

**A VETERAN'S TALK ABOUT LUMBER.**

A representative of this paper visited a veteran in the lumber trade Thursday for the purpose of applying the reportorial plaster and drawing from its burrow some information which might interest, amuse or instruct its readers, according as it might harmonize with their views or appear to them absurd. "Put yourself in his place" is what no one can do, and hence the views we get of things differ.

"So, young man," said the veteran, "you are in search of information about the lumber trade, in order to enlighten the public. Well, wisdom won't die with me, and you need not set me down on the start as the best informed man in the business. If you are looking for the Solomon of the trade, you might as well strike almost any other person. I can send you to such a man, or I can give you my opinion and what I know of lumbering. What points are you dazed on?"

"What effect will the high prices of supplies have on lumbering operations, the coming winter?"

"Very little, in the way of limiting operations. The expense will be increased quite a good deal, of course. Pork will cost about \$20 where it cost \$16 last season; corn about 70 cents in place of 46, but hay and oats are not much higher. Stock will, perhaps, cost more and labor be higher. But the additional expense won't have much more effect on the amount of stock put in than the weather in winter has. If I wanted to help bull the market, I'd say, oh, yes; it'll be too costly business lumbering this winter, and a good many firms will go light. But I don't talk that way, because there is no sense in it. Men who haven't the capital may have to curtail their operations on account of the extra expense, but those who have the stock to cut, the capital to candle it, and confidence in the market, will go in just the same as though pork was but \$10 a barrel."

"Then you think there'll be a large stock out the coming winter?"

"Well, I don't think there will be an excessive crop. Some men will go in as though they thought there was never going to be another chance for them to make a harvest of pine, but there are not many such in the trade now. The firms lumbering in this Saginaw country are pretty much all composed of level-headed, well-balanced men, who can see a good way beyond the ends of their noses. They are in a position where they don't have to market their lumber, unless they choose. Of course, they'll cut enough to satisfy the demand, for the risk from fires is greater than ever, and much timber has to be cut to save it. But there is a powerful reason for conservatism in the cutting of timber in the Saginaw district."

"Do you mean that the stock is becoming small?"

"Yes, you have hit it. Some of the largest mills on the river haven't standing pine enough within reach to last them six years, at the rate they are cutting, and it is my opinion there are not a dozen firms on the river that can count on ten years' cutting, within profitable reach."

"Is there not timber they can get? Some land yet unexplored?"

"Not in the lower peninsula. There is hardly a pine tree standing south of the straits that has not been estimated. A good deal of land has been cut over the second time, and the virgin forest has been penetrated in every direction. The railroad has done the business."

"Then pine land is eagerly sought?"

"You can say so. No hungry grayling overtook a fly more eagerly than men snap at pine land. A few years ago you couldn't give them away; now men are crazy to buy. And no wonder, when you consider the facts I've given you above. The prices which men are paying for standing pine, in my estimation, settles the fate of the market for some time to come. Prices cannot fall materially without ruining every man in the trade who has bought pine lately. There have been many sales where the stumpage cost three and a half to five dollars a thousand, and when you come to put cost of cutting, driving, booming, rafting and sawing into it, of the stumpage, the margin at present prices for lumber isn't much, any one can see."

"What is about the average result on a lot of average Saginaw logs?"

"About fourteen dollars a thousand. You see, the virginity of the forests has been violated, and the best timber has been culled."

"But I see sales at \$17 and \$19 straight."

"Yes, but those are from selected logs and not the common run. In days gone by, when we took the first pick, logs would average 40 per cent. uppers, and often run as high as 40 per cent., but they won't average per cent. now, nor up to best common. Fourteen dollars is about the average result from an average lot of logs on this river now, sir."

"If as you say the pine is getting short in supply, wouldn't it be good policy to go slower in cutting?"

"Well, it might, and then again it might not. It would be, if it wasn't for the pesky fires that rage in the woods every season. Why, whether you believe it or not, it is true, that as much if not more timber has been destroyed in eastern Michigan by fire in the last ten years than has fallen by the axe. It's enough to make a lumberman who loves good timber shed tears to see the long stretches of dead pine which can be seen in a belt from five to nine miles wide extending from Sant Point to Thunder Bay river, while the marks of the devastating fires may be seen in every other locality where there are bodies of pine. Some of the owners of pine would gladly husband their resources, cut less lumber now and let price go up where they ought to be, but the chances are even that fire would destroy more than enough to make the difference in their returns, so that they would really make nothing by the operation. Some of the owners of pine lands are taking the risk and holding off, and as the end of the pine comes nearer there will be more conservatism in cutting and prices have got to go up. The prairies of the west are settling up so rapidly that Wisconsin and Minnesota are not going to have much lumber to spare for eastern consumption, and when the Michigan supply is exhausted, or nearly so, there will be a dearth of pine for the eastern market, unless some new region shall be discovered, and that doesn't seem possible. The lumber problem in this country is going to be a difficulty one to solve and you can't expect me to settle it."—*Lumberman's Gazette.*

**Waste of Gas.**

The cost of gas is a great expense in many a house. A bright light is a luxury, and is appreciated by every one, but it cannot be enjoyed without being paid for. Waste of gas makes the gas bills mount up, and the careful house-keeper may effect a considerable saving by preventing this. The gas meter should be turned off during the day, so that if there are any places where the pipes are defective, escape of gas may be prevented. The condition of the burners has almost as much to do with the amount of a gas bill as the cost of gas per thousand feet. Old worn-out burners are the best friends which the gas companies have. A smell of gas should never be disregarded. It is a sign that there is an escape somewhere, and steps should be immediately taken to discover where it is, and put a stop to it. Last, but not least, gas when not in use should be turned out or left very low. A careless person who leaves the gas "full on," in an unused room, is throwing money away as much as if he cast it into the street.

**Chinese Ingenuity.**

A recent number of a paper published in China records a fresh illustration of the acuteness of the natives in the matter of exports from Hong Kong. Large quantities of matches are bought in this city for re-exporting to other ports, but on coming into the trader's hands they undergo strange transformation. Empty boxes are counterfeited and filled in the following manner:—After emptying the matches as originally packed (each box containing on an average sixty) they commence the refilling by laying two matches across each other, at the bottom of the box, in the form of an X, and fill up the box. The boxes, as now filled, do not contain more than two-thirds the original number of matches, and every gross thus sold realizes 50 per cent. profit.

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