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### A PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE.

The number of lumber markets of importance which are springing up in the United States appear to be effecting the great centres of the lumbering business, where wholesale dealers did a large trade. The *Northwestern Lumberman* refers to this, under the above heading, as follows:

"The rule of division is becoming more and more applied to the lumber business. This application is opposite to concentration and multiplication of stocks at different markets. The tendency is to scatter markets and sources of supply, and break up old lines and directions of trade. By this manner of stating the case we mean to assert that whereas a few years ago there were main sources of lumber supply to the distributive trade, like Albany, Buffalo, Tonawanda, Saginaw, Toledo, Chicago, and the river towns, now there are many more points that are dipping into the distributive trade, which are scattered along the railroads in Michigan and Wisconsin, and rising up constantly around the lakes on the Mississippi river. Manufacturers who were once content to sell their lumber in block, are now eager to embark in the assorting and piling business. Muskegon is trying it, both at home and in Michigan City. There is a considerable car trade at the Saginaws, and it is increasing. The Menominee manufacturers are beginning to pile at the mills, for shipment from there partly, instead of altogether from this city. The railroad mills of interior Michigan do an extensive car trade in Ohio and Indiana. The same class of mills in Wisconsin ship assorted lumber in large quantities into Iowa, south Dakota, Nebraska, and to some extent into Kansas. Eau Claire, whose manufacturers once rafted all their lumber to points down the river, now pile probably 50,000,000 feet, and would pile more if they were sure of competitive freight rates. Only within recent years have Duluth and other Lake Superior shore mills been competitors for the southwestern trade, while the Lake Superior regions of northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin are being cut up by new railroads, designed to draw off the abounding pine into western and southwestern distribution.

All this opening up of new outlets, and leading them with new mills, tends to divert lumber from the oldtime points of concentration. As a natural consequence it is increasingly difficult to control trade and prices. Every new railroad brings in a new factor in the freight problem, and a new competition in the distributive fields. When Chicago had only to watch Oshkosh, Stevens Point, and a half dozen mid die river markets, the problem was much less difficult than it is now, since the merchants have to watch all creation and Duluth besides. Freight, prices and delivered lists must now be adjusted with reference to an appalling

variety of competition. The lumber merchant here must have a head on his shoulders that is capable of comprehending a complex situation, and then, do the best he can, he is often chagrined to find out that somebody up above Wausau has beaten him out of his trade in Nebraska.

Chicago merchants are not alone in this difficulty. Some of the Eau Claire manufacturers stopped piling this season because their freight rates were arbitrated too high. St. Paul and Minneapolis on the one hand, and this city on the other, are vying with each other to see which can complain the loudest about discriminating rates and rival cutting of prices. A hundred points are pulling out with all their might to secure a share of the trade. Every body appears to desire to leave his lumber at the feet of the retail yard dealer and consumer in car load lots. All seem to want to ignore the great wholesale markets as much as possible. The effect is to increase competition and render the condition of trade exceedingly complex. It tends to uncertainty of prices. It is more difficult now than formerly to preserve a reasonable uniformity of prices between the different markets. Outside points profess to gauge their prices by those prevailing in Chicago, but lists emanating from this city are only a guide by which prices at outside places may be cut. Before there were so many railroads running into the interior of Wisconsin and Michigan, and reaching out into all fields of distribution, the leading markets on the lakes and rivers could easily control a relative range of values. Now it is impossible.

It is an interesting question as to what ultimate effect this cutting up of trade will have on the great wholesale markets. Will they gradually diminish in importance, or they will continue to hold their own against a multitude of small competitors? Coming into the problem is the changing character of the supply—the gradual diminishment of the proportion of good lumber in the older forest sections, and the increased proportion of coarse stuff. If the great markets keep up their assortments, as they must, as the only means of holding trade, there will have to be a vast amount of hunting through the woods in order to pick up the better grades. This will again complicate the distribution of stock. Indeed there is much of this eccentric movement going on now. It is difficult to determine how the stocks in the larger centres are to be kept full at a profit under the circumstances that are sure to arise in the not far off future."

### MARKET FOR CANADIAN WOODS.

Mr. Edward Jack, Crown timber agent for New Brunswick, who represented his province at the Forestry Exhibition in Edinburgh, writes an interesting letter to the *St. John Globe* in reference to the hardwoods needed in Scotland,

the uses to which they are put and the manner in which they should be prepared for the English and Scotch markets. His observations are the results of interviews with Mr. T. R. Vaux, of Dewsbury, near Leeds, and Messrs. John T. Connell & Co., 106 and 108 Bothwell street, Glasgow, the latter being what are called in Glasgow "American merchants." We quote from Mr. Jack somewhat freely, as the information he imparts may prove of value to shippers in this part of Canada.—

Mr. Vaux says black birch is much used for the making of chairs and for cornice pieces, which are from five feet six inches to eight feet in length; their diameter two and a half inches. It is used in the making of tables, wardrobes and bedroom furniture in general, and in the manufacture of machinery, especially that which is employed in woollen mills; it is also largely used for making drawer knobs. It would sell much better than it does were it sent in planks of from 2½ to 4 inches thick, and from 9 inches wide up.

The markings effect the price very much, and prettily marked birch should be shipped in planks from five to nine inches thick, by being shipped in planks the character of the marking can be seen, and this will pretty much increase the value.

BEECH.—This wood is used for saw handles and tools generally and for saddle trees. Butts having a diameter of from 20 to 30 inches are used for mangle rollers in the manufacture of woollen goods, the length should be from 5 to 10 feet.

MAPLE. Ordinary maple is used for the same general purposes as birch. Birdseye maple is not yet very extensively used, but is coming into fashion fast, as light-colored woods are being much more used for bed room furniture than formerly; it had better be sent in the log, choice markings will command a high price; length should be six and a half feet and its multiples.

ASH.—English ash is becoming very scarce, the demand far exceeds the supply, the gray, the yellow and the white would be the varieties most in demand, they might be sent in planks the same as birch.

Cedar planks might be tried if sound and clean. It should be three inches thick and 11 inches and upwards in width.

Mr. Connell said that his experience with Canada had not been very satisfactory, especially in the matter of sawing, if it were inch stuff that he had agreed for, he would be sent material ranging from three-quarters to one and a quarter inches. He further said that, in dealing with Scotland, dimension stuff must be strictly adhered to. A large quantity of broom handles are used in Glasgow, he said. London and Liverpool, however, were the best markets for disposing of them. Spruce or pine is usually used in their manufacture. The length is

forty-eight inches; diameter, one and an eighth inches. They are required to be free from knots and perfectly smooth. He thinks they might be very well made from slabs, as they are usually, he says, made from waste wood. The finest quality of them, he says, can be bought in New York cased at \$16 per M.; ordinary ones at a much less rate.

Handles of picks, hammers, sledges, etc., are made of hickory. A considerable quantity of rock maple, Mr. Connell says, could be disposed of. It should be cut to sizes either in boards or possibly in square or other sizes of given length and thicknesses. It would require to be entirely free from rots, shakes, blemishes, hearts and sap wood. I have already had several enquiries about hemlock for the purpose of coarse box-making, and people here who understand woods well think that sound hemlock will answer very well for that purpose.

Mr. Jack promises further information after visiting London. He is, says the *Montreal Herald*, a first-class authority on the woods of New Brunswick, and one of his objects in visiting Britain is to find, if possible, openings for the sale of those New Brunswick woods for which at present there is a limited market. Mr. Jack is very thorough in observation and will be found very practical in his advice.

### INVESTMENTS IN THE SOUTH.

The *Baltimore Manufacturers Record* makes a semi-annual statement of the progress in the South during the last six months, showing an investment of nearly seventy millions in new and enlarged industrial enterprises, as follows:

The aggregate investments foot up \$69,221,000, Alabama heading the list with \$13,840,000; Kentucky \$13,840,000, Virginia \$11,032,000, Texas \$7,934,000, Tennessee \$4,840,000, Georgia \$3,759,000, Maryland \$2,831,000, North Carolina \$2,633,000, West Virginia \$2,423,000, Florida \$1,506,000, Arkansas \$700,000, and Mississippi \$767,000, Louisiana \$1,830,000, South Carolina \$1,629,000.

The lumbermen of Georgia and Alabama have held a convention at Atlanta and passed a resolution that if necessary for the protecting of the milling interest, a stock company of the saw mill men should be organized and a lumber yard be opened in Atlanta, to be conducted through an agent to be elected by a board of five directors. This stock company to advance a certain per cent of cash to the shipper, and then hold the lumber until the company can dispose of it to the dealers, and they will remit balance to shipper, retaining a small per cent, which is to be used as a fund to operate the business and to defray incidental expenses, etc. *Saw Mill Gazette.*

When a saw has cracked near the teeth, to prevent its continuing, drill a small hole at the end of the crack. This is said to be effectual.