

MICHIGAN LETTER.

Decline of Water Shipments—Trade Prospective and Retrospective—Decadence of Michigan Forests. A Dam at Niagara Falls.

[Regular correspondence CANADA LUMBERMAN.]

THE shipments of lumber by water from Saginaw river ports during the season have been the smallest for many years, and are in the line of a gradual decline, which must ultimately have a serious effect on the water-carrying trade of the State. The following figures exhibit the shipments for the season to Nov. 1 from the entire Saginaw river for five years and illustrate the fact just stated.

	Lumber.	Shingles.	Lath.
1887.....	486,081,627	74,497,000	25,128,000
1888.....	436,326,000	75,802,000	29,474,000
1889.....	376,880,000	87,705,000	18,554,000
1890.....	382,162,000	70,547,000	11,397,000
1891.....	365,228,000	72,327,000	13,099,000

It is to be remembered, in this connection, that while the shipments by water are steadily decreasing, the railroads are each year capturing a larger lumber business.

The season's trade is well over. Lumbermen are viewing the work now both retrospectively and prospectively.

Freight rates to Buffalo and Tonawanda have been advanced, and I hear of two firms who have sent instructions to forward no more of their lumber until next spring.

Some failures, as you know, have occurred this year, and Michigan lumbermen have not altogether escaped their effects. The Hugard failure struck a number of Bay City men, and the P. A. Scribner troubles of the present month have roped in quite a number from Bay City. This firm did business at Tonawanda and the Michigan men, who suffer are: Pitts & Grange, \$17,000; Eddy Bros., \$5,500; Eddy, Avery & Eddy, \$2,800; S. G. M. Gates, \$1,600; Thomas Madden, \$4,500.

LUMBER CONDITIONS.

Dealers generally, express themselves as satisfied with the trade that has been done, despite occasional set-backs, some of which I have hinted at in this and previous letters. A prominent manufacturer here, who has been in the business in Muskegon for twenty-five years is authority for the statement that with the exception of one or two "boom" years the season of 1890-1891, has been the best, all things considered, within his memory. He bases this statement upon the fact that from the very beginning, starting with lumbering operations last winter, every condition has been favorable to the logging, driving and manufacturing of pine with a minimum expense and without losses or casualties worthy of note.

The question of the decadence of the lumber industry in a State possessed of the lumber importance of Michigan is always a leading question and gives rise to much in the way of conjecture and often little that has no other quality to recommend it. In 1867, a writer, who was supposed to have good knowledge of the question discussed, estimated the total standing pine in the Saginaw and Au Sable districts at 5,241,600,000 feet, which, at 300,000,000 feet yearly cut would be exhausted in 17 years. Well, the seventeen years are a good many years over run, and still a rather lively cut goes on. Not in any one year since that date has the production fallen below 451,000,000 in any season. At the same time there are individual parts of the State where the timber is becoming decidedly scarce. A lumberman, who recently returned from a trip to Muskegon River, where he has been looking over the lumbering prospects for the coming season, is reported as saying: "that where once the woods resounded with the crash of the axe there is now a dreary waste of barren plains, swamps and straggling trees. The camps on the Muskegon River to be operated this winter he says can be counted upon the fingers of the two hands. In the Higgins and Houghton Lake district, Matthew Wilson is about the only one who has any standing pine and but a handful, perhaps not to exceed 15,000,000 feet, which he will throw into the lake this winter. The other belts southward, along the stream and its branches, are being operated, the most of them by logging railroads and it is seldom that the primitive

methods of Michigan lumbering are seen. The present will wind up all but about half a dozen lumbering tracts tributary to this city and next season the Booming Company do not anticipate, nor have they counted on receiving more than 250,000,000 feet for the drive, and this, President Hill thinks may possibly be reduced about 50,000,000 feet. A quantity of logs will be brought to the city direct by rail and in some instances rafts will be made on Lake Michigan."

To remedy in part, at least, the trouble caused this season in Saginaw river and lake ports, the suggestion has been made to build a dam at Niagara Falls. Capt. Marshall, the government engineer in Chicago, however, says the only practicable way to get more water in the lake channels is to dig deeper. Should dams be built he says that in two or three years the water in the great lakes will be so high that people will be clamoring against that as they are now against low water.

PICA.

SAGINAW, MICH., Nov. 25, 1891.

OTTAWA LETTER.

Close of the Season—A Short Cut—Large Increase in Bush work—5,000 Men in the Woods—A Lumberman for the Cabinet—Lumbermen in Court—Where the Profits come in—Timber Limit Purchases—Piece Stuff.

[Regular correspondence CANADA LUMBERMAN.]

SO far as mill operations are concerned we have reached the end of the season. If every saw in every mill hereabouts has not stopped buzzing each is near enough the last kick to exhibit little life in the effort. The season in some respects at least has not been over satisfactory. I expect in a future letter to give you figures telling with proper exactness the outcome of the season's trade. I cannot do this to-day, but with what information is in my possession there is no risk in saying that the cut will be much behind last year. J. R. Booth has said this of the cut of his mill, and Pierce & Co. have only cut nine million feet against fifty million last year, their mill at the Chaudiere having been closed down throughout the season.

This short cut, however, is not an unmixed evil. It has left our piling grounds well cleaned out of nearly every kind of lumber. Prices have as a consequence stiffened, and the winter in the woods will be one of the busiest lumbermen have experienced for years.

Five thousand men will spend the winter in the bush this year—I am speaking only of operations of Ottawa lumbermen—as compared with three thousand last year. Road cutters are getting \$12 to \$16 a month (and their keep of course), general hands \$16 to \$20, log cutters \$20 to \$22, scorers \$26, liners \$30, hewers \$35 to \$40, cooks \$30 to \$35. There is an increase of about \$4.00 a month all round. The estimates of the men employed in most of the shanties this winter are given as follows:

Bronson's & Westman, 990; Buell, Orr & Hurdman, 600; Hawkesbury Lumber Co., 400; McLaren & Edwards, 300; Ross Bros., 400; Canada Lumber Co., 200 Edward Moore, (square timber) 100; Emery Lumber Co., 300; Rochester Bros., 100; R. H. Klock's, 150; Booth's 200; Perley & Pattee's, 500. Locally this means a good deal for Ottawa and Hull. Taking an estimate of 5,000 men in the woods, with an average of \$20 a month will be an expenditure for wages alone, by the lumbermen of about \$100,000 per month, or \$500,000 for the season. The increase in pay over last year will be between \$80,000 and \$100,000.

HON. PETER WHITE FOR CABINET MINISTER.

The question of lumber representation in the Cabinet is being considered by prominent lumbermen in this section. A few days ago a deputation consisting of J. R. Booth, G. H. Perley, Hiram Robinson and Berkley Powell had an interview with Premier Abbott with this object in view, strongly urging the claims of Hon. Peter White, now Speaker of the House of Commons, to a position in the Cabinet. Mr White was for years engaged in lumbering and as a lumberman likely knows as much of lumber affairs as the next man. He has been a member of Parliament for some years, representing the north riding of the County of Renfrew. Neither friend or foe will dispute his ability to hold a seat in the

Dominion Cabinet, and altogether aside from the present movement his name has frequently been mentioned when the question of Cabinet making has been to the fore, as it has very much been, since the death of Sir John A. Macdonald. Whether he should have a place there as the representative of any particular trade interests is a question on which people will divide opinions. Abundance of precedents exist in Canadian Parliamentary practice to support the custom, for class interests hold powerful sway in our politics. Goldwin Smith tells us that this is the rule of merit in Cabinet making, one man being chosen because he is prominent in Orange circles, another for the reason that he is a good Roman Catholic, and a third to represent the prohibition movement, and so on. Perhaps so, but I shall not tread further on the dangerous field of politics.

TWO IMPORTANT LUMBER SUITS.

The suit in connection with the David Moore estate, to which you made some reference in your news columns last month has since been settled, Edward Moore agreeing to pay each of the other heirs, six in number, \$7,500, which offer was accepted. When David Moore, the father died, he was one of the wealthiest lumbermen in the Ottawa Valley, his estate being valued at \$700,000. His eldest son, Edward Moore, was left in charge of the estate. He managed it with business ability and success, having since paid out \$250,000 to the other heirs. Some complications arising as to the administration of the Quebec portion of the estate as well as a question about a large Ontario limit which had been left separately to Edward Moore by his father, the other heirs began the suit which has just been amicably settled. With regard to the disputed limit, the contention of the other heirs was that, although David Moore gave it to his eldest son, which they admitted, they held that this was under a misapprehension. Edward Moore, while repudiating this, nevertheless was prepared to make some concessions with them in view of the appreciation in value of the limit. The facts show where the profit in lumbering comes in. David Moore bought the limit originally for \$4,000. Edward Moore during his father's lifetime made \$46,000 out of it, and after his father's death \$30,000 more and finally sold it for \$46,000; total, \$126,000.

The action brought by G. B. Pattee, G. H. Perley and C. Berkley Powell, for damages against John McKay for obstructing and shutting off the waters of the Amable du Fond river has been dismissed with costs. The plaintiffs have an extensive timber limit on Long Lake and by means of the Amable du Fond, thence by the Mattawa, thence by the Ottawa, they convey their logs to their mills. They claim that in August last, while they had 25,000 logs in transit, the defendant made a dam on the Amable du Fond, which injured the river as a stream for floating logs by reducing its current. Plaintiffs claim \$4,000 damages, and a declaration that the said river cannot be so injured and that Mr. McKay shall have no right to dam it. The decision rendered, confirms McKay in his right to dam the Eau Claire river, not saying what the consequences may be.

TIMBER LIMIT SALE.

The timber limits of Messrs. Dougherty & Rochester and R. Gorman were sold by public auction during the month, creating considerable activity among lumbermen. Parcel No. 1. Kippewa Berth, No. 21, on White Pine river was the first offered. Bidding started at \$10,000 and went as high as \$31,400, when it was knocked down to J. C. Edwards, M.P., of Rockland. Parcel No. 2—Berth A and B on river Coulouge, area 100 square miles, was withdrawn as was also the supplies and plant for the shanty, only \$18,000 being offered. The limits of Messrs. Dougherty & Rochester sold en bloc. They comprise licences 280, 281, 283, and 284 on the Mattawa, with 21 miles frontage. Captain Murphy bidding \$57,000 at which price it was sold, the purchasers being Messrs. Thomas and William Murray, of Pembroke. A few days later these gentlemen sold the limits again to the Rathbun Company of Deseronto, at an advance on the price paid. It is stated that the Rathbuns will erect a mill between Klock's and Mattawa and thoroughly work the limits.