

OUR QUEBEC LETTER.

THE LUMBER BUSINESS IN THE ANCIENT CAPITAL.—PRICES CURRENT.—CONTRACTS FOR NEW TRAIL'S SHIPMENTS.—MINING NEWS.—A NEW INDUSTRY.

QUEBEC, Oct. 11th, 1880.—The principal part of the "Fall Fleet," is now in port, and wharves and booms at the upper end of the harbour are lined with timber vessels taking in the last cargoes which will be shipped from the Ancient Capital during the season of 1880. Lumber merchants are all busy in their offices, or in the town offices which are connected with the former by telephone and telegraph, engaged in superintending the loading and shipment of lumber. When the last vessel of the Quebec timber fleet leaves port this fall, there will be left behind the smallest stock of lumber which has wintered here for many years. Even now there is hardly any stock held in first hands, so that there cannot be any extensive sales to report either at the present, or for some time to come.

If poor Jim Flak were now here, and wanted to go in for one of his usual bold transactions, he would buy up all the remaining stock, and thus control the market. I wonder that some worthy imitator of the great New York operator has not appeared upon the scene here.

It is satisfactory to know that the leading shippers and brokers of Quebec have not only experienced a remunerative business this year, but are looking forward with "great expectations" to the operations of the coming season. I find that the best informed men in the trade are basing their calculations for the year 1881, upon the production of some ten million feet of lumber this winter in the lumbering districts of the Ottawa.

The contracts so far made by the Quebec brokers for next year's shipments are quite encouraging. The following are some of the principal

PRICES CURRENT:

Ohio Oak (sold for shipment in 1881) 51 cents per cubic foot; Michigan ditto, 50 cents; Canada ditto, (a good lot for early delivery) 49 cents.

Sales of timber actually in the market would command two cents more than the above prices.

Pine staves have been sold at \$300 per standard mill.

West India staves at \$75 per mill of 1200 pieces.

Michigan Board Pine, 20 inch average, 33 cents; ditto, Red Pine, 55 feet average, 28 cents.

Elm is a drag upon the market, and will not command more than 2½ cents.

Walnut, Black, can be had freely at 80 cents per cubic foot for large girths.

Michigan Pine deals, Fir: \$100 per hundred, standard, 127½ feet, or 2,750 feet, board measure. Seconda: Usual proportion and price.

All the above quotations have been carefully selected from the most reliable sources.

SHIPBUILDING.

There is little or no reason to hope for a revival in the shipbuilding industry of this port, which a few years ago gave employment to so many thousands of our labouring classes. Mr. Baldwin has just laid the keel of a 300-ton vessel, but this will not give constant employment to more than about 100 men.

Mr. Dier, of France, who is now here in the interest of a proposed new line of steamers between this port and France, believes that the French Government will ere long remove the differential duty upon Canadian built ships. This step, he claims, would give rise to a fresh demand for wooden, Quebec built ships. Our business men do not happily pin much faith to this prospect.

MINING NOTES.

There has been a dearth of interesting intelligence from the Beauce gold mines during the last two months. With the return of spring 1881, operations will be resumed with renewed activity. A damper has of late been cast upon the prosecution of work in this region by the disputes concerning mining rights, given rise to by recent legislation of the Province of Quebec.

In another part of the Province, the shaft

of a very promising antimony mine is being put in working order.

The Crown Lands Department of the Local Government will sell by auction this week, a number of valuable timber limits in various parts of the Province. The sale will be held in this city. For some months past there has been a constant demand for small mining locations, which the Crown Lands Department is authorized to sell, to the extent of lots of 40 acres. Mica has recently been discovered at a short distance from Joliette, in paying veins, and only needs the skilful application of a small capital to return a lucrative yield.

It may not be generally known, that an English company has secured 400 acres of land in Charlevoix, containing oxide of iron in abundance, which it is their intention to mine, and ship to England for manufacture.

The Local Government has on hand, a scheme for buying phosphates, and distributing them instead of money grants to the various agricultural societies of the Province. This policy will, undoubtedly, by introducing this useful article to the farmers of Quebec, create in the immediate future increased demand for the fertilizer, and thus give an impetus to mining operations. In a future letter, I hope to give more details of the scheme.

FRENCH CAPITAL.

The Credit Financier of Paris, France, opens its agency in the city next January. Five millions of francs in gold will be at once brought into the Province, to be succeeded by as much more as can be judiciously invested in mortgages at 6 per cent. Whether or not it will prove to be a undoubted blessing to have our land and buildings mortgaged to a foreign power, I leave others to decide.

Thanks to the energy and enterprise of a liberal minded, and leading business man of the ancient Capital, Quebec is shortly to have in its midst, an important branch of a new industry. The Canada Company is the title adopted by the proprietors of the new undertaking, which will engage in distilling liquors and syrups, liquors, acids, perfumes, &c. Some of the products of the new industry, will be upon the market in a few days from present writing.

STADACONA.

PORT HOPE.

This has become an important shipping port, and is the outlet of the vast region north and north-west by the Midland Railway. Our correspondent sends the following statement of shipment to Oswego, for the season up to Oct. 8th, viz: Lumber 62 million feet, pine; value from \$3 to \$16 per M. Barley, 350,000 bu. Iron, ore, 1,200 tons, sent to Fairhaven. Square timber, 500,000 c. feet, rafted for Quebec. In addition to the above, over one and a-half million feet was exported from Port Hope one day this week.

Midland Railway rates to Port Hope for Lumber from Midland, Victoria Harbor, Sturgeon Bay, Waubesaene and Orillia, \$1.75 per M., and from Peterboro' and Lindsay, \$1.15.

NOVA SCOTIA.

Our correspondent at Parrsboro', a thriving place in Nova Scotia, writes:—"Our prospects here for this season, and first of next, are very good, boards and scantling bringing a good price in the English market at present. Short lumber, such as laths, pickets, and shingles, are in good demand in the United States, at fairly good prices, but the heavy duties against us there prevent us from doing much of any business that way. Next year's prospects, after the Spring sales, are not very encouraging, as there are heavy stocks being put in this winter.

We copy the following items connected with that section:

Messrs. Young & Son, of Parrsboro'—late of Calais, Me.—do the largest lumbering business in the county. They have mills at River Hebert, Apple River, Moose River, and Halfway River; the latter is a steam mill. Most of their lumber is shipped from this port. During the present year, this firm has sent several ship loads to French ports. Amos Lawrence, Esq., of Southampton, also exports a large quantity of lumber from here, and Messrs. Tucker and Adams, of the same place, engage quite extensively in this trade. Lumber is now sent from

River Philip, via the I. O. R., to Spring Hill, and thence over the S. H. & P. R. R. for shipment. Add to this the coal brought over this road for home consumption and export, and it is not difficult to see that labourers find plenty of employment during the summer.

Shipbuilding, once the principal industry of this place, has been languishing for some time, and seems to have fairly died out.

NEW STEAM MILL.—Messrs. T. de W. H., of Port Greenville, and J. Anis, of Queen's Co., N.S., have a steam mill in course of erection at Diligent River, about six miles "down shore."

The large tannery, of Messrs. Upham and McCabe, east of the railway station, will soon be completed.

GRAVENHURST.

As a manufacturing and shipping point for sawn lumber, Gravenhurst occupies an important position, being the outlet by railway of the lumber from the Muskoka lakes and tributaries. Considerable trade is also done in tanbark, both for home consumption and export. Large quantities of supplies are going out to that region by the Northern Railway, and as many as fifty horses may be frequently seen in a drove, on the way to the lumber camps in the neighbourhood.

OTTAWA.

The value of sawn lumber exported from Ottawa during the months of May, June, July, Aug. and Sep., 1877, is given at \$359,026; in 1878 at \$686,671; in 1879 at \$913,211. During the year 1880, for May, June, July and August, the value exported is \$100,320. When September returns come to be added, it is expected that the increase over the five months of last year will be in the vicinity of half a million dollars.

TRAFFIC RETURNS.

The traffic receipts of the Midland railway for the week ending October 7th, 1880 were:—Passengers and mails, \$2,673.82; freight, \$3,468.03; total, \$11,141.75. For the corresponding week of 1879:—Passengers and mail, \$3,000.39; freight, \$7,306.17; total, \$10,306.56. Increase for week, \$835.29. Aggregate from 1st January, \$268,018.68; increase over 1879, \$71,057.14.

The receipts of the Great Western Railway in the week ending on the 8th inst., and the corresponding week last year were as follows:—Passengers, \$50,450.41; freight and live stock, \$69,935.47; mails and sundries, \$2,956.63; total, \$123,332.51; corresponding week of last year, \$102,504.49; increase, \$20,838.02.

Receipts of the Whitty, Port Perry and Lindsay railroad in the week ending October 9th were as follows:—Passengers, \$694.75; freight, \$2,169.73; mails and sundries, \$63.20; total, \$2,927.68, against \$2,003.25 in the corresponding week last year, being an increase of \$924.43. Total traffic in current year, \$67,921.41, against \$53,033.36 last year, being an increase of \$14,891.05.

Glass Mill-Stones.

The outcome of this successful experiment, we learn from the *Potters Gazette* was the invention, by the Messrs. Thorne, of the glass mill-stones now made by them, and used in Germany with much satisfaction. Respecting their special merits, we learn, on the same authority, that they grind more easily, and do not heat the flour as much, as is the case with the French burr-stone. In grinding grist they run perfectly cool.

In making these stones the glass is cast in blocks of suitable size and shape, joined with cement in the same way as the French burrs, dressed and furrow cut with picks and pointed hammers. It is suggested that the substitution of diamond dressing machines would give better results.

Without going into the technical points respecting the comparative merits of the old and new mill-stones, which are given at some length, but which would only be appreciated by practical millers, we note simply our contemporary's opinion that, in the event of the success of certain experiments now making on a larger and more important scale than any previous ones, "this discovery will be entitled to rank as one of the most valuable of recent years as regards the milling industry."

An enterprising sign painter says he would pay liberally for the brush that the "signs of the times" are painted with.

MARINE AND FISHERIES.

Our Salmon Fisheries.

Professor H. Y. Hind has written a letter to the *Forest and Stream*, in which he advert to the climate question in reference to the late appearance of salmon in our river. It is season, also to "biennial spawners," also to the habit of salmon seeking other rivers than their native streams for sanitary purposes, and to the development of the hook on the male salmon in his spawning year only. He writes to Mr. Mowat, overseer of Fisheries, and asks to be informed through a column of the *Miramichi Advance* for reliable information about the catch of salmon in the Bay of Chaleur "forty years ago." He further says:—I wish to know whether any record or tradition exists respecting the salmon catch in the years 1832, 1835; and 1836, 1841, 1842 and 1852. In fact the record of any particularly good, or any particularly poor year, will be thankfully received. I have prepared a notice of the salmon catch and character of the seasons in certain rivers in Scotland for about one hundred years, and I wish to ascertain whether the experience in New Brunswick bears out certain remarkable relations I have found to exist between extremes of heat and cold in the appearance of certain anadromous fish particularly the salmon.

I should be glad if Mr. Mowat would also state whether he has ever taken or seen large male salmon late in the season without the hook being developed largely on the lower jaw; also, whether he has ever seen or heard of large male salmon, having mild well developed, without the hook on the lower jaw. I should also like to ask him whether he has ever seen any nests of the salmon which he supposes were made in the spring of the year. I have seen such nests at the headwaters of the North West branch of the South West Miramichi. I saw them with transparent eggs in them on the 24th of July, 1864, when I was making the Geological Survey of the Province.

The *Advance* says:—Professor Hind is writing on the Fisheries with a view of having the subject better understood than it now is, not only by the people, but also by the Department at Ottawa, whose knowledge and modes are both susceptible of improvement.

Suicides among Russian Officers.

The number of cases of suicide among the Russian officers in Tashkend, in Asiatic Russia, is increasing to an alarming extent. According to official returns, no fewer than six officers perished by their own hands in one week. Cases of suicide are not unusual in the Russian army generally, and especially among the troops quartered on the frontier stations. The pay of the Russian officers is small, his promotion is slow, play is everywhere the rule, and drunkenness is common. Except in St. Petersburg and Moscow, no inducement whatsoever is held out to officers to interest themselves in their profession; and even in the above-named towns originality of thought is so discouraged that no officer would venture to express an opinion on any military subject at variance with the views held at headquarters. So little is there to interest, occupy, or amuse that only a Russian could support the existence led by the officers of the army in country quarters. But if life in a Russian provincial town is dull and colorless, in Tashkend it is a thousand times worse. Often no post arrives for a whole month; there are no amusements; and consequently the unfortunate officer is driven to spend his time in smoking, drinking, card playing and low intrigues. The result of all this is that a Russian paper rarely appears without announcing the death of an officer who has committed suicide at that post.

The enormous charges of the British pension list are attracting more than usual attention in the House of Commons. It is stated that in less than a century the descendant of Lord St. Vincent and Lord Rodney have received \$1,000,000 each. For nearly two hundred years the heirs of the Duke of Schomberg have drawn a nice income from that grateful country. The Duke of Marlborough enjoy a perpetual pension of \$25,000 a year. The Duke of Wellington was given \$3,500,000 by Parliament to support the dignity of his dukedom, and a pension of \$10,000 a year for two generations. There are among some of the larger grants. The smaller ones are numberless, and many of them the rewards of mere favouritism.