

## THE LUMBER TRADE.

## WHY LUMBER IS HIGH.

A good many consumers are wondering why lumber has advanced in price, and why they are asked to pay materially higher prices than those to which they have been accustomed. The present advance in lumber began with the producer. Wholesalers and lumber dealers of all classes have been compelled to pay and in the immediate future must pay decidedly higher prices for the commodities they handle than for years past. Their demand for higher prices from the consumer is therefore legitimate, and dictated by their own business necessities. They cannot sell lumber for a less price than what they have to pay for it; they cannot sell it for the same price for they must make a profit, and any consumer, if possessed of an ordinary sense of fairness is willing to concede to the dealer a legitimate profit.

From the middle of 1893 to the middle of 1897 the lumber industry was in a very depressed condition. During that time it suffered more severely by failures than any other industry in the country. Many manufacturers did business at a positive loss through the whole or a greater part of the time, and only the most economically and intelligently conducted plants made any money. At the close of 1897 there was a marked improvement. The year 1898 was a fairly satisfactory one, with a large demand through a portion of the year; and now the demand is swelling very rapidly and finds the manufacturers with light stocks and in many cases with inadequate equipment.

The demand is enormous and the supply is light. This condition is true in practically all the commercial woods of the United States and Canada, for the condition of things over there is practically the same as in this country. The producers, therefore, have their own way. They are absolute masters of the situation. The dealers must pay their prices and are obliged to ask advanced prices from their customers, the consumers.

The question is therefore "up to" the consumer. He must pay an advance in price and should do so as cheerfully as possible, for the causes for the advance are beyond the control of man or any set of men. The retailers are in an uncomfortable position; they are compelled to pay an advance which as yet they have been unable to secure from consumers. Their profit such as it was has been cut in two or has entirely disappeared. Therefore they must ask higher prices of their customers, who should understand the situation, and, furthermore, be willing to share the burdens as well as the benefits that accompany a period of general prosperity.—From the "American Lumberman."

## BUILDING MATERIAL.

There is a decided scarcity of some classes of building material in Winnipeg this year. In the line of stone particularly, there is a shortage. Though the building season has only nicely started, contractors are already unable to secure supplies of stone. A large quantity of building material in both brick and stone will be brought in from the United States this year for building in Winnipeg. As there is abundance of the raw material of the

best quality quite close at hand, it seems too bad that such a large amount of money should have to be sent away for building material. There would appear to be a good opening for the employment of considerably more capital here in manufacturing brick and quarrying stone for the home trade. There is abundance of good stone within twenty to forty miles of Winnipeg, which can be drawn upon for local requirements, and the demand is increasing every year. Last year a large quantity of stone and brick was imported from the United States on account of the scarcity of material here.

## LUMBER TRADE NOTES.

It is estimated that the production of the Duluth-Superior lumber mills for the current year will be about 465,000,000 feet, or about 125,000,000 feet larger than the heaviest previous output.

Tenders were received this week by the Winnipeg city board of works, for the annual supply of lumber. The tenders were not announced, but it is understood three tenders were put in, by the Rat Portage Lumber Co., D. Sprague, and Dick & Banning respectively, ranging in the order named from about \$17 to \$17.75 per thousand. The tender will probably be awarded Monday night.

The rumor that the United States would prohibit the importation of lumber from Canada, in retaliation for the Ontario government measure prohibiting the exportation of logs from that province, has been denied. It hardly seems probable that the United States would resort to any such measure, which would be a bad blow against the consumers of that country, and would probably result in a demand by the people for free lumber.

The rise of \$2 to \$5 per thousand in prices for pine lumber in the United States is due to a largely increased demand for both white and yellow pine coupled with a gradual failure in the supply. The natural consequence of such conditions as these is, of course, a rise in values. It is said that stocks of white pine on hand at the beginning of this year were 424 million feet, or 11 per cent smaller than at the same date a year ago, when stocks were in their turn also lighter than in the previous year.

Michigan lumbermen made strenuous efforts to induce the Ontario government to relax the regulations regarding the exporting of logs from that province so that they could get out the logs which have been cut for them during the past winter. Their efforts were unavailing and as a result the logs must be cut in Ontario. Mills in the Georgian Bay district will consequently have a busy time this year as on them will fall the burden of cutting these logs. One contract to cut 20,000,000 feet has already been closed by one mill, the lumber to be afterwards taken to Bay City.

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