CANADA LUMBERMAN

WOOD WORKERS' MANUFACTURERS' AND MILLERS' GAZETTE

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BY

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J. S. ROBERTSON, - - - - EDITOR.

THE CANADA LUMBERMAN is published in the interests of the lumber trade and of allied industries throughout the Dominion, being the only representative in Canada of this foremost branch of the commerce of this country. It aims at giving full and timely information on all subjects touching these interests, discussing these topics editorially and inviting free discussion by others.

Especial pains are taken to secure the latest and most trustworthy market quotations from various points throughout the world, so as to afford to the trade in Canada information on which it can rely in its operations.

Special correspondents in localities of importance present an accurate report not only of prices and the condition of the market, but also of other matters specially interesting to our readers. But correspondence is not only welcome, but is invited from all who have any information to communicate or subjects to discuss relating to the trade or in any way affecting it. Even when we may not be able to agree with the writers we will give them a fair opportunity for free discussion as the best means of eliciting the truth. Any items of interest are particularly requested, for even if not of great importance individually they contribute to a fund of information from which general results are obtained.

Advertisers will receive careful attention and liberal treatment. We need not point out that for many the CANADA LUMBERMAN, with its special class of readers, is not only an exceptionally good medium for securing publicity, but is indispensable for those who would bring themselves before the notice of that class. Special attention is directed to "WANTED" and "FOR SALE" advertisements, *which will be inserted in a conspicuous* position at the uniform price of 15 cents per line for each insertion. Announcements of this character will be subject to a discount of 25 per cent. if ordered for four successive issues or longer.

Subscribers will find the small amount they pay for the CANADA LUMBERMAN quite insignificant as compared with its value to them. There is not an individual in the trade, or specially interested in it, who should not be on our list, thus obtaining the present benefit and aiding and encouraging us to render it even more complete.

LUMBER TO-DAY.

As the fall season opens, business in all lines is expected to be marked by fresh activity. What will be the experience of the lumber trades? is the question that specially concerns lumbermen. A considerable measure of anxiety surrounds the question because of the unexpected and depressed turn that the lumber market has taken in the United States within the past two months.

On the opening of the lumber season in the early spring, lumber in that market could not be supplied fast enough to meet the demand. Prices not only stiffened, but with white pine, advanced from $1 to $3 per thousand over former figures. It was not an unwarranted confidence that caused lumbermen then both in Canada and the States to say plainly that lumber was enjoying a substantial boom. The enjoyment was plainly visible and get-at-able.

The situation has undergone a radical change. Rather more than two months since a measure of concern was observable in lumber quarters, and some lumbermen began to talk cautiously of a reaction. Then followed a tardiness in closing lumber sales. Transactions became slow, then stagnant. A little later word was passed around that this firm and the other were in financial difficulties and some suspended. The banks were reported to have become chary of discounting mercantile paper which a few months earlier they were only too pleased to have the opportunity of melting down for their customers.

These conditions could only have one ending and within the past thirty days the situation has become so serious that the large millmen of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and further yet, down in the southern States, are resolving, after canvassing conditions carefully, to close down their mills at a very early date, for the reason that lumber is not selling, their piling grounds, which, before, were bare, are being awkwardly overcrowded, and a further cut would only aggravate the situation. The Mississippi Valley men have, in solemn convention, already fixed the date for a general closing down of the mills, viz., Sept. 20. In this one case this action will mean that the cut of timber will be reduced by about 1,000,000,000 feet, which represents for cutting and piling a lessening of expenditure by about $1,125,000. As we have intimated, for similar reasons, and where like necessitating conditions exist, the millmen of Michigan, Wisconsin and the southern States are, if they have not already done so before this issue of the LUMBERMAN goes to press, decided on doing as the Mississippi Valley has resolved to do.

This is a plain setting of the situation as it appears at the time of the present writing. The Northwestern Lumberman states the case thus:

"Extreme depression of demand in Saginaw Valley, at Manistee, Menominee, Marinette, Duluth and Minneapolis are noted. The operators who had contracted sales of a large portion of this season's product, and counted on that to help them through the season of quiet demand, are finding that it is one thing to make contracts and receive notes in consideration of sales, and quite another to be able to deliver the lumber and realize on the notes. They find that the notes they have received are not convertible into cash, and it is the money they need to pay current expenses, as nothing else will answer in the present state of prostrated credit. *Hence they might as well have lumber in pile as notes* on which ready funds cannot be realized. Some who had contracted for lumber to be cut, are pleading to have the logs carried over, or the lumber held at the mills, because they do not want to give either notes or cash for it. The lumber is accumulating at the mills in such volume that piling room is becoming exhausted, and the necessity of shutting down the mills is imminent."

It is a satisfaction to be able to say that the circumstances that have led up to these darkened conditions are not inherent to the lumber trade. The monetary disturbances that are *giving so great* trouble to the country to the south, the silver perplexity, in particular, are the root difficulties in the lumber depression. The general distrust that has affected every branch of commerce, shaking public confidence so that a universal shrinkage of trade has been the result, could hardly be expected to leave unmolested any branch of business no matter how flourishing it may have been. It has not done so, and consequently the lumber trade, with other departments of trade, is suffering. The rift in the cloud is to be measured by this fact that when the troubles of the day are conquered lumber will be one of the first trades to recover. Lumber itself, whether in the standing tree in the forest, or in the manufactured stuff in the mill, is as safe a commodity to possess to-day as it was in the month of March, barring this one exception that it may require a little more foresight, a larger patience, and possibly a plethoric bank account to hold on to it to-day for profit.

What is the result of the present situation on the Canadian lumber market? Sympathetic, of course. Our lumber goes in large quantities to the States. What it means to close out, or curtail, to any remarkable extent, this important outlet of lumber production is obvious. Lumber trade is quiet in Canada just now because of the depression in the States. More than this is not unlikely to be an after effect. Neither American lumbermen, who own limits in Canada, nor our own lumbermen, will be disposed to enter extensively into winter work in the woods until the clouds that are thick and black just now show signs of rolling by. The LUMBERMAN believes they will roll by and perhaps in time for substantial gains to come to the trade, in part, this fall. We would, however, be serving the part of a false friend of the trade were we to do otherwise than clearly and fully place before our readers the real situation, adding not thereto, nor taking from, as it exists to-day.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"BENEFITS of Organization," was the title given to a paper read at the recent meeting of the Poplar Manufacturers' Association of the United States by Mr. M. T. Greene, the president. On general principles the benefits that come to any class of men by organization are obvious. There are abuses that grow out of the organization of business men, but it does not follow that these need to be in any way a part of these organizations. During the past month various associations of lumbermen have been meeting in different sections of the United States and a report of the proceedings of these meetings furnish very clear evidence of the advantages that accrue to business men engaged in the same line of business getting close to one another. Organizations of business men are not wanting in Canada. One of the most important of these, the Dominion Millers' Association, held a successful meeting the second week in August. The LUMBERMAN mentions these bare facts not for the purpose of following up the argument for such organizations. This has been done on other occasions in these columns. Moreover, our opinion is that the argument is known to, and realized by, business men of *all* classes. *We simply rise to ask*, as the old Methodist preacher has said, why is it that among these organizations, there is no association of Canadian lumbermen?

CONFIDENCE is born of practice and it is difficult to say what a man may not accomplish in almost any walk of life by persistent effort. In the mechanical arts a dexterity that becomes marvellous is sometimes attained by workmen. These are things to be admired were it not that this dexterity too often develops into the most *terrible recklessness and leads frequently to loss of life.* In our news columns this month is recorded a sad fatality that overtook an expert band sawyer in one of the Ottawa mills, where the body of the man was literally cut in two. We are told by a fellow workman who knew the deceased well that he could do fully twice as much as an ordinary workman. It was his work to run the band saw, and he was noted for his great dexterity in "flipping" the logs on to the carriage. Frequently he had been warned to be more careful, for it was known that the work was surrounded by dangers. *It is no lack of sympathy for the widow and family that* causes friends to say that Marquel might have been living to-day had he heeded these words of caution. Nor is his case exceptional. A fuller knowledge of many accidents that occur in sawmills and elsewhere will show that with many, carelessness and recklessness on the part of the injured ones were the bottom cause. Particulars are before us of a recent accident where an oiler in a mill went about his work with some cotton waste sticking out of a pocket. The waste caught on a projecting set-screw, then his clothing caught, and the result was the man was killed. Eternal vigilance, it has been well remarked, is the price of safety in the mill.

VARIOUS and queer are some of the notions entertained in regard to money. Why cannot the government make money enough to meet all wants of its people? is the stupid question asked not unfrequently by people who would be insulted were you to intimate that they were stupid. The United States has been filling its treasury for months back with silver dollars at the rate of four million a month, and while its vaults have been full to bursting the country has been passing through a tryingly severe financial depression. The condition is not at all novel to students of economic subjects. The history of the English land bank scheme, the Rhode Island paper bank experiment, the John Law bubble in France, the land loan fiasco of the Argentine Republic, the crop moving paper currency of Mississippi, the banking mistakes of Alabama and Michigan are examples illustrating the inevitable result of schemes to inflate the circulation with cheap and valueless money. To borrow an illustration from Adam Smith, even sensible men forget sometimes that the highway to a particular place is not the place itself—the houses and lands. It is simply a means of reaching the place. Money is only a vehicle of exchange, and must have behind it something which is something. Dollar bills may be run off the printing press to advertise the wonderful values that some shoddy dealer is offering in pants, but when you come to buy the pants you must put a more tangible value behind the handsomely printed bill the same dealer has given you. The money issued by tailor or government is worthless if it has nothing substantial as its real representative.