

1897

Review of the Lumber Trade of the Year.

GENERAL SURVEY.

In some respects the year 1897 marks one of the most important periods in the history of the lumber trade. Viewed from a Dominion standpoint, there is evidence that, notwithstanding trade obstacles and uncertainties, a steady advancement has been made. New markets have been found, and the foundation laid in new fields of what promises in early years to become an extensive and profitable business. That the year was not satisfactory in every respect cannot be disputed.

There was reason to expect, early in the spring, that trade with the United States would show a considerable expansion, and that prices would improve. The disturbance caused by the Presidential election had become settled, and with the resulting general improvement in business, a heavy consumption of lumber by the United States was looked for. But the industrial establishments had felt the depression seriously, and were not disposed to contract too heavily in advance of requirements until the stability of the much-talked-of improvement was thoroughly tested. The demand for lumber continued fair until the summer months, when there was a sharp falling off. At that time indications pointed to the imposition by the McKinley government of a duty on lumber, and Canadian manufacturers, to avoid payment of the duty, shipped large quantities of stock to the Eastern States, to be piled in yards until it could be marketed. The expected happened, and before the close of the month of July the Dingley bill had become law, imposing a two-dollar duty on lumber. For the balance of the year the shipments to the United States market were of little account. Excellent crops in the Western States created an active demand for lumber, and this provided an outlet for much stock which would otherwise have been thrown upon the eastern states. In turn the eastern market improved, and stocks of Canadian lumber were well consumed before the close of the year. But storage and commission charges and other expenses had wiped out much of the profit to the Canadian manufacturer. It will thus be seen that the United States trade was not altogether satisfactory.

To the extent that the United States trade was curtailed, the European demand widened. Increased shipments were made from Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and where deals a few years ago included almost the total export, large quantities of thin lumber were exported in 1897 to Great Britain, France, Spain, Australia, China, Japan, and other countries. This trade is referred to in detail in the review of the provinces following. The bulk of the foreign shipments were sold at good prices. This cannot be said of the United States and local trade. Prices during the year were low, and profits to manufacturers less than was hoped for.

Only one important sale of timber limits was

held by the Ontario government during the year. Some 150 miles in northwestern Ontario were sold at fair prices. Perhaps the most important feature of the year was the passing of an act by this government compelling the manufacture of timber within the province.

The outlook for 1898 is not altogether promising. There are gleams of sunshine and clouds of darkness. A better feeling seems to exist among the lumber trade generally, based largely upon improved local conditions, decreased production, and the expansion of foreign business, whereby our manufacturers will be less dependent upon the United States.

ONTARIO.

The conditions surrounding the manufacture of lumber in Ontario were not favorable to a profitable business. The production of logs last winter in the Ottawa and Georgian Bay districts, the two pine centres of the province, was greater than in the previous season. Many manufacturers looked forward to a good year's trade, but it soon became evident that the United States market was to be partially closed by a two dollar duty. This was the means of reducing the cut by Georgian Bay manufacturers, who are largely dependent upon the United States market. The Ottawa Valley manufacturers were less seriously affected, having disposed of a large portion of their output in the fall of 1896 to representatives of British houses. As will be observed by the figures given below, the production of the Ottawa valley exceeded that of the previous season by 114,000,000 feet.

So far as western Ontario is concerned, pine manufacturers done business on a smaller margin of profit than in 1896. Low grade lumber was difficult to dispose of even before the duty was imposed, and since then there has been little demand from the United States for anything but high class stock, for which a market can always be found. The local trade has shown a gradual improvement, but collections during the year were slow.

In the Georgian Bay section many mill owners are turning their attention to the manufacture of deals for the British market, and their experience during the past season in this direction is said to have been very satisfactory. Pine stocks at the mills are not excessive, although quite ample and consisting chiefly of the lower grades.

The hardwoods were not affected by the duty to the same extent as pine. Birch and basswood were dull of sale early in the year, but improved towards the fall. Ash, elm and oak advanced in price to the extent of the duty, and dry stocks were well sold out before the close of the year. Some complaint is heard that present prices do not leave an ample margin of profit for the manufacturer. An instance of this may be found in the case of hemlock, which sold throughout western Ontario at \$6 per thousand feet.

Very few shingles were manufactured last year, and a strong demand late in the season resulted in a scarcity of stock. There is likely to be an increased production in 1898.

The cut of several mills in western Ontario is given below. These figures are not intended to represent the total production of the district, as up to the time of going to press the particulars

of the cut of a number of mills had not come to hand:

CUT OF SOME WESTERN ONTARIO MILLS.

	Feet.
Georgian Bay Lumber Co., Waubaushene	26,000,000
Victoria Harbor Lumber Co., Victoria Harbor	23,000,000
Jas. Playfair & Co., Midland (21,000,000 for Arthur Hill & Co.)	24,000,000
Mickle, Dymont & Son, Barrie	15,000,000
Spanish River Lumber Co., Spanish River	14,600,000
Robert Thompson & Co., Hamilton	12,000,000
Ontario Lumber Co., French River	10,000,000
A. McPherson & Co., Longford Mills	6,750,000
Collins Inlet Lumber Co., Collins Inlet	5,000,000
Mossom Boyd & Co., Bobcaygeon	6,000,000
A. Tait, Orillia	3,000,000
Loveland, Roys & White, Midland	7,000,000
Charles Newton & Sons, Midland	5,000,000
Huntsville Lumber Co., Huntsville	4,500,000
Wm. Laking, Hamilton	3,000,000
Whaley Lumber Co., Huntsville	2,500,000
John Harrison, Owen Sound	3,000,000
Blind River Lumber Co., Blind River	2,000,000
Snider Lumber Co., Gravenhurst	3,000,000
Cockburn & Sons, Sturgeon Falls	3,000,000
D. Davidson, Penetanguishene	2,800,000
Keeling & Bower, Warren	1,500,000
Mitchell Bros., Berkeley	2,000,000
Warrell & Howard, Powassan	1,000,000
Craig & Austin, Kinmount	1,500,000
John P. Newman, Warton	3,500,000
Vigars & Co., Port Arthur	2,000,000
J. E. Murphy, Hepworth Station	2,200,000
Thomson & Avery, Sharbot Lake	3,000,000
Goderich Lumber Co., Goderich	3,500,000
W. D. Vansickle, Barrie	1,250,000
W. Wenger & Bros., Ayton	1,000,000
Sadler, Dundas & Flavell Milling Co., Lindsay	2,000,000
C. Beck Mfg. Co., Penetanguishene	1,000,000
Reid Bros., Hepworth Station	800,000
J. A. Shaver, Ancaster	750,000
Kidd & Morrow	700,000
Pickard & Rowan, Owen Sound	800,000
W. A. Gillespie, Bracebridge	750,000

The mills of several of the largest companies were not operated last year. Among these might be mentioned the Parry Sound Lumber Company; Cook Bros., Cooks Mills; Conger Lumber Company, Parry Sound; Longford Lumber Co., Longford Mills; J. & T. Conlon, Little Current, and the Dickson Company, Peterboro'. The output of Chew Bros.' mills at Midland was 15,000,000 feet of lumber, 4,000,000 lath and 3,000,000 shingles. This was cut under contract for Loveland, Roys & White, Chas. Newton & Sons and Wm. Laking. James Playfair & Company's mill at same place manufactured for Arthur Hill & Co. The C. Beck Mfg. Company, of Penetanguishene, operated their mill only for a short time, sawing about one million feet.

The lumber production of the Ottawa valley in 1897 was 728,000,000 feet, against 614,000,000 feet in 1896 and 627,000,000 feet in 1895. The individual cuts for two years appear below.

OTTAWA VALLEY PRODUCTION.

	1896—Feet.	1897—Feet.
J. R. Booth, Ottawa	115,000,000	130,000,000
Gilmour & Co., Canoe Lake	55,000,000	60,000,000
Hull Lumber Co.	54,000,000	70,000,000
McLachlin Bros., Arnprior	52,000,000	50,000,000
Bronsons & Weston Co., Ottawa	52,000,000	55,000,000
Hawkesbury Lumber Co.	43,000,000	50,000,000
W. C. Edwards & Co., Rockland	40,000,000	70,000,000
St. Anthony Lumber Co., Whitney	35,000,000	50,000,000
Gillies Bros., Braeside	30,000,000	40,000,000
Gilmour & Hughson, Hull	25,000,000	18,000,000
Shepherd & Morse Co., New Edinburgh	20,000,000	12,000,000
Canada Lumber Co., Carleton Place	16,000,000	12,000,000
R. & W. Conroy, Deschenes Mills	15,000,000	12,000,000
Wm. Mason & Son, Ottawa	12,000,000	15,000,000
Pembroke Lumber Co.	11,000,000	11,000,000
Ottawa Lumber Co., Calumet	11,000,000	12,000,000
Ross Bros., Buckingham	10,000,000	14,000,000
McLaren Estate, Buckingham	8,000,000	8,000,000
R. H. Klock & Co., Aylmer	3,500,000	3,000,000
J. R. & J. Gillies, Arnprior	3,250,000	5,000,000
A. Hagar & Co., Plantaganet	2,500,000	4,000,000
A. & P. White, Pembroke	2,500,000	4,000,000
Total	614,250,000	728,000,000

It will be observed that in the estimate for last year a cut of 55,000,000 feet is credited to Gilmour & Co., of Canoe Lake, while their cut of 1896, which was somewhat smaller, is not taken into consideration. This, and increased cuts by the St. Anthony Lumber Co., J. R. Booth, Mc-