

shape of six masts and their sails, and will carry a crew of twenty men. It will in fact be a solid ship with no hold, or all hold and all cargo if that view is preferred. Twenty-five thousand spruce trees and innumerable smaller pieces of piling are to form a mass 600 feet long, 54 feet wide, and 38 feet deep. Whether she will make her voyage in safety remains to be seen, but the trial is to be made in the early summer. She will not have many prayers for her success from the schooners which are in the business of carrying piling to market. A question has been raised, whether the spruce trees are not saw logs and thus liable to export duties, but Mr Robertson claims that they are really piling and thus exempt from duty and he says that the custom authorities at Joggins agree in his view.

THE committee of the Senate of Canada, which is now conducting an enquiry into the capabilities of the Mackenzie River basin, is obtaining much interesting and valuable information as to that enormous water system and the extensive district which it drains. Some of the witnesses have spoken particularly of the timber to be found in the region. As might be expected from its northerly situation there are a few timber trees for a long distance from the mouth of the river. Further south on the main river and its affluents on this side of the Rocky Mountains there seem to be rather extensive forests but chiefly of a nature that makes them of comparatively little commercial importance though they would be amply sufficient to supply local requirements. On the large rivers that run into the Mackenzie from the westward breaking through the Rocky Mountains the case is different. There are on their banks fine forest of the character of those on the Pacific coast and the excellent timber they can supply could be conveyed great distances by this gigantic water system to the settlers of the district. But that concerns a distant future.

THE statutory power that is asked by the Dominion Administration of rescinding by order in council the export duty on saw logs and shingle bolts, is in addition to the power they previously had of removing or reducing our import duty on lumber, if the United States would consent to reciprocate in this manner. The new power is to facilitate such a bargain for the benefit of both countries. It is indeed of considerable practical importance as congress has been asked if it removes the lumber duty to make it apply only to countries which do not impose an export duty on saw logs. If legislation in the United States takes this shape we will be prepared for it.

In the United States Congress Mr. Mills' tariff bill has been exposed to the influence of the procrastinating methods in vogue on the eve of a Presidential election, and a discussion of it has been avoided in the House, though not in the press. It is indeed very doubtful what its fate may be even if any action is taken in regard to it. The whole tariff question is indeed full of pitfalls for the politicians. They treat the subject very cautiously and are very likely to postpone any decision. But though there may be a pause till after a President is elected, there is evidently a growing desire for a reduction or repeal of some of the duties which are yielding a revenue that is positively embarrassing from its magnitude. As in Mr. Mills' bill lumber is in most of these propositions one of the articles to be placed on the free list, and there is far less opposition now to the suggestion than there was a few years ago. There is every probability that before very long the United States import duty on Canadian lumber will be totally removed.

In the last number of this journal reference was made to the trouble then existing between the Builders' Exchange and the Bricklayers' Union, of Hamilton, which for a time almost entirely put a stop to building operations throughout the city. The history of the affair has been furnished THE LUMBERMAN by a thoroughly reliable correspondent, which is as follows: "Mr. W. Hancock owns a quarry in which union laborers were employed, but they refused to work ten hours a day and he discharged them and employed non-union men. The other union laborers in the city then refused to handle his stone, although all the other quarries in the city were non-union, and then Mr. Hancock set about organizing the Builders' Exchange, which when in running order fell in line with his wishes, and without hearing from the other side at all, proclaimed a lock-out of all trades until the laborers agreed to handle the stone. This a good many consider was very unjust, as the laborers, as was afterwards ascertained, were not supported by the other unions until after this action, and even then only by the Bricklayers' Union. The whole matter was eventually settled a week ago by the contractors again following Hancock's lead

and giving an advance of wages to almost every trade in the city. The workmen may be said to have gained substantially everything that they asked, and most of their demands were merely vague and would not have come to anything, or could have been settled by arbitrators had the exchange not taken the stand they did. The settlement arrived at has undoubtedly lowered its prestige and will make it much harder to settle matters next year unless some of the more level-headed of the contractors take matters into their own hands and go about it in a business like way and leave out the bulldozing. The general impression among the more sensible builders is that they will in future steer clear of the private quarrels of any of their members, as it turned out on looking deeper into the matter, that the aggrieved quarryman had actually made money by the whole business, and in fact, with the assistance of the hot-headed ones of the party, carried matters pretty much as he pleased for a while. There are no changes to speak of in lumber here. There are still prospects of a fair year's building, but nothing like what would have been but for the trouble above referred to."

#### LUMBER TAXATION.

REFERRING to our remarks in a late issue of THE LUMBERMAN, anent lumber taxation in the province of New Brunswick, and in reply to our enquiry for further information, the Miramichi Advocate, usually well informed on such matters, replies as follows:

"The Crown Land policy of the New Brunswick Government is complained of because it has directly affected those actually engaged in the lumber business, mill owners being the chief sufferers. As we understand the matter in the upper provinces the crown lands are held in perpetuity. That is, the lessee holds his limits indefinitely, so long as he complies with the regulations of the Department. That being so, a large interest in these lands is acquired by third parties—capitalists—who make advances to the limit-holders, their security being the latter's tenure of the lands, and, therefore dependent on the stability of the Government regulations. The Government of Quebec and—we believe—that of Ontario, also, have increased the mileage and stumpage charges, which, of course, lessens the value of these lands to those who have treated them as a security for moneys advanced to the operators.

"Capitalists who make investments in connection with the trade in this section of New Brunswick do not secure themselves in the lands held by lessees, for the tenure of the latter is for a fixed period—ten years—at the end of which the 'limits' are open to general competition. The capital invested is, therefore, in mills, booms, facilities for moving lumber, such as steamers, barges, scows and other plant connected with the business. The cause of complaint with us is that the time when our largest permanent investments were made in these facilities for carrying on the business, there was no reason to believe that the Government tax on Crown Land lumber would be even one half what it is at the present time. Not only so, but the utterances of members of the Government at that time, in the legislature, were calculated to create the belief that the then existing rates would be decreased rather than increased. We refer to a period about fifteen years ago when an annual allowance of \$150,000 a year was arranged for between the Dominion and local governments, to be paid by the latter to the former, in consideration of New Brunswick relinquishing her right to levy export duty. That arrangement relieved the trade of the provincial export tax of twenty cents per thousand sup. feet on all merchantable lumber, and the Government of the day claimed great credit for the 'boon' it had secured for the lumbermen. They showed that they had gained for the public treasury some \$75,000 a year more than the province had realized from the export duty and could afford to make things easier than formerly for the lumber industry.

"New Brunswick was, under these circumstances, a promising field for lumber operations on Crown Lands. There was no stumpage tax, the only charge being \$6 per square mile for the land, which was held from year to year, only, subject to annual public sale.

"Unfortunately, however, for those whose operations were on Crown Lands, as those of the Northern Counties of New Brunswick were, and are still, immense blocks of the best lumber lands of the province had been granted, absolutely, to land and railway companies, as well as to private individuals, either for about fifty cents per acre, or as subsidies for the construction of certain railways. To show the relative positions of the Northern and Southern sections of the province in respect of their lands, we group the four Northern Counties together and also the four largest Southern Counties for the sake of comparison—not from the statistics of fifteen years ago, as we would like to do, but those of 1877, which are the only ones we have at hand—and we find the following:

	Total Acres	Granted	Crown Land
Restigouche	7,372,885	2,174,774	5,198,111
Gloucester			
Northum'd			
Kent			
York	4,922,460	3,196,298	1,726,172
Carleton			
Victoria			
Charlotte			

"The greater part of the acres granted in the second or southern group were in the hands of land and railway companies or pledged to them in 1873, and as these lands had been selected by the owners because they were the best lumber lands of the province, it was natural that the government should be encouraged by the representatives of those counties to increase the taxation on Crown lands lumber, in order that the value of that on the private lands might be enhanced. And we may say that the rest of the province is practically against the four northern counties in this matter, for the seven counties not included in the above groups, although their aggregate acreage is only 5,052,010, had but 1,705,118 of it remaining in possession of the Crown in 1877. Increased provincial expenditure was soon made a plea for increasing the taxation on lumber, and it will not, therefore, be wondered at that the ten representatives of the four northern counties could do little to prevent what was urged in the interest of the counties which sent thirty-one representatives to the legislature.

"The record of the advancing steps by which the New Brunswick lumber dues have reached their present industry-crushing figures is briefly told—

"From the charge of \$6 per sq. mile in 1873 they were advanced, in 1874, to \$8 per sq. mile and a stumpage tax of 60c per M. on spruce and pine logs cut anywhere on the North Shore and 80c. elsewhere in the province. Mileage dues, however, were refunded to operators who paid sufficient stumpage to cover the amount they had contributed on that account. This arrangement lasted until 1877, with some slight alterations in items of small lumber.

"In 1877 the mileage was continued at \$8 but the stumpage tax on merchantable saw logs was made 80c. all over the province, the drawback of mileage being still allowed on payment of stumpage. This arrangement lasted for six years, the leases being renewable for five years and an extension of a year being practically allowed. In 1883 the mileage rate was continued at \$8, but the stumpage tax was raised to \$1 per thousand sup. feet for spruce and pine saw logs with no drawbacks on account of mileage. Leases were made renewable for ten years at an annual charge of \$4 per sq. mile and stumpage dues at \$1.25 per thousand sup. feet for spruce and pine saw logs. These are the rates now taxed upon the lumbermen. In addition to this great increase in stumpage on logs, and the retention of mileage fees, the rates on timber have been increased and many items of small lumber, such as boom-poles, etc., which were not taxed before, are made to contribute to the revenue of the province.

"The Government, having set the example, the private land holders have not been slow to imitate and even better it. It will, therefore, be readily understood that the effect of the government's policy has been to place the New Brunswick trade at a great disadvantage. It is well known that mill-owners with large capital invested can neither suspend operations nor realise anything near cost on their properties. They are, therefore, obliged to go on. Many have done so for the past two or three years at a loss. Some of our best known concerns have been squeezed out of the business, as so many idle mills testify. Should prices improve across the Atlantic the best prepared—those who have any capital left—may make both ends meet. If they can do so and pay \$1.25 per M., Government stumpage on spruce, it follows that the Quebec lumbermen who pay only 60 cents will make what is a handsome profit in these times. And that is why we expressed the view that the Government of Quebec, which charges \$3 for mileage and 60c. per M. stumpage for spruce is merciful, compared with that at New Brunswick which exacts \$8 mileage the first year, \$4 for subsequent years, and \$1.25 stumpage."

#### New York City.

New York April 27.—The market drags. Dealers evince little disposition to buy, unless they can secure a snap trade and such opportunities are scarce, because sellers look forward to a general thawing out of business. When sales will be more numerous and prices better. Many factories are running with small crews, and have but little work on hand. Certain dealers go so far as to say that business in certain directions has been overdone, and if care and sound judgment are not used, a crash of more or less severity will follow. Weakness, if any exists, is among consumers, and yard dealers are hesitating about piling their yards with stock which may not be saleable. A month ago trade was fully as strong as it is now, and at that time the dealers looked forward to a decided improvement in the time which has intervened.