

## WESTERN RETAIL LUMBERMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

## PROCEEDINGS OF NINTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The ninth annual meeting of the Western Retail Lumbermen's Association was held in Winnipeg on Tuesday, February 20th. There were present about 100 members, and the chair was occupied by the president, Mr. Henry Byrnes, of Winnipeg, who opened the proceedings by reading his annual address, as follows:

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Gentlemen, fellow members of the Western Retail Lumbermen's Association, I extend to you a hearty greeting. It is a great pleasure to meet you here on this occasion. The attendance at the ninth annual meeting of this association was very much increased, and the pleasure is added to in the fact of my being able to say to you that our association has prospered very much during the year now closed. It is not only from a financial standpoint, but with increased membership and much larger evidence of the sphere of usefulness it exercises, and which is more and more realized. In fact, the year just closed may well be classed as the record breaker in the history of the association since its organization.

I am glad to inform you that generally speaking the year has been one of marked harmony among the association members. There have been a few exceptional cases of grievances and frictions, all of which I must confess were to my mind properly made. I think this is a matter with which the members should allow their good sense and consideration to be used in assisting in the advantages to be derived from fair and honorable methods

## SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The secretary also read his annual report, which contained much interesting information regarding the working of the Association. It showed the affairs of the Association to be in a prosperous condition, not only from a financial standpoint, but also as to membership. During the year there were admitted 54 active and 6 honorary members. Since May last 7 former members had been removed from membership. The total membership at the close of 1899 was 215—188 active and 27 honorary. It was stated that with few exceptions a ready response had been made to the call for annual dues. The secretary congratulated the members upon having experienced a profitable season's business last year. His report included the following remarks:

"I have made some enquiries as to why it is possible that at a time when business is good that good men will in the face of a considerable rise in the wholesale price of lumber, cut the retail prices, already low enough, if not too low.

"When making a call at a town a short time ago, I was first met by one dealer who complained very much of the other dealer having cut the price list, and in course of a little time I met the other dealer, who had an identical complaint to make against the first dealer I talked with. I found that the usual thing had happened; some buyer telling the first dealer he could buy his lumber for less price from the other dealer. The first dealer did not allow the buyer to return to the other dealer, to get his lumber at less price, nor did he try to find out from the other dealer whether the buyer had been telling him the truth or not, but struck a bargain with the buyer on the spot by cutting the price; very soon after the other dealer came to know of the transaction and started out on retaliation at first opportunity, and the consequence was that cutting and slashing continued through the season. No confidence existed between them and jealousy and unfriendly feeling arose against each other, being so

competition was the life of trade, but it sometimes was the death of trade, and when carried to extremes reacted against the consumers by the inferior service rendered and the inferior goods offered. This frequently led to combination to correct these evil conditions. He pointed out that the Lumbermen's Association was not operated to injure the consumer, and that the public had not paid any higher margin on lumber by reason of the existence of the association.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The three chief officers were re-elected by acclamation, as follows: President, Henry Byrnes, Winnipeg; vice-president, R. H. O'Hara, Brandon; secretary-treasurer, Isaac Cockburn, Winnipeg. Portraits of these officers have already appeared in the CANADA LUMBERMAN.

The following were elected as the board of directors: Thos. Turabuli, Manitou; J. L. Campbell, Melita; D. E. Sprague, Winnipeg; Wm. Armstrong, Portage la Prairie; A. Stevens, Cypress River; J. F. Boyd, Minnedosa. The auditors for last year were re-elected.

Mr. T. D. Robinson urged the wholesalers to fix the price of lumber for the entire season early in the year. Mr. D. C. Cameron contended that this was an impossibility. Conditions varied at different times, and they could not tell what it was going to cost to manufacture the lumber,



MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE NINTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE WESTERN RETAIL LUMBERMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

carrying on the lumber trade along the lines of the constitution and by-laws of the association. The result of this would be to minimize in a very great degree the number of grievances arising.

As I am about to be succeeded in the office you did me the honor of electing me to at the last annual meeting, I wish before retiring to acknowledge the courtesy extended to me on all hands, and I assure you that the duties devolving upon me as your president have been of a kind most congenial to me. Indeed, I have enjoyed throughout pleasant interest in the part I have taken, according to my humble judgment, in the promotion and concerns of the association in the various ways that I have been called upon to act in dealing with matters arising from time to time.

I have been fortunate in having associated with me a very capable board of directors, all being experienced business men and able to use their business experience to valuable account while deliberating upon matters brought before them for settlement.

In conclusion, I may state for your information that I have been a close observer of the working of the association during the year, and I am quite decided that its purposes are beneficial to both the wholesale and retail dealers. Of course, the successful working of the association rests largely upon the loyalty of its members in sustaining the secretary in his duties, and in the general up-building of its constitution and by-laws.

I now call upon the secretary to make the annual statement, and any further report he may have to submit to you.

(Signed) H. V. BYRNES,  
President.

The reading of the address was greeted with applause.

The secretary, Mr. Isaac Cockburn, submitted the financial statement, which showed receipts of \$3,178 including balance of \$729 carried over from the previous year, made up mainly of fees and dues of members. The disbursements for the year were \$1,548, leaving a cash balance of \$1,630.

extreme that any assurance of one to the other was not accepted, and the end of the year must necessarily have found their profits to be less than they should have been. Neither one has risen equal to the occasion to make a proposition to the other to sink differences, and discontinue their folly of doing injury to themselves and their business. With earnestness on the part of both dealers to remedy the misunderstandings that have arisen and a larger degree of amity exercised, there can be no doubt the difficulties will cease, and a proper business arrangement be maintained. At present the one is quite sure the other is wrong.

"I propose giving a good deal of attention to proper established price lists at the various points, and bespeak your kind assistance in carrying it on to success.

"In conclusion, I lean upon the assistance of all members in furthering the objects of the Association, and would ask all to keep well versed in the by-laws of the Association, and if acted up to the spirit of them much good will be the result."

Mr. D. Sprague, of Winnipeg, moved the adoption of the report, taking occasion at the same time to compliment the officers, directors and members on the satisfactory condition of the association. He pointed out that at the last annual meeting reports were made of severe competition in some districts on account of a cheap class of low grade lumber being brought into Manitoba from the United States. The members, however, agreed to stand by the association, and happily the difficulty had since been removed. He urged the advisability of the wholesalers fixing their price lists as early in the year as possible.

Mr. J. L. Campbell, of Melita, spoke at some length, confining his remarks largely to the benefits of co-operation. Combination, he said, was not always an evil. It had been said that

owing to rates of wages and other factors in cost being liable to changes. He said that manufacturers in other lines would not guarantee prices, and the lumber manufacturers could not reasonably be expected to do so.

A lengthy discussion took place on credit business, discounts for cash, charging interest, cash business, etc. It was explained that the dealers had to pay spot cash for freight, which was a large item on a heavy commodity like lumber. The dealer was also obliged to pay interest after sixty days on his purchases from the manufacturer. This they did not complain of, but where the injustice came in was in selling to the farmer on long terms of credit, without interest. Farmers became hostile if asked to pay interest, though they would come to the dealer and get the lowest cash price on the understanding that they would pay in a short time, and then let the account stand for months. Some of the members said that they invariably charged interest, and when they insisted on it they found it not so difficult after all. Other members reported that they had two prices, one for cash and one for credit customers, their credit price being \$1 per thousand higher than spot cash; others had a credit price only and gave a discount for cash. It was the general feeling that the executive should take up this matter at once and see what could be done to place the business on a more uniform basis as to prices, interest, discounts, credit, etc.

The sum of \$100 was voted to the National Patriotic Fund, which concluded the business of the convention.