the St. Maurice, and the Lower Ottawa territories.

The Saguenay territory, embracing two Crown timber agencies, is the first in ascending the St. Lawrence.

The Saguenay territory.

In the eastern part of it, between the assumed boundary line, from the mouth of the Manicouagan and the River Saguenay, the chief rivers that fall into the St. Lawrence are the Betsiamites (of which nearly the whole of its course of probably 260 miles flows through this division) the Portneuf, the Sault aux Cochons, and the Escoumains.

The three latter, though much smaller, have yielded proportionally much more good timber (including some pines), though in parts denuded by old forest fires, and though originally well wooded the future supply from them must be very small.

Rivers below the Saguenay.

On the Betsiamites, above the 40th mile, the timber is very small and vast brûlés are prevalent, which cannot yield timber of value till reproduced in the remote future.

River Betsiamites

The area from which the Saguenay draws its waters seems, as far as known, to be about 24,000 square miles, and its most important feature is its great geological trough or basin (in which Lake St. John is situated) containing over three millions of acres of fertile arable land.

Area of the Saguenay Valley.

As the depression of this basin below the mean surface of the earth, as represented by that of the mountainous country around it, is such as to give it, on Humboldt's data, a climatic temperature equal to that of a latitude two and a half degrees further south, which, together with the richness of the soil, besides making it the best wheat growing country in the province of Quebec, gave it originally a fine growth of wood, including pine of a good quality, which was found on the River Mistassini 85 miles further north than the limit of the growth of pine in the valley of the River St. Maurice.

Cause of warm climate around Lake St. John.

Owing to my practical experience I was most forcibly struck with these advantages of soil and climate 30 years ago, while making an exploration in the interior by order of Government for the purpose of verifying the truth of what seemed almost incredible statements on the subject made by a few public spirited clergymen and gentlemen of high standing from the Lower St. Lawrence, which I had the opportunity of most amply sustaining. But, owing to these advantages and the demands of the lumber trade, what remains of the best timber forest of the Saguenay must soon be swept away to make room for what should be the most prosperous settlements in the province.

Pine grows far north on the River Saguenay owing to climate admitting.

However, from the generally mountainous character and extensive area from which the many large branches of the Saguenay draw their waters, there will always, with proper care, be a sufficient supply of spruce and larch and other wood, after its pine is almost or altogether cut away, to sustain a considerable export trade in lumber. For there will always be a great preponderance of unarable forest land remaining in the surrounding country, and we know from explorations made, that larch of a great size is found occasionally as far north as the height of land between the St. Lawrence and Hudson's Bay waters.

Other woods prevail in higher parts of this territory. Will yield much spruce and larch.

And, notwithstanding that there are great tracts desolated by fires, even they, when there is soil enough, are undergoing nature's process of restoration by a vigorous growth of deciduous trees, chiefly poplar and birch, whose falling leaves restore fertility. I saw much poplar and white birch of a fine growth for making saw logs in some parts of the Saguenay country, where the land is doubtless now under cultivation, that would be most valuable in prairie lands for house building. Forty years ago I examined, down to the foundation, the walls of an old house then being cut open; they were of hewn poplar, and all perfectly sound. It was built by missionaries 180 years ago, but had ever since then been inhabited.

Saguenay territory continued.

Fine poplar on parts.

On the southern tributaries of the Saguenay that interlace with those of the St. Maurice there is much good soil, and where the trees fit to make saw logs of have been cut away, the small trees left, if not destroyed by fire, will soon be of a useful size.