

VIEWS AND INTERVIEWS.

Business Bluntness. Business men are credited, often, with bluntness of speech. Rather let us call it business directness, which aims to get at the facts and true inwardness of things without any nonsense or the circumlocution of the legal profession. The following are three questions from a commercial cotemporary that certainly 'get there' rapidly: "Are you going to run your factory this winter, or have you decided to shut down during the severe months? If you are going to run, is your factory a fit place to work when the thermometer shows zero outside? Do you think your employees can do you and themselves justice working frozen lumber, on frozen machines, with frozen fingers?"

Evidence From Trees. Timber merchants who are philologists, or who have not forgotten their studies of "Morris's English Grammar" and "Grimm's Law," will be interested to learn on the authority of one who is supposed to have given the subject the necessary study, that the only names for trees common to all the Aryan languages are those for birch and willow, and it has been argued that since the birch is only found in Europe the primitive Aryans must have come from Europe, not Asia. It turns out, however, that the white birch flourishes throughout Siberia, from the highlands of Afghanistan to Japan, and that allied varieties are also found in the mountains of Central Asia and the Himalayas. In Iran and Turkestan, which some have supposed the cradle of the Aryans, these trees are not found. The argument for a European cradle of the Aryans, which is founded in the birch, is therefore a weak one.

Wooden Houses For England. An interesting experiment is shortly to be made by an English landlord. A British Columbia architect has received orders to prepare plans for lightly constructed houses, such as are built in this country, and a shipment of sufficient material for half a dozen frame houses is about to be sent to England to be erected for the workmen on a large estate. The houses are to be shingled with red cedar shingles in place of thatch. A local paper takes a roseate view of the scheme in the realization of which, we are sure, it has many well-wishers among Canadian lumbermen. This journal says: "There is no reason why England should not build wooden houses. The climate of the Pacific Northwest is like that of England, and here wooden houses are preferred to brick and stone. Lumber is cheaper than stone or brick, even if freights and insurance are high, and when this idea takes root among the middle classes of Great Britain, we may look for an immense trade from John Bull. At present the imports of timber and lumber into Great Britain amounts to over \$75,000,000 per year, of which less than \$200,000 worth comes from the Pacific coast. Should the wooden house idea take there will be enough work for all the cargo mills on the coast to supply the demand."

A Clearing House For Lumbermen. One will usually think of a clearing house as an adjunct of the banking system of the day. We do not hear of it as identified with ordinary business undertakings, and yet we are told that in Wisconsin there is a clearing house as a feature of the lumber industry of that State. On the Wisconsin river there is an agreement between loggers, mill men and others, which, though unwritten, is most scrupulously adhered to. In spite of the care exercised by the boom companies, the logs of the different corporations naturally become mixed in the drive down the river. In pulling the logs from the pond, on the haul-up to the saw, if the mark on the end is ascertained to be other than that of the company owning the mill, the usual course pursued is to note the entry on the sawyer's book of the firm to whom it belongs, and the number of feet it contains. At the end of the season each firm notifies its neighbors that it has cut a certain amount of their logs. The neighboring firm follows the same course with other firms, a balance is struck, and whichever firm cuts the most remits a check in payment of the difference. Sometimes it happens that a firm, in finding another's logs among his own, is indisposed to saw them and keep track of them, in which

case they are put to one side. At the close of the season these firms notify the various owners that they have in their ponds a certain number of their logs, subject to the owner's orders. One will say these be honest lumbermen. The theory is that some there be who are more honest than others. The clearing house plan seems workable, and ought to be suggestive, at least with lumbermen who desire to follow the golden rule, and, tradition to the contrary, we believe this is the case with most lumbermen.

ESTIMATING STANDING TIMBER.

BY H. B. WETZEL, IN "HARDWOOD."

THERE are several important things to be considered by those having in view the purchasing of timber, and its early conversion into lumber. Chief of these are—quantity, quality, and first cost, of timber, cost to log, or to get the logs to mill, and cost of transportation of lumber from mill to such markets that will readily absorb the output of the mill. The cost to convert the logs into lumber when at the mill, and to place the lumber on cars or vessel, can be ascertained more readily and approximately near to working results, than either of the first-named conditions.

If, in addition to the knowledge of the probable aggregate amount of the merchantable timber on the tract which is intended to be purchased and by merchantable timber we may interpret that term to mean such timber as can be utilized profitably there can be shown the probable percentage of certain grades of lumber that the timber will yield, one will then have the foundation or basis upon which an experienced lumberman or intelligent business man can reach a conclusion as to whether the purchase of such tract would be a profitable venture or otherwise. Many sanguine men often overlook the importance of investigating these primary essentials, and suffer loss in consequence.

No less interested should be the logging jobber as to the amount of timber on a given area of land, for usually he can log somewhat in the ratio of cost, proportionate to the amount of timber.

Frequently the cost of logging is not so carefully considered by those who buy tracts or timber lands at low costs, and remote from transportation facilities, if they buy as an investment rather than for immediate lumbering operations, for past experience has shown that they will not have to wait many years until the advance of the lumbermen will soon reach them and the logging problem be solved.

The very first thing that a capitalist or lumberman wants to know before he invests in timber is, the amount on a given tract or area of land, and it is of this that I purpose to treat more especially at this time.

There are men who, by knowledge gained through years of experience, or on account of their natural ability or adaptability to this kind of work, become very proficient and reliable as estimators of standing timber. Under the names of land lookers, timber explorers, timber experts and other suggestive titles they form a peculiar and distinct class in their occupation in all well timbered and lumbering regions.

Many of them have spent most of their lives in the woods and occupied in lumbering operations, and are as much at home in the primeval forest as a wild Indian. They are lovers of nature and in full sympathy with their work.

They are keen of vision, with perceptive faculties, together with form, quantity and distance well developed, and these become quickened, intensified and wonderfully accurate by constant use. Thus by a single glance they are enabled to arrive at conclusions that with others would require much time to reach by mathematical methods. Generally they are plain men of good common sense, reliable and honest to the core—noble men in the true sense. Their life work amidst the solitude and sublimity of nature, far away from the busy haunts and wiles of men, tend toward honest motive and effort. Their chief schooling has been in the direction of the study of timber, and many of them become remarkably proficient in this branch of education.

One of the best judges of timber that I ever knew could not read or write, yet he had the most wonderful memory of things that he had seen and events that occurred which came under his notice of any person I

have ever seen. And I would rather accept his judgment as to the amount of standing timber and its quality on a tract that he had examined, and the cost to log it, than the man having the longest list of degrees of titles of distinction issued from the scientific institutions of the world. While many of these men are uneducated in the popular sense, yet there are capitalists who invest millions of money in timber upon the report and judgment of these men, and without verification from any source, knowing full well their ability and honesty.

It is somewhat singular that these woodsmen each have their own methods or manner of work and of reaching conclusions and determining results. Few of them follow prescribed or narrow rules, yet quickly adapt new methods or ways to meet new contingencies or unusual conditions which arise in their work.

If asked to explain in detail how they arrive at certain conclusions as to the amount of timber on a certain tract or area of land, many would be unable to tell. With many their knowledge in this direction seems to be almost of an intuitive character. But there are others, men of scientific and educational attainments, who, by the use of instruments and mechanical devices and mathematical calculations, measure certain areas on a given tract of land—say an acre here, and an acre there, and again elsewhere—of the best, the medium and the poorest timber, so as to ascertain the average, then carefully measure the diameter or girth of each tree above a certain size within such measured spaces, by means of tape line, calipers or other mechanical device, then ascertain as near as possible the height of the tree, by quadrant or other device, which can be converted into sawlogs, after which they carefully compute the cubical contents of the tree, or how much lumber it will cut board measure.

While this may be a scientific method of reaching results, it is too slow in this fast age to be practical where a large tract of timber is to be estimated. It may do very well where a few trees or limited acreage are to be gone over, but it is slow and expensive in comparison with the experienced woodsmen's methods, for they can tell at a glance the approximate amount of lumber that a tree will yield, or almost as equally quick will tell how much timber an acre will cut.

A man may possess the highest natural and educational mathematical attainments, and yet fail to be a reliable estimator of standing timber, unless he has had some experience in lumbering, or is a judge of the defects or faulty character of trees. For due allowance must be made in the calculations for defective timber where it exists, and it is seldom that one examines any considerable tract without finding defective or faulty timber. It is only the trained eye of the experienced woodsman that is capable of detecting the various defects in trees.

So faulty and defective are certain kinds of timber growing under peculiar conditions, that often the timber examiner finds the most difficult part of his work to determine the amount of proportion of the unsound timber on the tract under examination.

A novice may be able to ascertain approximately by scientific methods the cubical contents of a sound, well formed tree, yet he may be greatly in error in determining by his methods as to how much an acre or a thousand acres will yield of merchantable lumber if the timber be crooked, hollow, rotten, or otherwise faulty, or where it is of irregular growth. A man may handle lumber for years in a city lumber yard, or even about a saw mill, and be an expert as to grades of lumber, and yet be entirely incompetent to judge of the quality or character of timber in the woods. It is the trained eye of the experienced woodsman or lumberman who has spent much of his time in the woods and studied the characteristics of timber, and cut, logged, or otherwise worked in lumbering operations in the woods, that is in a measure enabled to determine readily the proportion of sound to that of unsound timber before it is cut. He it is who detects by the peculiar shape of the trunk of the tree, the swollen or churn butt, the bulges or protuberances in places further up the trunk, the peculiarly unhealthy color of the bark, the fungus growths, dead or unhealthy top, or other signs which indicate that the tree is either hollow, shaky, rotten, or in the earlier stages of decay, or faulty in some other respects.