



PUBLISHED
SEMI-MONTHLY.

The only Newspaper devoted to the Lumber and Timber Industries published in Canada

SUBSCRIPTION
\$2.00 PER ANNUM

VOL. 5.

PETERBOROUGH, ONT., JUNE 1, 1885.

NO. 11.

OAK TIMBER IN THE UNITED STATES.

The causes that led to the disappearance of the oak trees in England have in the course of time come into operation in the United States, and within the recollection of persons now living the white oak has almost entirely disappeared as a shipbuilding timber in those states in which that industry has been most actively carried on, according to the census report. In Maine virtually all of the oak accessible from the coast is gone, and only a few small and scattered bodies of it now exist. It is thought that in the western part of the state, in the vicinity of Wells, there is oak enough still left to supply the frames of about 200 vessels; but it grows largely on property where it is valued for its effect upon the landscape, and cannot be utilized commercially. There are red and other species of oak found in the mountainous and broken parts of Maine; but they are at present inaccessible. It is believed at Augusta that in the older and better settled portion of the state the amount of timber and wood growing is suffering no material diminution, and it is thought by some that the area in the state devoted to forestry is now larger than it was 20 years ago.

The southern part of New Hampshire was once densely covered with oak, but on account of the excellence of the wood and the good workmanship of the ship builders, all the lumber within easy distance of the coast has now disappeared. The northern part of the state is stocked with red oak, intermingled with other timber, and when railroads are built in sufficient number to cover that region a great deal of timber will come into market.

In Vermont white oak is still in fair supply, and is scattered over large part of the state, more especially in the counties bordering on Lake Champlain. The state has enough oak for her limited use for a long time, and some to spare. Owing to the lack of cheap transportation much of it will not be called for until the supply elsewhere becomes so reduced that the increased price will pay the cost of hauling long distances, and by that time the supply will probably be much lessened by local consumption.

In Massachusetts nearly all the oak is gone, and little comes in the market, except by reason of the division of patriarchal estates and the necessity of paying off legacies, when the oak is cut and sold. Massachusetts oak is of excellent quality.

A small supply of oak is still to be found in the state of Connecticut, but shipbuilding has almost ceased there, and if that industry should ever reach considerable proportions again, the supply would not last more than a few years.

A large part of New Jersey was originally covered with the finest oak, but the clearing of land for cultivation, and the use of oak in the

general arts, has nearly removed the timber from the state. For a long period forests of this timber flourished, almost untouched, in the southern part of the state, but the railroads have made it accessible and it is disappearing at a rapid rate. There are but a few places left where oak timber of any size can be cut.

The largest oak forests now existing, growing close upon the Atlantic coast, are on the Peninsula of Delaware and in the states of Maryland and Virginia. The timber originally covered the whole face of the country from the Delaware river to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond, and the trees were so tall that the majority of them would yield 2½ feet square and 60 feet in length without a spot or defect. Delaware and Maryland white oak became famous more than fifty years ago for its lasting quality and general excellence. Serious inroads had already been made into the supply in 1861, and during the war an immense amount of it was cut. At least one half of the face of the country on the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia peninsulas is still covered with a thick growth of oak trees, but nearly all the first growth near navigable waters has been cut. It is supposed that Worcester county, Maryland, has more oak than any other locality at present, as there was very little cut in that county before the railroad was built through it a few years ago; but since a way of transportation has been opened, woodcutters have been operating there vigorously. Owing to the gradual clearing up of the country the soil has grown drier, or some other change has taken place which seems to affect the quality of the timber, and many of the local builders in Delaware and Maryland who are familiar with the timber resources of their states, believe that the first growth of white oak can never be replaced, and that the destruction of timber now going on is permanent. The demand from here is not limited to the United States, for Delaware and Maryland oak is now sent to Canada and Europe in large quantities.

There is good oak in the Alleghany region south of Pennsylvania extending nearly to Georgia, and though cheap where it stands, the expense of bringing it down for shipment would be considerable.

Along the northern lakes the white oak has disappeared with the same rapidity as on the sea coast. Originally the country was covered with almost one unbroken forest containing oak, pine, hemlock and hardwood from Lake Champlain to the head of Lake Superior; but in the place of this grand growth of timber there now exists an unbroken series of cleared and cultivated fields and thriving cities for a distance of more than a thousand miles. A few small forests remain, as in the Adirondack region in New York and on the peninsulas of Michigan and Wisconsin, and some oak remains scattered in small quantities all along the states border-

ing on the lakes, but nine tenths of all the timber is gone. Even in Michigan where the best white oak of the West is found, people are importing timber to some extent from Canada in order to make out the local supply. The western forests have been the more severely taxed for oak because that is the only good timber the ship builders on the great lakes have had. They are too far from the southern markets to buy pitch pine, and their white pine is too soft and perishable. This fact, and the general demand for oak timber for houses, cars and other local purposes, and its exportation to the East and to Europe, the clearing up of the country, and the disastrous losses by forest fires have caused the trees to disappear with remarkable rapidity. The wood has become so scarce that prices have risen 100 per cent. in the last 20 years.

The greatest hardwood forests in the country originally grew over the face of the territory extending from Arkansas and Missouri eastward all along both sides of the Ohio river and up the Cumberland, Tennessee and other great branches of the Ohio to the mountains of Virginia, and over the mountains down to the coast. On the northern side of the Ohio the oak has been pretty well cut off, except in scattered lowlands; but on the southern side of the river, in West Virginia, Tennessee and Western North Carolina, and away west in Missouri and Arkansas, there is an abundance of white oak timber. The quality is not always so good as that of the coast oak, but there is enough timber growing in moist lands to make the wood sufficiently sound for shipbuilding purposes.

Besides the oak used for shipbuilding, a large quantity is cut annually for the repairing and building of wharves and piers in harbors in which shipping is employed, and the trees cut for those purposes are unfortunately the younger ones. The forests are thus being stripped of both large and small trees. No opportunity is given them to recuperate, so that while consumption of white oak becomes greater, and increases immensely for many purposes, the circumstances are such that it is almost impossible to entertain the slightest hope of ever replacing the timber when it has finally been cut off.—*Lumber World.*

WHY REDWOOD DEPRECIATED.

The following reason of the decline of the price of redwood in the San Francisco market is given by the *California Building News*: It is a source of no small inquiry among our people as to what has demoralized the lumber trade during the past six months. As is well known, there existed for some time previous to the late brake in prices, a combination among manufacturers to regulate prices by limiting the supply. The California market will consume annually 150,000,000 feet of redwood lumber. To supply

this demand each manufacturer was allowed a certain quota, to be shipped to San Francisco, all the redwood lumber arriving in that port being, to all intents and purposes, sold through the agents of the combination. Last fall it was found that at least 20 per cent more than the market would take would be produced the coming year, and it was proposed to reduce the quota allowed each manufacturer 20 per cent. and thus hold the market at the figure which had prevailed for two years past, giving the mill men good profits and enabling them to employ a larger number of laborers at good wages, thus making business lively in all the lumber regions. Several of the Mendocino lumber manufacturers refused to accede to the 20 per cent. reduction of their quota, and sold their lumber under the combination price, and thus the market was broken. Others in the association said: 'Well, it is now every man for himself;' and the price has been gradually getting lower and lower, until now redwood lumber is being sold in San Francisco at less than the cost of manufacture and transportation. It is claimed that this state of affairs can be but temporary, and matters will sooner or later come back to a legitimate business basis—with some manufacturers many thousands of dollars out of pocket. The best informed manufacturers of lumber tell us the demand is up to the average, and if it had not been for the circumstances above related, the lumber trade would now be as good as it has been at any time within the last three years. There is a slight dulness at present in the foreign demand for what is known as large, rough, clear, suitable for export. This latter is a branch of the redwood lumber trade, which is supplied almost exclusively by Humboldt county, and renders her manufacturers independent of the home market to a considerable extent. Our lumber dealers feel the effect of the temporary depression in the California market, but take a hopeful view as to a readjustment of prices and better times."

THE VOYAGEURS.

LONDON, May 15.—That the large contingent of Canadian voyageurs should contain a stray black sheep is not to be wondered at, but it is no less a fact that as an entire the Canadians did excellent work, and won the praise of those with whom they came in contact. Early Derby has received the following very satisfactory despatch from Lord Wolsely:—"Certain unfounded statements having appeared in various papers to the effect that their employment has been attended with unsatisfactory results, I desire to place on record not only my own opinion, but also that of every officer connected with the direction and management of the boat columns, that the services of these voyageurs have been of the greatest possible value, and further that their conduct throughout has been excellent."—*Mail.*