

VIEWS OF A MICHIGAN LUMBERMAN.

MR. ARTHUR HILL, OF SAGINAW, PRESENTS SOME STRONG ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE IMPOSITION OF A DUTY ON LUMBER.

THE Hon. Justin S. Morrill, Chairman of the Finance Committee of the United States Senate, received a pamphlet letter a fortnight ago from Mr. Arthur Hill, of Saginaw, on the question of the proposed imposition by the United States government of a duty on foreign lumber. Mr. Hill is an extensive operator in the Georgian Bay district, as well as a large holder of Canadian timber limits, and is therefore thoroughly conversant with the lumber business on both sides of the border. The letter is written from the standpoint of an American, and deals with the question "How shall we treat Canada, as an enemy or as a friend?"

At the commencement Mr. Hill protests against any change in the present wood schedule which shall directly or indirectly prevent the free entry into the United States of the white pine lumber of Canada. Referring to those who are pressing for this legislation at Washington, Mr. Hill says:

"They press for it on the ground that it will be prohibitive; so that the Mississippi producer of pitch pine may extend his markets and his profits; so that the Pennsylvania producer of hemlock may force consumers to use hemlock when they want white pine; so that the lumberman of Minnesota may send his white pine into New England, 1,200 miles away, and make the New Englander pay the added freight. At the recent lumbermen's convention at Cincinnati these long-distance lumber dealers pointed out that the railroads should aid them at Washington, as the railroads would get this added freight."

In describing the movement which culminated in this Cincinnati convention, Mr. Hill says that the chiefly the lumbermen had was the hard times and the great distress into which the lumber business had fallen, and the assertion that the cause of all this depression was the influx of free Canadian lumber, and that to prohibit Canadian lumber would cure the evil. To show that the afflictions of the United States lumbermen do not come from the invasion of his markets by Canadian lumber, Mr. Hill quotes the importations of lumber into the United States since 1889, the year before the McKinley bill reduced the duty from \$2 to \$1 per thousand, with lumber duty free since 1894, as follows:—

	Feet.	
1889.....	717,842,000	\$7,804,163
1890.....	659,703,000	7,744,954
1891.....	757,149,000	8,498,046
1892.....	663,134,000	7,539,766
1893.....	747,351,000	8,717,331
1894.....	514,461,000	6,134,204
1895.....	600,809,000	6,859,532
1896.....	786,102,000	8,504,607

The explanations given by Mr. Hill to account for the state of things complained of by the lumber manufacturers of the United States are interesting. He says: "The obvious cause of the prostration of the lumber industry is a natural falling off in consumption during three years of national business depression, which has not been met by any corresponding reduction in output. The editor of The Timberman, a most able statistician, who made one of the principal addresses before the Cincinnati convention, stated incidentally his estimate of the amount of pine, spruce, hemlock and so forth used in construction in this country in 1892 at 16,000,000,000 feet, and the amount used in 1895 at 12,000,000,000 feet. Here is a shrinkage of 4,000,000,000 feet, or 25 per cent. of the normal consumption. This is an amount substantially equal to the entire production of white pine west of Chicago, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the entire Mississippi Valley, during the year 1895, which was 4,100,000,000 feet. It is a shrinkage equal to nearly 60 per cent. of the white pine product of the entire Northwest in 1895, which was, for Wisconsin, Minnesota and Mississippi river, 4,102,000,000 feet; for Michigan, 2,923,000,000, and for Lake Erie mills and others in that region, 68,000,000 feet, equal to a total of 7,093,000,000 feet.

"In the face of this shortage in annual demand of 4,000,000,000 feet, the lumbermen gathered in Cincinnati and resolved that the way to re-establish prosperous market conditions was to put a duty of \$2 per thousand on the 700,000,000 feet of lumber which has been coming from Canada into New England and New York for these many years, whether there was a high tariff, a low tariff or no tariff against it. It has been coming because the people of that section wanted it—needed it—and even the super-

ior white pine of Michigan has been unable to supplant it in its natural markets."

Regarding the claim that it is the character of the lumber imported from Canada rather than the quantity to which objection is raised, Mr. Hill asks: "Has the importation of an average of less than 700,000,000 feet of Canadian lumber during the six years following the tariff act of 1890 been able to fix the price in the United States on an average white pine cut of nearly 8,000,000,000 feet, and an approximate cut of 8,000,000,000 feet of other merchantable timber? This question answers itself. The quality of the Canadian importation has somewhat declined since 1890, but it has not deteriorated proportionately with the product of other white pine sections, nor faster than the consumers are adapting themselves to the use of commoner grades of lumber in place of the superior grades, which are fast vanishing from our markets."

Mr. Hill then proceeds to point out the fact that Canada has sought for closer trade relations with the United States, and has increased her purchases from that country, while Canada's sales to the United States have not increased proportionately. He urges that the United States should open her markets to the products of the Canadian forests, and gives the following table as showing the percentage of imports into Canada:—

	United States.	Great Britain.	Other Countries.
1885.....	45 p.c.	40 p.c.	15 p.c.
1890.....	46 p.c.	38 p.c.	16 p.c.
1895.....	52 p.c.	30 p.c.	18 p.c.

"Take note that the gain to the United States is entirely at the expense of British trade. This trade revolution is explained in the following statement of the imports into Canada for 1895:—

	Dutiable.	Free.	Duty.
United States.....	\$26,000,000	\$29,000,000	\$7,000,000
Great Britain.....	23,000,000	8,000,000	7,000,000

"In these three lines the reason for all that has happened can be read. Canada has been measurably opening her markets to the United States and measurably closing them to England. She taxes England \$7,000,000 for bringing into her markets \$31,000,000 worth of goods, and the United States no greater sum for bringing in \$55,000,000. Canada collects, too, a higher average duty on dutiable goods received from England than on dutiable goods from this country."

Mr. Hill presents figures of the trade the United States does with Cuba, Mexico, Central America and South America, and shows that Canada was a more valuable market in the year 1895 than all these other countries put together for the products of the United States. Yet, he says, Canada is the one country which it is proposed the new tariff bill shall distinctly legislate against in the article which forms the chief import into the United States from Canada—lumber. What now, he asks, would be the trade situation as between the two countries if lumber was taken off the United States free list and put into the dutiable list? and gives the answer as follows: "The United States received from Canada in 1895 \$36,000,000 worth of goods, of which \$15,000,000 worth were dutiable and \$21,000,000 free of duty. Put a tariff now on rough lumber and it will transfer \$8,000,000 from the free list to the dutiable, reducing the free list to \$13,000,000, and this would be the trade situation: Canada buying \$55,000,000 worth from the United States, admitting free \$29,000,000; and the United States buying \$36,000,000 worth from Canada, admitting free only \$13,000,000."

The cost of producing lumber is next dealt with, and is shown to be greater in Canada than the United States. "The average cost, including stumpage, of delivering logs at Ottawa, the main point of output in Canada, is at least one dollar more per thousand than the cost of American logs at Saginaw, Menominee, Duluth or Minneapolis. The assertions to the contrary were good ten years ago, but not to-day. With the exhaustion of pine in lower Michigan, where Saginaw alone for 30 years furnished an average of 700,000,000 feet, and with the reduction and final abolition of duties on lumber and logs, American lumbermen have entered the market for Canadian timber; stumpage has advanced; wages have advanced; until now American conditions, as to cost of timber and cost of labor, absolutely prevail in the white pine sections of Canada."

With respect to the timber supply he says:

"Michigan, for years queen of the white pine states, is fast losing that mantle of green that was the source and token of her royalty. Michigan forests supplied in 1890 nearly 4,500,000,000 feet of lumber. In 1895 they furnished only 2,900,000,000 feet of lumber, and during 1896 they

have produced less than 2,000,000,000, and the signs complete exhaustion, as to white pine, are plain before Michigan lumbermen, to continue the business to which they were bred, have been compelled to go to Canada to replenish their stock of timber, at once convenient for exportation and suited to their trade. No other timber takes the place of white pine, as witness England's constant demand for it, with all the lumber markets of the world to draw from.

"The great, the main, reason why Canadian white pine should not be excluded from our markets is because of the present forestry conditions in this country. There is no standing to-day in the state of Michigan 8,000,000,000 feet of pine, and there is not standing in the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota 50,000,000,000 feet of white pine, in the three states, 58,000,000,000 feet. I point you now, sir, to the fact that the annual statement for 1895 shows that the cut of these northwestern states for the ten years ending with that year was 77,000,000,000 feet, and you can draw your own conclusions.

"My first conclusion is that to now legislate to take timber west and south of Lake Superior and send it to remote New England is to perpetrate an economic crime upon those great treeless states. And this is my second conclusion: that to compel the people of New England to pay an added freight on lumber from the remote northwest, when their natural supply lies near at hand, cheap of access, is to do every citizen a wrong who builds a roof for home or factory. If that citizen pays the tax, then he stands as to every other builder in this land on an unequal footing.

"I have shown that our trade relations with Canada, reciprocal and friendly. Canada has so framed her laws that British trade loses and American trade gains. Shall we now, while Canada opens wider her doors to American trade, shut our doors in her face, and, if we, what will be the result? It was recently stated in leading newspaper of the Dominion that if the United States, in the face of present fair treatment by Canada, should now enact tariff laws unjust to Canada, they protect themselves by tariffs, too—turning first to their own people for articles now bought of us, and next towards closer relations with Great Britain, their natural ally, and in war and peace their friend. You, sir, are wiser than I to decide whether this prophecy be true; if true, its effect upon our trade."

Mr. Thomas Pink, of Pembroke, Ont., manufacturer of lumbering and driving tools, boom chains, cant hooks etc., has issued a new and useful catalogue for showing the various lines of manufacture. Mr. Pink established a wide reputation as a manufacturer of bermen's tools, and his goods are now used throughout the whole Dominion. A copy of the catalogue was sent upon application.

Logging is progressing favorably in the vicinity of Warren, Ont., although there is not a great deal of work. On Tuesday, the 16th inst., Keeling & Bower had team draw to their mill, a distance of three miles, a load of logs containing 21 pieces, that scaled in all 8,442 feet. The sleigh and bunks used were the same as the ones used every day, the latter being only 10 feet long, they been longer they claim a much larger load could have been hauled.

The new man in the shop is subjected to much criticism and scrutiny, but he very often has several handy up his sleeve which raise him in the eyes of the men. This makes it rather risky to indulge in sarcasm as to his way of working till you know how much work he can do in a day, he may paralyze the old man when it comes to time.—Machinery.

Parties who have been experimenting with white pine for bicycle rims have met with such success that they will be pushed for the purpose in competition with elm. Maple has been a favorite in some quarters since the introduction of the wood, but rock elm has many points of excellence that it is not probable it will be crowded out.

There is an estimated area of 47,000,000 acres of land with marketable timber in Australia. Western Australia has 20,000,000 of these acres. The various saw mills the last named section employ about 2,000 men. The total output of sawn stuff in 1895 was nearly \$2,000,000. The two principal woods are the jarrah and the blackbutt, which considerable quantities have been exported to pean countries—England principally—of late years.