

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters are invited from our readers on matters of practical and timely interest to the lumber trade. To secure insertion all communications must be accompanied with name and address of writer, not necessarily for publication. The publisher will not hold himself responsible for opinions of correspondents.

NEW MARKETS REQUIRED FOR CANADIAN HARDWOODS.

GUYSBOROUGH, 7th Jan., 1896.

To the Editor of the CANADA LUMBERMAN.

SIR,—I was pleased to see the letter from Mr. J. T. Schell in the January number of the CANADA LUMBERMAN, he being an old business acquaintance of mine about twenty years ago. I think he is quite right in his opinion that we should look for some other market besides the United States for hardwood lumber.

I have been a saw-mill man since the year 1850, and my principal market has been the U.S. for the best of my product—in fact, for more than half of the whole product—although I have sold considerable to our own manufacturers and lumber dealers.

My pine is about done and I am now depending principally on hardwood. I think the U. S. market is getting worse every year. I have a small stock of hardwood lumber on hand which I have fairly sold, or bargained to sell, at three different times to U. S. dealers, getting nothing down. Twice the parties have fairly backed down and I have not heard from the third since the war scare. I have thought for years that Great Britain would be our best market, but could not advise the best way to reach it.

Yours truly,
S. K. GARNHAM.

P. S.—I think if a party is needed to send to Great Britain, it would be well to consider the appointment of Mr. J. T. Schell.

To the Editor of the CANADA LUMBERMAN.

SIR,—I read with interest in your January number the letter of Mr. J. T. Schell on the above subject.

I believe that there are large quantities of maple, birch, elm, basswood, white and black ash, and oak used in England. The bulk of these woods are supplied by United States dealers, many of them acting as middlemen between the Canadian manufacturer and the English consumer. If the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands could be induced to send commissioners to England to obtain for the hardwood trade of Canada the information indicated by Mr. Schell, it would undoubtedly be a good thing, but I fear the honorable gentleman will be slow to act, if at all. I would suggest that the trade, or a few of them, put their heads together and send a man to Europe themselves. No manufacturer who pays anything for his timber can make any money out of hardwood at the prices that have been current for the past 15 years. Take for instance rock elm plank suitable for bicycle rims, and clear white maple. The price now obtainable from wholesalers for these two varieties is \$18 per M. You pay an average of \$5 for your timber. Cost of manufacture and interest on capital, say \$2.25 per M. It will take 5,000 ft. log measure at least to obtain 1,000 ft. of such quality as is wanted. This makes an outlay of \$36.25 to obtain 1,000 ft., for which you receive \$18, leaving a lot of coarse stock on hand to represent \$18.25.

Where can the manufacturer dispose of this coarse stock, particularly the rock elm? Is it good value for \$18.25? Are we selling the high grade too cheap, or are we paying too much (\$5 per M) for our logs? I say we are selling the high grade hardwood too cheap.

The pine manufacturer, when he selects his clear pine, is always able to sell his lower grades at a profit over cost of timber and manufacture, and yet what dealer would have the hardihood to offer \$18 per M for clear pine?

Mr. Schell truly remarks that there are few, if any, among the hardwood manufacturers of Canada, who are financially able to send a representative to Europe in the interests of the trade. In unity there is strength. Providence will help those who will help themselves. I would suggest, and would unite with a number of hardwood manufacturers, in sending a representative to Europe. All our hardwood mills are of small capacity, when compared with some pine mills, and it would take the output of a lot of our mills to supply a very small portion of the demand in England. We must obtain higher prices for our better grades of hardwood than are now obtainable, or else cease to manufacture. Time will not permit me

to further discuss this subject at present, but may trouble you again at a later date.

J. E. MURPHY,
Hepworth Station.

To the Editor of the CANADA LUMBERMAN.

SIR,—In your last issue I notice a remark that refers to my proposition that the Ontario Government might consider it advisable to take some action in the direction of assisting in the development of the hardwood trade.

The remark referred to, while not explicit, leads me to infer that the Ontario Government would be doing what should be done by the Federal authorities under the Department of Trade and Commerce.

The Federal authorities may also claim that the hardwood trade being so largely from Ontario, they would not be justified in spending general funds for such a purpose, without embracing all the wood products of all the provinces of confederation. Excuses are easily made, and quite as valuable as poor slabs in a country mill yard.

True, the province derives a revenue, direct and substantial, from expenditures on its pine forests, for the benefit of the province. From expenditures on mines, colonization roads, railways and other matters, the benefits do not appear to me to be so general nor direct, but few would object to the outlay on account of the public service of such outlay.

My idea in proposing the possibility of the Ontario Government assisting in the development, is that it would be a public service, if of any benefit at all. If the expected benefit would be realized, the advantages would be more general than though the object sought—viz., increased markets and better prices—would be accomplished by one or more private individuals, as the information in the first instance would be public and general, while in the latter it would be private and for the special advantage of a few.

I submit the matter, as first suggested, as one of possible interest to a large section of Ontario's citizens, and if submitted to the Government of Ontario as such, the Government, as custodians for the people, in the interests of the people, or a large section of them, may see it to the advantage of Ontario and in the public interest, to look into the matter without recourse to the Department of Trade and Commerce at Ottawa.

Personally I have moved in the matter and hope to profit thereby, but so far my information and any advantage which may accrue therefrom, I shall consider to be "private and for the special advantage of very few."

Beech is a useful wood in England, but how much is converted yearly into other than second-class cordwood, you could probably tell. Soft elm, basswood, ash, birch and maple are of much more value in England and the continental markets than many of the farmers of Ontario are aware of. The introduction of some of these woods into English markets is of recent date and known to but few dealers in Canada, but it may not always be so. While the United States absorbs nearly all of our stocks at present, I do not think it necessary nor advisable that such should always be the only outlet, practically, for our hardwood.

J. T. SCHELL.

Alexandria, Ont.

PERSONAL.

The death occurred on the 30th of December last, of the wife of Mr. E. D. Davidson, of the well known lumbering firm of E. D. Davidson & Son, Bridgewater, N. S.

Mr. John McLennan, lumber dealer, of Bay City, Mich., is dead. Deceased was a native of London, Ont., and was engaged in the lumber business in Canada before he went to Bay City in 1869.

Mr. Robert Dollar, well known in Canada, is the Pacific coast manager of the Usal Redwood Co., whose mills are in Mendocino Co., California. The company is composed mainly of capitalists of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Mr. John Burstall, the prominent lumber merchant of Quebec, is going to England to reside. Before leaving he was entertained at a complimentary dinner by about seventy prominent citizens. Mr. R. R. Dobell, another well known timber merchant, and President of the Board of Trade, presided.

—The Sault Ste. Marie Pulp and Paper Company, of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., made its first shipment of ground wood pulp on the 2nd of December last.

mulay saw is returned on the downward cut, but the energy which tears the circular through, against the grain of the log, seems to me lost forever. A saw cutting upwards would remove the sawdust more easily than the present arrangement of circulars; but a single blade or a gang with light but rigid frame, applied along the side of a log on a solid platform, seems to be the simplest form of sawing. A band saw placed in a horizontal frame and moved along the top of the log, is another possibility worthy of consideration. An electric motor attached directly to the cutting tool, with slack conducting wires, offers many advantages, but it would have to be fed from a waterfall or adjacent steam engine. I merely suggest the problem for some practical mechanic to solve, and hope yet to see the solution successful.

III.—WASTE OF MEN.

I have lightly touched upon the fact that the present mode of lumbering does not tend to raise the status of the workmen or attract intelligent men to choose the employment. The day when a pushing young man might aspire to a license and run a business of his own, may be regarded as gone by. The great majority look no further than to have "a good time" in the nearest hotel as often as they have a month's "time" free from the van or tailor's claim. Not one in ten young men save anything at camp, drive or mill; they only wear out their constitutions by hardship and dissipation alternately, break down early in life and become "hangers-on," wherever they have compassionate friends. The establishment of licensed cullers by the Ontario Department of Crown Lands opens one avenue to advancement for young men of some education, and is eagerly sought after. A further advance, in the line of fire inspectors, might, I hope, be tried with a fair prospect of success. At present they are nominated by the owner of the berth, and almost invariably are employees of the firm who live at the camp, are fed from the stores left in his care, and are not paid by the department till November. They go on duty about 15th May and are dismissed Sept. 15th in ordinary seasons—their wages being paid by the forestry branch of the Crown Lands Department and half charged to the holder of the license.

Now, what I would respectfully suggest is, that young men be encouraged to study the elements of forestry, at Guelph or elsewhere, and those holding certificates of qualification to be appointed to charge of berths not under license, or recommended to lumbermen not operating at present for appointment. The attention of intelligent young men would thus be attracted to the new country, their reports would lead to immigration from their former homes to the new territory, and they would be better able to make suggestions to Government or license holders on the capabilities of the berth than most of the present occupants. They might also act as game wardens in their respective berths during the balance of the year, and thus become the first permanent residents and valuable guides for future settlers. They might map out pulp and cedar lands, lay out roads, re-plant burnt spots, oversee trappers to have them trap in a rotation of 3 or 4 years, and otherwise advance the interests of the province in the new districts. This may be going too fast for some persons, but I believe would receive the hearty approbation of those who best understand the condition of this northland. But they would require to be paid monthly, and placed in close touch with the present timber agents, many of whose duties they might perform as well as to keep the department fully posted in everything pertaining to their charge. The position should be kept strictly non-political, or more properly, non-partizan. The more thoroughly this is done the better for all—government, the inspectors, the settlers and the country at large. By this means let us link the new country, timber trade, mining, and all other interests, with the energy and intelligence of the older settled districts.