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**THE QUEBEC TIMBER FLEET.**

A striking evidence of the depressed condition of shipping is at present made manifest by the almost entire absence of chartering British owned ships this season which are usually employed in the Quoboc timber trade. The rate of freight offering is, we understand, so low as to be quite unremunerative, and we believe many Clyde shipowners, under the circumstances, have resolved to allow their ships to remain in port rather than accept shippers' present terms. At this season of the year the ports of Greenock and Port Glasgow are usually all bustle, owing to the fitting out of the timber ships preparatory to sailing on their spring voyage to the St. Lawrence, but up till the present time not a movement has been made among the large fleet owned at these ports and laid up in harbors; and unless freights considerably improve the shipowners' resolution will prove a very serious loss to many parties. For the past four years the ships employed in the Clyde and Quebec timber trade were as follows—

Year.	No. of vls.	Register Tonnage.	Rate of Freight Per Load.
1881.....	55	64,009	25s.
1882.....	50	54,380	23s. to 25s
1883.....	74	83,293	25s.
1884.....	26	29,583	17s. " 22s.

Roughly speaking, these ships would carry crews averaging 18 men, the rate of wages earned by the seamen ranging from £3 6s. to £4 per month. Nearly all these ships, with the exception of last year, made two voyages each season to and from Quebec, bringing an average of 75,000 loads of timber of 50 cubic feet. Outwards most of the ships were partly laden with coals, carrying an average of something like 600 tons each, which taking an average of 50 ships per annum during the past four years, represents a shipment of 30,000 tons of coal per year. Then at the fitting-out ports during the spring months a large amount is usually disbursed in repairs, outfit, stores, provisions, &c., while seamen's wives, families and relatives were provided with part of the wages engaged for at the time of shipment.

The rates of freight offering this season, we understand, range from 19s. to 19s. 6d. per load, a rate which, if accepted, would simply entail considerable loss upon the shipowner, his disbursements, insurance, wages, and general outlays exceeding the rate of freight earned. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that shipowners prefer to incur the loss which they will sustain by their ships lying up in harbor in preference to sending them to sea, where a greater loss would be the result. Up till the present time only two or three British-owned vessels have been fixed, viz., the late Greenock owned ship, the *Craigs*, now owned in the Tyne, and *Princess Alexandra*, of Belfast, and another, said to be at Plymouth. On the other hand, a considerable amount of foreign-

owned tonnage has already been secured at the low rates.

It would thus appear that foreign shipowners, freed from the restrictions and vexatious supervision placed on the British shipowner, are enabled to send a class of vessels to sea, and work them so cheaply that a very low rate of freight yields to them a profit. Many of these ships, however, coming to this country are of such an inferior character that our Board of Trade would not for a moment allow them to go to sea, while the seamen are paid a much lower rate of wages, and the dietary scale is much inferior to that served out to the British seaman.

At this season a large number of seamen belonging to Shetland usually come to the Clyde for employment in the Quebec fleet. These men, from their steady and industrious habits, often get a higher rate of wages, the money so earned being generally carried back to their homes at the completion of the fall voyage. On the other hand, the money earned by foreign ships and seamen is nearly all sent out of the country. It may be roughly estimated that something like 100,000 tons of British tonnage has hitherto been employed in the timber-carrying trade, and the present collapse from the want of remunerative employment is a matter to be viewed with deep concern.—*Glasgow Herald, March 22nd.*

**THE WOOD TRADE.**

What the insurance fraternity might term "the war hazard" is being considered just now with reference to prices in many lines of goods. The wood trade we find, is no exception. An active trade in lumber and timber, at good prices, is so important to Canada that the interest felt in the prospects for our lumber in this coming season of navigation is quite natural.

As we note elsewhere the demand for our best pine boards and bill stuff, from the United States, is constant, and the price had advanced even before war with Russia was deemed imminent. But of ordinary or inferior goods there is no scarcity, nor is there for these any decided rise in quotations. Advices from American markets are to the effect that the natural consumptive demand will call for a heavy distribution of lumber. But the late opening of navigation means, as the *Northwestern Lumberman* says, that lumber will come forward late, and that mills will start late; and meanwhile, in the eastern markets, winter has lingered long in the lap of spring and movement is as yet limited. The statement is made, on good authority, that all the cut of good Canadian pine lumber is pretty well placed for spring delivery; and the proportion which this bears to the whole crop is sufficiently small to make a good price certain.

The resume made by our Chicago contemporary on the 11th instant is that while business in

the Eastern States is backward, the distributive trade west of Lake Michigan is active. Building operations in New York and New England cities, however, promise well for the season, and a brisker movement may be expected later. As for Chicago, "it is sufficient to say that shipments in March were considerably in excess of the aggregate in March last year."

Supposing war to be declared there is no doubt that the Baltic would be blockaded, and shipment of lumber thence practically stopped. This means much when we remember that Britain receives most of her timber and deals from Baltic reports. Norway and Sweden constitute the great source of supply, but Russia furnishes no small amount. Russian cruisers might seriously damage the British carrying trade, and give rise to a much greater export from the United States, carrying in American bottoms. According to last mail advices from England stocks at the receiving ports for timber are very low, and imports must be soon begun in order to furnish the yearly supply for that market.

At Liverpool business in wood was paralyzed by uncertainty and transactions limited. "Orders from the country are small in extent and few in number" says the *Timber Trades Journal* of the 4th. With the withdrawal of tonnage from the Atlantic trade in two Cunard mail steamers and two of other lines, some sailing vessels have already been withheld from market, looking for higher freights; 21s. to 22s. Quebec to Liverpool were the figures talked of in the first week of this month. Accounts from other ports in the United Kingdom state that at Hull, the political strain with Russia is still showing its effect on the wood trade. The salesmen are nearly all withdrawn from the road, and there is no desire to sell stock except at an advance.

Slackness of trade is noted at Cardiff; Norway mining timber is a drug there; some Baltic orders in market. A Sunderland letter says the building and shipbuilding trades are far from brisk, and everything points to a bad year. At Leith, "trade remains in the same depressed condition."

Deliveries of wood goods at Glasgow during March fell off nearly a fourth as compared with the previous March and stocks of everything at Yorkhill yards except red pine deals, St. John spruce boards and oak plank were smaller than a twelvemonth before. As to Clyde shipbuilding, the amount of tonnage launched last month has touched a low point, comparatively, the total being 15 vessels, 13,667 tons. The first of the timber fleet, the *Somand*, a Norwegian owned vessel, left Greenock for Quebec on 30th March.—*Monetary Times.*

A KENTUCKY concern is stated to be getting rich out of the manufacture of wooden stirrups.

**OIL IN BOILERS.**

In an article upon a bulge in a boiler, produced when the fires were first banked, after putting a gallon of black oil in the boiler, the *Locomotive* takes occasion to say:—"The action of grease in a boiler is peculiar, but not in so far as we might expect. It does not dissolve in the water, nor does it decompose, neither does it remain on top of the water, but it seems to form itself into what may be described as slugs which at first seem to be slightly lighter than the water, of just such a gravity, in fact, that the circulation of the water carries them about at will. After a short season of boiling, these slugs or suspended drops seem to acquire a certain degree of stickiness, so that when they come into contact with shell and flues of the boiler, they begin to adhere thereto. Then under the action of heat they begin the process of varnishing the interior of the boiler. The thinnest possible coating of this varnish is sufficient to bring about overheating of the plates, as we have found repeatedly in our experience. We emphasize the point that it is not necessary to have a coating of grease of any appreciable thickness to cause overheating and bagging of plates and leakage at seams. The time when damage is most likely to occur is after the fires are banked, for then, the formation of steam being checked, the circulation of water stops, and the grease thus has an opportunity to settle on the bottom of the boiler and prevent contact of the water with the fire sheets. Under these circumstances, a very low degree of heat in the furnace is sufficient to overheat the plates to such an extent that bulging is sure to occur. When the facts are understood, it will be found quite unnecessary to attribute the damage to low water."

**To Clean a File.**

When you are filing a saw and the file gets gummed up don't try to work with it so, or throw it one side and get a new one. If you have no card to clean the file, take a piece of pine wood 2 inch square by 3 or 4 inches long. Rest one end of the file upon the bench; with the little strike the file nearly edgewise with a square corner of the stick following the slant of the teeth. This will clean a file nicely without causing half the wear that a card would. A little practice would enable you to clean a file in half the time it would take you to hunt up a card cleaner.—*Hobart.*

The Harmon Lumber Company, that this winter has built a mill at the point where the Felch mountain branch of the Northwestern railroad crosses the east fork of the Sturgeon, Menominee county, Mich., has 11,000,000 feet of logs ready for sawing. A planing mill has been added to the capacity of the plant. The headquarters of the company is at 158 Superior street Cleveland, Ohio.