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ALASKA'S TIMBER RESOURCES.

A correspondent writes to the *Western World*:—"Alaska is square-shaped, with two horns projecting from the southeast and south west corners, the former called southeastern Alaska, the latter being the Aleutian islands. This southeastern horn is the place where is congregated nearly all the white population engaged in those industries over which the government has thrown no special protection.

"Nearly all of Alaska south of the Arctic circle may be covered with timber, except an immaterial portion facing Behring sea and the Aleutian islands, although, in the broadest sense, none of it is fit for more than local use, except southeastern Alaska, and most of this, from its remoteness, can never expect to compete with the more valuable and vast timber fields of British Columbia, Oregon and Washington territory until the latter are exhausted. There is one exception to this general rule, however, in a very valuable kind of timber found near the tip of the southeastern horn, along the Pacific coast. I refer to the yellow cedar of Alaskan parlance. For a number of years it has been used upon the northwest coast as a fancy wood, from its exceeding fine texture, great durability, and odor which, though agreeable to the genus homo, is a sure preventive to moths, and other good qualities for cabinet making, special woodwork and so on.

"The yellow cedar attains enormous size compared with the dwarfed species by which it is surrounded often reaching a height of over 100 feet and corresponding diameter at the butt, shown by the conifer family. When I was in Boca de Quadra inlet, Alaska, not from Dixon entrance, that separates this territory from British Columbia, we had to unload 65 tons of freight a salmon cannery there, and this was done in two loads by a raft made of two logs of yellow cedar not yet thoroughly seasoned. I thought they were ten feet at the butt, so grand were the logs, but probably two-thirds that would be about the truth. Even in the region that this extremely valuable tree occupies—the third of southeastern Alaska—it is not found in large districts, either in compact forests or straggling cases among other kinds, but rather in little isolated groups, or patches here and there, 10-acre and 100-acre lots, so to speak, but, once found, this patch is quite densely populated with them. This would really be greatly in its favor in securing these 'groups' as timber land. Some of them, however, are quite large, and many have never been well outlined, and others, no doubt, are yet to be discovered in this almost wild country. Most of it grows near the water, and this phase, in an Alpine country, cut up by numberless channels and inlets of water running in every direction and creating thousands of islands, may be readily appreciated. Near by the old Russian towns the clumps have been extermin-

ated by them before we came in possession of Russian America, and had they held it I have but little doubt it would now be worked on a large scale, or monopolized by some Moscowite favorites. While living in Oregon and the adjacent territories I often heard these valuable fields of timber discussed by parties who desired some law to protect them in securing them, and I was more than impressed with their sayings when I afterwards visited the districts. I look on the industry based on this timber as one of the future 'bonanzas' of Alaska, and the only one in the line of timber."

TREES ON THE PACIFIC SLOPE.

George H. Hamm, the well known correspondent, who is "dying" British Columbia in the interests of the *Western World*, writes as follows:—"The timber supply of the province is apparently inexhaustible, and will doubtless prove a mine of wealth before many years. Already shipments are made to the Australian, South American and Chinese markets, but the volume of trade has not as yet reached the proportion that it is capable of. The principal tree is the Douglas fir, which ranges from four to twelve feet in diameter, and from two hundred to three hundred feet high. It is straight and tough, and capable of bearing a great strain and is almost unequalled for bridging, framework and for shipbuilding, while its great length and straightness make it especially adapted for masts and spars. Besides the Douglas, the following trees are to be found in the province: the lists being obtained from a work issued by the local government. Western hemlock, large, found on coast and Columbia river, Englemann's spruce, eastern part of province and interior plateau, Menzies' spruce, very large, mostly on coast, great silver fir, coast tree of great size, balsam spruce, abundant in Gold and Selkirk ranges, and east of McLeod's Lake, Williamson's Alpine hemlock, too scarce and too high up to be of much use, red pine (yellow pine or pitch pine), a variety of the heavy yellow pine of California and Oregon, very handsome, four feet diameter, common in drier parts of interior, white pine (mountain pine), Columbia region, Shuswap and Adams' Lakes—also interior of Vancouver's island, white barked pine, small, western cedar (giant cedar or red cedar), wood pale, yellow or reddish color, very durable, often found 100 to 150 feet high, and 15 feet thick, yellow cypress (yellow cedar), mainland coast, Vancouver and Queen Charlotte islands, western larch, (tamarac), Rocky Mountains, Selkirk and Gold ranges, west to Shuswap Lake, large tree, yield a strong, coarse, durable wood; maple valuable hardwood on Vancouver and adjacent islands, Queen Charlotte island and the mainland coast, up to 50', attains a diameter of four feet; vine maple, very strong, tough whitewood, confined to coast; yew, Van-

cover and opposite mainland shores, very tough and hard, and of a beautiful rose color; crab apple, along all the coasts, wood very hard, takes good polish, and withstands great wear; alder, two feet thick, on the Lower Fraser and along coast, good furniture wood; western birch (paper or canoe birch), Columbia region, Upper Fraser, Peace River, range and value not much known, oak, on Vancouver Island 70 feet in height, and three feet in diameter; dogwood, Vancouver and coast opposite. Arbutus, close-grained, heavy, resembling box, reaches 50 feet in height, and 20 inches in diameter, found on Vancouver and neighboring islands. Aspen poplar, abounds over the whole interior, reaching a thickness of two feet. Three other varieties of poplar are found, commonly included under the name cottonwood. One does not extend above Yale, and is the same wood largely used in Puget Sound to make staves for sugar barrels for San Francisco. The other two kinds occur in valleys in the interior. Mountain ash, in the interior; Juniper (red cedar or pencil cedar), east coast of Vancouver, and along the shores of Kamloops and other lakes in the interior.

There are already some very extensive saw mills in operation—and have been cutting for a quarter of a century—and yet this branch of industry is only in its infancy. Not only is there the trans-Pacific trade, gigantic as it should soon be, but with cheap freight rates the treeless plains of the Northwest could be readily supplied and profitable interchange of commodities spring up.

A THRILLING EXPERIENCE.

DETROIT, Mich., July 31.—A Chicago special says: The Canadian steamer Isaac May staggered into harbor at a late hour on Thursday night without fuel and almost destitute of provisions. Captain Muir, her master, relates a thrilling experience. The May left Chicago three weeks ago, towing three barges. After a run of five days they arrived at the Manitoulin island, on the Canadian side of Lake Huron, the largest island in the great lakes, covered with cedar trees. When the vessel arrived the inhabitants were badly frightened. For weeks not a drop of rain had fallen. The steamer and her tow began to take on cargoes of posts and ties, when the woods suddenly burst into a great blaze. No sooner had the fire started than a severe wind storm swept over the island driving the flames in every direction. The people fled in terror to the beach and sought shelter on board the vessels, which pulled out into the lake. Scores of bears, roaring with pain, ran out of the woods, with the hair singed from their hides, and plunged into the lake. The flames raged for five days, burning over acres of valuable timber and destroying a vast amount of stock piled on the beach for shipment. Then a drenching rain

storm set in, and continued until the fire was put out. It was ten days from the time the vessels reached there before they were ready to leave, and their stock of provisions was almost exhausted in caring for the people who took refuge there. Still Capt. Muir thought he could make his provisions hold out until they reached Chicago, but he did not count on having head winds all the way.

The vessels left the island last Saturday morning, and as dense clouds of smoke from the burning timber had settled down over the water, the vessels had to pick their way slowly through the darkness. The steamers passed Lake Michigan when they ran into another band of smoke that shut out everything from view. So thick was the atmosphere that the first barge of the tow could not be seen from the decks of the steamer. On all sides could be heard the fog signals of passing steamers. By moving slowly and sounding whistles at frequent intervals, the steamer made her way through the smoke in safety. Her progress had been so greatly impeded, however, that when one hundred miles north of Chicago the engineer reported the coal bunkers empty, and the steward informed the captain that nothing was left to eat but salt pork. The crew were put under short rations and the deck load posts were drawn on to feed the furnaces, but the cedar was so green that the boilers could hardly be kept warm. Finally the steamer cut her consort adrift and came to Chicago under sail without them. The experience of the steamer at the Manitoulin island during the fire was thrilling. The scene from the vessels as told by a spectator was grand beyond description. The flames shot into the air for hundreds of feet and turned night into day, while the heat was so intense that the vessels were obliged to push out into the lake. The noise was deafening, and amid all the din and confusion thousands of birds fluttered around their late homes, until, tired with constant flight, they dropped into the lake or fell into the flames. Deer and bears rushed from the woods together, and throw themselves into the cooling waters of the lake. For five days the flames held their sway before the lumbermen could return to island to finish loading the vessels. The barges were found off Racine and towed into port yesterday.

Timber Movement.

Mr. J. M. Irwin has sent forward from Lakefield to Quebec by all rail communication eight hundred and fifty picas of square timber during the past week. This is the first time the all rail route from here has been utilized by lumbermen for the transportation of square timber. This mode of transport has the advantages of being quicker, less risky, and the insurance on the stock is less. Mr. Irwin will send more square timber by the same route.