

THE war cloud, or cloud of the old world, appear to have blown over for a time, and each day peace seems more likely to endure for this year. As the season grows more unfavorable for commencing warlike operations. There is thus little prospect of the increased demand for timber, coupled with a diminished supply from some European localities, that had been anticipated to arise from a conflict between some of the great powers.

LUMBERMEN throughout the country are already engaging men for the shanties, and the big hiring boom will be on by the first of October. Wages are likely to range from \$16 to \$22 per month. From present indications it would seem as if there is likely to be a dearth of men, and the large operators will, it is thought, experience some difficulty in this regard. So far as can be learned at this early date the prospects are that the cut of logs the coming winter will be one of the heaviest on record.

HERE is a hint which might be noted with profit by many concerns. The manager of a large southern company says: "By dressing and drying we reduce the weight of our lumber from 4,800 to 2,600 pounds per thousand, which gives us a big advantage in freight. Besides, we save insurance, rehandling and wharfage, and gain dispatch, which is oftentimes a big item in shipping by car. All things considered, we can put dressed yellow pine into your northern markets as cheaply as can otherwise get there, in less time."

THE *Montreal Miner* does not place implicit confidence in the disinterestedness of those in the United States who favor annexation or commercial union. It says:—"Our forests are disappearing much too fast, and it has become necessary and urgent to find some means of conserving them. Our neighbors who have ruined this portion of their capital, would not be sorry to come into our Provinces in order to find again new resources which they would not fail to work to complete extinction." There are at least two sides to every question."

THE general opinion of the people of Buffalo appears to be voiced in the following editorial paragraph from the *Commercial Advertiser* relating to the proceedings of the Canal Convention at Rochester some time ago:—"The Convention over-reached itself when it called upon the Canadian Government to abolish the tolls upon its canals. If the Convention wants to intensify the competition for business on the Erie it is a good idea to induce a reduction of expense by the Canadian route, not otherwise. The Champlain lumber business from the Ottawa river might be benefitted a very little by an abolition of Canadian tolls, but that is all.

THE editor of THE LUMBERMAN invites communications on any subject which will interest those engaged in the lumbering or wood-working branches of trade. Nearly every one of our readers could, if he would, contribute something of interest, be it either a suggestion or item of news, and while it entails but little work to each individually, taken together such items would make a paper of which the trade would justly feel proud. We have to thank several readers this month for "first contributions," and hope that scores of others may follow the good example, as the invitation is intended for all. So many people think that they cannot write anything suitable for publication, and perhaps, to a certain extent this is true, for it takes years of hard study and practical experience to become an adept as a newspaper writer. But one thing all can do, and that is to give us the benefit of their practical ideas, and the editor will readily do his share towards not only making it readable but interesting. How many of our readers will send in something for the next issue?

FROM all over come reports of extensive forest fires, and although a limited amount of rain has fallen in some localities, the destruction has been but little checked. While the public are calling out against the hasty denudation of our forests by the lumbermen, would it not be as well also to give a share of attention to the disastrous work of the fiery element which every year destroys such a fabulous amount of our wealth, and see if something cannot be done to stop its progress? The damage they do is beyond calculation, as the property destroyed is that which carries no insurance. Much of this destruction at the present season of the year is attributable to the carelessness of campers, landlookers, surveying parties and those who build fires without regard to the consequences which may ensue. Some stringent measures should be adopted, calculated to put a stop to what is now considered everybody's privilege to build fires when and where they like, and until this is done the present rapid destruction will continue. But we fear that by the time the slow-moving law makers of the country get around to the subject of forest protection there will be little left to care for.

A CERTAIN commercial journal is credited with having said that R. A. & J. Stewart, of St. John, New Brunswick, are reported to have arrived at a satisfactory understanding with their friends in Great Britain. The *Montreal Trade Journal* takes exception to this statement and retorts as follows:—"So far from Messrs. R. A. & J. Stewart having arrived at a satisfactory understanding with their creditors in Great Britain, it is a notorious fact that the latter have been waiting a long time for the promised appearance of Mr. R. A. Stewart on the other side, who, according to Mr. John Stewart, knows everything and will explain the whole matter to them, which by the bye up to the present is a puzzle. Whilst Mr. John Stewart in London has been promising the creditors that his brother Robert would be over to straighten matters the latter has postponed his trip to England on the ground that more important business of the firm's affairs required his presence on this continent. We are therefore authorized to contradict in the most positive terms the statement above referred to."

THE International Exhibition will open in Melbourne on August 1st, 1888, to celebrate the centenary of the founding of New South Wales, the first Australian Colony. Aside from the growth of America there is nothing more remarkable than the growth of Australia in all that relates to population, production and the general distribution of wealth. From a penal colony it has developed into a great nation, in which the arts, commerce and education are in hopeful process of development. Some slight idea of its marvellous growth may be gained when it is known that during the year 1885 Australasia, with a population of 3,500,000, imported from Great Britain alone goods to the amount of \$165,000,000; that the aggregate length of railroads opened for traffic amounts to 7,700 miles, and that when the lines of rail now in course of construction shall have been completed they will reach a total length of 10,000 miles. Australia is a large purchaser of Pacific Coast supplies and communication between this country and Australia is also rapidly growing, and a number of Canadian industrial and manufacturing establishments have now agencies in its chief cities; so that the proposed exhibition will doubtless be taken advantage of by many of our manufacturers as offering an opportunity for making the people of the antipodes better acquainted with our natural resources and with the products of our inventive skill and general progress.

MANY of our exchanges are at the present time advocating a conservation of our forest wealth, being of the opinion that the present rapid destruction will so denude our forests that in a few years we will lack enough timber to supply the needs of our growing population. THE LUMBERMAN has on more than one occasion referred to this matter and considers it a question worthy of the closest consideration. There are many, we have no doubt, who hold the opinion that it would be detrimental to those engaged in the lumber business to legislate in favor of checking the unnecessary denudation of our timber land. But in this we do not agree. We believe that the lumbermen, as well as the public at large, are anxious for the preservation of our forests, realizing the fact that before a very great lapse of time a maintenance, to say nothing of an acceleration, of the present system must result in an absolute scarcity. The history of the past year goes to show that the lumbermen holding large limits and having large capital invested in them, have been compelled, through the hasty legislation of our governments in imposing exorbitant ground dues, to enter into a hasty slaughter of our timber lands in order to save themselves from bankruptcy. This high tax was levied for the purpose of replenishing the provincial exchequers, but while it may have its desired effect for a few years, the country will suffer to a far greater extent in the future. So long as our Provincial Governments legislate in such a way as to force the lumbermen to strip their limits, with the utmost possible rapidity, instead of encouraging them to exercise a wise providence, we may expect the cry against forest denudation to continue.

QUEBEC GROUND RENTS.

A MEETING of limit holders in the Province of Quebec has been held in order to appoint a deputation to wait upon the Provincial authorities and endeavor to obtain a reversal of the Order-in-Council increasing the ground rents of timber limits, or at least to secure a reduction of the amount. This deputation has had an interview with the Commissioner of Crown Lands, before whom the case was plainly laid, but he gave them distinctly to understand that the Government would not change its policy.

This adherence to a mistaken step is greatly to be regretted. From every point of view except that of an immediate, but temporary increase of receipts in the Provincial Treasury from this source, it is a mischievous change. The lumbermen of the Province of Quebec are by no means deriving such

enormous profits from their business as to be able to afford to deduct from them the amount of this special class taxation. It must to a serious extent tend to hamper and cripple them in their operations, and force upon them parsimonious reductions, which they will be loath to adopt. Thus the great army of their employees will share with them in the loss, this being the only source from which the imposts can be borne, since profits are not great enough to bear it, and the price of lumber cannot be raised except for local sales. In some localities the local consumer can be called upon to shoulder part of the burden by paying more for his lumber, but though unpleasant for the home purchaser this will not greatly aid the lumberman, who must seek a distant market for much of his cut.

From the point of view of the public interest the change is no more to be approved. This heavy increase of ground rent will in many cases force the limit holders to hasten prematurely their operations in portions of their limits, stripping them as quickly as they can and thus releasing themselves from the burden. Those who are now conserving their timber as much as possible will thus be coerced into the opposite policy. It is not in the interest of the community to hasten the depletion of our forests, but rather the contrary, so this step is decidedly retrogressive in that respect.

Even from the Treasury point of view the prospective gain is quite fallacious. It is true that for a brief period the receipts from ground rents will be augmented, but this cannot continue. The lumbermen, eager to terminate the burdensome rental, will hasten to strip portions of their limits, thus terminating as quickly as possible their liability, and at the same time the Treasury receipts of rent. In any future sales of public lands the increased rental will be discounted, for bidding will be lowered in consideration of it, and thus no gain will be effected. The Government is simply killing the goose to obtain at once some golden eggs.

It will be seen on reflection that this increase of ground rents is a mistaken policy from every point of view. The bad effects will not be confined to the limit owner, though they strike him in the first place and most severely. We must say that in this treatment of the limit owners the Government is acting most inequitably. Their property is suddenly depreciated and they are subjected to a special class impost, after they have in good faith invested their capital in their business and have acquired public property on the conditions asked by the Government and which were with good reason understood to be permanent. The increase may be legal but it cannot be defended morally or equitably, any more than if the Government were to rack rent a tenant of public land as soon as he had built a factory on it and could not refuse to submit, except at the sacrifice of his capital and his prospects.

We yet hope that the Quebec Government may see the impolicy and injustice of its course, and yield to the remonstrances of an industry which is one of the most important in the Province and does so much for its development. A reduction of the increased rental would be both just and expedient.

THE FORESTRY CONGRESS.

THE annual meeting of the American Forestry Congress is to be held at Springfield, Illinois, from the 14th to the 16th of September. This is practically an international organization, and there should be a good representation from Canada. Sometimes it is supposed by lumbermen that forestry associations with their desire for the conservation of forests are in more or less direct conflict with the interests of the trade. That such an idea is erroneous is proved by the fact that leading lumbermen show a warm interest in forestry, and took an active part in the proceedings of the congress when it was held at Montreal. Many lumbermen indeed would gladly see better provisions made for the preservation of the forest, and regret any governmental management or regulations tending to induce a hastened cut. Unfortunately in more than one Province recent changes have had an increased tendency in this direction.

There is one branch of information certain to be offered to the meeting at Springfield which cannot fail to be interesting and useful to our lumbermen. Estimates of the extent and probable duration of the forests of this continent, especially in the United States, give valuable indications for the guidance of Canadian lumbermen, throwing light upon the question of the expediency of forcing lumber into the market or sparing the limits as much as possible. It is undoubtedly the fact that the forests are rapidly diminishing, while the manufacture of lumber and the demand for it are steadily increasing.

One subject that is sure to be discussed, with the result of yielding increased information on a debatable question, is the suggestion of reciprocal trade, as it may affect the lumber interests, and the economy of forest wealth. The discussion of this point alone should be sufficient to induce the attendance of representative Canadians and to compensate them for the time, trouble and expense of a visit to Springfield.