

A SHORT LOOK AHEAD.

The *Northwestern Lumberman* has the following article on the prospects of the lumber trade:—

"The money obtained for farm products is what every retail lumber dealer bases the success of his business upon. In the absence of good crops and fair prices comparatively little lumber is used. The prosperity of a village is gauged by the prosperity of the farmers in the county surrounding the village, and, this being the case, the success of the lumber trade outside of the largest cities hinges largely on crops and the prices obtained for them.

The yield of small grain this year has been bountiful. From some sections there have come complaints, but investigation has proved that such complaints were due in part to poor, grumbling human nature. Not a small percentage of the people never make note of any days except the cloudy ones. The sun shines for others, they think, and not for them. These people, no matter how prosperous, are never contented. If their wheat fields produced 30 bushels to the acre they would call themselves poorly off because it was not 50 bushels, and if it grew in flour in their pantry bins they would think that nature was doing them a wrong because it was not in baked loaves.

In some districts corn is out of the way of frost, while in others a hard freeze would damage it. The season has been so cool that an early frost has been expected, but in the great corn belt it has not yet come, and in a very few days from now it can come with impunity. There is every indication that the corn crop will be immense. The West next year ought to be a country well stocked with well-fed hogs and cattle. Last season a large number of cattle were sold in certain sections because their owners could not feed them properly, and, of course, on the heels of such a condition, the number of hogs in the yards this season is comparatively small.

Still, with good crops of small grain secured, and an immense corn crop nearly assured, the lumber dealers are seriously asking themselves what the outcome will be. Will the farmers sell their grain and corn, or will they hold them? And, if they do sell them, will the prices warrant improvements to an extent to consume a large quantity of lumber? It is no wonder that these questions are asked by the lumber dealers. They come very properly into the consideration of their business plans, and it would be a poor business man who would not give them thought.

That the farmers will sell the bulk of their farm produce cannot be questioned. They raised it for the purpose of turning it into money as quickly as possible, and they will do it for the simple reason that they want the money. Debts are due and must be paid. Improvements in various directions must be made on the farms, and it will take money to make them. It is not the disposition of but a small class to make every thing count for the best. Sacrifices are made every day in the business world in order to get ready money. So many farmers will sell their crops that we expect for the next few months the railways will have about all they can do. In times of a bountiful harvest, no matter whether prices were high or low, such has always been the case, and this year will not be an exception. There are some men who will hold their wheat and corn, but they will be few when compared to the great number of producers. And what object have they in cribbing their products? Crops generally in Europe are good. There is a probability that the European powers will become engaged in war, but the probability is rather remote. All the people of the old world are not so hot-headed as the French, for which let us be thankful, no matter if our wheat and corn sell for a few cents a bushel less than we would be glad to get for them. This not an era of high prices for any line of goods. It is an era of overproduction, and nature seems desirous this season of pointing out to man that she, as well as he, can take a hand at it. The most sanguine do not even predict that any boom in prices is likely to occur in the immediate future. Plenty to eat, and plenty of houses to live in, at moderate prices and rents, is the outlook. The iron, cotton and coal men are

reducing their output; the lumber manufacturers are taking steps to bring about the same result—all acknowledging that in order to go faster they must first prepare by going slow. Such conditions do not point to high prices this year for wheat and corn.

The second question that the lumber dealers are asking themselves ought to be readily settled. Good crops are always productive of increased activity—an activity that is graded by the prices obtained for the crops. If high prices were realized this season, business so brisk that it could be denominated a boom would be the result. There are no such indications, however. The realization of such an event can be expected to be but partial. There will be a quickening of trade, but not in a degree as to show that the flour is wholly prepared for the leaven yet. This, however, must be borne in mind—we are all hopeful. A partial success leads us to believe that the next step may take us to a success that is unqualified, and we discount the future. Such crops as we have are inspiring, and men on the strength of the inspiration will buy as many of the necessities and luxuries of life as they ought to. Their credit will be extended. Neglected improvements will be made. More money will be in circulation. More men will be employed, and a better feeling will prevail. Another fact that we should not lose sight of is that the people of our great country keep marching right on. They are all the time reaching out, and every step necessitates commercial transactions.

Under such conditions there can be no such thing as halt in the lumber trade, this year or any other year as for that matter. Lumber in the very nature of things must go forward steadily. The amount of lumber that is used, and has been used during the past year, we believe has been underestimated because so much has been said and written about overproduction. Because lumber has piled up on the mill yards and docks many are of the opinion that business has been dull at the consuming end of the line. That does not necessarily follow. The facilities for producing lumber have been largely increased year after year. There really seems to be no limit to them, and with the present mill capacity the demand that would call for all that is turned out would be such as no man has ever seen.

Judging from the evidence with which we come in contact constantly, we see no reason to think that the retail trade for the next twelve months will assume smaller proportions than that for the twelve months past, but rather that it will be larger. It is safe to assert that in the next year 6,000,000,000 feet of white pine lumber will be put into buildings and improvements, and if the dealers distribute that amount from their yards, the year will certainly not be one long play day."

CONCERNING CHEESE AND CHEESE BOXES.

We clip the following from the *Glengarry* correspondence of the *Montreal Witness*:

One of the principal features of note which seemed to interest our visitors on that day, and we are not surprised to hear it, is the cheese box manufactory of Messrs. McPherson, Merrill & Schell, directly under the personal superintendence of Mr. J. T. Schell, one of our latest and most enterprising citizens. The factory was built about eighteen months ago in connection with their saw and shingle mill, for the purpose of manufacturing cheese boxes to meet the demand of the factories under the direct control of Mr. D. M. McPherson, our "cheese king." The enormous quantity of one thousand boxes a day are made and despatched to all parts of the country and across the river St. Lawrence, and a large quantity of material ready prepared is shipped daily to all points. Last week over seven thousand boxes of cheese were shipped to England from the different factories, and Mr. McPherson has received further orders from the Old Country for ten large cheeses, each to weigh from seven hundred to one thousand pounds. The average yield of cheeses of the different factories, so far this summer, is seven hundred per day, a decidedly encouraging outlook. A factory run with such activity and push must naturally produce a

good effect in a small place like Alexandria, both to the working classes and the stores. To such of our readers who may chance to visit Alexandria, we feel sure a visit to this factory, to witness the manufacturing of those cheese boxes, will prove interesting. With that indomitable push and enterprise which have characterized Mr. C. T. Schell since his arrival in Alexandria, he has planted in our midst a most flourishing concern. We now learn that this gentleman is about to erect a new saw mill at or near the "Dingwall Farm," in the fourth concession of Kenyon, adjacent to the track of the Canada Pacific Railway, which will give him splendid facilities for transporting lumber and cord wood, etc., to Montreal and the American markets. Such business speculations are all worthy of success, bringing with them as they do a home market for the deserving farmers.

CONSERVATION OF FORESTS.

Mr. R. W. Phipps, whose activity in the political campaign of 1878, will be remembered by most people, is now visiting the capital for the first time and in an official capacity. A few years ago he was appointed forest conservator by the Ontario Government. In that position he has shown himself to be surprisingly efficient, and collected a mass of information respecting the forests of our province, and the best means for their reproduction, which is invaluable. He intends to go along the Canadian Pacific as far as Lake Nipissing for the purpose of personally inspecting the forests of the Ottawa Valley and intermediate district, and determining what suggestions are necessary for their preservation and reproduction. In his next report the result of his visit will be published, and we anticipate it will contain some fine specimens of word painting descriptive of the Ottawa Valley's forest wealth and economy. While in this city Mr. Phipps has been interviewing individually the prominent lumbermen and soliciting their co-operation in proposed measures for forest preservation and reproduction. They have invariably approved warmly of his aims, and promised every co-operation in their power. It is probable a general meeting of lumbermen will be called, for the purpose of conference with Mr. Phipps and an exchange of views.—*Ottawa Free Press*.

A DULL WINTER.

The coming winter is likely to be the dull-est in the lumber trade which this district has yet seen. There have been very few sales of lumber this summer and all the mills are overstocked in consequence. The Parry Sound Lumber Company's mill here has been closed down, possibly for the season, and, unless shipments are made immediately, the Conger Lumber Company's mill will have to shut down for want of piling ground. The mills at Byng Inlet belonging to the Georgian Bay Consolidated Lumber Co., are also to be closed down for the season shortly. The upper mill is expected to run about three or four weeks and the lower mill is to run only about two weeks and, it is said, will be closed down the whole of next summer. All the different lumber companies are going to largely reduce their winter operations in the woods and the cut of logs this winter will not be one-half as large as that of former seasons. Altogether the outlook in the lumber trade in these districts is anything but promising.—*Parry Sound Star*.

SPONTANEOUS EXPLOSIONS.

Herr Baehr, of Dresden, has been conducting a series of experiments in the Royal Theatre in that city, whose results are of the highest importance in elucidating the causes of the spontaneous explosions that sometimes occur in flouring mills. He has found that the leather belts employed for the transmission of energy in manufactories are such rapid generators of electricity that flour malt and other finely divided forms of dust may be spontaneously fired and exploded thereby. Accidents of this kind, due no doubt to the cause exposed by Professor Baehr, have frequently taken place in large mills in this country; and, as any finely divided form of dry combustible material is liable to be thus exploded, the contingency is one against which proper provision should be made.—*Ex*.

THE PALMETTO.

Another use has been discovered for the once universally despised palmetto. The fine fibre obtained from the inner lining of the bud is now manufactured into a substance so closely resembling human hair that it is employed as a substitute for the genuine article, and now ornaments the graceful head of beauty. It can be had of any length, and being capable of taking any color, the ladies can now indulge in brown, flaxen and auburn tresses. Thus, not only the hat, but the glossy locks upon which it rests, are now furnished by the palmetto, from which source also come the fan to cool the brows and the material to stuff mattresses whereupon to repose the wearied body. Paper, fiber, hats, frons, hair, etc., are now furnished from palmetto, and it will yet provide material for cordage and clothing.—*Ex*.

NEWLY-DESIGNED MACHINES.

The Egan Company, of Cincinnati, Ohio, have just completed several newly-designed machines of special interest to large number of wood-workers on account of the many fine points embodied in their construction. Among the number we may mention their fast-feeding special flooring machine, which will turn out a first-class quality of flooring, in either hard or soft wood, at the rate of 100 lineal feet per minute. This machine is provided with three pair of large feeding rolls, and it will work stuff nine inches or 14 inches wide, by three inches thick, finished sizes. Their new self-feeding rip-saw is well adapted for use in any factory where a large amount of ripping was to be done, as the work performed by it is much more rapid, as well as more smooth and even than can be done by hand. The company have already placed several of each of these machines with parties who had thoroughly canvassed the market and finally decided on the Egan Company's make.—*Lumber Trade Journal*.

A BRIGHTER OUTLOOK.

The import list this week is a somewhat formidable one, and includes 25 vessels from Sweden; 13 from Russia, and eight from Canada. There are 25 steamers and 35 sailing ships, making a total of 60 against 74 the corresponding week last year. At that time there was a marked preponderance of steamers, 46 being of this class; so that though the present week's import is undoubtedly a heavy one, it is not so large, fortunately, as twelve months ago. Trade is now duller than it was then, though the prospect of improvement is somewhat brighter than it appeared the autumn of 1883. Then there was nothing to ground any hopes upon of a change for the better. Now the outlook is much brighter, and in the present unsettled state of the foreign markets, and the disturbance between France and the Chinese empire, the chances of the shipping trade improving are every hour becoming greater. The blockade of the Chinese harbors would throw tonnage on the market; but to carry on such a distant war the French will be compelled to utilize all their vessels for transports, and in this way the Mediterranean trade will be almost entirely in our hands.—*Timber Trades Journal*.

Tree Planting in the Northwest.

One of the measures before the Northwest Council, now in session, is the introduction of an ordinance providing for the encouragement of those who will undertake the work of planting out trees on the prairies, both for the purpose of raising timber belts on such portions as are of little value for cultivation, and to create wind-breaks around homesteads and along the roadsides for shelter and shade. In either case it is most desirable that the encouragement to be given should be of a liberal nature. There is nothing, we believe, in either the climate or the soil to militate against success, except that the varieties of trees to be tried should be those best adapted to exposure. The experiment need not be a costly one, and a beginning might be made by planting out those sorts that are indigenous to the country or to localities with a winter climate equally as cold.—*Calgary Herald*.

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