

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters are invited from our readers on matters of practical and timely interest to the lumber trade. To secure insertion all communications must be accompanied with name and address of writer, not necessarily for publication. The publisher will not hold himself responsible for opinions of correspondents.

CANADIAN WEST INDIA TRADE.

To the Editor of the CANADA LUMBERMAN.

SIR,—I have not as yet had the pleasure of reading the pamphlet referred to in the November issue of your valued journal, as compiled by Mr. J. A. Chipman, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, entitled "Canadian West India Trade," but from your comments thereon I am pleased to observe that a resident of one of the Maritime provinces has the courage to direct the attention of our people in Ontario to the fact that our province, contributing the largest proportion of the subsidy to the miserable, inadequate, irregular steamship service, operating as between Canada and the West Indies, derives little or no benefit from such connection.

The annual subsidy of \$95,000 was obtained with the distinct understanding that Canada was to be furnished with a first-class fortnightly service from St. John and Halifax to Demerara and Jamaica, touching at intermediate ports; this was some ten years ago.

Instead of this frequent and regular service, so stipulated and promised, the company have employed occasional tramp steamers, such as the "Portia," or whatever others might be available when a sufficient cargo had been secured, and Western Canada, notwithstanding the prominent position we rightly occupy in the Confederation, and paying the large proportion of the subsidy, derives little or no benefit from it.

The lumber interest is but a fair indication of the foregoing, as, for instance, in 1896 Nova Scotia alone exported forest products to the value of \$86,053, whereas the figures for Ontario are given as \$204—and with British Guiana, the Danish, French and Dutch West Indies, St. Domingo and Honduras, it is equally unsatisfactory.

Apparently the service is maintained and subsidized in the direct interest of the Maritime provinces, and Ontario is called upon to provide for their assistance in this as in other terminal facilities, and at the same time, to secure an efficient and regular mail service, contribute to the steamship service via New York.

As Mr. Chipman points out, in the manufactures of wood alone, of which the West Indies purchase annually one and a quarter million dollars' worth, the United States furnish \$700,000 or \$800,000 worth, and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the balance.

The fact that the Americans furnish this large proportion of forest products, the bulk of which doubtless originally comes from Canada, is attributable without a doubt to their efficient and regular service. Many instances are recorded where shipments have been made from Canada to the West Indies via St. John and Halifax, the drafts against same mailed via New York, with the result that the drafts arrived at their destination before the goods were forwarded from the Maritime provinces, such goods being detained awaiting the sailing of our irregular steamers, with the consequence that drafts arrived at the West Indies long before the goods, and were held for a time and then returned unaccepted. Our Ontario people became disgusted with the facilities via our subsidized Maritime steamship line, and refused to execute further orders unless they received instructions to ship via New York—consequently Ontario has been contributing three-fifths of this subsidy for years without deriving any benefit therefrom.

Is it any wonder that the United States are importing from Canada and supplying \$700,000 or \$800,000 worth of this million and a quarter in forest products, notwithstanding the professions of the present Federal government in regard to Dominion trade extension?

In every instance Ontario seems to be handicapped as against our outlying provinces, owing to the experiences and resulting apathy of our people, the exorbitant rates of our railways for transporting to such terminal points, and the irregularity of the steamship facilities in the Maritime provinces. If they do ship at all they are compelled to give preference to the shorter rail haul to New York and the frequent regular service, and operate this and other trade in the other British colonies through commercial houses in the United States, and thereby develop a trade for the Americans by swelling their shipments, and

assist them in obtaining a more favorable interchange in the products peculiar to such British colonies.

Mr. Chipman suggests a through line from Montreal in summer, with most favorable and decided possibilities to Quebec and Ontario. It is commendable, and worthy of note, that the C.P.R. are now awakened and are quoting the same export rates to St. John as are current from the same shipping points in Ontario, &c., to New York, and have sent an agent to the West Indies, who has, I understand, already visited Bermuda, St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Kitts, Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbadoes, Trinidad and Demerara, and we may hope for satisfactory results; but is a railway representative competent to decide and further commercial necessities?

If the favorable disposition of the British West Indies to interchange with Canada has not been entirely absorbed in their unsatisfactory experience with the Pickford & Black steamship lines, there may still be a reasonable possibility of securing at least a portion of this trade, but a reference to the volume of forest products shipped by the United States to the West Indies, of from \$700,000 to \$800,000, should afford food for thought for Ontario people.

Let it be understood and borne in mind that Ontario furnishes three-fifths of the revenue of the Dominion, and that whatever subsidies are supplied Ontario provides an equal proportion of such expenditure, therefore she is entitled to a corresponding benefit in whatever trade interchange may result.

Geographically, Ontario is seriously at the mercy of our railways in the matter of satisfactory rates on shipments to the West Indies and South America, in consequence of the long rail haul to St. John or Halifax. This, as well as the fact that we are committed federally to three-fifths of whatever subsidy is granted by the Dominion government, should be kept prominently before our government.

St. John and Halifax are continually at sword's point when any assistance or recognition is afforded by the government to either New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, in which they do not equally participate. To wit: I observe to-day in the telegraphic despatches that "the people of St. John, N.B., are up in arms over the terms of the new arrangement made between the Federal government and the Beaver steamship line, whereby Halifax is to be made a port of call during the winter service," &c.

It is also to be observed that the deputation from St. John, on their way to Ottawa, called upon Mr. Shaughnessy, Vice-President of the C.P.R., in Montreal, with an endeavor to have St. John's interests more carefully considered. This rivalry and continuous struggle for supremacy, as between the Maritime provinces, would to a very material extent be obviated by the adoption of the valuable suggestions of Mr. Chipman, of Halifax, for a fortnightly service from Montreal and Quebec, with the very valuable intermediate service in the route, from which such steamers would unquestionably profit. By this means only can Ontario ever hope to profitably participate in this West India trade; otherwise New York, with the comparatively short rail haul, is our only hope.

Nova Scotia alone exported to the British West Indies, including British Guiana, about two million dollars worth of goods in 1895, and to all the West Indies \$3,449,585; consequently their efforts and anxiety.

We have Boards of Trade (so-called) continually languishing, at banquets and other similar occasions, for opportunities for trade extension, and there is an intense rivalry manifested by certain of our business men in railing forth what might or should be done if such and such were only at their command. As far as Ontario is concerned it ends in such wind explosions, and we are left, Micawber-like, waiting for another occasion to turn up for windy efforts, and in the interim while at the inactivity of the government, the irregular service, etc., etc., without exercising effort or influence to remedy the condition.

What we require is that our business men in Ontario, as representing three-fifths of the subsidal assistance, get right down to a practical realization of this matter, and devise some practical, intelligent basis upon which to secure proper consideration, and demand facilities and rates in the interest of Ontario that will admit of some return for the large subsidy which we have had to contribute for years in the direct and only interest of the Maritime provinces.

The proportion of \$204 in Ontario against \$86,053 to Nova Scotia in lumber interests, is significant of the pro-

portion Ontario derives in the total of the Canadian trade to all of the West Indies.

Deputations from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have been chasing one another to Ottawa in this matter long enough. Now, let Ontario and Quebec look to it that during this opportune season opportunity is given them to share in this trade proportional to the subsidy paid by each province, or else favorably consider facilities elsewhere.

Mr. Chipman's effort should commend itself to every thinking Canadian engaged in manufacture and export to Ontario. If Ontario had but a percentage of the indomitable and irrepressible spirit which the Maritime provinces possess for asserting their position and value to the Dominion, and their rights, she would be differently treated and more equitably regarded than at present. The effort and co-operation of our lumbermen are essentially necessary for this purpose. Let unanimity and combined purpose characterize every effort put forth, and Ontario, under her three-fifths subsidy, will obtain her proper share in this trade.

Insist upon a first-class line of steamships; it is not merely a Nova Scotia or New Brunswick venture, but a Dominion interest, and Ontario wants her proper share and must have it.

"PROGRESS."

CANADA FOR THE CANADIANS.

To the Editor of the CANADA LUMBERMAN:

SIR,—What are our governments and people about, allow Scandinavia and other foreign countries to monopolize the British market in their demand for wood pulp, without putting forth some practical, intelligent effort to secure at least a reasonable portion of this trade to our resourceful Dominion? I observe in the November issue of your valuable journal, THE CANADA LUMBERMAN, that Norway and Sweden furnished Great Britain with 300,000 tons of pulp wood in 1896, valued at £1,485,761, or seven million four hundred thousand dollars' worth in round figures, or 88 per cent. of the total value imported by the mother country, viz., £1,684,647, and that the balance of 12 per cent. of Great Britain's requirements was made up of imports from Russia, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Austria, the United States and Canada—our Canadian portion being but 2,714 tons, the value being £9,370.

Can the lumbermen of Canada explain why this is? Is it through want of intelligent effort, or is it that the pulp wood of Norway and Sweden is considered in Great Britain as superior to that of our country?

American manufacturers, as you state, admit that they get more pulp per cord from Canadian wood than from the wood of any other country. If our wood pulp is superior in quality as recognized, and more profitable a result than any other, why this 88 per cent. from Scandinavia to Great Britain? Is it that our freight rates are against us? If so, with such preferable material as we are acknowledged to have, and with the possibility of capturing such a volume of trade in this particular interest, with practical Imperial federation and trade within the British Empire as the popular commercial theme of the jubilee year, surely it is worthy of the closest and most practical consideration on the part of our railway and steamship companies.

Australia, I also observe, has sent forward orders for pulp for their paper mills, and anxiety is announced by a prominent newspaper firm to meet a Canadian representative of one of our paper mills. Is it not in order to inquire what is Commissioner Larke doing that this decided opportunity is not looked after?

The federation of the British Empire and the proposal to trade within the Empire should materially assist the Dominion in the development of this department—that is, if Imperial federation means anything but lip loyalty. But it occurs to me that the overtures and efforts to effect such a federation and trade interchange as between the colonies and the mother country, has only so far served to awaken our American neighbors to a practical realization of the possible commercial results of such federation. In this particular interest, note the proposed amalgamation of the big paper and pulp mills of the United States with a combined capital of some twenty-two million dollars, so as to protect and strengthen their endeavors for the world's trade. Canadians have, or should have, with the subsidal assistance provided by our governments, the best steamship and other facilities, and the most favorable rates for conveniencing trade with the mother country.