



It came in my way the other day to have a pleasant chat with Mr. W. H. Bromley, of the Pembroke Lumber Co., Pembroke, Ont., and a son of the well-known manager of that successful lumber concern. Mr. Bromley, jr., had been making a short trip in western Ontario looking after the business of his concern. He says that the season's trade with them has been of a most satisfactory character, business of the past month being much ahead of the corresponding period last year. The Pembroke Lumber Co. make a specialty of dimension timber, and it has been their pleasure this year to furnish a good deal of timber of this kind to be used in the erection of elevators and the building of large warehouses. Prices, Mr. Bromley says, have kept up very fairly; at least, they have not been disposed to cut prices. This, he tells me, has not been the case with everyone, as with some concerns in the east prices have been shaded to the extent of one or two dollars this season from the fact that large stocks are held by some lumbermen. He takes the wise view that it is foolishness for lumbermen to sacrifice prices, especially of white pine. The time is coming when white pine will be a scarce commodity in this country, and to quote Mr. Bromley's words, "white pine is for this reason to-day as good as gold." Mr. Bromley comes from a part of the country where many of the pioneers of lumbering in Canada have found their home. From around about Pembroke has come the Mackies, Mr. Peter White, Mr. Hale, and others whose names will easily occur to the student of lumber history, as the men who operated in the forest in the Ottawa district, when there was lots of forest to cut. Wonderful have been the changes in that section of the province since the days when Ottawa was best known as Bytown, and could not boast of the favored conditions that exist to-day. Mr. Bromley remarked that with lumbermen, as with men engaged in other lines of trade, it is not everyone who has been in the business for years and acquired a rich competence and therefore have no reason to trouble themselves about material affairs, who keep closely in touch with conditions as they change in every business, and have changed in the lumber business, from decade to decade. Having come from Hamilton, where he had met Mr. Robert Thomson, he did not hesitate to name him as one of the lumbermen of the country, who seemed to-day, though he had been lumbering for years, to be as keen and interested in every development of the business, as he undoubtedly was in his younger days.

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A MONTH ago I let Mr. McBurney, a well-known Canadian lumberman, tell something of the methods of drawing logs by rail in Michigan and Wisconsin, where he has been cutting timber lately. As one studies this question it is seen that important changes are taking place in logging methods. The railroad, in recent years, has cut seriously into the schooner and barge as a lumber carrier, shown by the Marine records in many places, and especially noticeable in the decline that has taken place in the vessel trade in Michigan. It looks as though the rafting of logs would in time become largely a method of the past, the railroad taking its place. Nearly half of the logs banked on the Upper Mississippi and its tributaries last winter were hauled by railroad. Logging roads are being extended into the interior in many different parts of the country where lumbering is carried on. A lumberman of Maine is quoted as saying: "It won't be many years, we hope, before this waiting for the spring drives of logs will be a thing of the past. How much better it would be to load them on to a car at the lake in the morning and have them at the mills within two days, if not within one. Now you put a log into the lake and wait two years for it, and you are lucky if you then get it intact, for frequently it is broken or left high upon the shore of the receding freshet." It

is calculated that you can get about 5,000 feet on a log track, or in other words, a train of ten cars would haul 50,000 feet. In lumbering, as with so many other vocations, the ingenuity of the times will soon take all romance and adventure away from many branches of business.

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It is needless to say, that like everyone who aims to possess an intelligent knowledge of lumbering conditions, I read carefully the review of trade conditions, that is so important a feature of the Weekly Lumberman. Here, I have no doubt, is reflected very clearly the state of the markets from week to week. Making frequent calls myself upon lumbermen, I have been struck with this fact, so far as the commercial side of the business is concerned. The lumber trade is divided into at least two distinct branches, namely the mill man, who manufactures the lumber, and the wholesaler, who sells it. I will have a chat with my friend Col. Davidson, of Davidson & Hay, or Mr. Warren, of the Imperial Lumber Co. and naturally they talk from the side of the manufacturer. They are in the business to sell lumber. There is little use in their getting out large quantities of logs each winter, driving these to their mills and cutting them into lumber, if they cannot sell the product. It is to be expected that these men will take a little different view of the situation to Ald. Joseph Oliver, of Donogh & Oliver, and other wholesale lumbermen. Whilst they too have lumber to sell, and through these a very large part of the lumber of the country is distributed, yet they are always in the market to buy. And, I do not know, when playing this part, that they will want the price of lumber, and the conditions that would tend to increase prices, too favorable. At another time I will strike Mr. Thomas Meaney, of Robt. Thomson & Co. His concern occupies the position of wholesalers, as well as large manufacturers, and just how nicely a man is obliged to balance the situation, under these circumstances, I will leave readers to judge. There are Bulls and Bears, I suppose, in the lumber trade, not to so great an extent as in the grain business, but in a degree at least. One only gets at a real consensus of market conditions by carefully weighing all the pros and cons that enter into the situation, and I suppose this is the place of one, whose particular duty it is to write of trade conditions, and intelligently, fairly, and fully size up the situation.

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A Michigan correspondent of the Northwestern Lumberman is quoted as saying that Georgian Bay timber, not to exceed 15 per cent. of all the timber in that district, would run better than common. Though referred to as one who is himself largely concerned in the timber of the district, he is quoted as expressing wonder how the man who puts money into it can get out whole. The way he figures is this: "Georgian Bay logs have been held at from \$10 to \$11; it costs \$2 to bring them across the lake, and figuring interest on capital and saw bill at \$2, there is not much margin in selling the manufactured product at \$14. Of course, now and then a lot will bring \$16, and the man who owns the timber and puts it in has a little better show over his white alley. He paid \$2 to \$3 stumpage, \$1 crown dues, and it costs probably \$3.50 to \$4 a thousand to cut and put in the timber." This, it must be confessed, sounds somewhat illogical, coming from a gentleman who is credited with being well informed, and who has backed up his information by becoming a large holder of Georgian Bay timber. Every little while some statement of this kind is given currency to through the lumber journals across the border. And not only every little time, but quite frequently, the lumbermen of Michigan and other states keep increasing their investments in Georgian Bay pine. I don't believe that business men, as a rule, when there is no particular occasion for it, enter into business ventures that they are satisfied beforehand are going to give them some trouble to get their own out of. Messrs. Bliss, Hurst, Fisher, White, Loveland and scores of others have become investors, it seems to me, in Georgian Bay pine, because they know there is money in it. They have not done it from patriotic motives, I am sure, for their lot is cast under the Stars and Stripes, and not under the Union Jack, much as they may love the mother country, as everybody does.

They have not locked up their money in this way just for the fun of the thing, or because there is no place where they can place it in their own country. They are into the lumber business in Canada, rest assured, for the long green stuff there is in it, and nothing else. Our contemporary wants to call down those correspondents who talk rubbish like that which we have just quoted.

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It is as true of business as it is of individuals, that the situation is largely effected by surrounding conditions. I hear complaints, when talking with lumbermen, of the disposition among buyers to break prevailing prices. A good deal of dickering is frequently indulged in. But the trouble is, the buyer cannot always control circumstances, and as the dictates of his good business sense suggest. I was in the office of a lumber concern a week ago, when the case was put to me something like this. Here is a letter from a manufacturer who wants certain classes of lumber, and the order is stated in the letter, but the qualification is, that there is no use in shipping this lumber unless the price can be made so and so. "We get a good many letters, and personal enquiries along this line," said this lumberman. "And when I have pressed for an explanation of this method of buying, the answer has been just this that manufactured stock to-day is brought down to so low a figure, a result largely of the keen competition, that unless the raw material is bought at a certain figure, the manufacturer cannot make up stock that will carry with it even a semblance of profit." Again, I have had the situation put to me from the standpoint of the builder. He has accepted a contract to erect one or more buildings in which will be used a certain amount of lumber. He has got his price down so fine, that he is forced to do a deal of bantering with the lumbermen, if in so doing he can get a shading of prices on his lumber. Now I know there is some truth in this, for it came in my way not long since to make enquiry among builders as to the condition of trade, and I learned that one of the worst aspects of the building trades to-day is the recklessness that characterizes the present system of contracting. In turn this influence quickly disorganizes prices among supply men. It occurs to me like this, that the lumber trade will be doing a good thing commercially for themselves, for the builders, and for the welfare of the country generally, if they could turn a deaf ear to all efforts on the part of buyers to secure a cut in standard prices. If the lumberman cuts his price, he is putting himself in the same position as the builder and the manufacturer, selling his product without a profit, for be it remembered, that in these days of high stumpage, and increased cost of lumbering, unless a certain price is secured for the forest product, it is simply a losing business. There is wanted at the present time an intelligent effort to effect a hardening of values in all lines of business. And good times are not going to return until business men in all classes determine that there is no business in doing business for nothing.

QUERY FOR QUEBEC LUMBERMEN.

A SUBSCRIBER to the CANADA LUMBERMAN asks, why the tamarac, or red spruce, is all dying in Quebec limits, particularly on the Gatineau. It seems, he says, to "dry up." Who will answer?

THE TRADE IN SAWDUST.

IN New York City there are about five hundred vendors of sawdust, having a capital of \$200,000 invested and doing a business of \$2,000,000 annually. Forty years ago the mills were glad to have sawdust carted away; twenty-five years ago it could be bought for fifty cents a load; now it brings \$3.50 a load at the mills. It is used at hotels, eating-houses, groceries and other business places. It is wet and spread over floors in order to make the sweeping cleaner work. Plumbers use it a great deal about pipes and buildings to deaden the walls and floors. Soda-water men and packers of glass and small articles of every kind use it, and dolls are stuffed with it. Yellow pine makes the best sawdust, as it is the least dusty and has a pungent, healthy smell. But any light wood will do. Black-walnut sawdust will not sell, and is burned.