

greatest tropical island colony chiefly, if not solely, due to our dairy products, our flour and our tur are equal in quality to those of the United States, and yet Canada's export of foodstuffs to Jamaica is not quite one half of that of her southern neighbors. Of household furniture, how comes it that the energetic and tasteful manufacturers of Montreal, Toronto, and a dozen other places have only been able to sell \$43 worth, while the American sales reached \$8,500, and the British \$43,500. Of the million and three quarters of dollars spent on imported clothes and shoes, surely Canada might secure more than \$6,000. Of building materials, including lumber, Canada ought certainly to supply Jamaica with as much as the United States does. She now sends not quite a fifth of the quantity furnished by her rival. She ought, too, to send as much coal as the States, instead of only a fourth; and the same may be said about manufactured tobacco and cigars, of which she does not send a dollar's worth, while the American trade in this commodity amounts to \$48,000. As to hardware, tools, ironmongery and machinery, etc., I have given the figures, and people will readily see that our export to Jamaica of many of the articles enumerated ought, at least to be trebled, and would be, were suitable steam communication provided. The steamers should be fast and should be fitted with Blackman's patent exhaust or other similar apparatus for the preservation of fruit on the return voyage. Though mails and passengers should be carried, freight should be the chief object aimed at. If of sufficiently light draught, some of the smaller ports of the island might, in time, occasionally be visited with advantage. From the shape of Jamaica, long, narrow and intersected through its entire length by a high mountain range, the traffic of the island will always be chiefly coastal. Jamaica has but one short railway, and the ordinary roads across the island are steep and rugged. Coastal steamers now ply round the island every ten days conveying freight and passengers between the smaller ports and Kingston. A line of subsidised steamers would probably at first only be able to touch at Kingston, as other West India islands would have to be visited, and would be supplied by these coasters with fruit and other homeward freight. But with increased facilities of transport the Jamaica trade would speedily require steamers exclusively devoted to it, and then the smaller ports might be called at, and the cost of transshipment saved. We Canadians scarcely know even by name many of the tropical luxuries, such as yams, guavas, pawpaws, shaddoes, etc., which a steam line would bring cheaply to our tables, and for which a large demand would speedily be developed among us. A line of steamers traversing the 1,700 miles that separate us from Jamaica would take our lumber, our staves and our fish, our boots and shoes, our dairy produce, oats and hay, our furniture and agricultural implements, our paper, glass, wire fencing, nails, cordage, cottons, tweeds, soaps, candles, canvas, carriages, apples and potatoes, and would bring in return, cheap enough for ordinary use on the tables of our farmers and mechanics, the bananas and oranges, the limes and guavas, the yams and plantains of the tropics. The growth of trade that steam communication would secure for us is no merely fanciful speculation. In the three years (1880-83) that the Cunard service between Kingston and Halifax was subsidized by the Imperial Government the trade from Jamaica to Canada increased from 6.2 per cent. of the whole export in 1880-81 to 16.66 in 1882-83, when as being inconsistent with Free Trade theories—the subsidy was discontinued, and the trade to Canada at once fell, amounting in 1885-86 to only 3½ per cent. of the total export trade of Jamaica. This is pre-eminently a farmer's and working man's question. Steam communication with our fellow subjects in the tropics means better markets, increased work and wages, and cheap luxuries for the Canadian masses, whether ploughing the soil, toiling at the loom or the forge, or wielding the axe in the snow clad forests of our northern or eastern wilderness.

Yours, etc.,

A. SPENCER JONES.

Ottawa, May 10th.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Mr. J. S. Chase of this city, who has spent the major part of the past eighteen months on the Pacific coast, returned only last month, has again taken his departure for that section, which he will make the scene of his further labors. In many respects Mr. Chase thinks that the Pacific coast, and particularly the Puget Sound country, is one of the finest sections of the globe. Its business advantages, in their rapid development, offer inducements to men of energy and capital (and to energetic men of small capital as well), unsurpassed by any section of the land. There is money in its timber and its minerals. In some sections of the mountains gold and silver lays around loose on the surface of the ground. Unfortunately for the seeker, it is not minted to his hand, and like all other valuable commodities, takes time, patience and a

considerable expenditure of money to separate from the rock with which it is amalgamated. In one of his trips through the mountains Mr. Chase came across a vein of mineral of which he picked up a half dozen specimens from the surface and submitted them to the government assayer at Victoria, obtaining the following report: No. 1 assayed at the rate of 29 ounces of silver and 13 ounces of gold to the ton; No. 2, 37½ ounces of silver and 2½ ounces of gold; 3, 43 ounces of silver and eight-tenths of an ounce of gold; No. 4, 27 ounces of silver and 1½ ounces of gold; No. 5, 35 ounces of silver and 5 ounces of gold; No. 6, 49 ounces of silver and half an ounce of gold. These were surface pickings, and but tend to indicate what might be the result of a close research. In our own wanderings in the mountains of British Columbia, we became perfectly satisfied that the whole country was auriferous, and that the time would come when machinery could be so economically availed of that in connection with improved facilities of transportation, the precious metals would be developed to an extent never exceeded in gold or silver mining. The coal of British Columbia is another mine of wealth, its quality being superior to even the highly esteemed bituminous coal of Pennsylvania. Iron and copper mines are found upon Vancouver Island of great richness, awaiting a larger population for utilization. The yellow cedar of the coast is almost, if not fully, equal in closeness of grain to the Holly of the South. It is one of the most difficult woods to find, there being but few tracts of land upon which it grows in any quantity. In fact, one tract of 160 acres on the main land of the Gulf of Georgia and a few scattering forties on Vancouver Island is all that is known to exist in bodies of any extent. It is worth \$60 per M in sawed lumber on the coast; as a trimming for contrasts in fine work it is not equalled by any timber known. The fir of the coast has not been exaggerated either for size or quality. Its extent is not so great as is by many supposed, as the large and good timber is confined to a territory west of the coast range of mountains and mainly on a belt of not more than from one to fifteen or twenty miles in depth, largely in a broken and mountainous region where the cost of lumbering would exceed the profit. The timber of the interior does not compare for size or quality with that of the coast, unless we except the red cedar, of which an occasional tract of comparatively small extent is to be found, and when found shows trees of enormous proportions.—*Lumber Trade Journal*.

#### THE HEMLOCK.

This, which has hitherto been one of the most abundant trees in the forests of Maine, as in those of the maritime provinces of Canada, is fast disappearing, as well beneath the axe of the woodsman, as from the results of the destructive effect of forest fires, to whose action it is very susceptible.

There are two varieties of this tree known to eastern woodsmen—the sapling, or white, and the black, or coarse-barked hemlock. The former is usually the smaller tree, attaining, however, a greater altitude in proportion to the size of its trunk. Its bark is also smoother and whiter. It seems very commonly to follow the banks of rivers and streams, or rather the sides of ridges adjacent to the shores of streams and lakes.

One of the best localities for this wood is to be found on the shores of the Avon river, and its branches, in the vicinity of Windsor, Nova Scotia. It occurs also in many other parts of the interior of that province, as well as in New Brunswick and Maine. In the two places last mentioned, especially in New Brunswick, vast forests, chiefly consisting of rough-barked hemlock, were overthrown, some twenty years since, by a storm, which is locally known as the "Saxby gale," from the fact that the date of its occurrence had been predicted by Lieut. Saxby, of the Royal Navy of England. The destructive effects of this gale, which extended a distance of more than 90 miles up the St. John river from its mouth, may be estimated from the fact that shortly after its occurrence the writer was called upon to examine and report upon some timber land which had been subjected to its influence. Two days were spent in such inspection, during which time he failed in traveling to exceed a distance of from three to four miles a day, the roots, tops and trunks of blown trees meeting him at every few steps, presenting formidable obstacles to anything like a rapid advance.

The gale had been more destructive to this than to any other forest tree, on account of its heavy and spreading top, which offered great resistance to the wind. As the roots ran along near the surface of the ground, where the trees were blown down, they brought with them masses of earth, which formed one of the chief obstacles mentioned above.

The wood of the black hemlock is nearly always more or less shaky, these shakes sometimes extending from the base of the tree to the limbs.

Hemlocks which grow on wet land, as well as those which are found on the low, sandy ridges of carboniferous rocks which occupy the central part of the province of New Brunswick,

are usually very shaky, while those which are found on the boulder district of that province, which covers probably 100 square miles of its area, are especially good. Excellent trees may be seen standing where it would in many cases puzzle one to secure a shovelful of earth, and where indeed one might walk for a long distance by stepping from rock to rock, without ever once setting foot to the ground. In such a place the writer has counted, without moving from where he stood, ninety full-grown hemlocks, standing within a very limited radius.

The boulders which cover the extensive district in New Brunswick now alluded to, are composed of granite in nearly all cases. These are frequently porphyritic, enclosing crystals of feldspar of large size. The cause of the abundance of this tree, and of the good qualities of its wood in so unpropitious a locality, may perhaps be the result of the decomposition of this feldspar, under the action of changes of temperature and atmospheric agencies which by mechanical and chemical means combined, may have set free from its silica and alumina the 16 or 17 per cent. of potash which the feldspar of the granite contained, to be thus rendered soluble and fitted to be drawn up by the roots into the body and limbs of the tree.

In the maritime provinces of Canada, no attention is being paid to the protection of this tree on the property of the government; on the contrary, settlers are invited to occupy the poor and sandy ridges on which it grows, with the result of poverty to them and their families, and destruction of the surrounding forests from the spread of fire from the clearings.

Several large manufactories have been erected in the province of New Brunswick, for the purpose of extracting the tannin from the bark of the hemlock, the result of which has been that whole forests of this valuable wood have been cut down for the bark only, while the tree itself has been left to rot or act as fuel for the fires which every now and then rage in spring or autumn among the forests of this country.

The supply of hemlock of the eastern states and maritime provinces of Canada will in all probability fail long before that of the spruce, from the fact that while the hemlock grows very thickly in certain localities, these are limited in extent. On the contrary, spruce trees are found scattered all over the country. The hemlock also is much more easily destroyed by fire than the spruce, and does not replace other forests which may have been destroyed nearly as readily as the spruce.

The young hemlock is a remarkably pretty tree; as it grows older, however, its branches frequently die and the dead and often barkless top of the aged tree gives a by no means agreeable appearance to it and its surroundings.—*Edward Jack, in New York Lumber Trade Journal*.

#### EXCHANGE ECHOES.

Quebec Chronicle.

From some of the Quebec lumbermen who have lately returned from England, it is understood that although the condition of the European markets is not perhaps quite as promising as it was a couple of months ago, there is no reason to anticipate anything but a fairly prosperous season. The demand for Quebec oak at the principle shipbuilding centres has apparently been satisfied. The anxiety and rush to sell during the boom in prices of the month of February last, produced the natural result of lower prices, and the then existing demand was satisfied in a shorter time than had been anticipated. Even the slippers, whose interests on this side never permit them to paint the condition of affairs in England in very bright colors, admit the present prospects on the other side are rather more promising than they have been for the past few weeks. Prices of deals are now at least ten per cent. higher than they were at this time last year, and stocks in England are known by the Canadian manufacturers to be much lower than they have ever been before, at least for many years back. This should be one of the most promising features of the present outlook. The American demand for boards continues to be more satisfactory than was anticipated, and is fully equal to that of last year, notwithstanding that the Presidential election year is generally most unfavorable to business with the United States.

London Timber Trades Journal.

The placing of lumber on the free list by the United States government will be—should such a measure pass—an immense stimulus to the Canadian timber trade, with a consequent all-round advance in values, through the introduction of United States capital, in the shape of numerous mills, and a large absorption of Dominion forest limits by the lumber manufacturers from Chicago and Michigan. As far as relates to the wisdom of this step towards free trade by the United States legislature we cannot say much, the tendency of such a measure being to divert capital from their own side to that of the neighboring country, and though, perhaps, the interest on it might return in the shape of cut lumber specially manufactured in the States, the principal would be lost for all time, sunk in lending its assistance in the furthering of Canadian