

bushels, which shows an increase during the past week of 211,000 bushels, and whilst it is true that stocks in the principal centres of Great Britain are considerably lighter than those of a year ago, the amount of supplies on passage and on this continent aggregates several million more than that of last year at this time. One healthy feature of the situation, however, presents itself in the increased shipments from the Atlantic seaboard, since the commencement of the last crop year beginning on Sept. 1st. From that date the exports from the Atlantic ports have footed up 26,619,901 bushels, against 18,933,030, bushels for the corresponding period of 1883 and '84, showing an increase of 7,686,874 bushels. The disposition of the above shipments were as follows: To the United Kingdom 13,156,216 bus.; to the Continent 13,409,810 bushels; to Southern and Central America, 35,455 bushels; 146 bushels to British Colonies; and 18,278 bushels to other countries. The chief item of interest in the above figures is the large increase in the shipments to the Continent which is 6,500,000 bushels, as compared with 1883 and 1884. And should the Continent continue to import at the same ratio between now and next harvest the supply in sight on this side will exhibit a material diminution. So that, taking an impartial survey of the situation, investment in wheat at present low prices would seem to be as profitable as most ventures in the commercial arena for the employment of surplus capital, notwithstanding the recent set-back, which was the result of a largely oversold and speculative market.

LUMBER REVIEW.

The year just expired differed from 1883 only in degree in being one of the most unsatisfactory and unprofitable experienced for some time. The season, which begins in January, found manufacturers in the woods as usual, those working for the United States markets preparing for the average supply, and those for the English markets (for pine) doing the same, encouraged by fair contracts with exporters at high prices, especially for first and second qualities. Manufacturers of spruce had not equal encouragement, the result being operations on a reduced scale except in the Saguenay region, where the production was about as usual. Indeed many of the spruce mills did next to nothing, and some of them nothing at all. Of pine logs there were enough for a fair average supply of deals. In square timber, notwithstanding the considerable

stocks wintering in Quebec, the greater portion of which was unsold, the Ottawa lumbermen magnanimously set to work to get out more, and the production for the winter of 1883-4 was somewhere in the vicinity of four millions cubic feet—and probably over, if the exact figures were produced. The winter, as a whole, was favorable to operations in the woods and the drives were generally successful.

In England but little headway was made by the representative Quebec exporting houses, at the beginning of the year. Heavy stocks in that country depressed the markets and checked consumption, and buyers evidently did not dare to face new purchases. As the spring advanced, sellers, determined not to return home without having made some sales, eased themselves of some of the burden by lowering their prices. The extent of the sales, however, was unusually small, and the prices were ruinously low. It will thus be seen that at the opening of the year the prospects for exporters to the English markets were not brilliant, and as soon as the small spring fleet to take away the contracting cargoes had departed, finding it impossible to make further sales to U. K. buyers, they set to work chartering, and sent over to London, Liverpool, Clyde, etc., a considerable quantity of unsold stock,—this of course on consignment—to realize what they could for it. As stated on a former occasion, timber manufacturers do not appear to realize the steady and permanent decline going on in our trade with the United Kingdom. The causes of this decline may be again cited:

1st. The enormous natural and steadily increasing consumption of lumber in North America. It must be remembered that a new world is being built up here, and at a pace to which history affords no parallel.

2d. The consequent immense natural denudation of our forests, lessening the supply and rendering the balance more costly to make, by compelling lumbermen to go farther and farther into the interior and from the banks of rivers and streams; besides which, as the area of available forests decreases, it becomes centered in fewer hands, and trees are held at higher prices and stumpage more costly. Those were not entirely mistaken who predicted that at no very distant day lumber would be as high in America as in Great Britain. That day has almost arrived for everything except the higher grades of white pine timber and deals; and a few years' prosperity in the United States would bring even these woods up to the values in England.

3d. The fact that in England they can now get the bulk of their wants supplied from North Europe at such prices as our manufacturers could not touch and cover cost. It is now admitted that the forests of North Europe are of much larger area than those of North America, and have been drawn upon to a much less extent. Again, wages and most other things that go to make up the cost of lumber are much lower in North Europe, while the cost of freight is only about one-third to one-half of what it is from this side of the ocean. We can scarcely count for the future on the markets of Europe, as we have in the past, and every year makes this clearer and clearer by the great falling-off in our exports. This decrease, too, would have been more marked had the business been done on a legitimate basis—that is, confined to the legitimate demand from Europe, and not supplemented by a large consignment business,—of goods that were not wanted, because cheaper came from elsewhere, or they were, if of suitable goods, over and above the normal requirements. We venture to say that more than half the shipments of the last few years were of this class. There is thus no blinking the fact that it is no longer possible to ship low grade deals, either pine or spruce, to the United Kingdom with hope of much profit. In the opinion of competent judges, there has been more money lost on lower grade pine deals during the last two years than was made on the upper grades. It is to be hoped that our exporters will realize this and act accordingly, relieving the English markets of goods that are not wanted—that is, not wanted at prices which must be had to save themselves.

It may be asked then—how else can this surplus be disposed of? And we answer: In our own Canadian markets, where a very large quantity of lumber is used, and especially in the United States markets, which even to-day absorb a larger portion of our production than Europe. A strong feeling is growing in the United States favorable to the abolition of the \$2 tax on Canadian lumber, with the view of husbanding and protecting what is left of their own forests. This feeling is assuming a national proportion, and is strongly supported by influential newspapers. When the time comes for the change, as it probably will ere long, if not even one cargo of our wood goods were called for from Europe it would not cause a ripple in our lumber trade in Canada. During the last few months of the season some buying was done by shippers from manufacturers at