

THE COARSE LUMBER PRODUCT.

A prominent and long time lumber commission dealer, of East Saginaw Michigan, has expressed his deliberate opinion about the condition of the lumber business in eastern Michigan, which brought out some points worthy of comment. Among other reasons for the existing depression in the lumber interests of Saginaw valley and the Huron shore, this commission man said that Norway lumber had gone so low that there is no margin on stumpage, some sales of lumber having been made at an actual loss of \$2.68 a thousand. This decline of Norway stock, he says is a clear case of over-production. The figures of last year, and those of the present, on this stock, were too high to stand the strain of the load of product that was put on the market. That is the reason why so much Huron shore Norway has been coming to the Chicago market this season, and why dry dimension of this description has sold from \$9 to \$10 when green east shore white pine was selling for the same money. Taking into consideration the difference in freight between Bay City, Tawas, Au Sable or Alpena, and east shore ports on this lake, and the difference of \$1 a thousand between dry and green lumber, Norway dimension has virtually sold on this market the present season at \$1.50 less than white pine stock.

Added to the overproduction of Norway in eastern Michigan, is the unwonted accumulation of coarse white pine, which has been held too high for the market demand, and has thus remained a drug in the hands of holders. The larger portion of this coarse stock at Saginaw goes to Ohio; but dealers in that state this year have largely refused to take it, because they considered prices were too high. Consumers have turned their attention to poplar, white-walnut, and other varieties of timber native to the state, and production of these kinds of lumber have thus been greatly stimulated. Tennessee, West Virginia and Kentucky have also been drawn upon for supplies. Poplar, especially, has been used to a surprising extent as a substitute for pine.

While coarse pine in Eastern Michigan has become a burden to movement, good lumber is in demand in excess of supply. This class of stock goes mostly to Albany and the East. But while it is very gratifying to the manufacturers and handlers of good lumber to know that such property is "good as the wheat," and is in no danger of a decline in price, it is less pleasant to contemplate its rapid decline in proportionate quantity. The commission dealer referred to is of the opinion that the average stock of Saginaw river lumber does not contain a tenth as much of the upper qualities as it did five years ago.

The growing scarcity of good lumber has led the Saginaw manufacturers, as it has those on the western side of the state, to conclude that coarse stock must be worth proportionately as much as the higher grades. This feeling no doubt grows out of the fact that it costs as much to log and manufacture the poor product as it does the good—and perhaps more, when the relative value of stumpage is considered. But it should be borne in mind by the saw-mill owner that the merchants and consumers will have their say about the value of coarse lumber, as they have this year. They will not continue to take all the coarse stuff the manufacturers may offer, and at prices that the latter may wish to realize in order cover costs and afford a profit. As was seen before in the *Lumberman*, the price of inferior lumber cannot be forced above a certain point. Clear pine may one day be worth much more than now in this market, while second common may not be worth more than it is to-day. The reason of this is found in the fact that the common uses of coarse lumber do not admit of prices above a certain range being paid for it. Besides there is an abundance of substitutes for coarse white pine, such as the poplar and whitewood of the middle and southern regions of the country, the basswood and hemlock of the North and Canada, spruce, Norway pine and the mountain pine of the Rockies. Railroad facilities for reaching sections where all these timbers abound are being extended, and distribution is becoming constantly easier and cheaper. The Saginaw manufacturers are already beginning to realize the com-

petition of whitewood and poplar in Ohio and Indiana. Choice pine lumber may vault upward, but a poor quality must always sell for a moderate price until the supply is exhausted. Owners of stumpage might as well figure of this basis from now out.—*Northwestern Lumberman*.

BIG TIMBER.

The California *Architect and Building News* has the following: Hundred of visiting Knights Templar had an opportunity, while in this city, of seeing two of the largest pieces of timber that ever passed through the hands of the mill men. It was amusing to hear the remarks, and watch the various changes in the different countenances caused by a survey of probably the finest pieces of timber that was ever sawed. One piece is 144 feet long by 18 inches square, and contains 3,456 feet of lumber. For over 100 feet there is no knot that a five-cent nickel would not cover, and in the whole piece of timber (the largest knot can be covered by a half dollar). It is wonderful that a stick of timber of the size given should be so remarkably clear of knots. Its companion is of the same length, 16 inches square, and contains 2,352 feet. When it is taken into consideration that the tree from which the first mentioned piece of timber was taken was cut several feet above the ground, and that 160 feet from the cut made to fell the tree it was of such a size as to enable the mill man to saw the log so as to produce a piece of timber of the size given, one can imagine the size the butt must be, and partly comprehend the amount of labor required to handle such an immense stick. It costs about one-half more to land in our wharves a stick of timber of the size mentioned than it does of ordinary lengths. These pieces of timber were sawed at the Port Blakely mills, Washington Territory, the owners being Renton, Holmes and Co., the well known lumber merchants of this city. A short time ago there was received in this city a stick of timber 104 feet long, 24 inches square, and almost free from knots. After its arrival here it was allowed to be on inspection for a short time, when it was taken to one of mills and sawed into joists, as the purpose for which it was manufactured was given up and no use could be found at the time for a stick of timber of such large dimensions.

CALIFORNIA REDWOOD.

The San Francisco *Bulletin* says:—J. D. Walker, of the firm of Falkner, Bell Co., is among the overland passengers announced to arrive in this city. This gentleman for the past two months or so has been on a visit to Scotland. During his absence he has successfully negotiated the transfer of a large area of California timber lands, for a sum aggregating between \$1,500,000 and \$1,750,000, to a recently organized corporation in Scotland known as the California Redwood Company, of which it is understood the firm of Falkner, Bell & Co. will be the representative agents on this coast. The purchase embraces land, mill, tugs, embarcaderos, and other incidental accessories to the general lumber trade. The main object of the new enterprise is to meet the demand that is developing at Eastern and European capitals for the fine redwood lumber for interior house finishing and ornamentation. Woods, like everything else, it is to be presumed, have their ages or periods. One generation will use nothing but mahogany. Another give walnut the preference. Laurel, rosewood, and oak each come more or less in prominence as caprice or fashion may require. It is only of late that outside attention has been given to the products of the Pacific coast, and California redwood has rapidly gained favor among those by whom the study of fancy woods is accepted as partaking somewhat of esthetic character and taste.

In the whole world there are no known redwood forests outside of California. Carefully prepared official estimates give the quantity at 25,825,000,000 feet, and this amount is comprised in the coast belt that extends from Humboldt County, just below the Oregon line, down as far south as the Mexican border. It is a significant fact, however, that one-fourth more finished lumber, suitable for interior house-work, can be obtained from Humboldt timber than from timber grown from any other county in this State. This circumstance may account for the invest-

ments of the California Redwood Company being confined to Humboldt County. Unlike many other kinds of trees, redwood stumps can be utilized to profitable advantage. For veneering purposes slices from these stumps are said to be highly prized, and may probably in time prove almost invaluable.

The capital stock of the California Redwood Company is nominally £300,000 or about \$4,500,000. There are 90,000 shares of £10 each, of which 60,000 shares are classed as preferred and 30,000 shares as ordinary. One-half of the stock—say, \$1,225,000—has been paid up in cash. It is understood that debenture bonds will also be issued to the extent of £450,000. The prospective calls for land area approximating some 70,000 acres, though probably 50,000 acres will more nearly represent the land involved. From advanced sheets of the Census Bulletin issued by the Government we are able to give the total amount of redwood in California, measured by sections, as follows:

	Feet, Board Measurement.
From Oregon boundary line to Redwood Creek.....	800,000,000
Redwood Creek to Mad River.....	9,000,000,000
Mad River to Eel River.....	2,145,000,000
Eel River to Mattole River.....	4,450,000,000
Mattole River to Coltona Creek.....	200,000,000
Coltona Creek to Russian River.....	7,690,000,000
Santa Cruz Region.....	1,550,000,000
Total.....	25,825,000,000

It is considered as somewhat remarkable that the redwood belt begins just below the Oregon line and stops just before reaching the Mexican boundary of lower California.

As it may be of interest to know how much redwood lumber is cut annually in this State, we give the quantity that is calculated to have been cut during the census year ending May 31, 1880, as follows:

	Feet, Board Measurement.
Sawed lumber.....	125,590,000
Shingles and stakes.....	25,380,000
Split railroad ties.....	23,265,000
Posts, &c.....	12,900,000
Total.....	25,825,000,000

HOW TO POSTPONE THE FAMINE.

The *Lumberman Gazette* of Bay City, Mich., says:—If there is absolute danger of a timber famine at any time in the future near enough to render it matter of interest to the people now on earth, it were well that measures were taken to avert it. That may be done in at least three ways. By the planting of forest trees and the care of forests, by the invention and use of substitutes for lumber, and by greater economy in the use of lumber and timber. Regarding the latter it may be said that there is wide field for the exercise of economy. The use of lumber by the Americans is wasteful in the extreme, and there is danger that the waste will continue as long as they are obtainable at the comparatively low prices now prevailing. Because wood is cheap, it is wasted in almost every use made of it. The smoke of its consumption for various purposes ascends by day and by night; in the city and in the country, from stoves, furnaces, bonfires, brush and log heaps. It is consumed in a great number of ways that might be abandoned. It is put into buildings where other material might be more economically used if the element of time were given its proper weight. It is put into bridges where iron would serve a better purpose and in the end prove cheaper. It is used in vessels, but may in time be supplanted by metal. A tremendous quantity is used for fences, which might be dispensed with to a great extent or built of earth or wire; and a vast amount is worn out by the hurrying feet of men and horses in sidewalks and pavements. That wooden pavements and sidewalks are extravagant compared with stone and gravel is no doubt true, although the lower first cost of wood leads to its very extensive use. It is also pleasant to walk and drive on wood, and these considerations will no doubt prevail until timber reaches a price which will make it more immediately expensive than some other material. The waste of lumber in sidewalks, however, is enormous, even admitting the necessity and propriety of its use for that purpose. There are miles of sidewalk in this city, laid with plank, five and six feet wide when for all practical purposes they could as well be three and four feet wide.

An immense saving might thus be effected not only of timber but of money. And if the plank were bordered with grass the appearance of the streets would be improved rather than injured. When the predicted timber famine shall begin to make itself felt there will be room for great savings in sidewalks, and perhaps somebody will invent a style of walk which can be more cheaply constructed of some other material. Then, perhaps sidewalks will not be so ruthlessly condemned as worn out as is the case now, and instead of common councils ordering new walks laid there will be more repairing of walks allowed and the great amount of half worn plank which now goes into bonfires or summer wood will be utilized until it is no longer available. Under the present extravagant use of the gifts of the forest, because timber is comparatively cheap, a dozen broken plank in a hundred feet of sidewalk will provoke the powers that be to order a new one built, and the half and quarter worn planks must be thrown aside to become the prey of the flames. This city is no exception. The same process of waste goes on all over the land, accelerating the approach of the lumber famine which is declared to be nearing. The abundance of the gifts of the forests lead to their wasteful use. An incredible amount of available lumber is cast off as valueless, because it has been once used, and the cost of saving and utilizing it would be too great. As timber advance in price as compared with labor, economy in its use in countless ways will increase, substitutes will be found, and the result may be that the supply will be so husbanded that, with the growth of timber under the impulse of forest cultivation the famine may be indefinitely postponed.

BOARD OF TRADE RETURNS.

In an article on the Board of Trade Returns for August, the *Timber Trades Journal* says: How the timber trade figures in these returns has now to be taken account of—a trade that has nothing to offer in exchange for its imports but hard coin of the realm. The cotton-mill owner who imports the raw material finds a market for the manufactured article in the very land where he laid out his money in the first instance, and thence derives a profit, but the foreign shipper looks to the timber merchants for money only, because, from the nature of the business, all it can be converted into is outside the requirement of the country from which the raw material comes, and of the eleven or twelve millions sterling drawn every year against it not a shilling need necessarily be spent in the United Kingdom. Thus a large increase in the importation of timber represents a decrease in our circulating medium to that extent, and we rather regret to see that the supply which came forward in August, on a not very animated market, was one of the largest for that month that we have on record. Only on two occasions has it been previously exceeded. In 1876 the August return was 1,059,520 loads, and in the following year 1,147,829. Nor has a million of loads since been reached in that or any other month (though six years have intervened) until the present season. Neither can we consider it less than a formidable irruption for the trade to bear up against, at a time when it is holding its own with some difficulty, as to the obtaining of a fair return for its outlay. Not that there is really any harm done yet; the short supply of the spring months, in comparison of last year, is not, even now, wholly effaced. We have still over 10,000 loads to the good; but when a single month has rolled in upon us within a small fraction of 175,000 loads more than it did last summer, some apprehension may reasonably be felt last September should follow on the same lines and the 10,000 loads be so overwhelmed as to be hardly discernible with a powerful eye glass in the heap of excess next month.

There appears to be an unfortunate habit of reserve and reticence among the importers in the chief centres of trade, who seem to think their business is best conducted by letting their neighbors know as little as possible what their respective engagements are, and thus it happens that if the demand mends for any particular size or quality of wood in an outpost, orders go forward for perhaps half a dozen cargoes of it from so many different firms, each ignorant of what the other is doing, and the result is that what