

It is reported that an effort is being made in Michigan to enforce the prohibition of the importation of foreign contract labor against the French-Canadians who go over there to work in the woods in the winter. If this movement should be successful it would have a tendency to increase the expenses of the Michigan operators, and at the same time to increase the supply of labor and make wages easier for Canadian lumbermen.

DR. ROBT. BELL, of the Geological Survey, in a paper recently read before the British Association, states that the amount of timber which has been lost through forest fires in Canada is almost incredible, and can only be appreciated by those who have travelled much in the northern districts. The proportion of red and white pine which has thus been swept away in the Ottawa Valley and in the St. Maurice and Georgian Bay districts is estimated by the lumbermen as many times greater than all that has been cut by the axe. Yet all this is insignificant in quantity compared with the pine, spruce, cedar, balsam, etc., which have been destroyed by this means in the more northern latitudes all the way from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Nelson River and thence northwards. The total quantities which have disappeared are almost incalculable, but even a rough estimate of the amount for each hundred or thousand square miles shows it to have been enormous and of serious national importance. This is all the more to be deplored that these forest fires are usually the result of carelessness, and any laws existing on the subject seem to be a dead letter.

PREPARATIONS are already being made for an International Exhibition at Glasgow in the summer of 1888. The fact that the corporation has given a site of 60 acres whereon will be erected buildings covering 10 acres, shows the scale of this enterprise, promises to support which have even now been received from all quarters, the guarantee fund already exceeding \$1,250,000. One of its stated objects is "to stimulate commercial enterprise by inviting all nations to exhibit their products, both in the raw and finished state." Our timber trades should be adequately represented on this occasion. It is true that the woods from Canadian forests are already well known and appreciated in the Glasgow market, but there should be such a display as will ensure our not suffering by comparison. And those Canadian mills that carry the manufacture of our lumber to a more advanced stage, might find their interest in trying to extend their market in this direction. We are ahead of Great Britain in wood working machinery, and ought to be able to obtain custom for doors, sashes, &c. Our manufacturers of machinery should also be represented.

THE city of Melbourne, the most populous and most enterprising community of Australasia, has announced that it will hold a Centennial International Exhibition next year to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the first settlement of the great Island-continent. With the impetus that the C. P. R. and its associated line of steamers has given to the trade of the Dominion, and the facilities for transport thus afforded, the Australian market has acquired increased importance, and this is especially the case with the products of our forests. The documents we have received in relation to it show that the management of the exhibition is in good hands and that every arrangement is being made for the convenience of exhibitors and spectators. We will quote one useful suggestion:—"Exhibitors are particularly requested to mark the trade price of the articles exhibited, so as to facilitate the judgment of the jury as well as the information of visitors." It is intended to keep the exhibition open from the 1st of August, 1888, to the end of January, 1889. We will give further information as we receive it, to our readers, but those of them proposing to exhibit would do well to communicate with the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, as applications for space should be made by the end of August, 1887.

BRADSTREET'S, usually well informed in trade matters, speaks of the increased export duty on saw logs as having succeeded in its objects of retaliating for the duty on our lumber and frustrating those Michigan lumbermen who while enjoying this protection bought pine lands in Canada, in order to get a cheap supply of logs. This importation of logs has, it says, been abandoned, and it mentions a concern, which owning 1,000,000,000 of Canadian pine, put in 12,000,000 feet of logs last winter in order to tow them to Tarvos and Saginaw, a project which has been abandoned. This is satisfactory and it is still more satisfactory to learn that these logs, sold to a Boston concern, are being sawn at Midland. According to the same authority other lumbermen from the States are withdrawing from these attempts to carry off Canadian logs. Bradstreet's, as might be expected, is better informed as to the real position of affairs than many who are laying down the

law with more confidence than knowledge. It places the responsibility on the right shoulders by remarking that "meanwhile the Canadian Government is ready to permit free exportation of logs whenever the United States allows free importation of lumber." And until the United States sees fit to accept our standing offer, the export duty, which seems to work as was intended, will be retained.

EFFECTS OF RECIPROCITY.

Is it so certain that reciprocity would be all gain to the Canadian lumberman? There are two sides to every question and it is always as well to see what there is to be said on the other side. It is claimed by those in the United States who favor reciprocity that Canadian lumbermen would not obtain the amount of the duty for their own profit, but that the purchaser would secure the benefit of cheaper lumber. Though there is some difference of opinion of this point the majority of the lumbermen of the States more immediately affected, do not seem to fear that reciprocity would seriously reduce prices, and as they ought to be well qualified to form a reasonable conjecture, our lumbermen may fairly hope to pocket at least a considerable portion of the amount of the remitted duty. Again the advocates of reciprocity in the United States claim that their pine is being fast exhausted in the Northern States, and that free access to the forests of Canada would spare their own from such rapid destruction. In this some of the lumbermen of Michigan, Wisconsin and other States seem to concur, for it is notorious that some of those who have extensive limits in their own country have obtained others in Canada with hardly any concealment of their intention to work these and spare their home timber for the present. If there is any profit for United States lumbermen in reserving their limits till timber becomes scarcer and therefore more valuable, it seems as if such a policy must be equally advantageous for Canadians.

Another point to be taken into consideration is that with reciprocity the export duty on Canadian saw logs must go with the import duty imposed by the United States on our lumber. Would the increased competition of citizens of the United States for Canadian limits materially increase the price our lumbermen would have to pay for them? And would the drain of logs out of the country to be sawn in mills across the international boundary prejudice the Canadian trade?

Another question is whether reciprocity would materially cheapen the lumbermen's supplies. Perhaps in some localities corn could then be obtained at a price that would make it an economical substitute for oats purchased near at hand. Possibly, too, pork might be obtained more cheaply from the States than from the home market, though the abolition of the duty might not always have this effect, as there is little doubt that the great pork men of the Western States have in times of a glutted market sold in large quantities to our lumbermen at a reduction to cover the duty, thus reducing their surplus stock and maintaining prices at home.

A further question is what the effect of reciprocity would be upon our home markets for lumber. If, as is asserted by protectionists, Canadian industries would suffer from the competition thus facilitated, it is evident that the home market which some of our lumbermen have assiduously cultivated and which they find most remunerative, would be prejudicially affected, but on the other hand the friends of reciprocity maintain that it would give an impetus to our Canadian towns and increase business.

Weighing the different considerations, it seems that reciprocity would in some respects benefit the Canadian lumberman, but that this advantage would not be without some drawbacks. The relative importance of these drawbacks it would be difficult to estimate. They would vary considerably with distances from markets, facilities for conveyance and other local influences. It is at least certain that the trade should not be too sanguine as to the effect of reciprocity or exaggerate its benefits so as to be led into disappointment and perhaps inconvenient miscalculations.

There will, however, be time for further consideration before reciprocity is adopted. The United States does not seem to be eager to accept the Canadian offer of a renewal of the old restricted reciprocity, nor does Canada seem more eager to snatch at the suggestion of unrestricted reciprocity. If either bargain is made it cannot be concluded in a day.

THE N. & N. W. R. AND ITS MANAGEMENT.

OUR attention has been frequently drawn to the manner in which the Northern and North-western Railway Company is treating the lumber merchants in Toronto and vicinity, and during a recent visit to that city we made enquiries of every lumber dealer we called upon, and found the dissatisfaction universal. To rightly understand the grounds of complaint it may be briefly mentioned that for many years Toronto, by its

position as the terminus of a number of roads running through lumbering districts, has been practically made a slaughter market for the lower grades of lumber. For instance: Sales are frequently made by Toronto merchants of, say, 75 per cent. of a certain stock of lumber at the mills to go to the United States, and during the shipping of which the balance, or 25 per cent. is forwarded to Toronto to be sold for whatever it will bring. In this way an immense quantity of lumber is thrown on that market, and the builders and their consumers of lumber reap a great benefit in low prices. Much of this lumber has, however, either to be unloaded on the railway docks and yards, or has to be held on the cars for a few days until a market can be made for it. Certain rules in regard to demurrage on these cars have been laid down by all the roads coming into Toronto. The Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific railways have always treated their lumber shippers in a liberal spirit in this regard, and have shown themselves reluctant to add to the difficulties of the dealer by making charges for demurrage if unloaded in anything like a reasonable time. The management of the N. & N. W., however, has construed these rules in the harshest manner, and most unyielding manner. The agents are allowed no discretionary power and the only satisfaction consignees can get is to be told to place their case before Mr. Barker, and perhaps he may do something for them, which remark is generally accompanied by a smile of doubtful portent. These charges for demurrage by the Northern have become so onerous that customers in fear of such charges are reluctant to purchase lumber coming over this road, and so make matters worse for the wholesaler. Several of the leading merchants of the city stated in the most positive manner that they would not buy any lumber to come over the Northern railway if they could get it by any other route. Practically the severe rules put into effect by Mr. Barker are provoking a "boycot" most injurious to the road. The Grand Trunk and C. P. R. are often spoken of as huge monopolies, but their treatment of their Toronto customers is in marked contrast to the road which of all others should act in the fairest spirit towards its Toronto patrons. This question of demurrage is by no means the only ground of complaint against the Northern, and we certainly found in our interview with the Toronto lumber dealers an irritation and prejudice against Mr. Barker's management that must in the end act most detrimentally to the road.

WHERE IT GOES.

The annual draft on the United States forests for purposes outside of the ordinary lumber supply, is as follows: Shoe pegs require 100,000 cords of timber annually in their manufacture; matches 300,000 staves and boot trees, 500,000. All this is of the most superior quality, straight grained and clear of knots and gnarls. To raise the telegraph poles of the country require 800,000 trees, and 300,000 more are required for annual repair. The railway ties of the country annually consume 75,000 acres of timber at least thirty years old, and the fencing of railways represents \$45,000,000 and the annual repair \$15,000,000. These are but a moiety of what is required of the United States forest supply. The burning of brick alone requires 2,000,000 cords of wood annually.

THE VENEER CUTTING MACHINE.

A Brooklyn, N. Y., man has invented an improved veneer cutting machine, and has applied it to the cutting of logs into lumber, claiming that it will effect a complete revolution in lumber manufacture. The invention is a large steel plate with knife-like edge, a compressing roller and ingenious appliances to serve the log and remove the lumber when cut—all operated by steam power. The log is held stationary in a horizontal position. The knife-like plate, capable of from 20 to 30 strokes per minute, strikes the log at an angle of 45 degrees at each stroke, passing through its entire length and cutting off a board of perfectly smooth surface and uniform thickness. It is claimed that any degree of thickness can be cut, even to the hundredth part of an inch. A machine adapted for cutting logs four feet long and averaging two feet in diameter will cut in one day 37,500 feet of inch, 60,000 feet of half-inch, or 80,000 feet of quarter-inch lumber. Besides the present process of sawing, planing is also done away with, as the operation of cutting renders smooth the surface of the board. In material alone a saving is effected of from 37 per cent. in the manufacture of half-inch to 23 per cent. in the manufacture of one-sixteenth inch lumber. It is the expectation of the inventor that in the case of thin lumber, at all events, which composes 66 per cent. of United States consumption, his machine will supersede saws and planing mills. He shows barrel staves made from lumber manufactured by his machine. He says that from 1,000 feet of lumber 1,800 of such staves is the highest number now obtainable, whereas by the use of his machine 4,500 can be got.