

## LETTERS FROM THE TRADE.

PROMINENT LUMBER MANUFACTURERS EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED LUMBER DUTY.

With a view of ascertaining the opinions of Canadian lumbermen regarding the effects of the United States import duty of \$2 per thousand feet on sawn lumber, as provided by the Dingley bill recently reported by the Finance Committee to the Senate, letters were sent to a number of manufacturers in the different provinces of the Dominion in which the following questions were asked :

1. To what extent would such a duty injure the Canadian lumber industry?
2. What action should be taken by the Canadian government in case such a duty is imposed on lumber by the United States?
3. What class of lumber would be affected to the greatest extent?
4. Presuming that we are compelled by the duty to abandon the United States markets, what methods would you propose for the extension of our lumber trade with Europe and other foreign countries?

For some reason, which we hesitate to attribute to a lack of interest in a question so directly affecting their own interests, some manufacturers to whom a letter was sent failed to respond. The replies received are printed below :

MIDLAND, ONT., May 20th, 1897.

DEAR SIR,—Replying to your four questions respectively our views may be summed up as follows :

1. The passage of the clause relating to a \$2 import duty on lumber would paralyze the industry in Georgian Bay and Muskoka districts.
2. 1st, put a similar duty on all American lumber coming into Canada. 2nd, give the United States government to understand that the Canadian government deems it a breach of faith, considering the agreement entered into between the late Sir John A. Macdonald and Hon. Jas. G. Blaine, whereby the duty was taken off logs, to take the stand they are now doing. We should intimate to them that if the Dingley bill is carried out the duty on logs will be reimposed, or if the Canadian government should not be willing to do that, lumbermen should endeavor to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Ontario government to forbid logs being taken from the country, which, we understand, they have the power to do.
3. Common lumber.
4. That Canada should send agents, thoroughly posted in the lumber business, to different countries of Europe for the purpose of working up trade in this industry and keeping the government posted, and through them the manufacturers, as to condition of trade, necessities, etc. We trust that in case the Americans do not conclude to reduce the proposed import duty to \$1.00 per M., such measures will be taken by our government as will protect our interest in this behalf.

Yours truly,

CHEW BROS.

PENLANDSHIRE, ONT., May 13th, 1897.

DEAR SIR, In reply to your recent letter on the lumber tariff question we are glad to give you our views, and consider the matter a most important one :

1. Such a duty would simply mean the exclusion of our coarse grades from the United States.
2. As a \$2.00 duty would exclude our coarse lumber, and we have a good market in England for the better grades, and the Americans if they want them must pay the advanced price, it would be to the benefit of lumbermen and the country at large to prohibit the exportation of saw logs, pulp wood and hemlock bark. As we have almost a monopoly of the pulp wood there is no doubt that it is manufactured largely here considerable English capital will be attracted to this country. In regard to hemlock bark, it is almost a sin to allow the hemlock to be slaughtered as it now is, when there is a small market for the timber, and so much of it is slashed down and allowed to rot in the woods in order to furnish bark for

the Americans, when no doubt in a few years the timber would be valuable if cut only in quantities sufficient to supply bark for our own tanneries. Any one taking a trip through our hemlock woods must realize the truth of this.

3. Coarse grades only.

4. At the present time there are large quantities of Canadian lumber manufactured in the United States into box shooks, etc., and shipped to South America, the West Indies and Europe. Our government, for one thing, should send agents to these countries and divert considerable of this trade to us.

THE C. BECK MANUFACTURING CO., Ltd.

BRACEBRIDGE, ONT., May 20, 1897.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours enquiring as to my opinion regarding the lumber tariff, I would say, by all means put an export duty on Canadian logs equal to the import duty on lumber going to the United States, and in my opinion the sooner our government takes this step the better. The export duty on logs should take effect just as soon as the duty on lumber comes into force. We should also impose an export duty of \$2.00 per cord on all Canadian pulp wood going into the United States.

Now, I believe that if our Canadian government takes steps firmly and decisively, we will not hear much more about the duty on lumber and shingles. This step should be taken at once, and if the United States government should increase the proposed duty on lumber to the amount of the export duty on the raw material from Canada, there will then be plenty of time to back down, but to back down in the face of a bluff would simply prove disastrous to the Canadian lumber trade in general. I am sorry, indeed, to hear some of our lumbermen talk as though they would be willing to submit to an import duty for fear that the American people would increase such duty in addition to the already proposed \$2.00 to the amount of the export duty on raw material. This, to my mind, is a matter of great importance to Canadians, and should be dealt with firmly. We are in a position to do as well without their trade as they without our timber. We have the Americans to blame for the hard times in the Canadian lumber business at present, as it was they who increased the price of stumpage on our timber.

Personally, I am willing to give our American friends equal footing in the trade, but I do protest against paying them tribute and then let them take away our raw material free. I fail to see how, as a loyal Canadian people, we can support any administration that will allow us to be imposed upon in any such manner.

Yours truly,

J. D. SHIER.

HEPWORTH STATION, May 22nd, 1897.

DEAR SIR,—Replying to your recent circular asking what effect the Dingley bill will likely have on our Canadian lumber industry, I beg to say that, in my opinion, it will in no way injure us, under present existing conditions, as far as the hardwood lumber industry is concerned. In the first place, when lumber was made free, we submitted to a reduction in price equal to the amount of the remitted duty of \$2 per M. Now, when the Americans see fit to reimpose this duty, are we not entitled to again add this amount to our prices. As far as the hardwood trade goes, I can safely say that any duty our neighbors see fit to impose cannot make trade much worse than it has been for the past three years. There has been no money in the trade with the United States for this period of time. In a conversation recently with a large exporter of Canadian hardwoods, he declared there was no money for him in United States markets, and that he did not care how high they made the import duty, and I am of precisely the same opinion.

Regarding pine, the duty will no doubt for a time injure this branch of the lumber industry, especially in the lower grades, but not to so very grievous an extent that we need to crawl on hands and knees to beg that this duty be not imposed. The tariff is a weapon that is as free for the use of our people as our neighbors. They have thrown down the gauntlet, and if our government do their duty, and I think they will, by striking back good and hard, and placing an export duty on pine saw logs and pulp wood, these coercionists will conclude that they have gone on the wrong track. They want our lumber, our pulp wood, and our saw logs. Let us make them pay for them. They are a good asset, all of them, and if we don't sell to-morrow or the next day they are good things

to keep in stock, and it is only a matter of time when neighbors will realize the fact that our pine is an actual necessity among them. England, Germany and France are all looking towards America, and Canada in particular, for forest products. I regret to observe, however, that the bulk of the wants of these countries are being supplied through American channels, and often are the products of Canadian forests bought by American middlemen and sold again in the markets of Europe.

Whatever evil results may temporarily accrue to the lumber industry through the repositioning of this duty pine will undoubtedly suffer most. It will not materially affect hardwoods. Better prices, with no closer inspection, can be realized in European markets for our hardwoods than can be obtained in the United States. The paths of commerce between here and Europe are so well trodden as they are to United States markets. This feature can soon be overcome. Let the lumber producer familiarize himself with European methods and learn the wants of European markets, and then carefully manufacture the timber to suit those wants, and if he succeeds in producing a suitable article he will never regret being closed out of American markets. An organized effort should be made by the hardwood lumber dealers or producers to have lumber cut in our Canadian mills to suit European consumers, and to familiarize the trade generally with the various details of railway and ocean freights and to learn the most advantageous routes to forward their goods by, and whom to forward to, for I have no doubt there are as reliable commission men to be found in England, Germany and France as there are in the United States.

Yours truly,

J. E. MURPHY.

CHATHAM, N. B., May 14, 1897.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to question No. 1, I think the injury would be only temporary, excepting, it may be, a lath. I do not know any other market for any large quantity of them.

2. The Canadian government should put an export duty on saw logs and pulp wood, the latter to amount to almost a prohibition of its export, so as to allow the saw trees to mature and make good logs. Each year's growth in a good healthy forest would add at least ten per cent annually to their value.

3. Principally laths.

4. I do not think anything can be done to largely increase our exports to Great Britain. We already consume more to that market than circumstances justify, and unfortunately keep it so crowded that an advance in price is almost impossible. We could, however, cultivate and profit the South American, West Indies, South Africa, Canary Islands and other such markets with rough saw and other more fully manufactured stock, such as doors, sashes, frames, small boxes, etc., that are now largely bought from the United States, and on which the extra duty imposed by them will make dearer (if protection is a reality) and enable us to successfully compete. Orange, lemon, banana, fig, date, tomato and other small boxes are wanted by the million, and a profitable business can now be done in them, if any person would embark in the manufacture. The United States have done some of this business, but it has been entirely neglected by Canada so far as I am aware.

My policy would be to carry the war into the enemies' camp by invading their present markets, which we can well do, having the cheapest stock to manufacture from.

Yours truly,

J. B. SNOWBALL.

AMHERST, N. S., May 19th, 1897.

DEAR SIR,—We beg to reply to your four questions asked in your letter re United States lumber tariff as follows :

1. In the lower provinces we should say that the producer would be injured \$1.00 per M, or half the duty on log lumber, and probably the full amount of duty on laths and shingles.
2. As to the action Canadian government should take in case this duty becomes law, we think our government should put an export duty on saw logs of \$2.00 per M for board measure, as well as an export duty on pulp wood of say \$2.00 per cord.
3. The classes of lumber most affected in the lower provinces would be spruce and hemlock, also cedar shingles.
4. As to what methods the Canadian lumber trade should adopt to open up new markets, in our opinion we would lose nothing in the long run if compelled to abandon the United States markets. The United States are also exporters of lumber, and their lumber dealers handle large quantities of Canadian lumber for export. If Canadian lumber merchants would visit foreign markets, study the requirements of the different countries, and form good connections, Canadian lumber would net more per M to the producer than it does now, and the merchants & middle-men's profits would be enjoyed by Canadians instead of Americans.

Yours very truly,

RHODES, CURRY & CO., LTD.,  
N. Curry, President