

WALL PAPER AND DECORATIONS.

BIG PROFITS IN CANADIAN MAPLE WOOD.

IN Canada we have the best hard maple in the world. The farmer in many districts spends part of his winter cutting it and selling it for firewood. He is quite happy if he realizes \$1 to \$3, or perhaps \$4, a cord. This is a sad waste of one of our greatest natural treasures. Much of it can be more profitably used in other ways.

In the manufacture of wall paper, an industry constantly growing here and abroad, hundreds of thousands of rollers are used for printing the various patterns. For every color in a pattern there is a separate roller. In a single pattern there will be from four to ten or twelve rollers. The average is about seven. These rollers are generally used but one season, and as there are thousands of different patterns it is easily seen what a large number are used each year in the States and Europe as well as in Canada.

These rollers are made of the very best hard maple, the very kind that Canada produces better than any other country in the world. In the rough they are 19½ or 23½ inches long. The end is 5 or 6 inches square, according to the size of roller required. Only the most perfect wood can be used. It is cut into these sizes. The ends are painted to prevent the wood drying faster with the grain than across it. It is then allowed to stand for three or four years. By this time it is thoroughly seasoned. This is all the labor put upon it.

Now glance at the prices. Good maple in this form, after being properly seasoned, brings 50 to 75c. per rough block. In a cord it is figured there would be about 440 blocks, counting them 20 inches long. At 50c. this is over \$220 per cord, considerably better than \$1 or \$4 a cord, which they got for firewood.

Of course, there is considerable expense. But is there not ample return for the outlay? The blocks must be sawn the proper size. They must be stored for four years, during which time there is no return for the money invested. Many of the blocks will crack in the seasoning process. Suppose only one cord in five is perfect. Over-estimate all these expenses and there is still an enormous profit. Why should the Canada farmer and woodsmen not have the benefit of that profit?

Nor should we stop here. The blocks turned ready for the wall paper manufacturers bring still higher prices. A hole is bored lengthways through the block. At each end a small metal ring is fitted. The block is then turned to a circumference of 12, 15, or 21 inches. In this state they will bring on

an average \$1 per roller on the New York market. These figures are not conjecture, but are prices actually paid within the last year and a half.

The United States is alive to the value of this trade. A little over a year ago, I saw at New York Harbor over 5,000 of these blocks for the British market. The demand is there, and it is Canada's place to supply it. We have the best wood for the purpose that can be found anywhere. Already I know of two men in Canada who have done something in this line. One of them has received three large orders from England at 30c. per block, green. Of course, they keep it quiet. We know of one town in Ontario which has been shipping for some years, but we doubt if anyone but the shipper knows for what purpose the blocks are used or the profit there is in them.

All that is wanted then is some person properly situated to take the matter up—to get in touch with the foreign manufacturers. This is in Sir Richard Cartwright's department. Considerable push is necessary at first. When once the trade is started, the superior quality of our maple will do the rest. If this matter receives the attention which it merits, it would represent in our exports to the United Kingdom and the United States a very respectable figure, and prove a valuable income to many of our farmers, who are now literally putting money in the fire.

A considerable quantity of maple blocks are similarly treated each year for use in mangles. These must be of first-class wood, but are not necessarily as perfect as the wall paper rollers.

Everyone who reads this must not begin the manufacture of printing rollers. The market would soon be oversupplied. In localities where an excellent quality of maple is plentiful, it is reasonable to expect a very much greater profit by handling the wood in this way than by selling it as firewood.

THE TARIFF AND WALL PAPER

The tariff commission has not heard from the Canadian wall paper factories yet, though many other industries have presented their case. Canadian wall paper has done very well in the home market in recent years, and the imports from abroad have diminished, as our own factories met every demand for medium and cheap grades. In the finer lines the present duties do not keep out foreign makes, and our factories have to compete with outside. The competition has kept prices down, and the present scale of prices allows of the poorest home being

finished with tasteful paper. This argument of cheapness applies as well to the lower grade as to expensive papers. No large fortunes have been made in manufacturing wall paper in this country, and the question, therefore, before the tariff framers will be largely one of expediency and fact.

If on enquiry the consumer is not found to be paying more than he should, and the value to the country in wages paid, material used, etc., warrants a continuance of the duty, it will doubtless be maintained. Wall paper factories, besides the amount expended in wages. Canadian material, etc., also pay out a large sum in freights. Their raw material is heavier, or as heavy, as the finished product, and the freight rates on paper, and on colors, which often come in liquid state, mean a good deal of business to the railways.

There are dealers who would favor a cutting down of the present duty, because they are free-traders. Their position is consistent, and their opinion entitled to respect. It is understood, however, that the present Government intend next year to deal with the tariff rather as a business matter than an issue between free trade and protection. They want to get as much revenue as possible without crippling the domestic industries. Later on, perhaps, they may be inclined to go further, but at present, so their friends say, it is desirable to be moderate.

No change is, therefore, anticipated, as far as we can learn, in the wall paper duty. The rate at present is 35 per cent. on brown or white blanks, printed on plain ungrounded paper, in 8-yard rolls, and 1½c. per roll and 25 per cent. on other imported lines. The duty paid in 1895 was over \$50,000.

NEW MACHINERY IN MESSRS. STAUNTON & CO.'S FACTORY.

An entire change in the system of rolling the paper has just been made at the wall paper factory of M. Staunton & Co., Toronto. The rolling of wall paper, owing to its fragile nature, has always been recognized as a difficult operation, and anything that reduces the danger of breaks or other small injuries to a minimum is a decided improvement. The old system took the paper direct from the racks to the machines which made it up into small rolls. This necessitated rolling at a high rate of speed, and in spite of great care it was sometimes impossible to prevent damage to the paper. In order to do away with this difficulty, the Messrs. Staunton have gone in for an entire change, and have fitted up their factory with the new patent double-winding system comprising the latest improved machinery for the purpose. By the new process the paper is taken from the drying racks and carefully wound into large bundles by the winding