

HOME AND FOREIGN TRADE REVIEW.

Office of CANADA LUMBERMAN, }
April 30th, 1890. }

There is little to be said regarding the lumber trade of Toronto which has not already been referred to in these columns. Trade continues very quiet, and so long at least as the existing strike among the bricklayers and stone-masons continues there will be but little probability of an improvement. Building operations are virtually at a stand still throughout the city, and it is not probable that operations will be carried on this summer to any considerable extent. Several contracts are under way for the erection of extensive commercial buildings, but they are of a character which do not bring to the lumber trade any large amount of business. Notwithstanding the very rapid increase in population too many buildings have been erected for residential purposes in Toronto during the past two or three years. The loan companies are now valuing much more closely than heretofore, and are increasing the rate of interest to a considerable extent. This will naturally prove a severe blow to speculative builders and hamper them materially in their operations. The stock of lumber in the yards is by no means large, although well assorted. Prices remain as usual, without any particular tendency either up or down.

Considerable improvement has been noticeable during the last month in the way of cars over the Grand Trunk system for carrying lumber, although there is still some trouble experienced in moving stock over the Midland division. The Northern division shippers have been well supplied, and if they are as well treated in the future as they are at present, lumbermen will have no cause to complain on this score.

But while lumbermen can congratulate themselves on the improvement in the car service they still have the old grievance against the Grand Trunk in the matter of excessive freight charges. The LUMBERMAN has on several former occasions referred to this question, and the dealers have individually and collectively used all the persuasion possible in the attempt to relieve themselves of what they consider exorbitant charges. There has been altogether too much guess-work going on on the part of the G. T. R. in the matter of lumber weigh bills, and as the difference is invariably in favor of the railway company it is only reasonable to suppose that the lumbermen are doing a considerable amount of kicking. What is wanted to overcome this difficulty, and place the lumbermen on an equitable footing with the railways, is the appointment of a government weigh-master whose duty it would be to see that all cars of lumber are properly weighed and charged accordingly. Under the existing state of affairs the lumbermen not only have to pay a considerable percentage of their profits in excess freights but are compelled to devote a large amount of valuable time in the attempt to have these over charges remedied, which attempts as a rule prove utterly fruitless. The lumbermen are undoubtedly the best customers of the G. T. R. and are certainly entitled to the most honorable treatment.

In Western Ontario the season opens out with the yards carrying a considerable amount of last year's stock. Trade is reported as moderately good, but purchasers in cargo lots are very light as yet.

There has been a better demand for 1 and 1½ inch. clear, and pickings, in the United States. Prices remain about the same as at the close of last season.

The trade in 12 inch. stocks for South America is practically extinguished, owing largely to the internal dissensions now existing in that quarter.

Hon. Mr. Tupper, the Canadian representative, has been in Washington for some weeks, conferring with the members of the United States government on the tariff question, but as yet little, if anything, can be learned regarding the purport of negotiations. The mills in Northern Ontario are starting up in good shape, and from what can be learned there will be no dearth of lumber this year. Very few stocks have, however, been sold as yet.

A large number of mills in the Ottawa Valley have already started up, and before the end of the month they will all be pretty well under way. Considerable of the lumber wintered over in the Ottawa yards has been moved by rail this spring, but with the opening of navi-

gation the stocks will soon be cut down. Lumbermen as a rule were not particularly anxious for an early commencement of operations owing to the fact that the yards were stocked with lumber, and piling room was scarce. It is not likely that the season's cut will be as large as that of last summer, when there was a very early commencement and a late winding up.

A fair winter's work has been done in the woods, and the number of logs turned out is satisfactory to the lumbermen, though somewhat smaller than the previous winter, from the fact that operations were not gone into so extensively, and because a considerable amount of sickness prevailed in the shanties. About one thousand men have left for the Upper Ottawa to attend to the drives, and about one thousand more will follow. The prospects for the coming season are considered bright by the lumbermen in general. Owing to the unsettled condition of the labor market business is on the quiet order. Prices of lumber remain unchanged, Lath and shingles are in good demand, and prices firm.

The demand for lumber at Quebec is active, and the prospect for a good seasons trade is considered very hopeful, both manufacturers and shippers agreeing that the prospect has not been so encouraging for many years past. Now that the question of wages has been settled between the merchants and ship laborers we see nothing to interfere with the prospects of the port. Little as yet has been done in charters. A steamship was recently chartered for deals from Montreal to a direct port in the United Kingdom, on a basis of 60s.

A fairly active trade is being done in Winnipeg. Country yards, which have been very bare since last summer, are being replenished, and this has made the trade more active. Prices are somewhat irregular and tending downwards. The competition from Minnesota lumber keeps the situation interesting, and makes dealers less independent as to schedule prices. The retail prices have gone down \$2 per thousand. Water on the streams is not so high as was expected, yet lumbermen are hopeful that they will be able to get down their logs, and if there is no difficulty in this direction the season will be an active one at the mills.

The carpenters strike has seriously affected the lumber interests at Chicago. Lumber vessels have been waiting for days, there being no sale at any price, the buyers taking advantage of the strike to bear the market. At present there are some 10,000,000 feet of lumber on the market. The stocks on hand in the yards show an increase of 12,000,000 feet of hardwood lumber over that of last year at this time, and a decrease of 30,000,000 pine.

FOREIGN.

The hardwood market at London shows signs of marked improvement, and the firmness of the market has exhibited most encouraging features. An exceptional amount of mahogany has changed hands, and American walnut logs of good quality are in active demand at full prices.

The strike of the dock laborers at Liverpool has materially interfered with the timber trade, and especially with charters. London *Timber* says, as far as we can learn, no charters for steam tonnage have been made as yet from St. John, although at this time last year several were loading. Freights are decidedly a little easier from the spruce ports, and from the Baltic considerably so, but Quebec timber freights continue about the same. The *Timber Trades Journal* says, a vessel of about 1,000 tons register has just been fixed from Batiscan to Liverpool at 57s. 6d. for all deals, and one or two more from Quebec for west coast ranges at 55s. We also hear of a charter for 1,100 tons register vessel from Quebec to London with a mixed cargo at 23s. and 52s. 6d. One vessel of 1,100 tons register has just been fixed from West Bay to direct afloat west coast Britain or E. C. Ireland range at 50s. From Lower St. Lawrence Mills a couple of vessels have been taken up at 57s. 6d. and 55s. respectively.

Messrs. Churchill & Sim in their wood circular of recent date report: From Canada there are still no arrivals worth mentioning. The stock of deals has almost entirely passed out of first hands, and the quantity appearing on the market has been much smaller than in recent months, and prices have consequently been somewhat firmer. The lower rates of freight now cur-

rent have enabled sellers more freely to meet buyers' ideas as to prices, with the result that a fair amount of business has been arranged for forthcoming open water shipment on terms which appear very reasonable for the buyers. There is no change to report in the position of timber, the sales have been of retail quantities only, without variation in values.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

From our Regular Correspondent.)

NEW WESTMINSTER, April 24th, 1890.

The lumber business has opened this season with the best prospects ever known in the history of the lumber business of British Columbia.

Almost every mill in the province have increased their capacity for the coming season. Hastings saw mill will cut 125,000 feet a day this year, having spent some \$35,000 in increasing their facilities and putting in new machinery. The Brunette Saw Mill Company have sold the machinery in their old mill and have built alongside a mill to cut 100,000 a day.

W. P. Sayward, Victoria, has increased his plant by large additions of machinery, and the same may be said of the Royal City Mills here, the Vancouver Saw Mill Company, at Vancouver, G. Willis Croft, Fort Simpson, R. Cunningham & Son, Skeena, Victoria Lumber & Manufacturing Company, (the old Croft and Angus mill,) the Hazlett & McIntyre concern who have bought the Sutton mill and are increasing the cut to 100,000 a day, the machinery is now being manufactured by the William Hamilton Manufacturing Company.

Messrs. Lossie & Morrison are building a 50,000 mill on Shawnigan Lake, a short distance from Victoria on the E. & V. R. R.

The estimate from present prospects are that before the season is well under way that double the output per month will be turned out than has ever heretofore been done.

Your correspondent was favored with a look at a testing of how the large carriage worked in the McLaren-Ross mill at New Westminster, and special interest was taken in how the using of compressed air would work for the sett works and canting, and even at this early stage of trial everything worked with such precision that the onlooker was surprised and predicts for all the new improvements of Mr. S. N. Kendall, the mechanical superintendent, a decided success; in fact, there will be a revolution of rebuilding mills when everything gets running in this mill, and also when the new Kendall and saw gets working. I have it from almost every mill in the province that if it is a success they will all put a similar one in. It will be the first band mill in British Columbia, and they expect it running about the first of July.

The mill will start to cut about the first of May, but will not run to its capacity till about the first of July.

From a recent letter from Australia, the buyers there say that though all Pacific coast lumber is classed as Oregon pine that consumers are now asking for and paying more for British Columbia fir, and that trade journals will very soon give it space in their market reports. There has been quite an influx of eastern lumbermen this winter. Mr. John Wilson, of J. R. Booth, Levi Young, W. H. Baldwin, all of Ottawa, and Mr. Clanton from New Brunswick, and several others from Quebec province.

There is every likelihood of one or more mills being established on the Fraser river in the near future by some of these parties.

In a recent dispute over the lumber question and the respective merits of the Oregon pine and Douglas fir, the question was asked, "can you tell me if any large firm in Canada use Oregon pine?" to which the answer being given in the negative another question was asked, "can you tell me if any large firms in the United States use Douglas fir, paying duty on it?" to which the answer was, Yes! several; the most prominent being the Barney & Smith Mfg. Co., of Dayton, Ohio, who use exclusively our fir for car sills. After testing every wood in America they find that is the maximum of strength and durability and the minimum of weight. Now after such authority