

MICHIGAN LETTER.

[Regular correspondence CANADA LUMBERMAN.]

REFERENCE was made in my letter of last month to the opinion entertained at least by some lumbermen that this erstwhile fertile pine state has seen its best days so far as lumbering operations are concerned. I do not say that those whose predictions run along these lines have all the facts and arguments with them, and yet, as the present season's work comes to a close, there are some conditions that give color to this view.

A number of our large operators are not only prospecting in other lumber territories, but they are making heavy investments, which must ere long draw off a measure of their attachment from this State, whilst several firms have closed business altogether and are planning operations for other fields another season.

LUMBER FIRMS MOVING OUT.

The firm of Merrill & King, who not long since were large holders of Canadian limits in the Georgian Bay district, closed down their mill here on 20th inst., and its machinery will be removed to Duluth, where the firm has erected a new mill. The old mill cut 18,000,000 feet of lumber the present season. The A. W. Wright Lumber Company, who have put in 30,000,000 in Gladwin county, Mich., this season, is another concern that will break camp in the spring and will make their way north. This company have about 1,000,000,000 feet of timber in Minnesota, near the Duluth & Winnipeg railroad. They will build, it is said, a road in connection with this road, and operations will commence next season. One of the oldest firms in Bay City, N. B. Bradley & Sons, have wound up their record as lumbermen. Their mill will be dismantled and the machinery removed to the upper Peninsula. This firm has been in business in Bay City since 1857, and have cut possibly 500,000,000 feet of lumber, to say nothing of the salt, shingles and lath which have been produced by the Bradley plant. A rumor is current that a sash and door factory will be built on the site of the old mill, which will be good news for Bay City if realized.

Another change, that removes from the field of active work one of the oldest lumber concerns in the state, is the closing out of the business of Ryerson, Hills & Co., whose mills on Muskegon Lake are among the historical landmarks of this section of country. By those who should know it is said that the mills of this firm have during their existence manufactured at least 1,000,000,000 feet of lumber. The members of the firm have undoubtedly amassed large fortunes as a result of their work on Muskegon Lake and have ever been highly esteemed by the community.

LOOKING TO CANADIAN PINE LANDS.

On the other hand, we find those who think the present exodus, if I may so term it, to new fields and pastures green, just a little premature. E. G. Stoddard, one of our best-known Michigan lumbermen, said in a recent interview: "I have been in the business in Saginaw now for twenty-eight years, and have seen the best period in the lumber trade. People are now looking around for other places to go to in view of the fact that the timber will soon be entirely gone. A great many are looking toward Oregon and Washington, but I don't think the time has come yet for the opening of the lumber trade in that region. My reason for thinking thus is that the market will be lacking for a long time to come. The Pacific slope is a young country, but on the whole it is pretty well equipped with build- ings, and I don't think there will be much of a demand in that locality. Then, Australia is in the same condition, and the eastern market is rendered very hard of access on account of the immense distance and the mountain ranges lying between. If we had no timber it would be different, but even after Michigan and Wisconsin timber is used up we have the immense southern district besides the Canada pine lands which will surely be called into requisition."

THE WOOD FIBRE BUSINESS

is intimately connected with the lumber trades, and intelligent lumbermen are interested in a study of its several phases. Hon. I. M. Weston, of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a gentleman who is extensively interested in this business. He has a large financial concern in a company which controls the Misterlich patents for making chemical wood fibre in the United States and Canada.

He is very sanguine of the possibilities of this industry. There is in his opinion scarcely any limit to the variety of articles that may be made from wood fibre. "All that is needed," says Mr. Weston, "is a mould in which to press the fibre and sufficient pulp to hold it together and you will have a door that is one solid piece of wood, and which will be light, strong and will not decay or warp. Perhaps you do not know that if the resinous substances are extracted from wood you have gotten rid of all that causes decay, and the fibre left is like a piece of cotton in whiteness and fluffiness? The uses to which this is put are many. For some time past a factory at Port Huron has been making underclothes from wood fiber, which equal in every respect those made of wool. It is made into hats, blankets, pails, washtubs, trunks, basins, pitchers, and a hundred other things which are indestructible unless you break them with an axe. Professor Misterlich is now taking out patent for machines which will weave and spin the wood fiber the same as cotton or wool.

PIECE STUFF.

McKeon and Glover, of Bay City, now have 30,000,000 of logs on the skidways in your country. They are logging about 17,000,000 feet on the Gladwin branch of the Michigan Central. This is another firm that closes their operations in Michigan with this winter. They have handled during the season about 80,000,000 feet of logs.

Muskegan has had in some respects a phenomenal season. Usually from 100,000,000 to 300,000,000 have been carried over till spring. For the first time in the history of that market there is no more stock on hand to-day than can be handled for the local demand.

The Chippewa Lumber Company's mill, near Chippewa Lake, Mich., has been sold to the Tallapoosa Manufacturing and Hardwood Company of Georgia. The mill has a capacity of 90,000 feet daily and cost \$50,000.

The Scribner failure, at Tonawanda, continues to excite unfavourable comment here. It struck some Saginaw and Bay City lumbermen pretty hard.

Charles H. Plummer, lumberman and pine land dealer, has given mortgages to Daniel Hardin, of Saginaw, for \$40,000, as security for paper endorsed by the latter.

SAGINAW, MICH., DEC. 26, 1891.

PICA.

OTTAWA LETTER.

[Regular correspondence CANADA LUMBERMAN.]

DECEMBER may fitly be termed an off month in the lumber trade in this district. I could hardly have less to record in the line of lumber news. The mills are closed down; there is no mill news. Logging in the woods is active, but this is a class of work that is not productive of much interest for a newspaper correspondent. Shipping is quiet, as one would suppose, at a time when the shipping season is practically closed. In the offices of our several lumber concerns book-keepers and clerks are busy working towards the balancing of accounts for the year. A little later, when balance sheets have been prepared, we will learn with all necessary certainty just how the year's trade shows up.

We do know this to be the case, that the stock books will show very small quantities of lumber in the hands of any of our mill men, outside of what is already sold and is being held subject to shipping orders from purchasers. This is a factor that is expected to have a favorable influence on prices in the spring. Prices can hardly be otherwise than firm, with a strong tendency to an advance in nearly all lines.

Our exporters are looking forward to a revival of South American trade, where a fair market has usually been found for twelve-inch stock. The Export Lumber Company here is increasing its storage capacity for twelve-inch and other better grades by building a large addition to its sheds.

Mr. John Ferguson, M.P., who reached the city this week from the Madawaska district, and who holds a contract from J. R. Booth for the taking out of logs this winter, says that lumbering on the Madawaska this winter is humming. Mr. Ferguson's work is limited to the removal of logs that the fire passed through last summer. He reports that the bush fires had injured a large quantity of valuable timber. When he left the bush there was hardly any snow and very little frost. The large

lakes were still open and smaller ones were but slightly frozen over. The want of snow and ice to get the logs out was severely felt.

OTTAWA, DEC. 26, 1891.

SHAVINGS AND SAWDUST.

It is claimed that a chute in the logging camp at Clifton, Oregon, is the longest in the world, being three-quarters of a mile. Its track is shod with railroad iron, and this smoothness and the sharp pitch get the logs down in twenty seconds. We would rather not try to interview one of them while taking this little excursion.

The match-making women at Marselles, to the number of 650, have struck work. Their grievance is that the French wood employed by the State in this manufacture is inferior and difficult to handle, and that though the Government professes to have purchased a large stock in Russia, whence the supply was formerly derived, no promise is given them as to the date of its arrival.

The Lumber Worker, of Cincinnati, O., predicts an early return of walnut to its old time popularity, basing the prophecy upon the statement that many of the largest furniture making concerns of the country are quietly buying all the walnut stock they can get, 30 cars of walnut, for example, having recently passed through Cincinnati en route to Grand Rapids, Mich. The Lumber Worker regards walnut lumber as the best stock on sticks to-day.

A NOTE of warning to the loggers in the woods, not to be easily persuaded by the cheap jewellery pedlars, who like to play on their generosity, should not be without its effect. The money that the logger earns is well earned, and he does not need to throw it away for the first trumpety gew-gaw that is offered him by a glib-tongued notion pedlar who strikes the camp. The logger may make up his mind that these men are after him for the money they think they can make out of him. Loggers do not require any article that these men may offer them, while they are in the woods, and if it is important to procure anything of the kind, let them wait until they return to the city and patronize the store of a reliable merchant, where they will obtain value for their money.

P. O. BYRAM, of Victoria, N.B., whose opinions on lumber matters are not unknown to readers of this paper, is again after those Americans who insist on "slaughtering our forests and driving native labour and consumption out of our country." Replying to N. C. Dymont, of Barrie, who has expressed himself as approving of the removal of the log duty, because of the reduction of duty on lumber that this step carries with it, he says: "The greatest curse that can follow the settlement of our forests is to allow the product to be slaughtered and manufactured out of the country, instead of at home; and the only way to place ourselves on an equal footing with Americans is to make the export duty on logs equal to their import duty. If the American cannot compete on these terms, other and perhaps better outlets can be had for our manufactured lumber. If Canada is to be held for Canadians it is time her resources were protected from outsiders poaching on her territory."

A POINTER FOR MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS.

NOW comes the harvest of the machinery manufacturers. Mills will be overhauled, and alterations made. In some cases new machinery will take the place of old, and in others improved machinery will take the place of some not very old that has fallen below the requirements of the plant. The lumber manufacturer knows that improved machinery means greater profits, and is willing to go to the expense necessary to make the improvements. The cut this winter in Canada will undoubtedly be above the average. This means that our lumber manufacturers will be anxious to have their mills in tip top shape for the opening of trade in the spring. The time is opportune for the shrewd manufacturer of machinery to bring to the notice of saw mill men the facilities possessed for meeting the various needs of the lumber trade. It is hardly necessary to suggest that as the only journal in Canada devoted to the interests of lumber and saw mill men the CANADA LUMBERMAN is an exceptionally valuable medium to all manufacturers who contemplate business with this industry.