

Extracts from “Forests of British Columbia” of interest to Powell River by Whitford & Craig, Commission of Conservation, Canada
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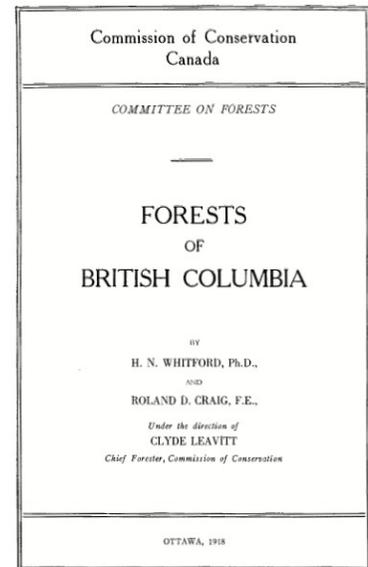
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LOGGING BY DONKEY ENGINE, POWELL LAKE



PULP AND PAPER MILL, POWELL RIVER



Page 216: The Powell River mill is situated at the outlet of Powell river, on Malaspina Strait, about 80 miles north-west of Vancouver. It was built by the Powell River Paper Co., which was composed of interests connected with the Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Co. of Minneapolis. It is now known as the Powell River Co. It has been operated continuously since its completion; and is one of the most thriving industries in the province. Both the sulphite and mechanical processes are used to reduce the wood to pulp, which is manufactured into paper at this plant. The capacity of the mill is about 250 tons of paper per day. The operating company acquired the mill site, waterpower and 134,500 acres of timber in pulp leases, from the Canadian Industrial Co. These leases are nearly all situated about 100 miles north of the mill, as the timber in the immediate vicinity is chiefly of the Douglas fir-red cedar type. The logs can, however, be safely and cheaply towed to the mill through the channels protected by Vancouver island. This mill, in addition to its own cut, uses a considerable amount of pulp-wood purchased from independent loggers, whose main cut is for lumber purposes.

The sub-division of the Coastal Belt has been made as follows :*

Southern Mainland Region—

- Railway Belt, Coast Section
- Chilliwack and Skagit Rivers
- Lillooet, Stave and Pitt Rivers
- Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound
- Jervis Inlet
- Powell River and Texada Island
- Toba Inlet
- Bute Inlet
- Loughborough Inlet
- Quadra to Hardwick Islands
- Knight Inlet
- Kingcome Inlet, Gilford Island
- Drury and Belize Inlets

Vancouver Island, East Coast Region—

- Hardy Bay
- Johnstone Strait
- South-eastern Section

Page 343 Jervis inlet itself is characterized by very steep, rocky shores, the mountains increasing in height towards the head, where large glacial fields occur. Not infrequently the shore line rises precipitously for 2,000 or 3,000 feet. In the tributary valleys, the chief of which are Deserter river, Vancouver river and Britain creek, excellent stands of timber extend back for from six to ten miles, and in the smaller ravines and more gentle slopes cedar and fir of superior quality are to be found. The drainage area of Jervis inlet is comparatively small, owing to the fact that the watersheds of the Powell and Squamish rivers encroach on it to the north. The terminal valley is occupied by the Squakaw river. Unlike most of the other terminal valleys, it is short and of relatively small importance from a timber standpoint, though a heavy stand extends up the valley for about five miles. As might be expected from the mountainous nature of the country, the proportion of waste land in this district is high and there is very little land of value for agriculture.

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POWELL RIVER AND TEXADA ISLAND DRAINAGE BASIN

For purposes of description, the area described below includes the mainland, from the mouth of Jervis inlet to Homfray channel, and, in addition, Texada, Lasqueti, Harwood and Savary islands. The most prominent physiographic feature of the mainland in this region is the large number of fresh water lakes. They occupy the same broad, U-shaped valleys as characterize the fiords. The first of these valleys is drained by Eagle river, which flows through a chain of three lakes, called the Gordon Pasha lakes. A terminal river of considerable size occupies the upper end of the valley. Emptying into the second Gordon Pasha lake from the north is Horseshoe river, draining Horseshoe, Nanton, Dodd, Lewis and Windsor lakes, which lie in a valley about 12 miles long. The next valley to the east is occupied by Haslam lake, which is seven miles long and which empties into Malaspina strait by a river of the same name, eight miles long.

Powell lake, which is one of the largest bodies of fresh water on the coast, is very similar to the salt water inlets. The lake comes to within one and one-quarter miles of the tide water. Powell river, which carries the discharge of the lake, falls nearly 125 feet about one-quarter mile from its mouth. Powell lake has never been accurately delineated on any published map. It is about 30 miles long. Goat island, about half way down the lake, is about 10 miles long and 3 miles wide. Upper Powell river occupies the terminal valley, which extends for a considerable distance above the lake. Two tributaries enter Powell lake from the east side, Goat river and Loon creek, each of which flows from a lake of some size. No other streams of importance flow into the lake. The drainage to the west of Powell lake flows into Malaspina inlet.

From Thunder bay, on Jervis inlet, to Powell lake, a low and comparatively flat area extends back for from one to four miles from the shore. This is well covered with a drift deposit, consisting of finely stratified hard sands overlain by several feet of stony clay. As might be expected, a wonderful stand of fir, with cedar as a secondary species, was produced on this land. Much of this timber near tide-water has already been cut, and the more remote parts are now being exploited. When cleared, much of this land will be suitable for agriculture, as the southern exposure and the deep, though somewhat stony, soil offers favourable conditions, especially for fruit growing. From Powell lake to the Indian reserve at Sliamen, somewhat similar conditions exist, though the granite bedrock outcrops more frequently, and the flat land does not extend so far back from the shore.

From Sliamen to point Sarah the country, though not mountainous, is very rough; pockets of soil occur among the rocky outcrops. An attempt to place settlers on this land has been somewhat of a failure, as the proportion of tillable land on a homestead is frequently 'too small to support a family. Behind this stretch of level land the granite mountains rise somewhat abruptly, but not to very great heights, hardly

any being above timber-line within 15 miles of the salt water. Snow-capped peaks do occur, however, farther north. A large proportion of this mountainous land has been rendered waste by forest fires and subsequent erosion of the soil, leaving only bare rocks on which new soil will have to be formed before the forest can be replaced.

Practically all the timber facing on Powell lake has been destroyed in this way. Only isolated patches on tributary ravines or at high altitudes have escaped; and, owing to the steepness of the shore, it is not likely that a merchantable stand of timber will be produced for 'several centuries. The origin of these fires is uncertain, as they occurred many years ago; the last one of any importance occurred about 17 years ago. It is estimated that at least 1,250,000 M. board feet of timber has been destroyed in the vicinity of Powell lake by fire. Isolated fires have occurred in the Gordon Pasha region and in Malaspina inlet, but the areas destroyed have been comparatively small. The deep soil and moderate rainfall (from 60 to 70 inches per year) is conducive to the development of fir of particularly good quality, while, at the higher altitudes to the north, where the rainfall is somewhat heavier, cedar becomes predominant. One of the finest stands of yellow cypress on the southern coast is found at an elevation of about 2,500 feet, near the Gordon Pasha lakes.

This district is one of the chief centres of the i n d u s t r y on the coast at the present time, especially for fir operations. Several logging railways are in operation. These include one from Scow bay to the Gordon Pasha lakes, one from Lang bay towards Haslam lake, another from Myrtle point running several miles in a northerly direction, and also one from Powell lake to the sea. The largest pulp and paper manufacturing plant in British Columbia is situated at the mouth of Powell river. This site was selected on account of the excellent water-power available. Since its completion, the plant has been operated steadily and is producing about 250 tons of paper per day. The shore-line from Powell river to Homfray channel, including Malaspina inlet, has been pretty thoroughly logged over, except Theodosia arm, where a fine valley of virgin timber remains.

Texada island is composed chiefly of conglomerates and sandstone and not of the granite which is found on the adjacent mainland. Generally speaking, it is a rocky ridge, with shallow soil, producing a relatively inferior stand of timber, composed almost entirely of fir. A long the eastern side, and in a few sheltered places on the west side, fairly good stands of timber occur. Most of the timber is small in diameter and is especially suitable for piling. Towards the centre of the island, in the northern part, there is some agricultural land which is being developed, but the main industry of the island is copper mining, which centres about the town of Van Anda. A small sawmill is situated at this point. Lasqueti island, which is situated near the southern end of Texada island, is of the same geological formation and presents practically the same forest conditions as Texada island. The land is more level, however, and quite a colony of settlers has been established, with encouraging results.

**CLASSIFICATION OF LANDS IN THE POWELL LAKE AND TEXADA ISLAND
DRAINAGE BASIN**

Classes of land	Area, sq. miles	Percentage of entire area
Above merchantable timber-line.....	462	41.2
Below merchantable timber-line :		
Area carrying 30,000 b.f. or more per acre.....	70	6.2
Area carrying between 10,000 and 30,000 b.f. per acre.....	195	17.4
Area carrying less than 10,000 b.f. per acre (chiefly young growth)..	270	24.1
Area incapable of carrying merchantable timber.....	110	9.8
Non-timbered agricultural land, townsites, etc.....	15	1.3
Total.....	1,122

Harwood and Savary islands, which lie about two miles from the mainland above Powell river, are of the same formation as the flat land to the east of Powell river, being composed of sand with a top layer of gravel. The former is an Indian reserve and is still heavily timbered, while the latter has been developed as a summer resort on account of the excellent sandy beaches that surround the island. The logs from this district are all towed to Vancouver for manufacture, the cost of towing being about 60 cents per M.b.f. About 60 square miles, or 1.3 per cent of the land-area of this district, will be of value for agriculture, but, as yet, most of it is timbered.

Little over 370 sq. miles has been alienated, about one-third Estimate of Timber of which has been, or is in process of being, permanently alienated. About 109 sq. miles has been taken up under timber leases, 130 sq. miles under special licenses and 3 sq. miles under timber sales. The high percentage of the area which has been Crown-granted or leased is due to the fact that the excellent quality of the timber and the accessible location attracted the early investors. Though this region has been exploited for the past 30 years, the following amount of saw-material is estimated to be still standing: Douglas fir, 2,575,360 M.b.f.; red cedar, 1,404,410 M.b.f.; hemlock, 517,760 M.b.f.; balsam, 201,940 M.b.f.; spruce, 36,660 M.b.f.; white pine, 16,010 M.b.f.; yellow cypress, 37,560 M.b.f., making a total of 4,789,700 M.b.f. The additional small material suitable for piling, poles, pulpwood, etc., is estimated to be 312,000 M.b.f. Pulpwood forms a relatively small proportion of the stand in this district, there being only 1,169,000 cords of all the species which can be used for this purpose.

Page 347 ...similar material on

TOBA INLET DRAINAGE BASIN

Toba inlet, with its main outlet, Pryce channel, extends in a north-easterly direction about 35 miles. The Redonda islands and Raza island, and the mainland adjoining Toba inlet are of the typical Coast Mountains granitic forma-

Page 354 – in the Knight Inlet section:

The saw-logs from this district are towed to mills in the vicinity of Vancouver, at a cost of approximately \$1.25 per M. The pulp leases in this drainage basin belong to the Powell River Company. The pulp timber from these leases and most of the hemlock and balsam from the other lands, are taken to Powell River in the form of logs.

KINGCOME INLET DRAINAGE BASIN

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