

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE bill proposed to be submitted to the Ontario legislature at its recent session, providing for the better sanitation and inspection of lumber camps, will not become law for another year at least. For some reason, probably known only to a few friends of the government, the measure was not introduced in the House. It is hinted that this step was the indirect effect of the invalidation of the statute compelling inspection of cattle at the expense of owners, inasmuch as it was intended by the act that lumbermen should bear the cost of inspection of camps and of procuring a physician and nurse in case of infectious diseases.

APROPOS of our remarks in the last issue of THE LUMBERMAN regarding the necessity of uniform inspection rules for the purchase and sale of lumber, the report published in another column of a suit which was recently heard in the County Court at Toronto affords interesting reading. It was shown by the evidence that there was really no general understanding as to what constituted firsts and seconds in birch, and the contentions of the plaintiff and defendant differed widely. The decision declared that sap was not a defect. The learned judge was nonplussed at learning that the lumber business was conducted in such a manner, and suggested that the legislature should sanction some code of inspection rules which would remove the opportunities for law suits such as now exist, and which only serve to divert to the pockets of lawyers the profits which rightly belong to the lumber dealer. This and other similar suits which are fought out from time to time afford a strong argument in favor of some action being taken by lumbermen looking to the adoption of standard rules of inspection.

THE Ontario government is apparently becoming convinced of the expediency of protecting from fire the unlicensed timber limits of the province, as we observe that at the last session of parliament, at the request of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, an appropriation of \$3,000 was made for the employment of fire rangers for this purpose. It is gratifying that a step in this direction has been taken, yet we cannot but express regret that the amount was not larger, thus placing the department in a position to protect more efficiently an asset from which is derived annually a very large revenue. In the case of licensed limits, the expense of fire ranging is borne equally by the licensee and the government, while the latter would, of course, be compelled to bear the total cost of protecting unlicensed territory. The appropriation of \$3,000 would, therefore, only provide protection for a very small section of country, leaving the balance to suffer destruction by fires such as have occurred in past years in many parts of the province, and which should have served as object lessons. Now that the government has shown itself to be in sympathy with the movement, however, we trust we may receive a much larger grant for this object at the next session of the legislature.

Saw mill owners in every part of Canada are asked to assist in making THE LUMBERMAN of greater interest to its readers by furnishing information regarding the condition of the lumber market. Particulars of sales of stock, estimated cut, current prices, etc., are solicited.



ONE of the latest industries to which my attention has been drawn is the collection of white pine seeds for sowing. I recently learned of a gentleman in Ontario who was devoting much of his time to this work, which he described as being very tedious and laborious. His method was to purchase the cones from the lumbermen in his vicinity. These were gathered in the fall of the year, the month of September being the best time, and threshed out by a flail in much the same manner as peas. The seeds were sold at fifty cents per pound, the principal market being in the United States.

MR. E. W. Rathbun, the Deseronto lumber king, upon being interviewed, stated that Canadian lumbermen should not permit the United States to impose a duty on our lumber. "Within seven years," he said, "the American pine forests will be wiped out at the present rate of cutting. Then they will be as dependent on us for pine as they are for pulp wood now. Let the Canadian Government say: If you impose any duty at all upon our lumber, we will impose an export duty upon all logs, pine and pulp wood. When that fact is grasped by the Americans they will change their attitude." "There is another thing that the public have not realized," said Mr. Rathbun. "The timber limits of the country are passing into the hands of Americans who have no interest beyond clearing off the lumber. They bring in supplies free and American labor, and tow away the logs. They are protected against our competition in the lumber market by the duty of \$1 or \$2. That means that when they bid for the timber limits they have an advantage over Canadian bidders equal to the duty. We cannot compete against them, and every year sees fewer Canadian purchasers of timber limits and more Americans." Mr. Rathbun thinks that European capitalists will shortly establish paper mills in America, and under favorable circumstances they would locate in Canada.

A MONTREALER interested in lumber, referring to the system of protection which he considers it preferable for Canada to adopt, recommends a little paternalism. He says: "I would have the government get reports from its Commissioner in England and from British consuls abroad as to lumber markets, and would have instructors travel among our smaller mill men to teach them how to saw for the foreign market. The government should advance to these small manufacturers 75 per cent. of the value of the lumber on board the vessel at the shipping port, after payment of insurance, and I would have the lumber sold for them, just as has been done in the cheese business—done so successfully that young Canada supplies 55 per cent. of the cheese used in Great Britain." The query whether a policy such as this would not meet with strong opposition, was answered thus: "At first, possibly. But when the public become educated to the fact that

no sale for lumber means destruction to millions of dollars of our natural resources—that stagnation in this trade means starvation to tens of thousands of employees from Quebec to Port Arthur—that it means no freights for our railroads—they will favor the policy. Our small lumbermen need help and need it at once; for three years they have been lumbering at a loss. This policy would mean the manufacture of our logs into lumber in Canada. It means its transportation from Sault Ste. Marie and Georgian Bay, Toronto, the Bay of Quinte, Ottawa and all St. Lawrence ports on Canadian railroads or ships to the sea and to Europe. In fact, I think that if the government acts on these lines at this crisis, the McKinley Bill will do as much good as it did before when it was in force."

* * *

THE season of rafting timber to Quebec for shipment across the Atlantic has now opened, and passengers enjoying an early summer tour down the St. Lawrence will pass a number of huge rafts, with their jolly crew, quietly floating along. Within the past fortnight a considerable quantity of timber has left Toronto, to which point it was brought by railroad from Ohio and Michigan. In former years all this timber was rafted at Toronto, but the risk of loss by storms on the lake is now avoided by taking the timber to the vicinity of Kingston by vessel, where it is made into rafts for floating to Quebec. This method is now adopted by most of the timber merchants. While the square timber trade is not by any means what it was years ago, when as much as twenty million cubic feet of white pine alone was exported from the St. Lawrence, and twenty firms were engaged therein, it is yet quite an important feature, and one which the average lumberman knows little about. Talking with Mr. Bickell, of McArthur Bros. & Co., the other day, he referred to the great change which had taken place in the timber trade of late years. "Less than twenty years ago," he said, "sailing vessels were employed almost altogether for carrying timber, but now very few of such found their way to Quebec, owing to the difficulty in securing a charter. The steamers were now built in such a manner as to take in a log 75 feet in length. A point in favor of the steamer was that the wood was landed at its destination in much better condition, being free from discoloration such as is likely to occur when shipped by a sailing vessel, which could only make about two trips a season, while a steamer would make half a dozen. The cost of insurance by steamers was also a mere trifle. During the summer months the rate was only one-quarter of one per cent., which was increased in the fall season." Mr. Bickell expressed the opinion that Quebec would continue to hold the timber trade, as Montreal did not afford the necessary cove and other accommodation. He hoped for the early extension of the Ottawa, Arrprior and Parry Sound Railway to the ancient city, which would be the means of restoring some of its old-time activity. He could well remember when as many as fifty vessels were built each year at the port of Quebec, affording employment to thousands of workmen. Now, owing to the general use of iron and steel, this trade had been diverted to the Clyde. Mr. Bickell goes to Quebec early in May, where he takes charge of the shipping of the timber for his company, and will remain there until the close of navigation.