

BY STRAIGHT MEASURE OR INSPECTION.

THIS is just now a live question in the lumber trade, and especially a certain portion of it whose operations are mainly carried on in the producing regions, and at the distributing markets, of the lower lakes. There it has become a declared issue between a majority of the buyers and a certain proportion of the sellers, and if present indications may be relied upon, there is likely to be a lively and interesting struggle between the two when the season is fairly opened.

Concerning the merits of the controversy, there ought to be less dispute than as to its practical result. Presented merely as an abstract question, the answer to it is easy, simple, and measurably conclusive. The buyer of lumber, in common with the buyer of any other bulk commodity, the quality and value of which is uncertain and impossible of accurate determination by a mere casual examination, is entitled to some other and adequate means of knowing what he is to get for his money. The basis of any wholesale trade in lumber is the quality of the stock handled. It is this which establishes the price, and determines the sale, if a sale is made. Without knowledge of this factor of the transaction, no man can buy intelligently. It is an essential feature of a purchase from both sides. If the owner of stock should fail to acquaint himself with its actual merits or defects before he went into market with it, how long could he expect to do business successfully? It is beyond question equally necessary for the other party to a trade to know what he is buying.

Granting that this knowledge is a thing the purchaser is entitled to, it becomes merely a question of how he is to obtain it. Obviously the simplest, and perhaps the best way, is for him to examine what he proposes to buy himself. This is the method of small transactions, the first crude plan of determining values that suggested itself when trading between men began. So long as the business done is confined to transactions of a small magnitude, it is satisfactory, because the buyer only invests in what his judgment approves, and even if he fails to get the worth of his money, may not realize the fact. But it will be admitted without argument that the same plan cannot be applied to business done on a larger scale, and give equally satisfactory results. A man buying a wagon-load, or even a car-load, of lumber may examine it for himself and decide upon the evidence of his own eyesight and judgment as to what it is worth; when he buys a million feet, this becomes to all intents and purposes physically impossible. What can he do? Clearly he must be allowed some way of ascertaining what the stuff is, and practically but two remain open to him: he may accept the representations of the seller, or he may buy it subject to an examination by a competent, disinterested man—that is, inspection.

The necessity for inspection arose just as soon as men began to deal upon a large scale in bulk commodities, and in the process of commercial development it has come to be a part of the machinery of business in every line in which the nature of the merchandise handled makes expert examination necessary.

Lumber is certainly such an article. It is handled in bulk, and it is subject to wide variations in quality and worth. Any average lot of log run lumber will range in quality from mill culls to first clear, and hardly any two piles will show precisely the same proportion of the respective kinds and grades into which it is ordinarily assorted. One board furnishes no definite guide as to what the next one in the pile will prove to be; indeed, one cannot tell from it what will be the quality of the succeeding cut from the same log. As a matter of absolute fact, no two piles of lumber, or two logs, or even two boards, are exactly alike. The difference may be so slight as to be of no commercial account, or they may be so great as to make one piece of lumber valueless, and the other worth the highest price the market shows. Between the two extremes the variations are infinite in number. An average of these differences may be obtained by assorting the lumber into grades; according to a definite system, and from such an average it is easy to determine the value of the whole. This is merely what inspection is for, and what, honestly made, it does.

Inspection, pure and simple, means nothing more or less than an examination of the stock to see what it really is. It is or should be, within the right of the buyer to have this knowledge, without which he must be compelled to take all the chances in a trade, while the seller takes none. It is to be presumed, in all cases, that the seller knows what he is offering. If he does not, it is his own fault. But the buyer cannot know unless he is allowed to ascertain, and this privilege the straight measure advocates seem disposed to deny him. Men may prefer to buy on their own judgment of lumber, because they think their own judgment may be better than any inspector's, which very likely it is; but this does not furnish a reason why another buyer should not have his lumber inspected. Fairness would dictate that manufacturers should give their customers the same opportunity to test the value of what they sell, as they require in buying the raw material they manufac-

ture. They, or some of them—insist that a buyer shall judge of the quality of a pile of lumber by looking at the top and sides, with no chance to plunge into the middle of it, and to find out of what stuff it is really made; but where is the maker of boards who would think of buying his timber in the same uncertain, haphazard way? Would one of the Saginaw mill men, for example, consent to skirt around the edges of a thousand-acre tract of pine, and then buy it "straight measure"? No; when he buys timber, he must have it inspected, and inspected, not by a disinterested man, but by a land looker of his own selection and employment, who is instructed to carefully examine every acre, to scale the trees, and to ascertain beyond a doubt just what the timber is that he is asked to purchase. If there is any good and sufficient reason why a principle that is obviously just when applied to timber standing in the tree, is not similarly fair and righteous when applied to the same timber after it is cut into lumber, the discussion of inspection and straight measure has so far failed to bring it out.

The exceptions of the manufacturers to a one sided and unfair inspection by interested parties are well taken. Equally with the buyers, are they entitled to a competent and unbiased judgment of their stock; and it is manifestly to the interest of buyers that they should have it. But there should be a remedy for an evil of this kind short of abolishing inspection altogether. It is not to be assumed that buyers will insist upon inspectors of their own choosing. Indeed, they have distinctly expressed the desire that manufacturers should "organize and appoint a corps of qualified and reliable inspectors," and should themselves establish a just and fair system of inspection. This places the matter wholly in the seller's hands, and affords them the opportunity of giving inspection a trial upon an equitable basis, if they are disposed to do so.

The actual outcome of the inspection dispute, depends of course, upon other circumstances than the mere principle involved. For the time being, the condition of the market will probably have more to do with it than a strict right or wrong. With a strong, active demand and firm prices, the manufacturers will be likely to dictate the manner in which they will sell their lumber; with a sluggish, weak market, probably buyers can have all the inspection they want. This is not right, but perhaps it is "business."—*Chicago Timberman.*

THE LUMBER TARIFF.

WE have been shown a copy of the C.P.R. special lumber tariff from Rogers' Pass to all points east as far as Winnipeg. The following are some samples of the rates:—

MILES	TO	RATE	RATE
		per 100 lbs.	per car
136	Banff	32c	\$ 96
216	Calgary	39c	1 17
270	Gleichen	40c	1 20
377	Moose Jaw	40c	1 20
69	Regina	42c	1 26
92	Brandon	44c	1 32
1055	Winnipeg	45c	1 35

The first fact that will be recognized in scanning these figures is that the rates are a practical preventative of any business in lumber between the prairie towns and the mountain saw mills. It is therefore useless to go into an analysis of the unfairness of the figures as between one point and another, because the tariff is evidently not intended to foster freights but to check and prohibit them for the time being altogether. To say that a railway is seeking to discourage business over its own line appears on the face of it to be absurd, but a little scrutiny of the situation will show that there are reasons. Under the comparatively low tariff allowed last year the lumber mills in the mountains west of Rogers' Pass were able to do a prosperous business, and in view of a continuation of that tariff, they greatly increased their capacity for manufacturing. The railway was fostering their enterprise, but, as the sequel shows, they were fostering it with a view to make food for their own capacity. The company foresaw that they would require vast quantities of lumber and sawn timber for their snow sheds and other works in the mountains. The mills have been put in, the railway puts on a freight tariff that prevents them entering the markets, and once the C.P.R. is master of the situation. They can dictate to the mill owners in the mountains the price and terms on which they must supply the lumber and timber the railway needs, and that price and those terms will just squeeze the mill owners hard enough to get all that can be got out of them without actually killing them.

The practical shutting out of these mountain mills from competition with Maj. Walker, at Kananaskis, and the Calgary Lumber company, at Cochrane will be a good thing for those mills temporarily, but what assurance is there that the C.P.R. will not some time require to use them just as the mountain mills are now being used? The effect is to demoralize business, to destroy confidence, and check and prostrate enterprise.—*Calgary Tribune.*

CHARCOAL.

AN exchange desires to know why charcoal is not more largely used for fuel in Ontario. In France it is in general use for cooking and even, in some cases, for warming, though wood is very much dearer than in Canada. But in that and in some other European countries, every scrap of waste wood is converted into charcoal.

In Canada we have hardly begun to realize the value of our forests. A few years only have passed since the finest forest trees were regarded as cumberers of the ground, and the one object was to cut them down and burn them. Now we realize the value of most trees fit for lumber; but even with these the waste is enormous. The limbs are worse than useless, for they are left to dry upon the ground where the trees are cut, and when fire gets among them it spreads rapidly and works incalculable damage. Most industrial operations are conducted with such economy that the waste products constitute in themselves a large source of profit. It might be so in our lumbering camps. The waste wood might be turned into charcoal for fuel, and in the process the pyroligneous acid and other products might be saved, so that the charcoal would be had for nothing. Mineral coal is raised from great depths, and is carried great distances. Charcoal might be had in almost inexhaustible quantities much nearer the Canadian cities, and would prove a source of great wealth. A pound of charcoal will produce more heat than a pound of the best mineral coal. A table which we found in the Encyclopedia Britannica says that one pound of mineral coal will evaporate water as follows:

COAL.	WATER, LBS.
South Wales (average)	9.05
North of England	8.37
Lancashire	7.94
Scotland	7.70
Derbyshire	7.58

One pound of charcoal will evaporate 12.75 pounds of water. In all cases the evaporation is that of water already raised to the boiling point. It will be seen that charcoal has one-third more heating power than the best Welsh coal, and 65 per cent. more than Scotch coal.

Doubtless difficulty would be experienced in using charcoal for heating; but we cannot doubt that Canadian ingenuity would soon find means to employ it with comfort and safety. For cooking, especially in summer time, charcoal has many advantages.

The sawdust, which not only goes to waste at saw mills, but which gives so much trouble, is to be used for a good purpose. The *Journal of Commerce* says:

It is understood that a company is about to be formed in Ottawa with a large capital for the purpose of purchasing a water power on the Chaudiere and erecting extensive mills for the manufacture of pulp from the sawdust, which has for so long been a nuisance to both lumbermen and forwarders in the Ottawa river. Mr. Bronson, M.P.P., is one of the principal promoters of the scheme.

If the sawdust can be made of economic value, surely the limbs of trees should not be permitted to go wholly to waste, and that at a time when mineral coal is getting more and more expensive. At present Ontario is wholly dependent upon foreign countries for coal. If her own forests were turned to the best account, employment would be found for many laborers, freights would be supplied to Canadian railways, and large sums of money now sent abroad would be retained at home.—*Exchange.*

TIMBER AND LUMBER NOTES.

At Beaverston, on the north shore of the Georgian Bay, Burton Bros. are getting out some seventy five or eighty thousand feet of board timber and five or six million feet in saw logs. At Collins Inlet the Collins Inlet Lumbering Company will have out five and a half million feet in saw logs. All along the North Shore there will be an unusually large output of logs this year, so says the *Espejoir*.

The Port Perry *Standard* says: Last Tuesday we beheld one of the largest saw logs that has ever been seen in this part of the country. The tree from which it was taken grew on Mr. John T. Pound's farm just north of this village, and was blown down about three years ago during a heavy wind storm. The first two logs cut from the tree measured fifteen feet each in circumference and were composed of good, solid, clean, timber. They were taken to Ticonderoga to be cut into shingles.

According to a despatch from Ottawa, the lumbermen of that neighborhood have met to discuss the bill introduced by Mr. Murray, M.P.P., before the Ontario Legislature. They almost all pronounce against the clause providing that in case of a jam of timber or logs on any stream where a number of lumbermen's logs are congregated, the firm or individual who breaks the jam may take a lien on the logs so liberated until paid for the expense of freeing them. The lumbermen object that this provision, if adopted, would result in endless litigation.