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MR. JOLY ON THE TIMBER TRADE.

SIR,—President Cleveland's recommendation, in his message for the abolition of the import duty on Canadian lumber, appears to meet with a good deal of favor from the Canadian lumbermen. It would benefit them to a certain extent, but not likely to the whole amount of the duty of two dollars per thousand feet. On the other side, if it leads to our allowing the American lumbermen to cut down our forests and manufacture the product thereof in their own country, the result will be fatal to the Canadian lumberman as well as to the country at large.

The Dominion would be much more benefited by the imposition by our own Parliament of a heavy duty on the export of logs to the United States, than by the abolition of the import duty on our sawn lumber into the States.

A heavy export duty on logs would prevent the cutting down of our forests by the American lumbermen, and it would secure work for our people and keep them here. It appears little short of madness, when we have got the raw material here and thousands of willing men to work it, that we should send away to our neighbors both the raw material and the men who can work it here. It is a suicidal policy, and it would be difficult to find a parallel for it in any other country.

The fact is that our timber trade does not rest on a sound basis. If we could arrive at a correct balance of that trade for the last twenty-five years, it would be sad to find out how little we have received for the value of our timber above our expenditure in manufacturing it. In more than one case I fear that we have actually paid the purchasers on the other side to accept our timber from us.

The responsibility of this state of things must rest, above all, with our Provincial governments. They are the administrators of our timber lands. Instead of treasuring them and opening them only gradually to the lumbermen, as the legitimate requirements of the timber trade demand, they force them, wholesale, on the market and actually compel an extravagant production, which can only have one result—glutting the market and ruining the lumberman.

How many men are they not among us, who understand absolutely nothing of the lumber trade, who had never given even one thought to it, and who, at a moment's notice, have been actually manufactured into lumbermen by the action of Provincial Government?

I stated that our timber trade did not rest on a sound basis; let me quote no less an authority than John Stewart Mill on the subject. In his first volume on the Principles of Political Economy, chap. 15, "of profits," he says:—"The timber trade of Canada is one example of an employment of capital, partaking so much of the nature of a lottery as to make it

an accredited opinion that, taking the adventures in the aggregate, there is more money lost by the trade than gained by it; in other words, that the average rate of profit is less than nothing."

This was written long ago, but it applies now, more than ever, to our timber trade.

It is not often that Governments can interfere, beneficially, with trade; but they can in the present case and it is full time that they should do so.

H. G. JOLY.

Leclerville, P. Q., January, 1886.

LUMBER DUTIES.

THE Port Arthur Board of trade is not satisfied with the present duty on lumber imported from the United States, and wish it re-arranged so that the duty will not be so high per M. on the lower grades. The Board of Trade, at a recent meeting, embodied their views in the following resolution:—

"That whereas it appears that provision is made in paragraph 6 of chap. 16 of 42 Vic. for a reduction of the duty on lumber imported from the United States, in case it should appear to the satisfaction of the Governor-in-Council that lumber may be imported into the United States from Canada at a less rate of duty than that imposed on lumber coming from the States to Canada under the provisions of the act referred to.

"And whereas the United States Government imposes a specific duty of \$2.00 per 1,000 feet, board measure, upon pine lumber not planed or finished, without regard to its quality or value, but that lumber imported from the United States to Canada is taxed 20 per cent. upon its value, thus admitting common lumber, which competes with our domestic products, at a low rate, but putting a prohibitory tariff upon the better quality of pine which is not produced here.

"And whereas it appears that most of the imports of lumber into Canada are for consumption in Manitoba and the Northwest, and that is largely of the expensive qualities required for the manufacture of many staple articles of family and home benefits for which the domestic lumber is not suitable.

"And whereas the effect of an ad valorem duty on lumber is largely to increase the cost of the better goods not produced here, and prohibiting the import of such lumber except in the finished state of sash, doors, etc., so that manufacturers in this part of Canada, who are dependent on such lumber, are unable to prosecute this industry owing to the high cost of the raw material under our tariff, which is in its effect largely in excess of that imposed by the United States on lumber of corresponding value going from Canada.

"It is therefore resolved, that the attention

of the Dominion Government be called to the matter, as it seriously affects an important industry, which would, if enabled to obtain its raw material at reasonable cost, prove of great general benefit, and that the equalization of the tariff on lumber would have the effect desired, that it would injure no Canadian industry but would cause a considerable reduction in the cost to the consumer of staple articles required in the Northwest, which are now largely imported from the United States, and that the reduction of revenue to the Government would be slight in comparison with the general advantage to the country."

CHICAGO LUMBER MOVEMENT.

Glancing over the last monthly statistical sheet, issued by the Chicago Lumberman's Exchange, several prominent facts are presented. One is that there was, on January 1st, but 2,782,376 feet of lumber in the yards more than there was at a corresponding date last year, but there is shown an increase of 95,000,000 shingles.

It is interesting to note the course of trade throughout the year, as indicated by the stocks on hand at the beginning of each month. It is peculiarly interesting to the Lumberman's market reviewer, and should be to close readers of the paper, on account of the remarkable coincidence between the exchange figures and the movement of lumber as set forth in our reports from week to week. The monthly reports of stock on hand, as returned by the dealers to the secretary of the exchange, are probably the most reliable figures concerning lumber published in the Northwest.

It has been repeatedly asserted that the trade of this city lost a good start in the year's business of 1885 by the excessively cold weather and heavy snow storms of January and February. The figures corroborate this assertion. In January, 1884, 67,007,509 feet of lumber was sold out of the yards, and 125,772,587 feet in February, about 193,000,000 in both months. In January last year the sales and shipments in both months amounted to but little over 96,000,000, less than one-half of that during the corresponding months in 1885. So it will be seen, that as compared to the year previous, the trade on March the first, 1885, was fully 100,000,000 feet of lumber behind. But in March last year there was a heavy outward movement, amounting to 112,391,333 feet, as compared to 127,922,991 in March, 1884. In April of last year trade fell back as compared to April of 1884, the difference being represented by 136,126,975 feet in 1885 to 166,329,243 in 1884.

So it will be seen that last year, up to May 1, there had been three poor months for trade, and one good one—March. On May 1st the yards contained nearly 50,000,000 feet more lumber than they did at a corresponding date in 1884.

There was another start made in May, sales and shipments during that month amounting to 179,173,517 feet as compared to 178,170,870 in May, 1884. Hence it will be seen that the statement then made that trade was in excess of that of the corresponding time the year before was correct. The trade of June was also a little in excess of a like month a year before, as it likewise was in July. But in August distribution fell behind that of the corresponding month of 1884. In September trade forged ahead again, and beat the previous year's record by nearly 90,000,000 feet. Trade in October of last year was also a little in excess of that of the previous year. But in November there was a serious drop-off, there having been sold and shipped in November, 1884, 208,700,000 feet, while last year there was but 170,102,695 disposed of. This difference in favor of 1884 was wholly owing to the fact that there was a southwestern freight rate of only five cents a hundred, while in November, 1885, there was none. Yet there was twice as much lumber sold in December of last year as there was in a corresponding month of 1884.

It is well to observe how the totals for the two years look when sized up together. In 1884, sales and shipments amounted to 1,789,031,939 feet, and in 1885, 1,711,443,112—only about 77,500,000 less in 1885 than in 1884. This falling off last year was more than accounted for by the loss of trade on account of the extraordinary cold weather in January and February of last year.

We have thus thrashed over the old straw, as it were, to show how accurately the Lumberman as it went along, has indicated the state of trade, and how utterly without reason is the complaint that the distribution of the past year was greatly less than it was in 1884. As a matter of fact distribution in March, May, June, July, September and October and December was heavier than in the corresponding months of 1884, though in January, February, April, August and November it was lighter. The difference in the volume of trade as compared with the corresponding months of the two years was more owing to weather and freight rate causes than anything else, conditions that might be reversed in other years. There is nothing in the exhibit of the year's business that certainly points to a decay of the Chicago lumber trade. Prosperous times, or favorable circumstances affecting freight rates and competition may swell the white pine business of this city in some year to come beyond what has as yet been witnessed.—Northwestern Lumberman.

ICICLES are such a scarcity at Beaumont, Texas, that during the last cold snap a large one, that hung on the Texas Tram & Lumber Company's water tank, was so admired that the company thought of having it photographed.