

A MICHIGAN lumberman is credited with saying that the action of the Dominion government on the export duty question would tend to increase stumpage on the American side. Mill men short of timber and having extensive plants on their hands would be forced to pay more for timber when deprived of Canada as a source of supply, and the stumpage owner would not be compelled to lie awake nights to size up the situation. He regarded the increase of duty on logs in the rough as a retaliatory act, but inasmuch as the American people had declared for a high protective tariff, it was but natural that the Canadians should protect their own pine trees with both hands and feet if necessary. And they seem inclined to.

"THE question arises, If Canada does not want America to have Canadian logs except at an excessive export duty, why should America want Canadian lumber at an import duty that will bring it in direct competition with the American product? America is in great shape to supply all the lumber she needs."—*N. W. Lumberman*. Our contemporary should be aware by this time that the policy of the Dominion Government is not to encourage American enterprise, but to foster the industries of our own country. We have the advantage in this country over the Americans in the way of timber, and we want to make the most out of our opportunities. To do this our timber has to be manufactured at home, and, our contemporary's assertion to the contrary notwithstanding, we feel satisfied that the demand for the United States will not only continue but increase every year. Being in such a happy state of mind Canadian lumbermen can afford to rest their souls in patience.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRADE.

Those who are not content to take things as they find them at the moment, but like to look forward in order to influence the course of events if possible, or at least to be prepared for them, often give serious thought to the future of the lumber trade in this country. Evidently the present style of operating cannot continue indefinitely in the older Provinces. The capability of our forests to stand the drain now going on cannot last for ever and in the absence of authoritative information some men are inclined to place the exhaustion they foretell at a very early date. In Ontario the lumbermen are now seeking their timber further back till it is difficult to get the logs to the mills the same season. The limits yet to be put on the market are inconsiderable by comparison, and upon those already in private hands great inroads have been made in most cases. In the province of Quebec the situation is very similar, and the same may be said of the Maritime Provinces which at all events show no such heavy output of pine. In Manitoba and the Territories the forests have never been more than sufficient for local requirements and cannot last very long. It is very different when we cross the Rockies for the forests of British Columbia are so extensive and heavily timbered that in ordinary parlance they may well be called inexhaustible.

With the forests of old Canada being thus rapidly depleted it is very natural that some persons, and lumbermen among them, should be impressed with the wisdom of a Conservative policy for the future. There is not only the question of a future scarcity of lumber in this country, a fear that has not much restraining influence upon the present generation, but as the timber grows scarcer it becomes more valuable, and this rising of values will go on with continually accelerated speed. Evidently then it will be well for those possessing property of this kind to refrain from forcing their lumber into the market obtaining only a bare profit, as has sometimes been the case. Those who can afford to hold back will probably realize more by so doing whether they dispose of the limit or the lumber. The great objection to thus holding the forests is the risk of fire, and in some cases where the danger is very great and is increasing this motive will undoubtedly force an early cut. In other cases the prospective increase of value should want a greater expenditure on protection against fire.

It must be taken into consideration in estimating the duration of our forests that our neighbors, at least in the northern States, have been going ahead even more rapidly than ourselves in forest depletion. In a recent petition to Congress the Michigan and Wisconsin mill owners speak plainly of no longer having logs to supply their mills. Even without this confession the fact however would be obvious from the extensive purchases that they have been making of Ontario limits, the great preparations they were making for transporting logs, and their intense disgust at having their plans frustrated by the recent increase of the export duty.

This brings us to the consideration of the markets for lumber in the future. The mill owners of the northern States are making strenuous efforts to induce the Washington authorities to "retaliate" for the increased Canadian export duty of logs by raising the import duty on lumber. If, however, half they say is true about their being driven by scarcity to obtain our logs, there seems little likelihood that the United States consumers would long submit to duties which in that case they would have to pay. Even if the duty were increased there would soon be an overwhelming agitation for the reduction again. But even if the higher duty were maintained it would not be so formidable as it would have been a few years ago. Other markets are increasing in importance. Fresh efforts are being made to extend some of these such as the West Indies and South America. When we see that these are being largely supplied by the United States there is room for a shrewd suspicion if not a certain, that the lumber really comes from Canadian forest and that we might as well supply these customers directly instead of through a middleman. Another feature of this trade is that the demand is chiefly for a more highly finished article than mere rough lumber, and the further profit of the additional manufacturing would be secured. Then again the home market is assuming a greater relative importance. As the country progresses the local demand steadily increases. Already some of our lumbermen are availing themselves of this increased home consumption and are selling in this country as much of their cut as possible. Even one firm which exports largely, having its mill in an old settled agricultural district, has a yearly sale of all its culls and inferior lumber which sells at very satisfactory prices to the neighboring farmers and to small jobbers. Thus the cost of carrying an inferior article long distances is avoided, and the superior grades being so closely selected bring an exceptionally good price with rapid sale. In other mills or subsidiary factories the rough lumber is being more highly manufactured, and everything that can be used is turned to some account in both these ways adding greatly to the profits from a given number of logs. One firm especially have little or no mill waste, everything, even to the sawdust, being utilized and much of the cut being used as raw material for further manufacture.

Another feature of the trade of the future is the greater attention that is being paid now, and will be even more in coming years, to other kinds of timber as pine forests diminish. We have many excellent woods in larger quantity that may well be used for many purposes to save our pine, besides other uses for which they are specially adapted.

There can be little doubt that in the trade of the future there will not be the same haste as in the past to cut down a pine tree, saw it into lumber and rush it off to a foreign market thus to be sold for little more than the wages expended in the production. Greater caution in cutting, more regard for conserving the forests, a search for the most remunerative markets, closer utilization of the raw material, and manufacture carried to a more advanced stage, will be more and more the order of the day.

THE EUROPEAN TIMBER SUPPLY.

The *Timber Trades Journal* under date, December 29th, last, says: "As this is the last opportunity we shall have of noticing the distribution of our timber imports this year, it may be well to point out the contrasts they furnish and the peculiarities by which they are distinguished, as these form a sort of index to the direc-

tion the trade is likely to take when the new season commences. London, which for awhile appeared disinclined to be convinced that trade was really improving, and imported during the first half of the year with a sparing hand, seemed all at once to rouse itself to the occasion and to enter the arena of competition for the stock of timber goods abroad like a giant refreshed with wine, and of the excess of importation this year over the last (exceeding 500,000 loads) London has absorbed since June 193,649 loads, or nearly two-fifths of the whole surplus throughout the three kingdoms. Liverpool which has been doing a good trade, and importing freely all the season, is 77,000 loads in excess; Hull, also great in capital and enterprise, and pushing its trade in all directions, is but 18,000 loads over its last year's figures to 30th November, and Cardiff, also doing an immense business in coal, metals, and timber, has a surplus import of the latter represented by about 66,500 loads, while Newcastle, the most ancient and celebrated of all our coal and shipbuilding ports, one of the first to feel the benefit of the revival of shipbuilding, and now in full trade, has not ventured any greater depth into the wave of timber importation than an extra sale of about 2,000 loads would equalise.

Thus the port of London has imported more largely in excess, after being almost regarded as out of the running, than the four next great centres of trade on the English coast, east and west, by no less than 80,000 loads.

We must not, however, overlook the spirited efforts of Grimsby and Hartlepool to push themselves into the front rank of our timber emporiums, each of them having imported about 65,000 loads more than they did to same date last year, with no small quantity yet under charter to these ports and some of the ships overdue.

With regard to the London market it is difficult to say what has been fairly imported and what has come forward for sale to take the chance of the saleroom. It does not follow that ships consigned to our leading brokers contain cargoes ordered by them. Their business is to accept consignments of timber ships and to do the best they can for the shippers according to instructions, whether it be to hold the goods for a raise or throw them on the market at once for what they will fetch, and where the option is left to their own discretion they may be relied on to keep the shipper's interest in view, which is, in fact, coincident with their own.

It may even happen that they have been consulted as to the cargo to be shipped beforehand, and they have advised a postponement of the shipment. Nevertheless they deal with it, if consigned to them, just the same, though not by any means responsible for its coming forward. But in comparatively small provincial centres of the trade this system is not likely to be adopted to any considerable extent, and we may, therefore, from the figures before us, set down the striking enlargement of our importation to an equally expanding demand, or to the belief of the importers of these excesses that such a demand is impending.

It is remarkable too that in the excess of importation of timber goods London and Liverpool have absorbed more than all the other ports of England, Scotland, and Ireland together, or as thus:—

Excess of London over last year.	193,649 lds.
Ditto Liverpool	77,004 "
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	270,653 "

which being deducted from the difference on the whole excess up to the end of November leaves 202,565 loads for the excess in all the other ports of the three kingdoms.

The Scotch ports also show for the most part a considerable increase up to date on what they did last year, and Leith appears equally remarkable for what it did in this way. In October she had imported 71,530 loads, to which if we add what has come forward since, viz.: 11,809, we have to credit that great fishing town with 83,339 loads, against 71,250 loads at a corresponding date last year. We are sorry to see that the two great Irish ports, Dublin and Belfast, are both behind their last year's importation, though the last named still keeps the lead of the metropolitan city in its timber supply.

We took occasion in the summer to congratulate the trade in Ireland on its evident and general revival, and we are glad to see that, with the two rather remarkable exceptions mentioned, the other chief centres of importation, Cork, Derry, Sligo, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford, are all doing a larger business than they did in 1887. So that in fact, if no untoward event interrupts the course of trade, no political or financial crisis, we may look forward to a steady recovery of all the ocean trade we lost between the years 1884 and 1886, and a time when every man who devotes himself steadily to the pursuit he follows may look for a good return for the diligence he bestows on it, and especially the timber trade, which is full of hope engendered by its present surroundings.