

weekly he represented was subsidized by the Government. It is not a little curious that British exporters should be fooled as they have been by this man; but it is also true that his mendacity has greatly injured the reputation of Canadians in Britain.



THE LUMBER TRADE.

The lumber market in Ontario is distinctly firmer and it is by no means improbable that prices will take an upward turn before long. Even now, though so far no actual stated quotations have been changed, the prices realized show fractional advances, especially in culls. The causes for this state of things are not far to seek. Primarily, it is due to the improved state of business in the United States, and the better demand for building and other purposes. For a long time, purchasers there have been holding back, but the time has come when they can do so no longer. Another thing which counts is that it has now become a realized fact that the cut of pine lumber in Ontario will not be more than 60 per cent. of that of last year. In Wisconsin, and other of the northern lumber States, too, the production is growing less each year through natural causes, and though the place of white pine can be taken to a certain extent by other woods, such as southern pine and so forth, yet these facts all serve to accentuate the growing firmness of the market.

In British Columbia, the lumber, and especially the shingle, trade is still more or less demoralized. Mill men are said to be selling their product at cost so as to meet the growing and combined competition from across the line. Prices are said to be lower than ever before known. The recent conflagrations throughout the coast timber belt are likely to have serious effects on the lumber trade. Estimates of the damage done by fires vary from one billion to two billion feet. This would more than pay for a vastly increased system of protection on the part of the Government.

In the Maritime Provinces the season's trade in lumber, so far as it has gone, may be described as poor, prices in the British market having been anything but profitable. There are prospects, however, of an improvement setting in shortly in this respect. As to the probable cut in the coming season opinions differ, but they seem to point to a reduction in New Brunswick of about one-third from the average, and in Nova Scotia of almost one-half. All said, therefore, while the present position of the industry is not very brilliantly promising, there are elements of hope.



FIRE INSURANCE IN CANADA.

To give, in a page, the essence of what occupies some twenty pages of the report of the Canadian Superintendent of Insurance for the year 1903, is no slight task. But the staff of this journal is accustomed to condensation, as our readers have found, and we shall proceed in the attempt.

Taking the premium receipts of all licensed fire insurance companies doing business in the Dominion as a measure of their transactions, it will be seen that fire insurance in Canada has doubled in fourteen years, for the premiums of 1903 were \$11,384,762,

where those of 1889 were but \$5,588,016. And the losses are doubled also. The losses paid were \$5,870,716 in 1903, while they were \$2,876,211 in 1889, showing a merely fractional difference in ratio of loss; for where in 1889 the losses were 51.47 of the premiums, in 1903 they amounted to 51.57 per cent. But between these two periods the variation in percentage of loss was great, going, for example, up to 74.37 in 1893 and 71.92 in 1895 and down to 58.98 in 1898; up again to 93.31 in 1900—a disastrous year—and then down to 39.26 in 1902, which last was the lowest on record.

Comparing last year with its immediate predecessor, the cash received for premiums in the former was, as we have said, \$11,384,762 and the amount paid for losses \$5,870,716; while in the latter premium receipts were \$10,577,084 and losses paid \$4,152,289. Thus, while the premiums of 1903 were less than one per cent. greater, the losses by fire were 29¼ per cent. greater. How the losses were distributed among classes of companies this table will show:

| Group. | Premiums. | Losses. | Per cent. of loss. | Same for 1902. |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Canadian companies | \$ 2,282,498 | \$1,209,678 | 53.00 | 42.09 |
| British companies | 7,334,432 | 3,803,764 | 51.86 | 39.22 |
| American companies | 1,767,832 | 857,274 | 48.49 | 35.73 |
| Total or average | \$11,384,762 | \$5,870,716 | 51.57 | 39.26 |

The proportion of loss was thus greatest among the Canadian companies and least among the American, leaving the British at 51.86 per cent., which is slightly above the average of the three. A table on page ten of the advance report shows the average rate of premium charged per cent. of risks written to have been the same in the case of both the Canadian and American companies, namely, 1.53, while the American companies' rate was slightly lower, at 1.49, the average of the whole thirty-six companies—nine Canadian, nineteen British, eight American, was 1.50 per cent. The main items in the case of the three groups of companies was as under:

| | Gross risks written 1903. | Gross premiums 1903. | Rate per cent. of risk. |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Canadian companies.. | \$126,909,590 | \$ 3,316,922 | 1.53 |
| British companies.... | 580,718,653 | 8,635,620 | 1.49 |
| American companies. | 136,050,121 | 2,085,639 | 1.53 |
| Total | \$933,274,764 | \$14,038,181 | 1.50 |

| | Net premiums. | Paid for losses. | Ratio loss to premium. |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Canadian companies.. | \$ 2,282,497 | \$1,209,678 | 53.00 |
| British companies.... | 7,334,432 | 3,803,762 | 51.86 |
| American companies.. | 1,767,831 | 857,275 | 48.49 |
| Total | \$11,384,760 | \$5,870,715 | 51.57 |

The gross amount of policies, new and renewed, taken during the year by fire companies was \$933,274,764, which is greater by \$41,224,878 than the amount taken in 1902. The premiums charged thereon amounted in 1903 to \$14,038,181.55, being \$950,930.95 greater than the amount charged the previous