



It is amusing to note how opinions vary regarding the probable outcome of tariff changes. Here is what a large manufacturer across the line has said: "The duty on pine and hemlock is only \$1 per thousand, and \$2 on spruce; but, even with this removal, the way prices are now, the Canadians cannot do anything here. Prices are \$3 below what they were a year ago, attributable to the business depression largely and the consequent falling off in the building trade. I do not think it will affect the car mills much, if any, at present at least. The Canadian people, you know, have been educated to deal in sawing. They have been catering largely to the export trade, which calls for certain lengths and widths of lumber. These are cut to different schedules from ours. Take one of our schedules into Canada, and they would go crazy, as we are used to cutting the exact measurements down to the inches. The Canadians may adapt themselves to this market, but it will take considerable time, and by that time the old tariff rate may be restored, and I do not believe, with that uncertainty, that capitalists will put their money into Canadian mills to cater to this market."

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In my travels the other day, I dropped into the office of Jas. Tennant. Mr. Tennant was, at that time, out of the city, but when talking to one of the "men of the road," I was told, that the trade was meeting some competition in lumber from the States. This representative of the grip sack, confirmed what Mr. Meaney has stated in another column, that considerable white pine was coming in from Michigan. He also said that a good deal of Red pine was being brought in from Lake Superior, and that it was cutting a larger figure in competition with white pine than many dealers might suppose. It cannot fill the place of white pine for the better classes of work, but it would, in his view, prove quite a rival to the commoner grades of pine.

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"We are just moving along quietly," said John Donogh, of Donogh & Oliver. "Business is more healthy in lumber than it was before the tariff was finally passed, but the volume of trade has not increased very much. I do not anticipate that there can be much activity in trade this side of spring. While it is the case that at some lumber centres stocks on hand are somewhat large yet among the trade this is not generally the case. The fact is that dealers have for some time been pursuing steadily a hand-to-mouth policy of buying and no one has large stocks. There is this about the tariff that it is just too soon yet to know how wide will be its benefits to Canadian lumber. None of us know exactly how things are going to turn out, and capitalists are cautious in investing in lumber. What the ultimate outcome will be I have no fears. The trade is going to mend, but this will only come about gradually."

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In the opinion of Mr. Page, of the firm of Page and Mallett, of Fort Kent, the cut on the American side, at the headwaters of the St. John, N. B., will be smaller than last year. There will be more lumber got out on the Canadian side, however. The stumpage in the province is cheaper, which accounts to a very considerable degree for the bigger cut on this side of the line. Mr. Page says the following will be the quantities of lumber got out on the American side this winter: Page & Mallett, two millions for Randolph & Baker; C. H. Dickey, a million and a half for Stentson, Cutler & Co.; John Sweeney, a million for S. T. King & Sons; Neil McLean, a million for Miller & Woodman; W. H. Cunniff, two and a half millions; J. A. Lavertie, a million for Randolph & Baker; A. Cushing & Co., two millions; J. L. Stevens, a million and a half for E. L. Jewett; J. A. Morrison, a million and a half for Hale & Murchie.

C. A. Nason reports Dunn Bros. & Co., will get out five millions on the Anrostock. Mr. Nason says the cut on the Penobscot, will be larger than it was at first thought it would be. Capt. J. R. Warner is authority for the statement that there were 5,000,000 feet of logs in the St. John river below the falls. There were about 3,000,000 feet in the booms which were being rafted and would be brought to Indiantown this autumn if the water rises sufficiently. An effort would also be made to get into the booms, the lumber which is lying in the river. G. G. King, of Chipman, Queens Co., was asked to state his opinion with reference to the recent regulations in the United States tariff as affecting Canadian lumbermen. Mr. King said, he was aware that a number of provincial lumbermen gave it as their opinion that these regulations would be of no benefit whatever to Canadian operators. He did not think they knew what they were talking about. Personally he felt certain that the benefit would be very great. North Shore lumbermen are making preparations for the woods. Several cars of horses have been imported from Prince Edward Island for the winter's work. The Albert county lumber operators are also preparing extensively for the winter's work. So much for lumber opinion down by the sea.

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"It is the case," said Mr. Thomas Meany, manager here for Robt. Thompson & Co., "that considerable white pine is being brought in from Michigan into Western Ontario. We have, as you know, an office at Windsor, and it pays us better to bring pine from Michigan than to freight it all the distance from our northern mills to Windsor. This is one of the amusing features of the tariff. In fact you know it has been said that we have been sending our pine to Michigan and that some of this very same pine is now coming back into our hands in the way that I indicate. How correct this statement is I am not prepared to say. We are, at least, getting pine from Michigan, wherever it may chance to have been grown. The man who expected that the new tariff was going to work only one way finds out his mistake. As Canadian lumbermen we are not at all alarmed at this form of competition. The markets of Canada and the States are now open to lumbermen of both countries and we are prepared to have the benefit of the markets of the eastern states even though a certain measure of local trade may be lost to us as a result of this privilege." Mr. Meany says trade this fall is slow. Whilst there is more confidence and a more hopeful outlook since the change in the tariff, he does not anticipate that there will be any great activity in the lumber business until spring. The question of the grading of lumber came up in our conversation. It is one of these questions that, so far as the Canadian trade is concerned, does not settle very easily. Mr. Meany says that there are very few dealers who make any pretense of buying lumber according to inspection. Every man practically inspects his own lumber. The stuff is placed before him; he can use his own eyes and exercise his own judgment as to the quality, and if the price asked is satisfactory and he has got the money to pay for it, that is an end of the transaction. At one point lumber may be offered for sale and called common. Some other man will have lumber equal in quality and he will call it by some other grade, a little better, perhaps, or a little worse. I remarked to Mr. Meany that this was a drawback to the trade and was suggestive of the necessity of lumbermen getting together and endeavoring to adopt a uniform system of inspection. As a careful lumberman he recognizes the need for this, but was not sure just how easily the matter could be handled.

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I have been interested as a fellow scribe in the impressions of Canadian lumbering as recorded recently by Mr. John E. Williams, of the Northwestern Lumberman. Brother Williams, of the Windy City, has been taking a trip through Ontario, visiting Toronto, Ottawa, and some other lumber points, with the object of ascertaining what has been, or is likely to be, the effect of the Wilson tariff in putting lumber on the free list. Mr. Williams is a Republican in politics, and of course has his own notions of how a tariff should be constructed, and it is fair to say these do not run parallel with the ideas of the Democratic party,

though it is not an easy matter to say where that party stands on the tariff. Mr. Williams also represents a journal, which is in strong sympathy with his own political views, and which lead the "On to Washington" movement in the interest of "American lumber for Americans," when the tariff fight was at its hottest. Knowing these things, and remembering the big bugaboo that free lumber appeared to show itself to our Chicago friend—for the warning was oft and long repeated, "the goblins will catch you, if you don't watch out"—the goblins being none other than those naughty and greedy Canadian lumbermen. Knowing these things, I say, I was interested to see how Chicago opinion would shape after a representative of our contemporary had rubbed shoulders for a brief period with these people who had hitherto been best painted in hobgoblin picture. Well Mr. Williams has returned to his home carrying in his grip sack the assurance to United States lumbermen that they need not scare any more over Canadian lumber. He says in fact to any incoming Republican Congress that they might do worse than leave undisturbed the Wilson bill should power be again given Governor McKinley to formulate and direct tariff legislation. "I am of the belief, after the enquiries I have made," says Mr. Williams, "that we rather over-estimated the importance of the Ontario and Quebec contributions to our market. When you consider that the total export to the United States from these provinces in the year ending June 30, 1893, was only 747,710,000 feet and the total export something over a billion feet, while the Chicago market alone handles annually two billion feet, you will see that the effect upon the trade of the United States cannot be very disturbing." So far as dressed lumber is concerned, this opinion is expressed: "I inquired of some of the Ottawa lumbermen whether they were not looking for some trade in dressed lumber. But they seem to be in doubt as to the fate of the dressed lumber part of the new tariff if the Republicans win at the next election. In the meantime while the uncertainty lasts they do not care to incur the expense necessary to push that part of the trade. For myself I think there is good cause for caution, and that dressed lumber, as it was more than your lumbermen expected, will be found to be more than will meet the approval of the next Government in power at Washington. As for sawn lumber, it is a raw material, and in sympathy with the general feeling favorable to the free entry of raw products the Republicans would have put it on the free list, and now will leave it there." Mr. Williams views, however, are qualified to some extent when he writes of conditions in the Georgian Bay districts, as distinct from the Ottawa and Quebec region. "The reduction of the duty on box shooks from 30 to 20 per cent, while it will serve, he thinks, to keep out manufactured shooks, it will not prevent the introduction of planing mills in the Georgian Bay region for the dressing of box lumber for export. The consequences to the Saginaw Valley, will, he argues, in this connection be serious. Mr. Williams goes so far as to say—as a sort of saw-off, perhaps, to his satisfaction with conditions elsewhere—that Canadians are so zealous in their efforts to secure the transfer of both saw and planing mills to the British side, "that customs appraisers are instructed to practically shut their eyes to all such imports notwithstanding that the duty is 35 per cent ad valorem. This circumstance discloses another phase of the insincerity of Canadian professions of indifference previously referred to in these articles. The average Canuck may not be as aggressive as his Yankee contemporary, but when it comes to a show-down of comparative guile, the latter is not the worst sufferer." Now Brother Williams there can be no doubt where you hail from. When it comes to a show-down of down-right unmitigated gall, recommend me to Mr. Yank. There is an abundance of contradiction, and not a small quantity of bare-faced impudence all through Mr. Williams' treatment of this free lumber enquiry, indicating that what has been written has not been in the shape of a fair, open enquiry into actual conditions, but is written for a particular constituency, and doubtless with a purpose. The quotation we have given in regard to Canadian customs officers winking at the duty on American saw and planing mill equipment coming into Canada is one sample.