

## A LOOK-OUT.

Our readers will not expect from us a homily on the course of time, such as at this period befits the ages of the daily papers, who devote themselves to summing up the events of the past year, and moralizing on them like Touchstone in "As You Like It," to the edification, no doubt, of many of those who look to them for inspiration and guidance, but such diatribes would be inappropriate here. Of the great men who have been taken away from us since this time last year, and the little men who have become great, it is not our province to discourse; our mission is to investigate the progress of the timber trade, and to show from the familiar incidents of the past, and the state of affairs in actual present, what the course of business is likely to be in the coming year, on which we are about to enter.

Even this, however, we can only do incidentally just now, as we have to reserve for our summary of the year, about the middle of January, a more extensive survey of the trade; at present we must be content to touch on the prospects from abroad, without dwelling on those nearer home; and, indeed it is the foreign and colonial information upon which all our reasoning as to future supplies is founded.

We intimated a month ago that Russia was forming a chain of railways to connect all her workable forests with the nearest shipping ports, and, in fact, that the whole of them were now in communication with the sea. That is, perhaps too large a phrase when we think of the vast territory which the name of Russia comprehends; but it may be understood to mean that the forests within any feasible distance of the gulfs of Bothnia and Finland are now capable of getting their produce forwarded to the nearest rivers by means of railroads, where heretofore they were considered inaccessible to commerce on account of the serious impediments between themselves and navigation. On this account we may consider that, whatever the importation from Russia has been this year, it is likely to be very much larger in 1883.

From Norway the same increase is expected, and very much from the same cause. A great portion of the Swedish trade on the western borders will by the new railways find its way to Drontheim, we are told, and very much increase the trade there. Our Christiania correspondent also in our last number furnished reasons why "it would seem probable that a great quantity of timber could not fail to be brought forward for next year's sawing season." He suggests, however, the usual uncertainties, and the indisposition of merchants to pay the prices demanded in the interior as likely to check the supply; but we remember no instance of its having done so. The men who have timber to cut down during the winter for market will hardly be diverted from their purpose by a difference of a few shillings per standard when the price is yet remunerative; and, in fact, it is merely a question of the woodland being out of employment or getting something less per week for their labor, and though they may hesitate over it for a while, we seldom hear of them refusing by strike to accommodate themselves to the changes of the times. What may help to keep Christiania prices at a fair level is the impression that a diminished production of flooring may be expected there, on account of the mills that were destroyed by fire this year, those of Messrs. Kjøsterud, Breion & Co., and of Messrs. Maarud & Co., which have not been rebuilt. On the other hand, it may be assumed that it will render battens more plentiful, as fewer of them in that neighborhood will be wanted for conversion, especially as our correspondent alleges that shippers "do not appear very eager to secure them."

On the whole, therefore, we may set it down that there will be plenty of wood manufactured and unmanufactured, to come forward from Norway, and that it will come in the shape of other there is every reason to believe.

If we now turn our attention to Sweden, the chief source of our supply of European timber goods, we see every indication of a plentiful supply. The shortage that was foretold in 1880, but which did not come to pass in 1881, it was then explained to us, would not be seriously

felt till the following year, as only 20 or 30 per cent. of the winter's cut came forward the same year. In 1882, therefore, we were to be punished for our incredulity; but this year had hardly begun when the theory had ceased to be listened to, and instead of a shorter export from Sweden this year, the first ten months of it gave an excess over the same months of last year in sawn and planed wood of 135,000 Petersburg standards, and no less than 65,000 loads of square and rough timber, the greatest export, we believe, ever yet reached in the same number of months, and leaving after it a larger remainder at the shipping ports, and on the way to them, than any previous season.

At the meeting of saw mill owners at Stockholm, on the 16th of December, respecting which we published a telegram in our last impression, the opening surplus to begin next season with was acknowledged to be 50,000 standards over that of last year, and, without any inclination to ascribe to those gentlemen a desire to mislead buyers on this side, we may safely say they were not likely to err in the direction of overstating the case. Possibly 100,000 standards may be nearer the mark, but it is by no means necessary to press the point. With more than an average winter supply in this country, a great many vessels frozen up in their ports with cargoes, which could not get away in time, and a larger stock than usual for f.o.w. shipment, it is within the boundary of rational probability that any increase of price can be established in those regions during the coming year?

Yet our correspondent tells us that in the north of Sweden "there is a decided stiffening feeling prevalent among holders of sawn stocks;" but he admits that it will not be wise "to stand out for the full prices obtained during the early part of the last season," though the output may be diminished "by the immense masses of snow that have fallen in many parts of Norrland," which will make it "a matter of considerable trouble and expense to get at the timber." Reports of this sort, though perhaps very intelligible in Sweden, are rather confusing here. If the snow does not come down, or there happens a scanty supply of it, the trade is accustomed to hear great lamentations over the unfavorable state of the forests for logging purposes; but here we have an account of plenty of snow, which is represented as a serious impediment to the delivery of the timber. Offsetting one argument by the other, readers will be apt to consider them like negative quantities in algebra, which represent next to nothing. Snow, however, may be very useful, like brandy and water, to a certain extent, but to much of it is found to be worse than none at all.

In this short analysis of the state of the production of wood for exportation in Northern Europe we have endeavored to ascertain the turn that the trade is likely to take at the opening of the coming season, and we imagine that the impression left on the mind of the reader will be that, whatever else may happen, there is no likelihood of any shortage in the customary supply, but on the contrary that it promises to be on a very liberal scale indeed; nor is the state of the stocks in this country so low as to necessitate an early or urgent demand for an increase of them. On the other hand the continental requirements may be much larger than they were last year.

It was very naturally supposed the crisis in Paris last January, consequent on the failure of the Union Generale for such an immense amount of money, would greatly discourage trade in France, and no doubt it did so to a certain extent, but it is a mistake to suppose that money is not still very plentiful among mercantile circles in that country, and the requirements of the timber trade will probably be on a very liberal scale, for nothing is a better test of the state of trade in any realm than its export and import returns, and from these we learn that the value of the latter for the past eleven months ended, exceeded those of last year for the same period by £4,356,920 sterling, and the exports by £5,885,800—clear evidence that France is still enjoying a very considerable measure of commercial prosperity, and that no interruption to the public works authorized by the legislature—and consequently requiring a

large supply of foreign timber—is likely to take place.

We intended to glance at the state of the supply in hand on the American side, but have no space left to do so in the present number.—*Timber Trades Journal.*

## AN ADMIRALTY SUIT.

In the case of Peter Muntz et al against a certain raft in the United States District Court, libelants, who formed the crew of the steam ferryboat Margaret, sued for salvago services rendered the craft when it got adrift in the river.

The District Court gave libelants judgment and awarded them salvago.

An appeal from this decision was taken to the Circuit Court, and Judge Pardee affirmed the decision.

On the appeal it was urged:

"1. That a raft of timber is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Admiralty Court, in the matter of salvago.

"2. That the Margaret was too small and weak to be able to render salvago services to a large craft.

"3. That no salvago services can be allowed compensation when the property is not saved, and that the raft in this case was saved by the large tug-boats and not by the Margaret.

"4. That the services of the Margaret were of no value to the raft."

The court said:

"A few undisputed principles taken from the text-books settles this case.

"Salvago is compensation for maritime services rendered in saving property or rescuing it from impending danger on the sea or on a public navigable river or lake where interstate or foreign commerce is carried on. *Maritime Salvago, sec. 67.*

"Salvago may be shortly described as an allowance for saving a ship or goods, or both, from the damages of the sea, fire, pirates or enemies." *Jones on Salvago p. 1.*

"It is absolutely essential that the salvors should have rendered actual assistance to the vessel in distress." *Jones, supra. p. 4.*

"If part of a salvago service is performed by one set of salvors, and the salvago is afterward completed by others the first set are entitled to reward, *pro tanto*, for services they actually rendered, and this, even although the part they took, standing by itself, would not in fact have affected the salvago." *Jones, supra. 9.—American Lumberman.*

## OUR SPRUCE IN ENGLAND.

The London *Timber Trades Journal* says:—Trade in spruce on the west coast of Great Britain may be said to be at a standstill until the turn of the year. Merchants will now be stocktaking, and until they exactly know what they have on hand will be very averse to buying. Both the weather and the Christmas holidays have been against transaction in spruce deals, but at the commencement of the new year we hope to see an improved state of affairs. Merchants are very chary of buying, on account of expecting to pick up great bargains later on, and no doubt, while odd cargoes are dropping in on the market from time to time, it justifies the buyers in holding back from freely purchasing. Cargoes of spruce have been bought in the Liverpool market at equal to £6 17s. 6d. cost, freight, and insurance, and although the deals are from Nova Scotia, and may not satisfy merchants in quality as well as if they were St. John or Miramichi, still they do not fall far short of these; indeed, we have seen Nova Scotian cargoes equal to any from St. John or Miramichi, and if the shipment from these latter ports in late years are any criterion, we unhesitatingly affirm, compared with former times, the character of these shipments is deteriorating on the whole. So that between an ordinary Nova Scotian cargo and one from St. John or Miramichi there is not a great difference in quality. When spruce deal cargoes can be bought on this side at or under £7 cost, freight, and insurance, there is not much occasion for merchants or importers to hesitate, as at this figure it is generally safe to stock. The cost of producing deals in Canada is yearly increasing, and when we come to consider that a £7 cost, freight, and insurance also means the

cost of the deals and insurance being put at £4, leaving £3 for freight, it will be seen there is not much in this price for the shipper. We question if at this figure spruce deals are not produced at a loss, and we are therefore unable to comprehend how merchants on this side can expect to see prices any lower.

Those Nova Scotian cargoes recently sold at Liverpool cannot but have brought a loss to those interested in them. When we take into account the freights lately paid for removing fall stock, with the high rates of insurance for winter risks, £6 17s. 6d. must have left a smart loss. It is rumoured that these low scales are in consequence of the cargoes having belonged to shippers in Liverpool reported in difficulties a couple of months back, and forced on the market by those having advanced against them, in which case the sales are hardly a fair test of what the market is.

## TRESPASSING.

An Ottawa correspondent of the *Northwestern Lumberman* says:—This winter seems to be particularly unfortunate one for operators in the woods in one respect, namely: trespassing on one another's limits. As many of the boundaries between limits have never been run in the field, it is almost impossible to avoid trespassing, more or less, and if limit holders would only adopt the principle of arbitration in cases of trespass, it would be better for all concerned, but it seems that when a trespass is perpetrated, it is always on a pet reserve, where the timber is much more valuable than on any other part of the limit; and when asked what sum will be accepted in compensation, either a demand is made for an equal number of trees which would make a square timber of 100 feet average, or a price is frequently put on a few hundred trees which is actually more than would have been accepted for the whole limit before the trespass took place. Neither of these demands being acceded to, they go to law: both parties spend \$5,000 or \$6,000 uselessly; the trespasser pays a trifle more than the first offer, and the party whose limit was trespassed upon, after he pays his lawyer and other incidental expenses, gets little or nothing for his timber. It seems strange that a body of such shrewd men as our lumbermen are, have not devised some easy, inexpensive method of deciding such cases, and thus save themselves large and useless expense, besides exposing the inward working of their business; but it is to be hoped that the time is at hand when measures will be adopted to remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs, and that the decision of such claims for damages will be taken out of the hands of a jury composed frequently of men unable to appreciate the importance of the cases brought before them, and left to the unbiased judgment of honorable men engaged in the trade, who would make the fittest judges of what would, under the circumstances, be fair compensation for injury caused by cutting over limit lines.

## INFORMATION ABOUT SAWS.

On few points connected with wood conversion is there more difference of opinion than in the question of speeds. Commencing first with circular saws for ripping, for sawing soft and medium woods, a speed of 9,000 feet traverse per minute at the points of the teeth may be taken as a standard speed; if hardwood has to be sawn this should be reduced to about 7,500 feet per minute, and with very hard wood 6,000 feet per minute will be found sufficient. The shape, number, pitch and set of the saw teeth being modified to suit the nature of the wood.

In one experiment I put a circular saw, 30 inch diameter and 12 gauge, on a spindle and gradually increased the speed to between 12,000 feet and 13,000 feet per minute, when it became wavy and pliant and ran out of truth. It therefore follows that, not only is the extra speed entirely unnecessary, but it is positively detrimental, as more power is consumed, more heat engendered in the bearings, spindle and saw plate; extra lubrication is therefore required, and the belts deteriorate more rapidly. I should, however, prefer to err on the side of high speeds instead of low, as this necessitates perfect workmanship and finish not always found in these days of so-called "cheap" machinery. The speed of circular saws for cross-cutting