

## THE U. S. TARIFF.

At the meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 27th, of the Chicago Lumberman's Exchange, the following address was read by Mr. Dean:—

The forty-seventh congress having authorized the appointment of a commission for the purpose of gaining information directly from the people upon the subject of the present tariff, the gentlemen comprising the said commission, as we understand the scope of their duties, intending to recommend to congress amendments to the tariff law, when it shall appear them, from good evidence, that the people of the United States will be benefited by such changes, and we believe most earnestly that the time has come when it would be greatly to the interest and good of the people of the United States to remove the present import tax upon lumber, which may conveniently be brought to them from the Dominion of Canada. In support of this argument we would say that the wonderful growth of the United States, and especially the development of that portion lying west of the lakes, has been due to the readiness with which cheap dwellings, barns, fences and granaries were obtainable through the plentifulness of a cheap building material, such as is found in the white pine lumber supply. With the exhaustion of this supply, the still vast unsettled prairies and fields of the west, will, in a measure, cease to present inducements to the emigrant from foreign lands, the unoccupied overflow from the older states of the Union, or the inducements for development afforded by the building of railways and other highways of commerce.

That the time is not far distant when the lumber supply of the Northwest will be practically exhausted, and that evidence of that exhaustion are even now quite apparent, will be disputed by no well-informed person.

It is but a few years since the value of standing pine, of good quality, averaged from as low as 50 cents to as high as \$2.50 per thousand feet, the value of the same grades of timber has risen at the present time from \$3 to as high as \$8 per thousand feet, an average value being, probably, fairly stated at from \$1 to \$5 per thousand. This value is still further advanced to the consumer in the fact that a majority of the present timber supply is remote from streams, and consequently more expensive of access.

The efforts of the United States census commissioners to ascertain the extent of the timber supply of the United States, has resulted in a report, under the sanction and approval of that bureau, placing the timber supply of the three principal pine producing states at but 81,000,000,000 feet, or an amount equal to the demands of the country for a period of eight years, based upon the present consumptive demand. Aside from the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the white pine timber resources of the country are insignificant, and while the supply of other kinds of timber in the South, and elsewhere, is reported as adequate for the needs of a full generation, there is no other variety of timber which can take the place of or is adapted to the same uses as white pine, unless it be the cypress of the South, unavailable for many economic reasons, or the whitewood or tulip more valuable for other commercial uses than as a substitute for pine as a building material.

Aside from the supply of white pine in the states above mentioned, in the Dominion of Canada there exists a quantity equal, according to the opinion of many experts, who have considered the question, to the present remaining supply of the United States. We believe that it is in the interests of a good and wise policy to admit this timber to the United States free from the incumbrance of a tax. We assert that this timber has cost, and does cost, those who control it for utilization a larger sum per thousand than was obtained by the United States Government from those to whom the timber lands of this country were disposed, that the cost of manufacture in Canada is not below the cost to the American manufacturer, and that the average cost of transportation of a majority of that portion of the present Canadian pine which would naturally reach the United States market, is considerably in excess of the cost of placing the native product in the hands of the consum-

or. These combined factors preclude the possibility of any injury resulting to the American manufacturer from the admission of foreign lumber.

In support of the first proposition, we assert that the liberal policy of the American Government has permitted the timber lands of this country to be purchased in fee-simple at from \$1.25 to \$3.50 per acre. These lands are situated in general to yield 5,000 feet of timber per acre, while a large proportion of them have and will yield from 10,000 to 15,000 feet per acre. The standing timber, therefore, has been sold by the government at an average probably less than 25 cents per thousand feet, including the ownership of the land, which in many cases readily sells at from \$5 to \$10 per acre after being denuded of its timber, such land being found in many parts of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota to be unsurpassed in value for agricultural purposes. From the land and timber for which the government has received, at its highest established price, \$1,600 per square mile, the manufacturer of lumber has realized, and is now realizing, 3,200,000 feet of timber of an average stumpage value at the present time, as stated by the Saginaw manufacturers, in an address recently presented to the congressional special tariff commission, of \$1.60 per thousand, or \$14,400 per square mile, to which may be added the market value of the land for agricultural purposes, which, if stated at \$2.50 per acre, or \$1,600 leaves the case to be stated, simply, that the government has presented \$14,400 in timber to each purchaser of a square mile of timber lands. This we esteem to be fully all the protection to which the manufacturer of the United States is entitled at the hand of the government.

Comparing the policy of the American government with that of Canada, we find that it is the policy of the latter to place its timber lands in groups of townships, which are offered to the highest bidder at public sale, of a bonus for the privilege of cutting off the timber. This bonus or privilege usually costs the purchaser not far from 35 cents per thousand feet, after which, under many and usually expensive restrictions, the government claims a stumpage duty of 75 cents per thousand on all timber actually cut, in addition to local taxes of about \$100 per year, per square mile or an average of about 3 cents per thousand feet, a total stumpage cost of over \$1 per thousand paid to the Canadian Government, the ownership of the land remaining in the government.

While, therefore, the American timber owner investing of necessity but \$1,600 to secure 3,200,000 feet of timber (actually securing nearly, or quite double that amount as a rule) realizes from the value of his timber and the sale of his land \$16,000, the purchaser of Canadian timber pays to the government not less than \$3,200 without any rebate, in the value of the land, for the purpose of securing the net quantity of 3,200,000 feet of timber. The Canadian lumberman, in a country less favourably situated for railroad transportation of men and supplies to the camps, is consequently at greater expense in his preparatory work, and as the contiguity of the two nations enables a ready interchange of labor, it follows that with a larger number of laborers, bred to the work of the lumber camp, the Canadian laborer seeks work on American soil whenever the rate of wages between the two countries is greatly disproportioned, thus compelling the Canadian employer to pay nearly or quite as high rates of wages as prevail in the more extended lumber regions of this country, if he will retain his laborers.

The food markets of Canada are based in value upon those of the United States, so that in the staples which enter most largely into the business of lumbering; namely, grain for teams, flour, beef, pork and beans, for the men; the average expense of camp supplies is to the Canadian operator, but little if at all less than to the American. In the running of logs to the saw-mill, the expenses again are not far from equal, the general comparison of streams in the two countries being if anything in favour of the American.

The capital invested of necessity in pursuit of this industry is greater in Canada, in proportion to the extent of the work performed, from the necessity to acquire the large land

limits, which alone can be obtained from the Canadian government; the American government selling as low as 40 acres at a cost of not over \$100, while nothing less than a township is disposed of by the Canadian government. The number of men employed is not less, per thousand and foot produced, in our country than in the other, and the capital employed in saw-mills will bear the same comparison. It would be folly to assert that greater intelligence enables the Canadian laborer to perform a greater amount of work in the saw mills than does the American, while it is a fact that by improved methods and machinery, more generally adopted in this country, than in Canada, the cost of producing lumber is greater in Canada than in the United States. In the matter of transportation the Canadian again labors under a disadvantage in being, in the main, and especially in the western portion of the province whence must come a majority of the timber, at a long distance from markets, whereas the American operator can utilize lake or rail transportation at his pleasure, and with but short lines and a low freight rate. The disadvantages under which the Canadian operator labors we assert to be more than the equivalent of any superior advantages he may possess, so that it may with positiveness be assumed that Canadian lumber laid down upon the docks of Chicago, or any other distributing centre, will have cost the Canadian as much, if not more, than the same quality of stock has cost the American manufacturer at the same point.

Having demonstrated, as we believe, that the American government has dealt more liberally with the American timber owner, than has the Canadian, pointing to the statement of the Saginaw manufacturers, before referred to, in which by their own admission the royalty on Canadian timber is \$1.75, or nearly double what we have assumed it to be, as further evidence that our estimates are wholly within bounds, we next controvert the statement of the Saginaw memorial in which the liberality of the Canadian government in building piers, booms and slides is pointed out, by referring to the general policy of the American government with regard to navigable waters, pointing to the river and harbour bill, appropriating an additional \$17,500,000, no mean proportion of which was devoted exclusively to improvements in the localities where the lumber interest is benefited to a greater extent than is any other individual industry.

Analysing the statement of the Saginaw memorialists, we have shown that while the Canadian lumberman has paid to that government from \$1 to \$2 per thousand stumpage on the timber cut by him, the American government has virtually presented to the lumberman of this country each section of pine land, together with the timber on the same, of a value of \$14,400, for the mere nominal sum of \$1,600 or, as he can readily realize that sum for the stripped lands, has made him a gift of the timber for his labor in clearing it. The census bureau reports 1,649 lumber manufacturing establishments in Michigan, 234 in Minnesota and 704 in Wisconsin, a total of 2,587; assuming for arguments sake that the number is 10,000 and asserting, as we believe, that no timber interests, except those connected with the lumber manufacturers of the states named, are to be affected by an abrogation of the tax on lumber, it would seem that after giving \$14,400 with each section of pine land to 10,000 manufacturers of lumber, it was now the duty of the government to consider the interests of the consumers of lumber, represented by over 5,000,000 persons to each 1,000 manufacturers.

These have a right to claim that the timber which has been donated to the manufacturers by the government shall be provided for their use at a reasonable modicum of profit to the manufacturer. With a yearly destruction of the forests, the timber donated by the government to the manufacturer has risen in value until it is no uncommon thing to hear of sales of standing timber at the rate of \$8 and \$10 per thousand stumpage, while the average price, as stated by the Saginaw lumbermen, is not far from \$1.50. The average price in 1870 was below \$1 per thousand. The consumer has been compelled to pay this difference, and if values advance in the same proportion during the pro-

sent decade, he will be called upon to pay to the manufacturer not less than \$20 per thousand stumpage on timber donated to him by the government.

When we consider that the annual manufacture of lumber in the three states mentioned exceeds 8,000,000,000 feet, and that this slaughter of the home forests means the destruction of 2,500 square miles of timber each year, and at this rate that there is but an eight years' supply to draw from, it would seem the part of prudence to begin to purchase some portion of our supply from those who have it for sale, before the time when absolute want shall force us to buy it at the sellers asking price.

Some gentlemen claim that there are climatic considerations that have a bearing upon the subject, that the destruction of our forests will affect unfavourably the productive force of our soil; this branch of the subject we leave with those persons interested in agriculture.

The Saginaw committee claim that the settlers, by crowding in upon their pine lands to make clearings for farming purposes, destroy by fire all their pine forests, and for relief desire to cut off the trees as rapidly as possible, so as to save them. We seriously question this statement, not believing that the average thrifty farmer seeks the pine belt in pursuit of his occupation, but from our own knowledge believe that the forest fires are in the main brought about in consequence of the accumulation of the limbs, bark and chips that become dry and easily ignited shortly after escaping from the lumberman's axe. Hence we should say that a good way to preserve forests from fire would be to stop filling them with bonfire materials.

The Saginaw memorialists say, "When our government can furnish lands upon such easy terms as that of Canada, free trade in lumber might be nearer just." Having shown that our government has been even more liberal to the lumber manufacturer than to any other class of our citizens, and vastly more so than has the Canadian government to its manufacturers, and having demonstrated that the cost of lumber to the Canadian producer precludes any possible danger of his entering into ruinous competition with the American manufacturer, we respectfully submit that the short supply of native stock, and growing demands of a mighty nation, the interests of 55,000,000 of people in cheap homes, and manufacturing industries needing the consumption of pine lumber, imperatively demand that all restrictions should be removed from the importation of that limited quantity which the Dominion of Canada can supply to supplement our rapidly decreasing timber resources.

For the above reasons and many others that might be given, we most earnestly pray that all duty upon pine lumber, lath and shingles may be removed, to the end that the people of the United States, and particularly of the States and territories to the west of us, may improve the rich prairies, and at moderate expense construct their buildings and homes from the products of the forests of Canada, as similar material grown in the United States has become so nearly exhausted and cannot be reproduced.

After a long and warm debate on motions for adopting the address, for laying it on the table and for referring it to a committee, this last motion was carried by a vote.

A committee was chosen to handle the question and report in 15 days to a called meeting, consisting of Messrs. Thad Dean, B. L. Anderson, A. C. Soper, A. G. Van Schaick, Addison Ballard, James P. Ketchum and S. K. Martin.

## NATIVE FORESTS.

While there is much said and written in regard to forest tree-cultivation, we find very little attention paid to the preservation of native forests. In the timbered sections we have been too busy trying to get rid of the timber to think of any method of preservation. Yet in some sections that were formerly timbered there is now felt to be a scarcity of timber, particularly of that kind which is useful in manufactures. The only remedy mentioned is the planting of forest trees for this purpose, but this is a work that we are hardly prepared for in this State, and it is probable that only necessity will compel artificial planting. The time seems too long to wait for an investment of this kind to