BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST SERVICE

KITLOPE RIVER and LAKE

by

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1921
RECONNAISSANCE

of

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Maps accompanying report:

Forest Surveys File # 807.
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INTRODUCTION:

During the survey of the Kitlope River & Lake region in June 1921, a reconnaissance of the timber resources of that area was made, though no systematic cruise methods were used, as at that time instructions regarding the same had not been received. However, since the blocks of timber along the valley are only comparatively small areas, it was not a difficult matter to sketch in the boundaries and note a description of the types of forest cover which exist.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA:

Kitlope Lake & River drain into the head of Gardner Inlet. At the mouth of the River is a mile of tide flats formed by the glacial silt brought down by the river.

Tide water backs upstream some five miles or so, forming at high tide a broad and easily navigable river as far as the Indian Huts. Above this, as far as the outlet of Kitlope Lake at mile eight, the channel is more sinuous and the current rapid, but still navigable by canoe.
The timbered areas along this stretch are shown on the accompanying topographical map.

At mile eight Kitlope Lake discharges almost directly into the River. For a description of the remaining part of Kitlope River, reference should be made to the report of Mr. W. Blanc BCLS, of the Water Rights Branch, who explored this region in the summer of 1921.

Kitlope Lake is 8 miles long and 3/4 miles wide, and is only 30 feet above sea level. Except for its Northern and Southern ends, it is walled with precipitous mountains and little merchantable timber is to be found along its shores. At the southern end of the Lake, the Tezwa River discharges into it. This River is navigable by canoe for six miles and at seven miles it forks, and rapidly diminishes in size, being near its head waters. The lower half of this River valley is very narrow, but the upper part widens out to one or two miles, being however mostly open swampy country.

These Rivers receive their waters from glaciers and the whole district is a rugged mountainous one with numerous glacier-capped peaks. Judging by the topography of the country, Kitlope Lake must have once been part of Gardner Inlet, but the glacial silt has gradually filled up the valley. The Climate is a rigorous
one, in summer it is frequently wet and cold, and in
Winter the snow lies deep, and Indians report that even
the upper part of Gardner Inlet is frozen over.

FOREST DESCRIPTION:

At the head of Gardner Canal the mountains slope
steeply down to the water, and are bare of merchantable
timber. The Indian Reserve at the mouth of Kitlope
River consists of flat grass land, but adjoining it and
stretching a short distance up the Tsaytis River is a
fairly large flat area well timbered with Spruce and
Hemlock.

Along the eight miles of valley between Gardner
Canal and Kitlope Lake, the merchantable timber is
scattered.

A great part of the flat land along the River
banks is swampy and covered with Alder, although there
are some large spruce trees to be found in parts of
these flats. They usually occur in small belts along
the river bank, and the Indians living up here have
hand-logged quite a few.

The largest area of timber was near the junction
of Kitlope River and Kitlope Lake. Here the valley
widens out considerably, and a fairly thick stand of
Spruce and Hemlock is found which deteriorates into
open patches and stunted growth on the higher hill slopes,
and the mountain slopes.

For the few hundred acres of good timber in this region, the stand would probably run about 15,000 feet B.M. per acre. Most of the Spruce trees along the river bank run as high as 36" D.B.H., but the average D.B.H. of Hemlock is only about 20".

Kitlope Lake is nearly surrounded with precipitous mountain slopes, and only very small patches, mostly Spruce and Hemlock occur at the mouths of the few large creeks entering it, the quality of the timber being about the same as along Kitlope River.

Along the Kwis-u-Tezwa River there are large flat areas, but nearly all swampy. The timber occurs only as a fringe of Spruce averaging about 30" D.B.H. along the River banks with an occasional patch running up the mountain slope along the large creeks. Reference to the topographic maps will show where these occur. There is only one block of timber of any size and this occurs near the fork of the River a few miles from its headwaters. The stand is mainly Hemlock and Spruce running about 10,000 feet B.M. per acre. Our survey was not extended up the Kitlope River beyond the junction of Kitlope Lake, but reference should be made to the report of W. Blane B.C.L.S already mentioned. (Annexed)
LOGGING CONDITIONS:

It is questionable at the present time whether the amount of timber existing along this valley would warrant logging on a large scale. Quite a number of trees along the River banks could be hand-logged. Some parts of the Lower Kitlope River however are sinuous and cut up into channels, and would offer difficulties to floating logs down. The grade from salt water to Kitlope Lake is an easy one, Kitlope Lake being only 30 feet above sea level, while the Tewza River flows also over an easy grade, and can be navigated by canoes to the forks near the headwaters. Except for the swampy areas shown on the map, the ground is firm and rocky, and all the mountain slopes are very steep.

The quality of the timber generally speaking is good, and compares favourably with other similar districts such as Kimsquit Valley, and it was by a comparison with Kimsquit timber that the figures quoted in this Report were arrived at.
REPORT BY W. BLANE B.C.I.S.
on
UPPER KITLOPE RIVER

From Kitlope Lake Eastward, fringes of timber are everywhere met with along the river. Some good small timber was seen on the lower benches, but nothing of value on the higher slopes. Of the few larger timbered areas mention might be made of the benches on the East side of Gamsby River near its confluence with the Kitlope at Mile 20, also on both sides of the Kitlope at Miles 23 & 24. These areas consist of Hemlock and Spruce and Willow, the Spruce being small but of good quality. Beyond the forks at Mile 24 the timbered strips are very narrow, the mountain ranges paralleling the river being very close and showing on the higher slopes only a sparse vegetation of any kind. Proceeding further up the river a large flat with a dense forest cover lies between Miles 34 & 36. It is of irregular shape and covers over half a section. Spruce and Hemlock predominate on this area. Beyond here no timber of merchantable value obtains until the country North of Ear Lake is reached. Here are scattered stands of Hemlock, Spruce and red Cedar, the spruce running to 30"D.B.H. and would probably run from 15,000 to 20,000 feet B.M.

This brings us to the Valley of the Kimsquit River. The timber resources of which have already been the subject of divers investigations.