



THE difficulty of clearly estimating the possible cut that may come from a forest of standing timber has been a subject of frequent comment among lumbermen. It is true that woodmen have developed the faculty of calculation in this respect in a very high degree, but their work can hardly yet take a position among the exact sciences. In illustration of this fact cases are constantly coming before us showing how wide of the mark the cleverest experts will sometimes be. In connection with the several lumber sales that have taken place in our own province within the past year or two, we have known timber-lookers to have gone forth to spy out the land, and reported certain cuts to be worth certain figures. Others, believed to be equally shrewd and knowing, have gone over the same ground and fixed up a widely different estimate of the supposed quantity of standing timber. Added to these instances, I learned a little time ago of a Michigan case that goes to confirm all that has been said of the uncertainty of these estimates. Louis Sands, of that state, bought last summer a piece of pine land, supposed to contain on an estimate 13,000,000 feet, for which he paid \$74,000. It is now conceded that this tract will cut 16,000,000 feet, and yet others who looked over the ground with a view to purchasing could not find over 6,000,000, much less 13,000,000 feet. Those who are disposed to laugh at the frequent estimates that we get of the quantity of standing timber in the leading pine provinces and states can point with a good deal of force to such instances as I have here cited, and query, What do you know about it?

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When in the north country a few days ago I learned that Howry & Sons, the large Michigan lumbermen, who are carrying on extensive operations in the Georgian Bay territory, had purchased the old S. G. Smith mill, at Fensholt Falls, and will cut their logs, at least a part of them, on the Canadian side this summer. This mill has been idle for six or seven years. It will be good news to the people of the north to learn that the Howrys are to become Canadian operators. Talking of Howry & Sons operations in the woods this winter my informant remarked that these had been conducted on a wide scale. There is lots of "go" in this concern, said he, and whilst the figure they paid for their limits was a large one, they are evidently intent in getting all they can out of them.

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A few days ago I dropped into the office of Mr. F. Tennant, and in answer to the enquiry, how were the cedar shingles moving? was told that, though early in the season, he had placed a large quantity of them in the province, especially in Western Ontario. It is Mr. Tennant's opinion that the red cedar shingles are affecting the sale of the better quality of white pine shingles. For the lower grades of white pine shingles there is a good demand. Whilst there is no remarkable rush of business in lumber generally throughout the province, Mr. Tennant's experience is that there is a very satisfactory revival of trade. Last month proved with him one of the largest months of business for a considerable period, and the first week of April has opened up very auspiciously. It is remarkable, said Mr. Tennant, how well prices for lumber are keeping up. They do not range just as high as this time last year, but there was then a special boom on; the disposition now is to hold the firm to good figures. Trade in the city is altogether slow. In fact, there is no building going on this summer worth speaking of.

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Few names are better known in lumber circles in the Dominion, and especially in the east, than that of James F. Burns, of the maritime provinces. Readers of THE LUMBERMAN will remember that nearly three years ago a portrait with character sketch of Mr.

Burns, was published in these columns. He was then representative in the House of Commons for a leading constituency down by the sea. Within the past year his name has been quite prominently mentioned in connection with the Lieutenant Governorship of New Brunswick. He is a big enough man for any of these places, and does justice to any work that he undertakes. Lately Mr. Burns spent some time in England in the interest of his large lumber operations, and has been successful in selling the whole of his winter's cut at 75 cents a thousand over last year's rate. The future of lumber in the maritime provinces is, in his judgment, better than it has been for years. Deals will be worth \$9 a thousand in St. John in the coming summer, and may even go higher than this. Mr. Burns says the lumber cut of Restigouche, Gloucester and Northumberland counties, as well as other counties in the province, has not been nearly so large as last year, and this reduction in stocks will effect prices favorably.

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Particularly with Michigan lumbermen the business relationship between them and many operators in our own country is so close, that I am constantly on the look-out for any item of news that can be picked up regarding the plans and intentions of our lumber friends in Michigan. Remarking on this point, I am reminded of a comment made by Mr. Bray, of the Parkin Lumber Co., of whom I have something to say elsewhere. We were talking about the changes in methods of logging in the present day contrasted with those of ten and fifteen years ago, when Mr. Bray was active in the woods. He spoke of the magnificent scale on which some of the Michigan lumbermen conducted operations. "Take Howry & Sons," said he, "they are thorough going Americans, and they do things up fine in the woods. Lots of money is spent in the making of fine roads, the elaborating of shanty methods, etc." But to matters concerning lumber in Michigan, Mr. A. Comstock, an extensive and wealthy lumberman of Alpena, has been predicting a large shortage in the annual lumber crop this year that will be occasioned by the sudden thaw which set in in the open woods early in March. "It came to us all in a minute," said he, "and we were perfectly helpless. There had been snow enough for our operations previously, but within a few hours after the thaw set in everything was slush and we were tied up so that we could not move a log. It will cause a shortage of at least 100,000,000 feet in the lower and about 150,000,000 feet in the upper peninsula. In the districts which are immediately tributary to Michigan, including Wisconsin and the Canadian border, the shortage in the lumber crop will foot up at least 500,000,000." All this means a largely reduced output of lumber in Michigan this year. Canada will be drawn on for a good supply of logs. Mr. Otis Shepard, president of the Shepard & Morse Lumber Co., of Ottawa and Boston, and vice-president of the Saginaw Lumber and Salt Co., has said of trade in Canada that he found prices in both grades and mill run firm and that the prospects for a good trade in the East looked bright.

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Mr. Thomas Meaney, manager for Robt. Thompson & Co., who have also an office at Hamilton, does not anticipate any large amount of building in either cities this summer. "In fact," he says, "there is hardly anything projected as yet. Throughout the province, however, there is a fair measure of activity and a good deal of lumber going out." He tells me what others in the trade remark, that prices are holding up well. This applies more particularly to dressing grades and below. The United States market is equally dull for the higher class of lumber. The drawback there is the uncertainty regarding the fate of the Wilson bill. It certainly drags its way slowly along and Mr. Meaney tells me that not a few United States lumbermen are under the impression that at the last it will be defeated. This, he, of course, would consider an injury to the Canadian lumber trade. Talking particularly of building operations in Toronto, said Mr. Meaney, "this city will never again see another building boom." I remarked that this was a strong statement, the word never was a very long one. "It is so, however," he repeated, "the supply men and the labor men have been successful in securing legisla-

tion from the Ontario government that will prevent men from entering into that reckless class of speculative building that gave, at the time, so much life to the building boom here, and that proved, as well, perhaps, the strongest feature in bursting that boom. Any man who could handle a saw and hammer and who might be worth his \$1.50 or \$2.00 a day, went extensively into building. These men possessed no capital, but the boom was on and the loan societies were prepared to advance them large sums of money. Only one result could follow from the extravagance of these business methods and the lumbermen and other supply men came in for the heaviest losses. The working men by virtue of their lien law had some protection. The loan society gave these light-weight contractors the money and they seldom paid the supply men, if they could manage otherwise. Under the new act of Mr. Mowat the workmen and the supply men will have a primary claim on the building and the loan societies are expected to satisfy themselves when they advance money that these claims have been met, if not, they will have the pleasure of doubling up on their payments by paying over again."

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Spending a few hours in the progressive town of Lindsay, a few days ago, I took the opportunity to visit the mills of the Parkin Lumber Co. who are extensive manufacturers of shingles. They give their entire effort, in fact, to the manufacture of shingles. The business was originally conducted by S. G. Parkin & Sons, and within the past year has taken the shape of a limited liability company. The Parkins, outside of being shareholders, are not actively engaged in lumbering, being contractors for the supplying of electric power to the town of Lindsay. Mr. A. C. Dutton, of Springfield, Mass., is president of the company, and Mr. James Bray, sec-treasurer, and active business manager. The mill is a new one and very perfectly equipped, a description of it appearing in these columns some months ago. I had the pleasure of chatting with Mr. Bray about lumber affairs. He is a man who knows lumbering from A to Z, there not being a department of the business, perhaps, he has not at one time or another engaged in. "For a long time," he said, "I spent every winter in the woods, and know, I guess, as much about logging as the next man, and of its pleasantries, as well as vicissitudes. For some time I was shanty clerk and obtained experience in a business way in that position. Speaking of the drives, as the time comes near for that work, I have done my share of that thing. To-day my friends have installed me as manager of this business, which is one of no small size. We started the mill running on the 2nd of April and will continue it to its fullest capacity until the end of the season. I anticipate a good summer's trade." Responding to my enquiry whether the introduction of the red cedar shingles of British Columbia would interfere with the trade of white pine shingles in Ontario, Mr. Bray said: "I do not fear competition from this source. We manufacture less or more cedar shingles here, and at present the mill is working on this class of goods from cedar obtained from the swamps in this locality. I do not disparage the red cedar shingle. It's a splendid shingle and I only wish we had their wood here, but I anticipate, in any case, they must always be handicapped by the high rates of freights." I asked Mr. Bray, if he thought there was anything in the contention of white pine men, that it would pay better to work up the best logs into lumber rather than shingles. He said: "We do not consider any white pine too good for shingles, and manufacture ours out of the very best pine we can procure. The old way was to use only the culls for shingles, but this was a great mistake." Coming back again to the question of drives, Mr. Bray, looking out of his office window, giving ear to the whistling and howling of the wind, for I tell you when the wind does blow, there is lots of scope for it in that north country, he said, "I do not like the looks of the weather. A fortnight ago I despatched a company of men to get started with the drives and things looked favorable, but just now the weather is against us. However, I do not anticipate any serious delay. So far as this section of the country is concerned, I think the drives are going to come along all right. So soon as the ice breaks up we will have abundance of water."