

RETIREMENT OF MR. ROBERT THACKRAY.

The friendly relations existing between Mr. Robert Thackray, of Ottawa, and his employees, were exemplified on the 30th of April last, when, upon the occasion of his retirement from active business life, he was presented by the employees of the firm with an address and a handsome gold watch. The address, which was read by Mr. E. P. McGrath, was as follows :

DEAR SIR, —On the occasion of your severing your connection with the active work of your factory we desire to express to you our sincere appreciation of the many kindresses which we have received at your hands during the years when we have been associated together and our regret that the pleasant connection between you, as our employer, and ourselves as employees, is about to be broken.

"Some of our number have been continually in your employ for twenty years, and others but a shorter time, but we can unite in saying that the relations which have



MR. ROBERT THACKRAY.

existed between master and men have always been of a most friendly character.

"Those of us who know you best have most to say in your praise and we can all recall many acts of kindness from you which showed your thought of your men was of a deeper character than our simple business connection.

"The understanding between us is shown by the fact that during all the years of our connection we have never had any unpleasant disagreements, which in other places have taken place between the working men and their employers.

"And now when the time has come when these pleasant relations are to cease, we ask your acceptance of the accompanying small token of our regard for you, feeling that though not so closely connected in business, that in any time of need, we can find a friend in the one who has so long been our employer.

"We unite in extending to you our best wishes and our hope that you may be spared to years of usefulness and to the performance of those kindly acts which have always made your employees look to you as a friend."

Mr. Thackray expressed his gratitude for the gift, and for the kindly words contained in the address, in the following poetical fashion :

Words fail entirely to express
My thanks to you for this address,
So take the action for the word,
I bow ; to speak would be absurd.
Well I remember in past years
You shared my cares and hopes and fears,
When friends were few, and I in need,
You often proved a friend indeed.
When fortune frowned upon our will,
And fire disastrous burned our mill,
Your sympathy expanded then
And kindness made us better men.
Farewell. May we forever be
In bonds of closest sympathy ;
Let us each others burdens bear
Until we reach that higher sphere.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Mr. Robert Thackray was born at Leeds, England in the year of the Queen's coronation, 1837. At 15 years of age he was apprenticed in Leeds to the carpenter and joiner trade, and at the age of 21 years, on reading of the bright prospects for young men in Canada, and of the Queen's decision to make Ottawa the seat of government he decided to come west. Landing in Ottawa in 1858 with a small clothes box, a carpenter's tool chest and four English shillings in his pocket, Mr. Thackray worked at the carpenter's bench for five years. In the interval he married a Mrs. Davidson, a young widow, and by strict economy saved enough to start a small sash and door factory, which has now grown to be one of the most extensive and best equipped establishments in Canada, shipping large quantities of pine doors and box boards to Great Britain and other foreign countries. His business premises have twice been burned to the ground, entailing severe losses, but he has always managed to pay 100 cents on the dollar. The business at present employs 125 hands.

Some years ago Mr. Thackray bought timber limits on the Quyon river, Pontiac Co., Quebec, and built a saw mill there, the product of the mill being shipped to Ottawa to be manufactured into doors, sash, etc.

His family consists of one son, one daughter, and two step-sons, all married. He has now retired from active work, leaving the business in the sole control of his son and step-son. The name of the new firm is Davidson & Thackray.

THE SWEDISH TIMBER INDUSTRY.

In a recent special issue of Timber, London, Eng., Gustaf Peters has an interesting article entitled "A Short Survey of the Development of the Swedish Timber Industry," which is well written and very interesting. The export timber trade was commenced, according to this author, about sixty years ago, the first steam saw mill being erected in Sweden in 1848. It is said to have caused a complete revolution in the trade. At the time this mill was built the total export from Sweden of sawn wood was 132,000 standards, of the value of about 13,000,000 kroner (one kroner being equal to nearly 27 cents). Twenty years later it had reached 550,000 standards, valued at 50,000,000 kroner, while in 1896 about 1,100,000 standards were exported, of the value of more than 100,000,000 kroner. The export was chiefly to Great Britain. The freight from the Baltic to London varied during the first decades of this century from £5 to £10 per standard. The import duties in England from 1820 to 1831 were about £13 9s per standard for sawn timber and £9 15s for hewn timber ; and in 1842 the duty was reduced to £5 and £3 12s respectively, and ten years later it was further reduced to £1 10s and £1 2s 6d. In 1866 it was abolished altogether. To show how little of the high price paid went into the pockets of the producer, the following details of a shipment made in 1820 are given :

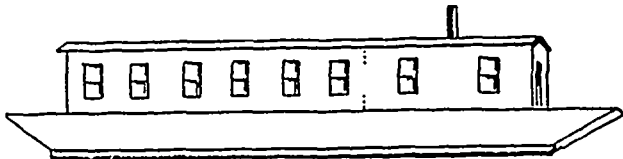
100 standards deals sold to London..	£2,864
Deductions :	
Freight.....	£ 448
Duty.....	1,990
Sundry expenses in London.....	102
Commission and del credere.....	143
	£2,683
Surplus.....	£181

In olden days immense quantities of waste timber and refuse were burnt in specially built furnaces, whereas now the smallest laths are used, and the remaining refuse is converted into charcoal, a by-product which now brings into the mills from £4,000,000 to £6,000,000 per annum. The first planing mill for export purposes was built about 1858, and the first joinery mill about the same time.

The wood pulp industry is of recent origin, but is, nevertheless, a very important business. The first mill for mechanical pulp was erected in 1857, and the first mill to produce chemical pulp in 1872. The annual export of mechanical pulp now amounts to about 80,000 tons, valued at 5,000,000 kroner, and of chemical pulp more than 100,000 tons, of the value of more than 15,000,000 kroner.

OTTAWA RIVER HOUSE BOAT.

Messrs. Bannerman & Findlater, of Ottawa, Ont., have recently completed four lumbermen's "house boats" for the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company. These are claimed to be the first iron house boats in Canada, two being for use at Quio (Chats Lake) and two on the Ottawa river at Pembroke. These boats—a drawing of which is given herewith—are scow-shaped, each 51½ feet long over all, with a keel of about 42 feet ; 12 feet wide at the top, and 11 feet across the bottom and 3 feet deep. The bow tapers to an extent of about 6 feet, and the stern 4 feet. The keel is formed of a piece of timber 7 inches deep and 6 inches wide, and is protected by an iron shoe. The house stands 6 feet above the top of the hull, making a height of ceiling of about 9 feet. The kitchen and cabin occupies about one-third of the house, the rest being occupied by sleeping berths, of which there are two



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tiers, a tier on each side of the boat with a gangway through the middle, making accommodation for a crew of twenty-four. The house is clap-boarded with an iron roof.

The Japanese market bids fair to be a large consumer of American and European lumber in the near future. The development that is going on in the land of the Geisha is bound to have the effect of increasing the consumption of American lumber. Brick buildings are not common in Japan owing to the frequent earthquakes, and the native lumber is irregular in size and difficult to handle. A few steam saw mills have been erected, and there is reported to be an opening for high class machinery for those who will introduce and handle it, to be used in the sawing of native woods. A great deal of lumber has been shipped from Japan to the Pacific coast, and it is likely that in the future Japan will be a larger user of west coast lumber. Japan is a populous country of close upon 55,000,000 inhabitants, all rapidly becoming civilized and copying Americans and Europeans in their manner of living. The buildings are becoming more modern, and their industries are being rapidly developed.