

PROFITS IN THE LONDON TIMBER TRADE.

Dealing in lumber after the English method appears to be a very profitable business, judging by the promises of the scheme of organization of two timber corporations which have recently been formed in London. The particulars of the organization of Powis, Bryant & Powis, limited, under the companies act, were given some weeks ago. The capital stock was £200,000 (\$1,000,000) divided into 200,000 shares at £1 (\$5) each. One of the inducements to invest was the promise (implied, at least) that the shareholders would receive a dividend of 10 per cent each year. This enterprise has been followed by another, namely the incorporation of William Oliver & Sons, limited, on a similar basis. The house is old one in the timber trade. The prospectus states that "the company is formed for the purpose of acquiring and still further developing the lucrative business of Wm. Oliver & Sons, mahogany, wainscot, timber merchants and importers, and dealers in every kind of wood in use, which has been carried on in London for two generations and has now a world-wide reputation." The capital stock of the proposed company is £200,000 (\$1,000,000) in 200,000 shares at £1 (\$5) each. Of this amount 175,000 shares are offered to the public at the premium of 10s. (\$2.50) per share, the vendors taking the remaining shares in part payment of their good will, etc. The directors are Thomas Oliver, Harry Webb, Joseph Aldridge Oliver and Edward Aldridge Oliver, who will have power to add to their number. The vendors are Edward Aldridge Oliver and Thomas Oliver who transfer to the company their stock in trade as valued by them at the ordinary stocktaking purpose of the firm and the sum so ascertained will be paid by the company, with interest thereon at five per cent per annum until paid. The good will, leases, appliances, plant, etc., will be transferred for the 25,000 shares, as fully paid up shares, together with £75,000, being the proceeds of 50,000 of the shares offered for public subscription. The premiums on the remaining 125,000 shares will belong to the company.

The lucrative character of the business will be inferred from the statement that "for three years the vendors guarantee a dividend of 10 per cent. per annum on the paid up share capital of the first or present issue of \$200,000, it being understood that the surplus over 10 per cent in any year is to be credited as against the guarantee of the following or preceding year. The vendors will deposit securities to be approved by the company's brokers to the value of \$30,000 with the company's bankers as a running security for the due performance of their guarantee." What American corporation dare undertake to have a dividend of 10 per cent. per annum on its capital stock and put up the bonds to secure the payment! The vendors undertake not to receive during the first three years any remuneration whatever for their services until the shareholders have received 10 per cent. on the paid up share capital. This promise seems superfluous in view of the deposits of bonds to secure the payment, but the security would be devoured should there be a failure for more than one year to pay the dividend.

Northwestern manufacturers of lumber (American) are suspected of making more than 10 per cent. profit, but they are those who have purchased the timber lands and get their stock from the stump. American lumber dealers generally would be well pleased, we believe, with a guarantee of ten per cent. dividend on the capital invested. The impression we have of England is of a land where money is cheap and the people satisfied with small profits, but that must be a mistaken notion if the profits in the English timber trade afford a fair sample of the earnings of capital invested in trade over there.—*Lumberman's Gazette*.

The *Forester* says:—We learn that the timber in the townships to the east of Huntsville, which as yet has never been tapped by the lumbermen's axe, is likely to be put on the market by the Ontario Government next year. Already several lumber firms have had men ranging through the bush spying out the best limits.

THE CHEAP AND THE DEAR SELLER.

It is not the first law of economics that the cheap seller will supersede the dear seller and get all his market away? Certainly that is true in the long run, but is not true in five minutes. The difficulties in the way of the "undercutter" or underseller are very great indeed. In the first place "the trade" hate him, and the hatred of the trade is unpleasant—good assistants shunning the banned shop—or, in the strictly organized trades intolerable. Effort after effort has been made to beat the bakers, who hold very closely together, but with very little result. They will let down prices to a point, but no further, being quite aware that in all trades which take root there limits to competition. Two half-pence on two loaves are not equal to a penny on one loaf when the ovens will only hold so many loaves. Then the buyer who cares about the fall of a penny is always wanting credit, and does not like to quit the man who will give it, and who regards desertion as the unpardonable sin. Moreover, he, or rather she, believes in the customary price, and, whatever the newspapers may say, cannot get rid of the impression that somehow the underseller is giving her, in some way, inferior quality for her money—a belief diligently encouraged by the regular tradesman. And lastly, the underseller being anxious mainly for accidental custom, is neither so obliging, nor so patient, nor so careful about deliveries as his established rival. So strongly do these three causes work together, that we have heard of instances in which bakers in populous districts have bought their underselling rival's stocks, and sold them at their own prices without their customers either knowing or resenting the tax so directly levied. The force of habit, which even arrests downfalls in bread, is much stronger as to articles less needed and less accurately understood, till we arrive at cases in which, as in the milk trade, cheapness is positively suspected or disliked, as if it must of necessity be based upon some fraud. Of course, in the end, if wholesale prices are low, the undersellers win, and the new price establishes itself, in which case we to the retailer when wholesale prices rise. They have to endure a storm of inquiries, oburgations and epithets which must take the sweetness of their previous gain quite out of them, and very often are compelled to yield and compensate themselves by unsuspected reductions in quality. As a rule, however, the demand that a customary and low price should be lower still comes with surprising slowness, and the distributors, when their wholesale market has given way, enjoy unexpected profits continuously for months. The public will not, in this instance, grudge the shopkeepers their gains, for they had previously been suffering greatly from different causes—one being the difficulty of meeting the competition of the stores, but they certainly for some time past have had cause to bless the "general depression."—*Exchange*.

THE NEW WAY AND THE OLD.

How natural it is for a man who assumes a position to criticize the condition in which he finds things, and the work and arrangement of his predecessor. How many times in visiting manufacturing concerns have we had the faults, neglects and errors of "the fellow who was here before me," diated upon by some new broom whose sharp corners and trim edges were already, we could see, beginning to wear off, and whose "head," as the politicians say, would doubtless some day "come off" with quite as many faults upon it to be diated upon by his successor. Very few of us indeed could step down and out upon short notice and leave the affairs of our office in a state which could not be criticized with some degree of truth by our successor.

With these facts in mind an engineer who accepts a situation should find all the fault which there are about it, seek for all the points where improvement can be made, and then set quietly about having the requisite changes made. He will not gain any particular respect to himself, nor any special reputation for smartness, by parading his superior knowledge and ability, and will make the best impression even

upon his employer by quietly calling his attention to the advantages to be derived from a change without finding fault with the condition in which you found it, or by respectfully insisting that an element of danger be removed without any uncomplimentary allusions to the man who preceded him. In suggesting improvements it is well to commence with small and inexpensive changes, which will pay a large percentage upon the amount expended in making them. If in such matters the employer finds the advice of his engineer to be good, his judgment sound, and that his cash balance is heavier for having followed them, he will be more ready to trust him with the handling of more important matters. He should, at the first opportunity, make a thorough inspection into the condition of his boilers in regard to their freedom from corrosion, scale and dirt, see that the passages to the water gauge are free, that the gauge cocks are clean, that the safety valve is large enough to clear the boiler of all the steam which it can possibly make, is in no danger of sticking from corrosion, and is not piped so that the water of condensation can stand upon its back. The safety valves for many boilers are figured from the grate surface alone, and this is frequently increased after the boiler has been in use, without a corresponding increase in the safety valve. Having determined the boiler to be in a safe and economical condition, or make it so if it is not, the engine should be looked over carefully for signs of wear, for errors in the setting of the valves, or for any chance of improvement as regards economy or safety. The same attention should be paid to the piping and accessories, never having sufficient confidence in your predecessor to take it for granted that he leaves things all right, while exercising sufficient charity towards him not making his failings your chief topic of conversation.—*Boston Journal of Commerce*.

BOSTON BUSINESS.

The local railway are buying absolutely nothing, a somewhat unusual circumstance for this season. At this date they have always been about with their plans for the coming summer and fall, but the most diligent inquiry can elicit nothing yet in prospect for depot, bridge or car work. Per contra, the Baltimore & Ohio has just closed up its Boston negotiations that foot its purchase of nearly four million, while the Pennsylvania and some of the western roads are gathering in about the same oxaggregate, with one well known Boston road that runs west of Chicago wanting about 2,000,000 feet in one lot for new car works.

"Nothing doing" is the ready response in every lumber office to the inquiry "How's the trade?" Yet at no time for several years has there been so many schedules floating about as now, and not often so many large ones. One new mill, to take over 2,000,000, is hanging around, while a host of small mills from 30,000 to 100,000 are looking for a hook to hang upon. The mills both south and north are bulls in the market, and decline to take orders except at full, and in some instances advanced, prices.

A couple of random cargoes of hemlock surprised the market the first of the week, the skipper snapped \$13, his first bid, and then "blowed great guns" an hour afterwards because he was 50 cents behind high water mark. However this little Doane-street episode established a value, filled an anxious gap, and puts the market rather softly on \$13 for random and \$14 to \$14.50 for such dule.

Builders have idled away the week gossiping over the prospect. They find lumber, labor and hardware disposed to inflate, and some who have deservng suburban schemes in hand profess to believe that any advance over last summer's values will break up their plans. The new circuit of the Boston & Albany roads round and through the Newtons, that was to open last spring, and then in October, and now procrastinates until April, gave evidence of getting a \$100,000 syndicate to build and boom this desirable locality, but the cost of the land and the lumber, they say, has already boomed them out of sight.—*Manufacturer's Gazette*.

SHILOH'S CATARRH REMEDY a positive cure for Catarrh, Diptheria and Canker Mouth. For sale by Ormond & Walsh, druggists, Peterborough.

PREVENTION OF FIRES.

There are some things quite interesting in a late circular issued by the Home Insurance Company of New York. A graphic diagram is given showing at a glance the proportion of causes to the whole number of fires that occurred in the United States for the year of 1894. From this diagram, it appears that most of the causes are incendiary, though a large portion of them are from defective flues, carelessness and other things that might be classed as preventable. Five-ninths of the fires are traceable to incendiary, two-ninths to defective flues, one-twelfth to matches, the same to explosions of lamps and lanterns and general carelessness and one-fifteenth each to lightning, spontaneous combustion and stoves and stove pipes. Many of these, it can be readily seen, could have been avoided by the exercise of ordinary prudence and foresight. Incendiarism is referred to as its "proportions could be materially reduced if each agent would be careful to ascertain the just value of property offered for insurance, and then firmly decline to insure or permit other insurance in excess of three-fourths of such value." No doubt many fires from this cause could be prevented by such a course of action but the eagerness on the part of agents receiving commissions on the amount of business done by them, greatly militates against carrying anything of this kind into practice to its full purpose. Fires caused by boilers and steam pipes are of infrequent occurrence, yet the location of the latter is of sufficient importance to speak of, in that they should not be allowed to come into contact with wood or anything liable to combustion, and should be so placed as not to serve as a convenient respectable for various odds and ends about the factory. The best plan to pursue is to suspend the pipes overhead at a proper distance from the ceiling, as they are then out of the way, in as safe a position as possible, and capable of heating the space allotted to them as well as if placed in any other position.—*Boston Journal of Commerce*.

MALAYAN TIMBERS.

The advocates of the use of jarrah wood ought not to be too sanguine regarding the alleged pre-eminent qualities of that kind of timber, if any confidence is to be placed in the following extract from a recent issue of the *Australian Register*:—

"It would appear that the Western Australia jarrah wood is just as susceptible to the attacks of the cobra (teredos navalis) in water as it is to those of white ants on shore. The Whampoa, on her southern trip, took down a piece cut from one of the trial piles of the jetty, planted some months ago, which was thoroughly perforated by the sea worm. As the jetty piles are to be sheathed with copper, and the wood has otherwise proved to be very serviceable for piles, we do not suppose any alteration of timber will be ordered, as, as yet, the cobra has found it just as difficult to eat its way through metal in the water as the omnivorous white ants have on shore. True, it may be only a question of time and education, but until it is proved that iron and copper are no protection against the insects' encroachments it may be as well to chance it."

It is surprising that the enterprising contractors and engineers of numerous docks and jetties in Europe, as well as in countries less favored with valuable timbers, have never directed their attention to the serviceableness and proved capability of Ballow, Rassak, Billion, and Tumbusoo for such purposes. These timbers have been entirely used in the construction of the Singapore and other East Indian piers and docks, and have given the utmost satisfaction. Ballow seems, however, to be the timber in greatest request, and large quantities of it have been exported from Singapore to India, China, Ceylon and Australia for this special purpose.

A *Port Sound* paper gives the scale of a single tree, cut at a Skagit river camp, as follows, the tree being cut into three 24-foot logs; Butt, 7,512 feet; second log, 5,732 feet, and top 5,826 feet—a total of 20,080 feet of lumber in the tree. The diameter at the small end of the logs was 78, 71, and 64 inches, respectively.