

impression that the price of lumber was higher than it should be. Mr. Hackett said that saws fitted to cut British Columbia timber were not manufactured in Canada. They had to be imported from the United States, where they cost from \$150 to \$160, and added to that was a duty of thirty per cent., which had to be paid for the entrance of the goods into Canada. Bets were in the same category. He said that with the cost of supplies so much higher here than on the other side there was no room for unfair competition. He said that the insurance rates charged mills were exorbitant. The general rate was $9\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and the rate of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the mills proper was so high that the insurance companies were ashamed to publish it.

APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT.

Mr. W. G. Harvey then moved that the board endorse a petition that the millmen had forwarded to the Government. Mr. R. P. McLennan seconded the motion, and said that the request of the lumbermen was a modest and reasonable one, and unless something were done the province would find itself in a state of commercial depression shortly. The resolution was carried unanimously, as follows:

"That the Vancouver Board of Trade realizes that the general commercial interests of British Columbia require that an equalization in the duty on lumber be established immediately between the tariffs of Canada and the United States, otherwise serious commercial depression will prevail throughout this province."

The Boards of Trade of all the leading towns and cities in British Columbia have endorsed the resolution in favor of a duty on lumber, and have agreed to the suggestion that a delegation be sent to Ottawa to impress the matter upon the Government. Money has been willingly subscribed to pay the expenses of the delegates.

VIEWS OF PROMINENT B. C. LUMBERMEN.

Mr. R. H. Alexander, Secretary British Columbia Mills, Timber and Trading Company:

"The foreign export trade here is in almost a state of collapse owing to the mad competition which has arisen through the multiplicity of mills and the consequent overstocking of the market, resulting in prices being brought down to away below the cost of production. There is no doubt that when a good deal of the old stocks which have accumulated during the past three years of excessive production are cleared off and the mill men have to face manufacturing at a loss, that prices will come up, as logs are as high to-day as when lumber was 50 per cent. higher. The condition of the domestic trade is in just as bad a shape as that of the foreign. To arrive at a just conclusion as to the causes of this deplorable state of affairs, one must not lose sight of the fact that trade here is really ruled by what is going on in the United States. For the past three years there has been a big demand for lumber all along the coast, especially in California and as far east as St. Paul and the Missouri River. This led to a big increase in the producing capacity, saw mills being

started by the dozen. Since then the demand in California and the east has fallen off, so that the mills are striving as well as they know how to dispose of their stocks, and as a result prices have been reduced to a very ruinous figure. When the California trade falls the great difficulty is to market the common grades of lumber which are usually manufactured in the proportion of 5 to 1. Enormous surplus stocks of these lower grades have accumulated in the hands of the mill owners across the line, resulting in their being completely jammed up. They have been agitating during the past two months for a 40c. rate to Omaha and the Missouri Valley, hoping to secure some amelioration of the present condition by an outlet into that market. However, nothing has resulted from that source as yet and in the meantime they must sell, the whole question reducing itself to one of securing hard cash for their last accumulating stocks irrespective of prices and cost.

"We, unfortunately, are in much the same position, manufacturing in the same proportion, but with the disadvantage of possessing no home market except British Columbia, which is practically nothing. The natural market for us is the North-West, and there we are being undersold by the Americans making it the dumping ground for their surplus stocks. Whichever way one views the situation the advantage is with the Americans. They manufacture in larger volume, possess a larger market, pay less for their supplies, while all their machinery and saws cost less. Without the tariff we could get things from Puget Sound cheaper than from Manitoba and the Territories, and yet although afforded no protection whatever we are taxed to support the Manitoba farmer. All conditions make it dearer to manufacture here than on the Sound. Last November trade practically stopped in the North-West. Since then both the government agent and the C.P.R. have been urging the mill owners here to be ready to supply the demand which was sure to arise with the influx of immigrants in the coming spring. Acting upon this advice they have accumulated tremendous stocks, but unfortunately, owing to the bad season nothing was done until two weeks ago, when symptoms began to arise of better trade. Now when they have all prepared they find themselves shut out by American competition, with the result that unless they are prepared to sell at a sacrifice no lumber will be shipped at all. It means destruction to the industry, as it is impossible to sell clear grades and pile up five times as much rough lumber. The only remedy is for the government to put a duty on American lumber and provide us the market we lack. That the institution of a tariff on the importation of the cheap grades of American lumber would hurt the settler is the merest clap trap, as he pays the usual price of lumber whether it be cheap or not, the retailer seeing to this and under no circumstances allowing any reduction whatever unless it be for trade. Furthermore, the average settler's house and barn never requires more than 16,000 feet of lumber and a duty of \$1.00 per 1,000 would be merely an atom of a cost to him compared to the loss he would suffer

by the reduction of the purchasing powers of his best customers. There is no industry that disburses so much among the general public in the shape of wages, steamboat charges, etc., as the lumber trade, it being estimated at \$9 to the public for every \$1 gained by the manufacturer. Were a mill with an annual output of say \$500,000 to close down the general public would lose \$450,000 to the \$50,000 lost by the owners. The loss to the community collectively is, far more serious than can possibly be estimated. Let the government either grant protection or at least place us in a position of equality with the Americans."

Mr. J. D. McNair, of the Hastings Shingle Mill Company:

"The company, in view of the present market conditions, are curtailing their output. We now average 400,000 shingles a day, while our capacity is over 1,000,000. We have felt the depression approaching ever since the Americans began to compete for Canadian trade owing to the depression in their home market more than a year ago. As the condition of the United States market has not improved but on the contrary grown worse, this competition has become keener, until to-day prices are so low and the state of the market so bad that the mill owner who would think of increasing his capacity or of building new mills would certainly be considered insanely mad by the associated lumbermen of the province." Proceeding, Mr. McNair went on to say that immediately after the burning of their lumber mill last October he, in company with Mr. Humerfelt and associates, considered the advisability of rebuilding and were unanimously agreed upon constructing a mill with double or treble the capacity of the one burnt, which when running manufactured on an average 50,000 feet of lumber and 200,000 shingles per day, provided the Laurier Government could be induced to grant some adequate protection from the ruinous competition which he, Mr. McNair, saw approaching as a result of the fast growing depression in the United States markets. In a letter read by Mr. McNair to the writer, the humiliating spectacle was brought to view of the British Columbia Lumber and Shingle Association appealing to the United States Consul in Vancouver, Col. Dudley, for a correct interpretation to his government of the recently enacted logging act. Such an occurrence, says Mr. McNair, is proof itself that the British Columbia lumbermen were growing tired of the apathy of the government at Ottawa, and were ready to appeal to the lumbermen of the Pacific Coast states for assistance. Loyalist as he was, he was convinced that unless something was done by the Dominion House to ameliorate the present conditions the day was not far distant when the Canadian people would receive a rude awakening in the demand from British Columbia for separation.

A LUMBER SCALE.

The Vulcan Iron Works, of Seattle, Washington, have for their friends and patrons a large number of pocket scales, which can be had by postal or verbal request. They are very neat and convenient.