

## ALBERTA'S FOREST INDUSTRY

Alberta's primary forest industry is utilizing an ever increasing volume and variety of woods for manufacturing process. Until a few years ago, woods operations were confined to saw timber, railroad ties, telephone poles and mine props. Now diversification is the theme in utilization of forest products. Poplar, long the weed tree of Alberta forests, has emerged as the foundation growth for three large plywood plants employing 500 workers. One plant has been operating at Grande Prairie since 1953; the other two opened in Edmonton late in 1956. This product has found ready acceptance with the building trade. For furniture and musical instrument making, poplar plywood is considered superior to that made from fir.

Vast tracts of poplar and spruce stands unsuited for saw timber or pole production are basic supply of a burgeoning pulp and paper industry. Early in 1957 North West Pulp and Power Limited began production of sulphate kraft pulp in a \$50 million plant at Hinton. The firm employs 500 workers in plant operations and another 1,500 in the woods. A second company is in the process of organizing a comparable pulp project in the adjacent Whitecourt area also northwest of Edmonton.

Growing importance of forestry in Alberta is reflected in the steady rise of its net value of production. In 1938 it contributed a net production value of \$1,112,000 to the provincial economy; by 1946 the figure rose to \$4,643,000; went on to \$9,445,000 in 1951 and in 1956 reached \$12,000,000.

### RECORD BORDER CROSSINGS

Highway traffic crossing the border between Canada and the United States reached a record volume in 1957, according to The Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Aggregate crossings increased almost 4 per cent to 17,982,400 from 1956's previous high total of 17,341,800. This compares with an increase of 9 per cent in 1956 over 1955. Crossings comprised 9,300,300 foreign vehicles entering Canada versus 9,046,500 a year earlier and 8,682,100 returning Canadian vehicles against 8,295,400.

Incoming foreign vehicles consisted of 2,555,100 units entering on travellers' vehicle permits (2,484,400 a year earlier), 6,287,100 local or non-permit entries - a new record (6,111,100 - previous peak), and 458,200 foreign commercial vehicles (450,900). Re-entries of vehicles registered in Canada comprised 1,425,100 units abroad more than 24 hours (1,346,600), 6,629,600 vehicles absent 24 hours or less (6,309,500), and 627,400 commercial vehicles (639,300).

Forestry and its allied industries furnish employment for 8,000 to 9,000 persons with a payroll estimated at \$25 million to \$28 million. Sawmills alone employ an average of 3,000 men a year, with a payroll of \$5.5 million. Their gross production value averages \$24 million annually. Work in the sawmills is seasonal, confined mainly to the months of December, January, February and March. Employment fluctuates from 4,000 in the peak month of February to fewer than 500 in May.

In the furniture industry, 82 establishments have a working force of more than 600 with a payroll of nearly \$2 million. Their gross production value is in the neighborhood of \$6 million a year. Gross value of products turned out by 122 sash, door and planing mills is \$22 million. Working force is 1,850 and their annual payroll is \$5 million. Miscellaneous industries using wood, such as box factories and morticians' supply firms, number 23, employing 451 persons. Payroll is over \$1 million. Gross production value exceeds \$2 million.

In 1941 the gross production value of wood and paper products combined totalled \$13,981,714. By 1951 the figure for wood products alone had climbed to \$51,207,703, while the 1956 figure is estimated at \$62,000,000.

Timber production fluctuates from year to year but the over-all trend is steadily upward. From a low of 182,407,992 board feet in 1943-44 production has risen to an all-time high of 430,000,000 board feet in 1955. Production in 1956 receded to 385,000,000 board feet.

Volume of crossings in December declined slightly (0.3 per cent) to 1,117,500 vehicles from the 1956 December total of 1,121,300, number of foreign vehicles falling to 505,600 units from 505,800 and returning Canadian vehicles to 611,900 from 615,500. Volume of non-permit or local entries in the month dropped to 382,900 units from 390,100 a year earlier, but travel permit entries rose to 84,600 units from 78,400 and foreign commercial traffic to 38,200 units from 37,300. Re-entries of vehicles registered in Canada consisted of 490,200 units abroad 24 hours or less versus 481,700, 75,000 abroad more than 24 hours against 77,700, and 46,600 commercial vehicles against 56,100.

Entries of foreign travellers by rail, bus, boat and plane dropped in November to 59,539 from 63,147 in the corresponding month of 1956 but January-November entries increased to 1,460,082 from 1,386,685. Canadians returning by these means of transportation fell in number in November to 80,898 from 81,252 but cumulative entries rose to 1,244,070 from 1,239,198.