THE WOODLOT SITUATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

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Woodlots are important to the New Brunswick economy—they are the biggest source of cash income to the farmer and they provide a great volume of raw materials for the wood using industries of New Brunswick, New England, Quebec and Ontario and Europe.

In 1950 the 4,000,000 acres of woodlots and small holdings in New Brunswick produced 1,000,000 cords of raw materials for industry. The great demand and good prices have resulted in extensive clear cutting and an analysis shows that only 4% of the farm woodlot area could be classed as

FIGURE I

merchantable mature forest and that 60% is classed as recently clear cut, young growth, or reproducing burn. That is, 60% of the farm woodlots and small holdings cannot be expected to yield any appreciable volume of wood products for a period of 25 years or more. This will be a serious loss of income to the farmer. It is causing concern to the forest industries which depend on farmers' wood and is lowering the taxable property in forest communities. In short, woodlots are being overcut for softwoods and this overcutting is lowering the value and yields on the most productive and accessible forest land in New Brunswick.

New Brunswick has a gross area of 18,000,000 acres, divided according to the following classifications:—(See Figure I)

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1. Crown land	7,000,000 acres	(From Crown Land Report)
2. Large freehold forest	3,500,000 "	(Granted land on which wild land tax was paid in 1948, that is in holdings of 500 acres and more)
3. Farm woodlots	2,500,000 "	(From the Census of Agriculture of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, that is the forested section of the 35,000 farms in New Brunswick)
4. Small holdings	1,500,000 "	(This represents the granted land not accounted for in categories 2 and 3)
5. Improved land	1,250,000 "	(From Census of Agriculture)
6. Wasteland water, roads, etc.	2,000,000 "	(From photo analysis by the Photogrammetry Division, Dept. of Lands and Mines, New Brunswick)

FIGURE II

The condition of farm woodlots and small holdings is the important consideration of this report. An office analysis by the Photogrammetry Div-

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ision, Department of Lands and Mines, N.B., of the stands at the photo centres of 5,950 aerial photographs indicates the following conditions on farm woodlots:—(See Figure II)

Merchantable

mature	160,000 acres	Mature stands contain more than 10 cords per acre.
Operable but immature	880,000 "	Stands containing approximately 10 cords to the acre, but which are thrifty and growing well.
Containing a remnant of mature wood	280,000 "	Stands of approximately 5 cords per acre of scattered mature wood.
Recently clear cut, young growth and reproducing burn	2,400,000 "	Stands not considered operable at present time.
Non-reproducing burn and other wasteland	280,000 "	Forest land that has sustained repeated heavy burns, barren land and rock outcrops.

FIGURE III

The 4,000,000 acres of woodlots and small holdings probably support a

stand of 15,000,000 cords of softwoods of which 12,000,000 cords are in stands which a farmer could operate. The cut in 1950 was nearly 1,000,000 cords of softwoods.

Overcutting can deplete woodlots as a source of wood supply.

FIGURE IV

Figure III graph shows the prices paid per cord and the amount of wood purchased by a paper company in a district where one company buys practically all the pulpwood. This graph shows that in 1939 raising the price increased the wood supply; however, since 1945 all increases in the price of wood have failed to bring pulpwood production from this community much over the 1,000 cord mark. If trebling the price of wood does not materially increase the amount of wood produced it is considered as an indication that the stumpage just isn't there.

In an attempt to obtain further data a detailed cruise was made of the farm woodlots in a typical forest community. The story is graphically depicted in Figure IV.

A further breakdown is as follows:

Improved agricultural land	1,000 acres
Forested land	3,500 acres
Selection cut	800 acres
Clear cut	
by owner	1,100 acres
by operators	1,600 acres
	2,700 acres

An interesting point is that although 70% of the forested area is softwood growing land yet the cruise shows an average of 3 cords per acre of

hardwoods and only 2 cords per acre of softwoods. Wider markets for low grade hardwoods would result in a better balanced and a more productive forest.

From the figures obtained in this farm by farm survey it appears that the farmers in this community derive nearly half their income from their woodlots. The possibility of losing this income concerns the government as well as the farmer because it is mainly from forest revenues that taxes are paid. In 1940 the county tax for this community was \$2,400; in 1950 it was \$4,300. In 1940 the amount of standing timber is estimated at 22,000 cords and in 1949 the cruise showed 19,000 cords. With increasing demand for public services and public expenditures this trend could result in land abandonment and tax sales.

CROP VALUES OF FARM PRODUCTS IN NEW BRUNSWICK 1950

FIGURE V

An attempt was made to analyze the woodlot situation on a wider scale. The depletion on farm woodlots and small holdings in York County appears to be as follows:

Depletion in 1950 in York County:

Pulpwood produced	80,000 cords
Logs	30,000 cords (10,000,000 f.b.m.)
Other products	10,000 "
Waste in logging	20,000 "
Fuelwood	50,000 "

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Losses from		
Fire, insects, disease	50,000	"
Total depletion	240,000	"
Estimated depletion in		
softwoods	160,000	"
For York Couny the total woodlot acreages on		
occupied farms is	300,000	acres
For York County the total acreage in small holdings is	300,000	acres
Total woodlots and small holdings	600,000	acres
Estimated productive acreage	450,000	acres
Estimated productive acreage of softwoods	340,000	acres
Or an indicated drain of 1/2 cord per acre of softwood in 1950 on the farm woodlots and small holdings in York County.		

GROSS HOURLY EARNINGS BY FARMERS NOT INCLUDING STUMPAGE

FIGURE VI

High prices and a heavy demand have brought about the unprecedented depletion on farm woodlots. The present prices of the main classes of woodlot products are as follows:

Sawlogs, Spruce, roadside.....	\$40. - \$50. per M f.b.m.
Hemlock "	35. - 45. per M f.b.m.
White Pine "	45. - 55. per M f.b.m.
Hardwoods "	40. - 50. per M f.b.m.
Veneer Logs, Poplar "	45. - 55. per M f.b.m.
Pulpwood, Peeled Spruce, f.o.b. car.....	\$28. - \$30. per cord
Peeled Hemlock f.o.b. car.....	27. - 29. per cord
Peeled Poplar f.o.b. car.....	20. - 22. per cord
Pitprops, f.o.b. car	30. - 32. per cord
Fuelwood, delivered	18. - 22. per cord

These high prices have made woodlot work very attractive as is shown in Figure V.

Figure VI shows the importance of woodlots to the farmer.

The foregoing report is based on insufficient data and some of the conclusions and inferences could be quite erroneous. The reason for presenting such sketchy data is to draw attention to the importance and opportunities of putting farm woodlots on a permanent productive basis.