



A VISITOR to Toronto during January was Mr. D. C. Cameron, of Rat Portage, president of the Ontario and Western Lumber Co., which, more than a year ago obtained control of the milling interests of the Keewatin, Rat Portage and Norman districts, and in connection with which important litigation is now in progress. Mr. Cameron claims, as a result of this combination, that lumber to the consumer has been reduced all round about \$1.00 per 1000. His company will continue on the lines on which it was organized. The removal of the duty on lumber has resulted in stimulating the bringing in of lumber to Manitoba from Minnesota, though he did not think that this was coming into the country in such quantities as to materially effect local trade. The lumber business of the northwest in the last two years, has shown a falling off of about 50%. The total consumption in 1892 in Manitoba had been between 80,000,000 and 100,000,000, whilst now it was under 50,000,000. This reduction in trade was attributed to the desire on the part of farmers to curtail expenditures on improvements and economize generally, because of the commercial depression. Time would right this difficulty, though Mr. Cameron does not anticipate any immediate boom in business.

\* \* \* \*

Quite a number of lumbermen, I find, are thinking along the line of establishing a supply yard in Toronto for the distribution of lumber. In my rounds the other day I met one man who longed for someone to drop in on him with \$50,000 to make a start in this direction. He said the necessity for such a movement was showing itself at every point. He was speaking specially of the hardwood trades. "Our firm," said he, "are receiving orders for hardwood constantly that requires an effort sometimes to strike the spot where we can secure the particular wood needed. Hardwoods are so scattered, a little here and a little there, that when an order is received for a mixed carload of hardwoods it is sometimes impossible to fill it. If there was a central yard in Toronto, where a supply was kept all the time, much trade that goes past lumbermen to-day would be secured." I told my friend that if I came across somebody with an odd \$50,000 I would let him know, but all the same I find that he voices the views of a good many others, though there seems to be difficulties in the way of getting such a movement set on foot. There is just too much want of cohesion amongst lumbermen in this part of the country.

\* \* \* \*

J. G. Scott, manager of the Pacific Coast Lumber Co., New Westminster, B.C., writes: "In your ELI column, January number, I observe you talk some about shingles and publish the opinions of one Mr. McBean as to the longevity, of the B. C. red cedar article. Now, I hold that it is eminently unfair for you to give any publication to a vague, indefinite statement made by anyone on this point. Despite adverse criticism by parties interested, I feel assured that these shingles have got into Ontario to stay and will make a record for themselves, but if anyone has any points to bring out against them it will be interesting to the B. C. shingle makers to hear it expressed definitely and specifically. We want to know the particular lot referred to; if there was a visible defect in the manufacture or in the quality of the timber; if in laying on the roof they were jammed close together as might be done with green white pine shingles or if common sense was used in laying and the shingles laid an eighth of an inch apart, to prevent bulging when soaked, as is necessary with kiln dried shingles. If a case of dissatisfaction exist and particulars such as above are furnished, we may be able to trace the reason to a specific cause. As to the test these shingles are put to by the weather in this Province, let some one express an opinion on that who has spent twelve moons in this

glorious climate and we may hear something of the intensity and penetrating powers of our rain storms; the east rains back home are simply not in it. No Mr. Eli we are not making a market for these shingles by abusing the merits of white pine or any other shingle but purely on their own merits and the users of them are the judges. We are not afraid of results where they are used and known, but we would just as soon you would not head us off where they are not known by prejudicing people against them before they have tried them."

\* \* \* \*

A week ago I dropped into the office of Mr. J. H. Eyer, lumber merchant, Toronto, and while we were chatting on lumber matters, Mr. D. C. Burke, of Hawkestone, Ont., joined us. Mr. Burke, at one time and another, has been an active man of affairs. Just at present he is operating a mill at the point named in Simcoe county. "I am cutting a good deal of black ash," said Mr. Burke, "though not having any very large quantity of this wood on my land; but what I have is of fine quality. There is also considerable birch where I am operating the mill, but the greatest drawback to cutting birch is the amount of culls that accumulate and are worth hardly anything. I shipped some birch culls to Toronto a few days ago that will hardly net me \$3 a 1000." I asked Mr. Burke what he thought of the future of birch, seeing that there is considerable talk of this wood taking a front position. His reply was that he believed that there would be a larger demand for birch in the years to come than there had been in the past. "It is like this," he continued, "birch is a close-grained wood, and it makes up nicely for mantels, closets, as well as general articles of furniture. Only a short time ago I got out a number of samples of this wood for a manufacturer of mantels and closets, to be sent to Great Britain, and now I am getting back good reports and will be able to place some of my timber for these purposes. In the manufacture of mantels and cabinet goods there is need for such stuff, and this gives a good opportunity to work up the small wood in birch." Mr. Burke is taken with the notion that there is an opening at a central point like Toronto for a mill that would make a specialty of cutting up hardwoods for manufacture. "The trouble is," he said, "when one operates a saw mill in a country district he is confined to the particular wood that is in his locality, and when it becomes exhausted he is obliged to get out and get somewhere else where there is a supply. In Toronto I could draw my supplies from a hundred different sources and obtain a good choice as well as a good variety." It was suggested by Mr. Eyer, in the conversation, that the trouble would be to secure favorable freight rates. Mr. Burke thought that this difficulty could be overcome if the railways saw that they were likely to secure a profitable trade for a continuous period of time, that it would be to their interests to make rates that would encourage this business. With some knowledge of how railways handle this kind of business, I am not so sure that Mr. Burke's sanguine expectations would be realized.

\* \* \* \*

Duluth, I notice, is bobbing up as a competitive point in white pine. We have heard of some shipments from there coming into Canada, but I do not know that there is anything to worry over in this particular. From a conversation, however, I had a few weeks since with Mr. C. H. Clark, I would fancy that Duluth pine is certain to come into competition on the American market with stocks from Canada and also Michigan. Mr. Clark, it will be remembered by many, was for a dozen years or more identified with the lumber trade in the Barrie section, and travelled extensively for Burton Bros. When their mill was destroyed by fire about a year ago, Mr. Clark found it necessary to look around for other fields to conquer. He made a trip through different parts of the States, and finally struck Duluth. He is quite enthusiastic of the possibilities of that country for lumbermen. There is no end of lumber there, he tells us, and some of the best mills in the country, in his judgment, are found in that district. Mr. Clark has about made up his mind, I think, to hang out his shingle in Duluth. At present he is spending a few weeks in Canada. He says that the pine of that district will compare favorably with Canadian white pine. In the better grades probably Canada is ahead, but for aver-

age quality they run parallel. A good deal of Duluth lumber has in the past gone into the western states, but the trade now are bidding vigorously for business in the eastern states, and it is there that it comes into competition with Canadian pine. I fear, as is the case too often with all new territories, the disposition is to make sales, without full regard to the real value of the timber sold. We see how this business is operating in southern lumber, as is remarked elsewhere by Mr. Meaney. Time rights all these difficulties, because after a while men see how foolish it is to throw away good money, but at the particular time havoc is played with trade by this constant throwing on the market of stocks at profitless prices. Speaking of Duluth conditions, I have come across an opinion expressed by Mr. J. J. Rupp, of Saginaw, who, with certain associates, owns about 400,000,000 feet of standing timber near Duluth. Mr. Rupp is also interested in Canadian lumbering, having a mill at Three Rivers, Que., which he is now working actively. So far as regards competition between United States and Canadian lumber, he has said: "Stumpage will average higher in Canada than in the Duluth district, and it costs considerable more to get in supplies and to manufacture; but, on the other hand, freight rates to Albany and New York are from \$1 to \$1.50 better than from the head of the lakes. There will be a continuous and good market for all the white pine now standing in Duluth."

\* \* \* \*

Speaking the other day with Mr. Thomas Meaney, manager at Toronto for Robt. Thomson & Co., I was interested in some of his comments on the change in lumber prices in a few years. To-day, everybody is bemoaning the condition of the shingle market. This has apparently been going from bad to worse for some time, so that the business to-day is a complete drug, whether one thinks of white pine shingles or of the red cedar shingles of British Columbia. On the admission of the lumbermen of the Pacific Coast no money is being made there, and it is hard to know how anyone can get a profit out of white pine shingles, when prices have, in some cases, been cut as low as \$1.70. "Go back eight or ten years," said Mr. Meaney, "and conditions were very different. Shingles were then bringing easily \$2.50, but on the other hand common lumber was down as low as \$6.00, where now shingles are down, and this lumber worth \$11. or \$12." I was interested in getting Mr. Meaney's view of southern pine. He said that certainly Georgia pine was being sold to no small extent in Ontario. Some of the southern mills are represented here, and their agents are doing all the business that will come along their way. He believed there was something in the complaint of the lumber section of the Board of Trade that architects and builders might, with advantage to their clients and help to the lumber industries of the country, use white pine, where in many cases they were recommending southern wood. It stood to reason that a pine that possesses as much resinous matter as yellow pine would help to feed a fire, as seems to have been proven by the unfortunate events in Toronto during the past month. The worst feature of business in southern pine and this view, as far as I know, is voiced by lumbermen in the eastern States as well as in Canada, is the ridiculous price at which it is sold. Just think of this pine being bought at the mills at \$4. a 1000. Where comes any margin for labor, and allowance for capital invested in mills, and cost of managing the same? I reminded Mr. Meaney that even the southern lumbermen themselves were complaining of these conditions. Only during the past month several meetings and consultations among leading men in this line in Missouri and Arkansas have been held trying to devise some way to better their condition and raise prices up somewhere near a fair living profit. A plan is on foot to form a permanent organization taking in these two states and Texas, Louisiana and Georgia, if possible. As the Tradesman, Chattanooga, Tenn., has said, the great trouble with yellow pine men in the past has been a mutual disposition and unwillingness to let each other know the situation. Each one has kept his output and business entirely to himself, and been unwilling to let anyone else know what his condition was. To-day a result of this policy is plainly manifest in the lumbermen's bank accounts and dividends.