

Skilled labor is scarce, it appears, and the rate of wages paid is high.

We take it that the lumber trade of the Miramichi, like many another line of business elsewhere, is weighted with a number of sanguine, bustling men, with more energy than prudence. These men, when they have had a good season—and the season of 1888 appears to have been a good one according to the authority just quoted—prepare to do a still bigger business next season, neglecting to look at the signs of the times, or to count the cost, and refusing to be guided by the wise counsels of older or cooler heads.

Shipments of wood from Chatham across the Atlantic, which had declined from 149 million superficial feet in 1883 to 87 million in 1885 and 68 million in 1887, went up in 1889 to 110 million superficial feet. Two-thirds of this (74,762,000 feet) went to twenty-four ports in Great Britain, 27,400,000 feet to eleven places in Ireland, the remainder to France, Africa, Australia, &c. The total quantity shipped from all New Brunswick ports in 1889 was 369 million feet, as against 277 millions in 1888 and 411 millions in 1883. Square timber is but a small item, the quantity sent abroad being 9,329 tons as compared with 6,320 tons in 1888. The ports whose exports go to make up this total of 369 millions are St. John (180,167,000 feet), Miramichi, Bathurst, Dalhousie, Campbellton, Richibucto, Buctouche, Shediac, Cocagne, and Sackville. Every port shows increased shipments in 1889.

From twenty-two Nova Scotia ports, 198 vessels carried 92,605,000 feet of deals abroad last year. The largest share went from Parrsboro' (32,000,000 feet), Halifax (30,640,000 feet), Sheet Harbor, Amherst and its outports. Nova Scotia square timber shipments in 1889 were 6,568 tons, all from Pictou and Halifax.

Lumber and timber exports from St. John have gone up wonderfully since 1887; the sawn lumber shipments were 23 per cent. larger the next year, and those of 1889 were 26 per cent. over those of 1888. Birch and pine timber figures had run down from 17,800 tons in 1884 to 5,200 tons in 1888, recovering to 7,700 tons in 1889. Mr. Gibson continues to be the largest shipper of sawn lumber, Mr. W. M. Mackay ranking next. Mr. Snowball is the largest shipper from Miramichi River, the N. B. Trading Co. coming next. We append what Mr. Snowball's circular says, under date Chatham, 1st January, 1890:

The winter of 1888-9 was a favorable one for logging operations, and all the cut in this section came to market early. In this respect we were much more favored than other timber districts. Considerable St. John stock only arrived at market about the close of the season, and driving expenses were excessively heavy.

Shipments from this port were the largest since 1883, showing an increase of 37,000,000 superficial feet over last year, the larger portion of which is compensated for by reduction in the stock being wintered, which is the smallest on record, and the stocks at outports are almost nil. The total export from the province was ninety-two millions superficial feet more than last year—the largest since 1883. The exports

from Nova Scotia ports also show a small increase.

The stock wintering at St. John is computed to be 16 million superficial feet—a little over half of which is manufactured. Thirty millions superficial feet was the stock at same date last year. Of the 180 millions superficial feet exported from St. John to Europe the past season, 45 millions came from Nova Scotia, and 35 millions from New Brunswick Bay of Fundy ports, leaving only 100 millions for the production of the St. John River and its tributaries and the contributing districts which send their deals to St. John by rail.

Exports from Nova Scotia to Europe direct were 92 millions, and adding the 45 millions shipped via St. John, brings the total to 137 millions—a formidable showing; and as Nova Scotia has a better West India and coastwise trade than New Brunswick, her export of wood goods generally, compared with her timber area, largely exceeds that of New Brunswick.

The development of Nova Scotia's trans-Atlantic deal trade is much more recent than that of this province and its forest area is, therefore, inviting to operators. Its Government has no stumpage system, such as prevails in the other provinces of the Dominion, but sells its timber lands to the first applicant, at 40 cents per acre. The sales thus made, in each year, from 1883 to 1888, inclusive, were 35,000, 37,000, 13,700, 36,796, 25,995, and 27,809 acres, or 176,300 acres in the six years. The returns for last year are not yet made up, but it is officially stated that the sales of 1889 were much larger than those of any of these years.

Operations in the forest this season are larger than present prospects justify. Shippers are all anxious to curtail, but operators getting logs for the market, elated by last season's success, have increased their productions and—forcing beyond their facilities—are working at an extra first cost, which they are not likely to realize. The weather so far has been very favorable for winter operations, and the scarcity of skilled labor and high rate of wages paid are the only drawbacks. The export for next season, however, will not probably be any larger than it was this, as an average winter stock held for 1890 will more than take care of all the surplus.

The substitution of steam for sailing vessels is not looked upon with much favor by shippers or buyers of cargoes; still, steam is likely to monopolize the future trade. There were 27 steamers loaded at this port last year, against 18 in 1888, and 7 in 1887.

There has not been any reduction in the stumpage tax referred to so fully in my circular of 3rd January, 1887. This tax, with mileage charge added, amounts to one dollar and fifty cents per 1,000 superficial feet, or 12/ sterling per St. Petersburg standard—a tax altogether out of proportion to the value of the wood—and until this tax is reduced there will not be any honest vitality in the timber trade of this province.

—Respecting the lumber trade of the Ottawa Valley, our correspondent says the work in the woods goes on well, from which we conclude that they have more frost and snow up there than farther south and west. "There is not much in the way of timber or lumber news, beyond the fact that a prominent firm in Quebec has bought quite a quantity of square and waney, which is now being made, and at prices approximating to those of last season."—A new logging machine is to be used by Perley & Pattee in the bush, which, it is said, will obviate the use of horses to a great extent.

## HAMILTON BOARD OF TRADE.

The Hamilton Board of Trade at its quarterly meeting on Tuesday last took hold of some live questions and debated them with vigor. They plied Mr. David Plewes with questions when he appeared before them, as secretary of the Millers' Association, to insist on the inequality of the duties on wheat and flour, but those present, some twenty-five in number, ended by adopting unanimously a resolution expressing the opinion "that there should be an alteration of the said tariff to equalize the duties upon the raw material and the finished product, and thus put an end to the existing discrimination."

Next came a discussion on fire insurance rates in the city, which several members declared to be too high, but the mayor reminded the meeting that rates were as low as in any other Ontario city, while water pressure in Hamilton was not all it should be. However, a motion was carried to select a committee of the board which should memorialize the Canadian Board of Fire Underwriters to reduce the present rates. The resolution certainly has a very aggressive tone, for it tells the underwriters flatly that "unless the said board meet the committee in a liberal way, outside insurance companies be invited to come here; and, if they will reduce the present rates, that the members of the Board of Trade pledge themselves to support such companies."

When the railway situation came upon the carpet, several gentlemen grew more than commonly disputatious, even personal, but nothing serious came of it.

A practical thing was done when two live members suggested and the meeting concurred in appointing a special committee of half a dozen of its likely members to prepare for discussion by the board of Trade this month a resolution regarding the incidence of taxation for local purposes as between income and personalty, and also regarding the present constitution of the Court of Revision. Business men elsewhere will be obliged to these Hamilton gentlemen for thrashing out well a subject which possesses interest for so many.

## PROFESSIONAL MEN AS EXPERT WITNESSES.

The associated accountants of Ontario, through their president, make the claim, not without reason, that they are entitled to some such recognition in the law courts as other professional men, say architects and surveyors, or lawyers and doctors. There is something of hardship in their treatment in legal cases at present, as an instance will show: A public accountant was subpoenaed to a distant place to give expert evidence in a case. He had to leave his business, which was among the wholesale houses and companies of a city, travel for hours by rail, and stay away from his office three days. This was annoying, but if necessary in the interests of justice he must submit. Surely, however, he ought not to be asked to spend both time and money in the public interest. As a matter of fact he did this, for his trip cost him \$12,