

Regional Aspects of Nova Scotian Agriculture

By D. F. PUTNAM

TWELVE years ago in an unpublished thesis, the writer analysed the census returns relating to agriculture in the province of Nova Scotia and attempted, by means of dot-maps, to show something of the distribution patterns. The task was made difficult and the conclusions somewhat weakened by the fact that the census tabulations were published only as county figures, and these areas are much too large to serve as the basis of distribution maps in a province of such scattered

Any explanation of distributional patterns must be based upon consideration of the natural physical background, therefore the first chart presented here (Fig. 1) is a generalized physiographic map of the province based largely on that of Goldthwaite.¹ As no soil map of the province is yet available, soil characteristics must be interpreted from the underlying rock. It is well known that hard rocks such as granite, syenite and quartzite do not develop into deep fertile soils,

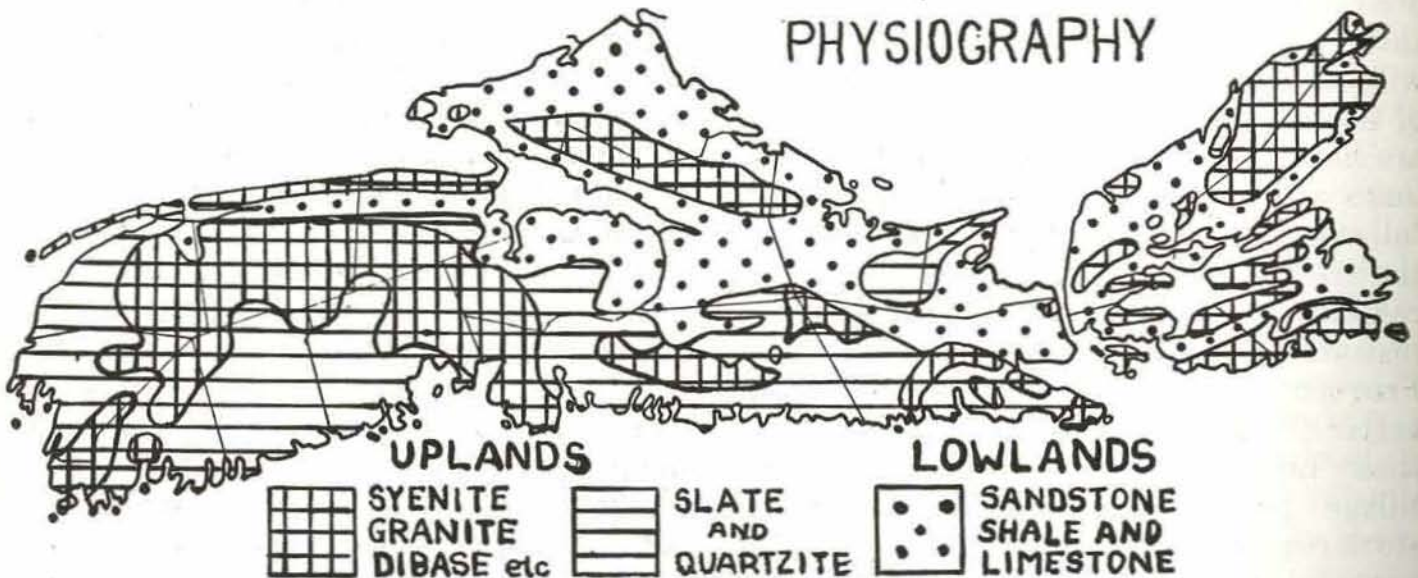


Fig. 1 .

settlement. Since that time another census has been taken and the returns have this time been published on the basis of census subdivisions, which are, apparently, the polling districts within the counties. Distributional analysis is still handicapped, however, by the fact that there is no map of the polling districts, hence their exact locations and areas cannot be plotted. Since there are usually twenty or more polling districts in a county, a sufficient number of point locations can be established to enable one to draw reasonably accurate isopleth lines.

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hence it is only natural to find that most of the area occupied as farm land (Fig. 2) is located on softer strata such as limestones, shales and sandstones. The notable features of this map, which has been drawn on the basis of the one accompanying Dr. B. E. Fernow's "Forest Conditions in Nova Scotia", are the areas of absolutely unsettled country which coincide very closely with the areas of granite outcrop. The slate and quartzite area is only sparsely settled except for the shore districts of Digby and Yarmouth counties and the "Slate Belt" of Lunenburg and Queens.

Of the 4,300,000 acres reported as occupied land in 1931, 2,500,000 or

1. J. W. Goldthwaite, "Physiography of Nova Scotia."

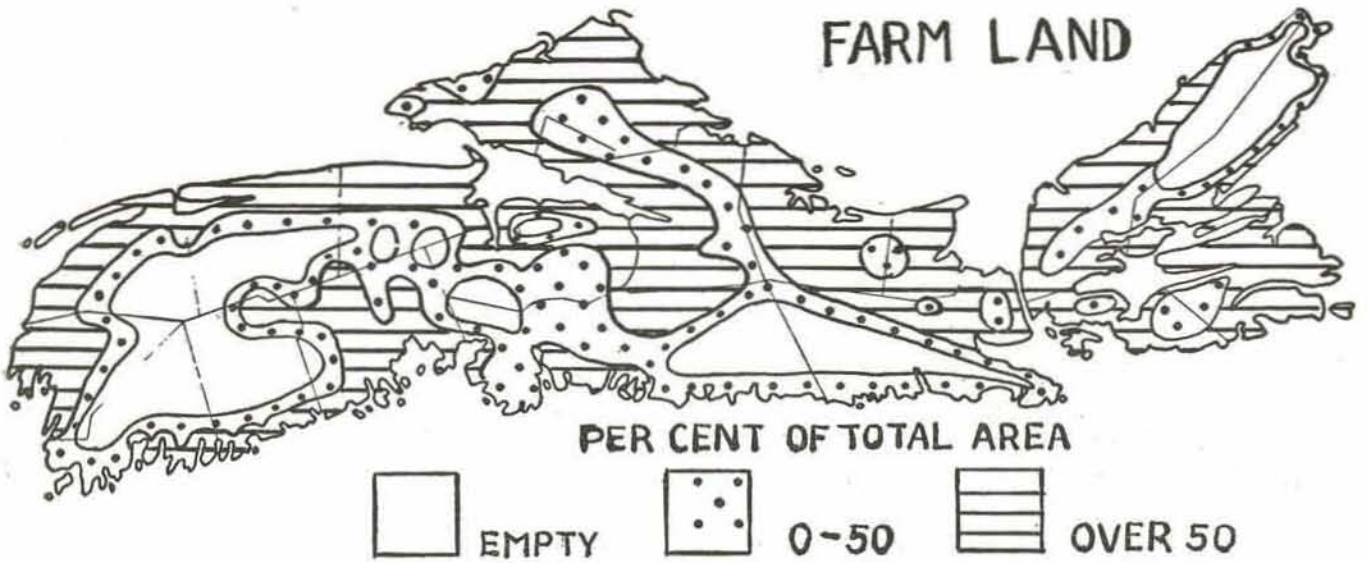


Fig. 2

58% was still in forest, and most of the remainder is classified in two categories; field crops occupying 625,000 acres or 14.5%, and pasture (both improved and natural) 913,000 acres or 21%. In only six counties (Annapolis, Kings, Hants, Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou) are there appreciable areas in which more than 20% of the farm land is devoted to

that in which there is a similar density of crop land and the 20% isopleth in this case seems to be controlled largely by the lithologic boundary. A very prominent feature of this map (Fig. 4) is the large area devoted to pasture in Yarmouth and Lunenburg counties. Fairly high pasture densities are found in Antigonish as well.

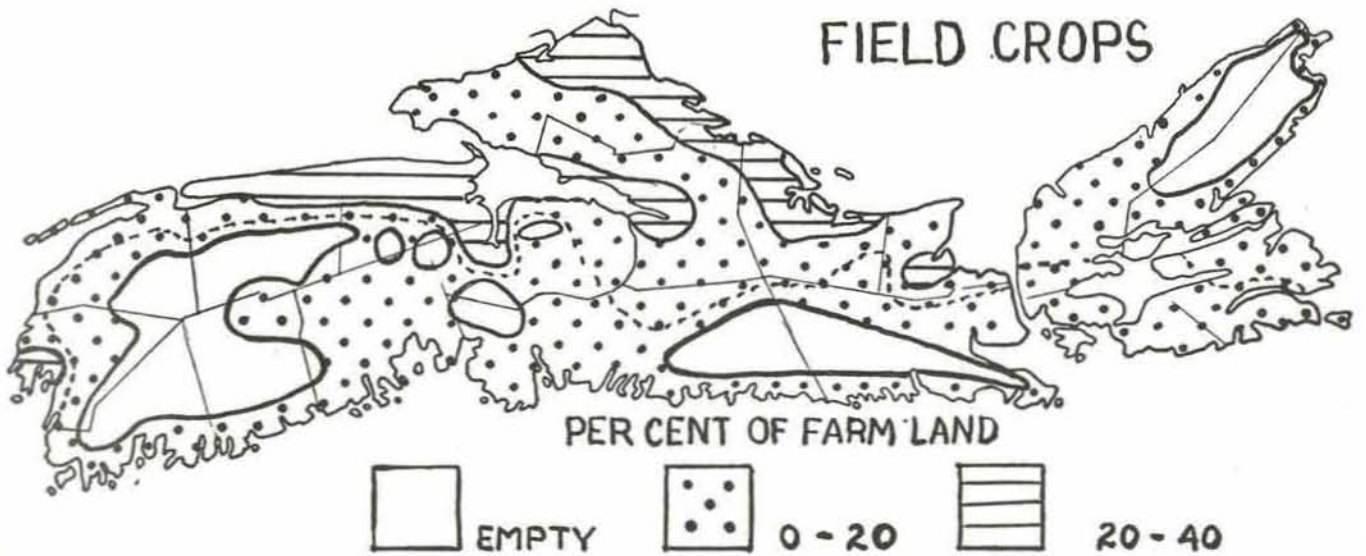


Fig. 3

field crops (Fig. 3), while smaller areas appear in Yarmouth and Antigonish. The interrupted line passing through the middle of the province is the 10% isopleth and throughout most of its length is coincident with the boundary between the hard and soft rocks. The area in which more than 20% of the farm land is devoted to pasture is nearly double

Over a period of ten years, including both depression and pre-depression years, the average annual value of dairy products in the province has been about \$8,500,000, and is by a safe margin the most important source of cash income to the majority of Nova Scotian farmers. Isopleths of intensity of milk production are shown in Fig. 5. Again, of course,

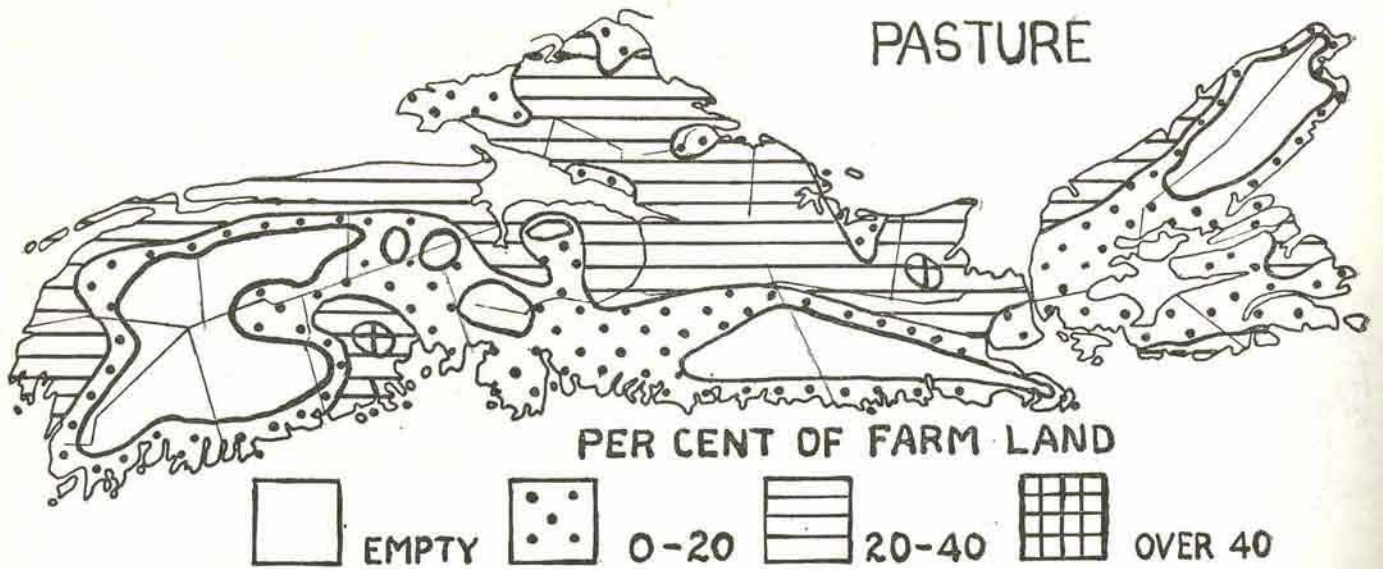


Fig. 4

the higher levels are found in the Northern counties, but the pattern is complicated by economic factors. Within the area of moderately heavy milk production, there are specialized dairy districts. One such is found near Amherst, another is located in Pictou and North Colchester counties, and a third is the market milk district surrounding the Cape Breton

According to the census of 1931, the total agricultural production of the province amounted to about \$32,000,000, the distribution of which is depicted in the map shown on the cover of this magazine. Two factors immediately attain prominence, first it is to be seen that the specialized dairy districts enjoy a distinct advantage, and second that the highest

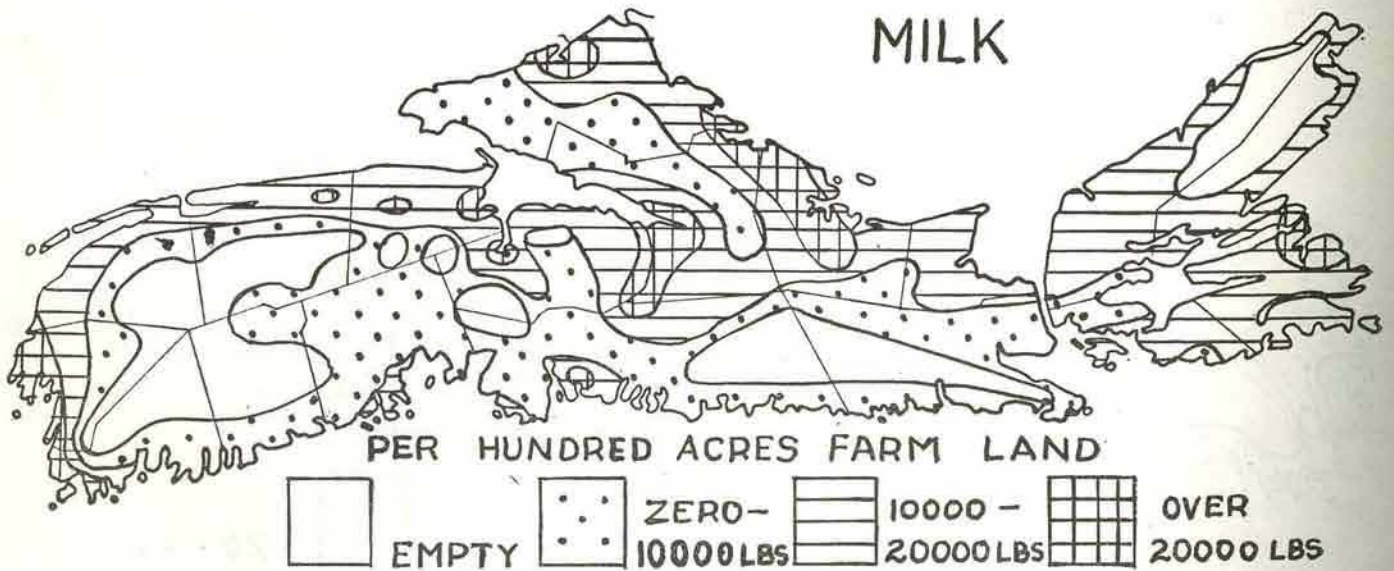


Fig. 5

coalfields. A fourth district is located in Colchester and Hants, shipping fluid milk to the city of Halifax, as well as supplying processing plants in Truro and Halifax. Yarmouth county contains a specialized dairy region, and there are several smaller areas adjacent to the towns of the Annapolis Valley.

production of all is centred in the fruit growing region of the Annapolis Valley.

Fig. 6 shows the distribution of farm capital according to the census of 1931. The fruit farms of the Annapolis Valley stand out above all the rest, but again it may be seen that the specialized dairy districts also enjoy an advantage. The

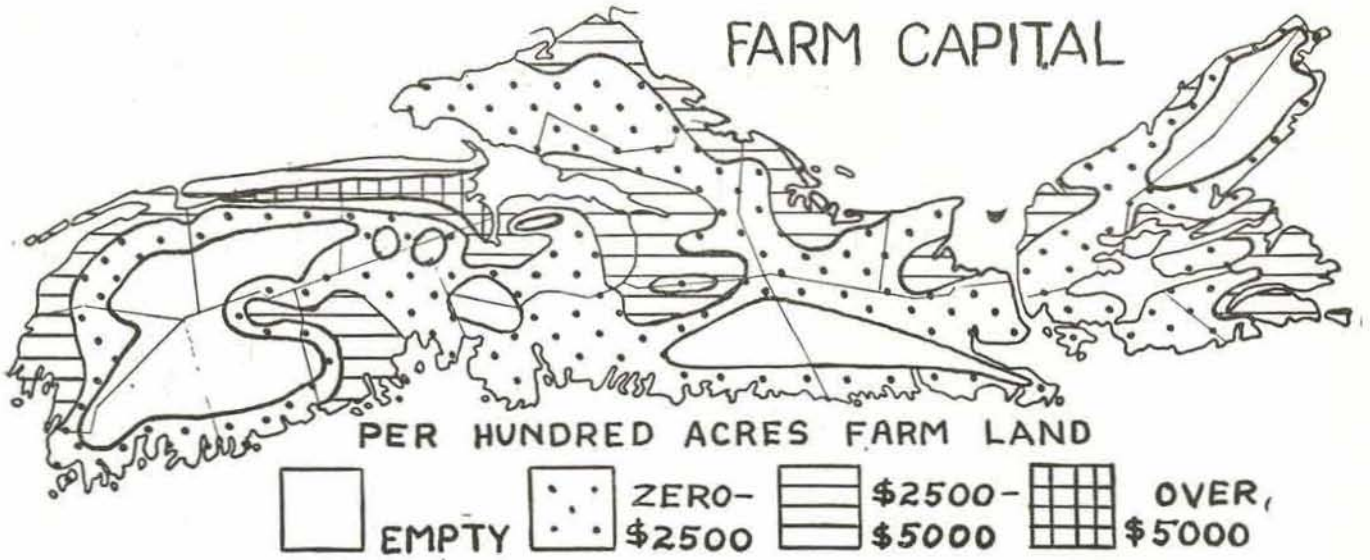


Fig. 6

total farm capital for the province in 1931 was \$105,000,000 on about 40,000 farms or an average of \$2,600 per farm. It is evident therefore that the values of farms in the outlying areas are low indeed. Taking into consideration all the factors charted on the isopleth maps it is possible to delimit a number of

Cumberland, (4) Northern Cape Breton including the counties of Inverness and Victoria, (5) Cumberland, (6) Lunenburg and Queens, (7) Yarmouth and Digby, (8) Cape Breton county, (9) Antigonish. Together they account for almost 90% of the agricultural production of the province, and the remaining portion,

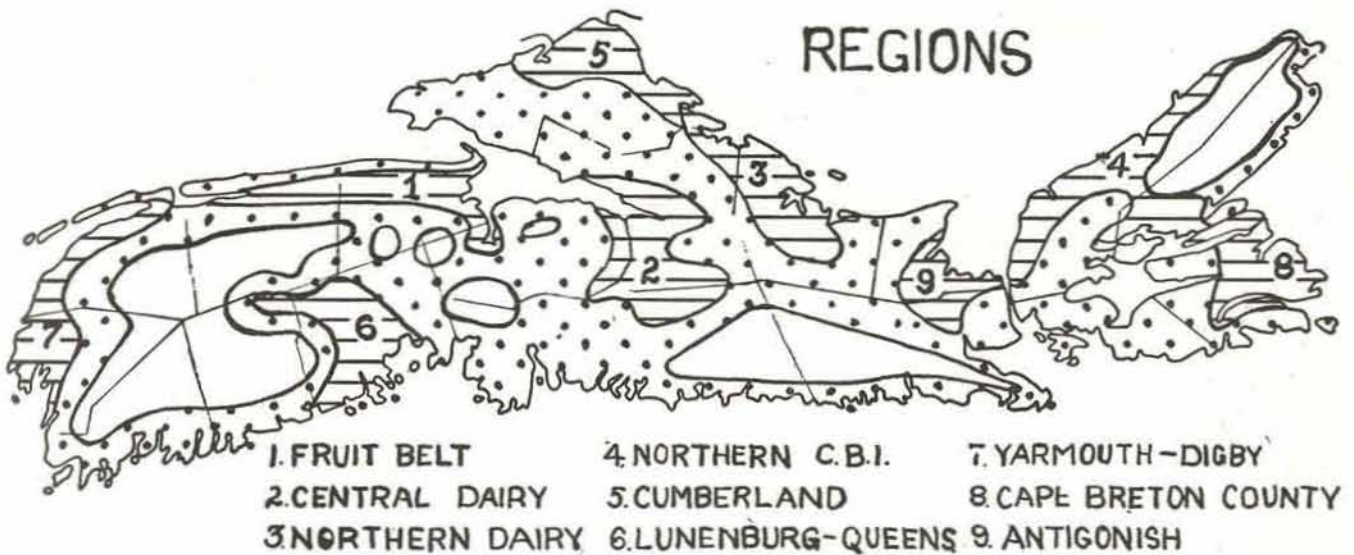


Fig. 7

individual agricultural regions. Nine such areas are shown in Fig. 7. They are in order of importance from a production standpoint: (1) The Fruit Belt in Hants, Kings and Annapolis, (2) The Central Dairy Region in Hants, Colchester and Halifax, (3) the North Shore Dairy Region in Pictou, Colchester and

including large areas in all the counties, but more especially in the southern half of the province, produces very little. The chief categories of agricultural production in order of value are field crops, dairy products, other livestock enterprises, fruit and vegetables, and forest products. The table on the following page has been compiled

District	Value of 1931 Production	Field Crops	Dairy Products	Livestock	Fruit and Vegetables	Forest Products
		%	%	%	%	%
1. Fruit Belt.....	\$ 8,500,000	30	10	10	45	5
2. Central Dairy.....	4,500,000	44	25	16	4	11
3. Northern Dairy.....	4,000,000	48	25	16	4	7
4. Northern Cape Breton.....	3,000,000	50	17	15	3	15
5. Cumberland.....	2,500,000	48	17	17	5	13
6. Lunenburg—Queens.....	2,000,000	37	15	17	11	20
7. Yarmouth—Digby.....	2,000,000	38	18	16	8	20
8. Cape Breton Co.....	1,500,000	40	27	16	7	10
9. Antigonish.....	1,500,000	48	14	25	3	10
Total for Province.....	32,000,000	40	18	16	14	12

from the census figures and shows to some extent at least, the types of farming characterizing the various districts.

Field crops bulk largest in all except the fruit belt, but other categories provide most of the cash income. There are three important dairy districts in which 25% or more of the farm production is in the form of dairy products, while in

only one county, Antigonish, do other livestock enterprises reach a similar prominence. In most of the remaining districts there is a semblance of balance between the two types of animal husbandry. Forest products bulk large in some of the districts, and in the outlying parts of the province they are even more important.

Colonization in the Province of Quebec

By J. E. LAFORCE

ALTHOUGH the Province of Quebec covers over 600,000 square miles, it is populated only along the St. Lawrence and a few of its tributaries, and along the shores of the Baie des Chaleurs. In addition, a new area is now being opened up, in the west of the province—the Abitibi district where some 70,000 settlers and miners are at present creating a new Quebec.

There are some 136,000 farmers in the Province of Quebec, settled on about 13 million acres of land. Hence, vast terri-

tories are still available for improvement either through mining enterprise or by timber exploitation. Moreover there are opportunities, for more extensive development of water-power as well as industries connected therewith, and especially for a fuller development of agriculture in all its branches.

During the past fifty years agriculture, like other industrial activities, has undergone certain changes. Farmers today, instead of cultivating sixty acres as formerly, find it worthwhile to work anywhere from 120 to 180 acres. Many factors have contributed to this trend in agricultural activity. In the first place,

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Laforce is Deputy Minister of Colonization for the Province of Quebec. He has to a large extent been responsible for the work described in this article.