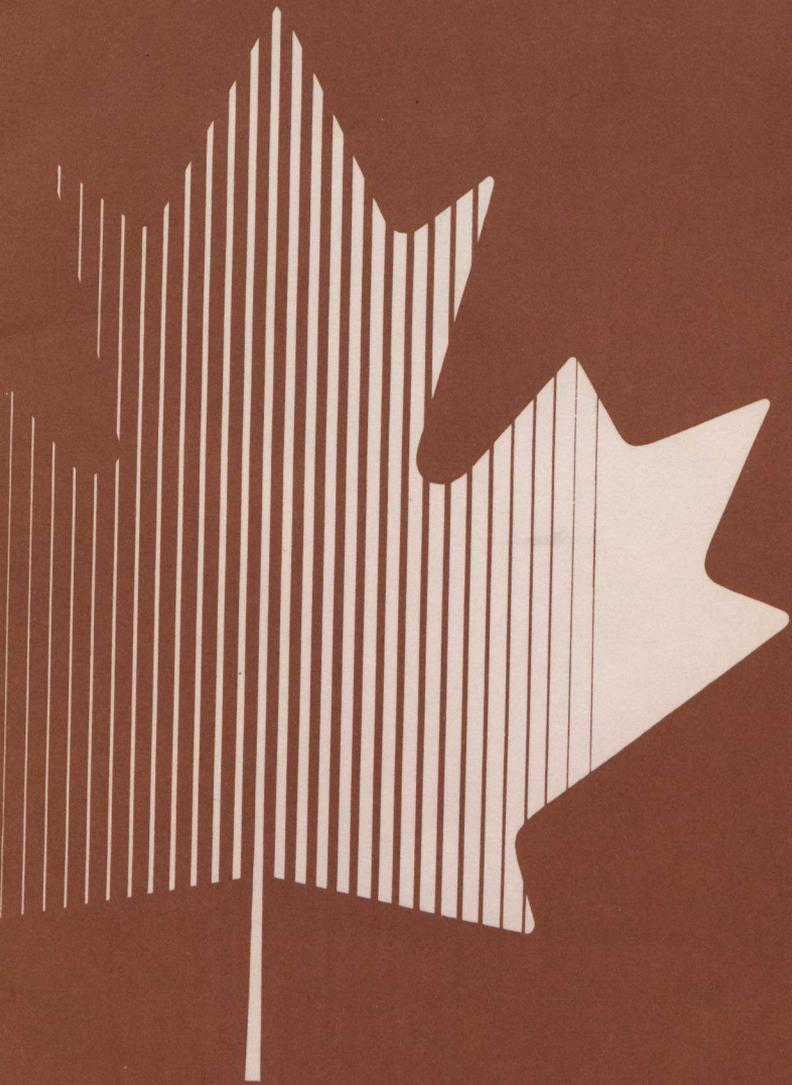


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# The Forests and Forest Industries of Canada



*Reference Paper 98*

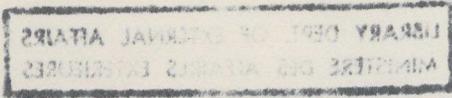


# The Forests and Forest Industries of Canada

*(Revised February 1977)*

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Prepared by The Canadian Forestry Service, Ottawa



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The Forests and  
Forest Industries  
of Canada

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The greatest of the eight forest regions into which Canada is divided is the Boreal Forest. Stretching in a broad belt westward from the Atlantic Coast to the Rockies and the Alaska boundary, it includes about three-quarters of the country's productive forest land. Its trees are primarily coniferous, spruce, balsam fir and pine being the most important. Some deciduous species are also found, however, the most widespread being birch and poplar.

To the north, the forest merges into open woodland, which finally gives way to tundra. In general, the woodland trees are relatively small, and much of the area is more suited to pulpwood production than lumber.

South of the Boreal Forest in Eastern Canada, the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence and Acadian Regions make up about one-eighth of the country's productive forest area. The forests are very mixed, containing large numbers of both coniferous and broadleaved species. The main conifers are white and red pine, hemlock, spruce, cedar and fir, while the most important deciduous species are yellow birch, maple, oak and basswood.

Much of the original forest of these two regions has been cleared for agriculture, and small parcels of privately-owned forest occur in the agricultural zones. The forests of the area, most of which have been logged for more than 100 years and some for more than 200, form the basis of a large forest industry.

The Coast Forest Region of British Columbia is very different in character. The climate is mild and very humid, with an annual rainfall of about 100 inches a year. Forests here are coniferous, the main species being cedar, hemlock, spruce, Douglas fir and amabilis fir. Trees of the region attain very great size — up to 200 feet in height and six feet and more in diameter.

Though the Coast Region contains less than 2 per cent of the forest area of Canada, it supplies about one-fifth of all the wood cut. Lumber is the most important use for the wood, and most of Canada's softwood plywood is made in this region. It also supports a large pulp-and-paper industry.

The forests of the mountainous region of the British Columbia interior and western Alberta are also coniferous, and very mixed in species and character. Their composition changes with the local

climate, which varies from dry to very humid. Production in this area has expanded very rapidly in recent years. Although, until a few years ago, the wood was used almost exclusively for lumber, there are now several pulp-mills in the region.

Canada's only area of true deciduous forest is a relatively small one in the southernmost part of Ontario, a predominantly agricultural zone.

## **Wood production**

Canada's total area of commercial forest is 436 million acres, roughly 8 per cent of the world total. Four-fifths of this forest is coniferous; the remainder is deciduous.

The pattern of use for the harvest of this forest varies widely across the country. In Eastern Canada, about two-thirds of the wood is used for the production of pulp and paper, while lumber is the major product on the West Coast.

Nearly 4,900 million cubic feet of wood were cut from Canada's forests in 1974 — about 90 per cent coniferous. A recent estimate placed the annual allowable cut from lands now accessible, and using present practices, at 8,480 million cubic feet, so that roughly 57 per cent of the allowable cut is currently being taken.

Economists predict by the year 2000 an annual harvest of 7,620 million cubic feet — still within the present allowable cut. In addition, much of the timber in Canada's northern forests — about 25 per cent of all the country's forested land — has not yet been inventoried, so that no allowable cut has been calculated for this area.

## **Forest industries**

In 1974, Canadian forest industries employed almost 300,000 workers, who earned some \$3,281 million. Of these, about 59,000 worked in logging operations, 107,000 in wood industries and the remainder in paper and allied industries.

The largest lumber-mills are located on the West Coast, some employing as many as 600 or 700 people, while a typical large mill in Eastern Canada employs between 75 and 100. There has been a steady reduction in the number of sawmills in Canada in recent years, with many small mills going out of production.

Plywood manufacture, mostly for the Canadian market, gives employment to more than 13,000 Canadians, with a payroll of \$133 million. Though most of the shipments (valued at \$463 million in 1974) use wood from the West Coast coniferous forests, there is also an important plywood industry in Eastern Canada, based on the use of birch and poplar.

The pulp-and-paper industry has expanded rapidly during the past decade, particularly in bleached craft-pulp manufacture. Newsprint, the chief product of the pulp-and-paper industry, is mainly exported — principally to the U.S.A., but also to many other countries. Canada produces about 40 per cent of the world's newsprint. Other grades of paper and paperboard, mostly for the home market, account for another large part of the growing production of wood pulp — more than 21 million tons annually.

Production figures for the forest industries in 1974 were: lumber, 15,185 million board feet; wood pulp, 21.8 million tons; paper products, 14.6 million tons. As well as the important newsprint market, exports account for about 8,300 million board feet (55 per cent) of Canada's lumber production annually, most of it going to the United States. In an economy highly dependent on exports, Canada's forest industries play a major role, providing about one-fifth of the value of all sales to other countries.

## **Forest ownership and jurisdiction**

### *Statutory authority*

Under the British North America Act, passed in 1867, each of Canada's provinces is assigned the exclusive right to legislate with respect to the management and sale of public lands belonging to it and the timber on those lands. Each province has similar authority in relation to municipal institutions, property and civil rights in the province, and all matters of a purely local and private nature. Thus, the administration and management of municipally-owned forests and those in private ownership, as well as provincially-owned forests, are within the jurisdiction of provincial legislatures.

To the north of the provinces are two vast areas — the Northwest Territories and the Yukon — whose population is very sparse. Although these territories comprise more than a third of Canada's

total land area, they include only 8 per cent of its productive forest. Forestry matters in both territories are governed both by statutes of the Canadian Parliament and by ordinances of the territorial councils. These are administered by the Government of Canada through the Northern Natural Resources and Environment Branch of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

### *Ownership of forest lands*

For many years, the policy of both the federal and provincial governments has been to retain in public ownership lands not required for agricultural purposes. In some of the older settled parts of the country, however, the proportion of privately-owned land is high, especially in the Maritime Provinces — New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island — where nearly two-thirds of the productive forest area is privately owned.

In Canada as a whole, about 90 per cent of the non-reserved forest land classed as suitable for regular harvest is publicly owned. Apart from the two northern territories, nearly all of this is vested in the provinces and administered by provincial government departments. There are, however, in some provinces a considerable number of small forests owned by other public authorities such as counties and municipalities.

In addition to the forests of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is also responsible for the administration of the forest in 28 national parks and many Indian reserves within provincial boundaries. Scattered across the country are numerous small parcels of forested federal land, including those on Canadian Armed Forces bases and federal forest-experiment stations. The administration of these tracts, whose combined area amounts to less than 1 per cent of the provinces' total non-reserved forest land, is the responsibility of the appropriate federal agencies.

Although Canada's forests are chiefly under provincial jurisdiction, there are a number of circumstances in which federal law affects the forest industries — hence the use and management of the resources on which those industries are based. These include the regulation of trade and commerce, taxation, and interprovincial and international transportation.

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