

EDITORIAL NOTES

WOOD is to be at a discount in future in C. P. R. trestle work. As a result of the recent tour of inspection made by the chief officers of this company, it has been decided to replace all the wooden trestles with steel structures. The cost is estimated at something over two million dollars, but the directors believe the consequent lessening of the schedule time between Vancouver and Montreal will repay this immense outlay, since trains will be able to run at considerable higher speed over steel bridges than over the best class of wooden trestle work.

THE favorite wood for paving purposes in London is the jarrah wood, imported from Australia. An inquiry has been recently set on foot to determine whether some other of the Australian woods notably red gum would serve as well as jarrah wood, but the testimony goes to show that while substitutes are used in some of the Australian cities for jarrah nothing that is offered is quite as satisfactory. They all lack the lasting qualities of jarrah. The inquiries further show that the supply of jarrah is abundant and that there need be no apprehension of the supply running short for many years to come. Wood paving grows more and more in favor in the European cities.

THE durability of timber under certain conditions is illustrated in a foundation of red pine planks taken from a sewer in Sparks street, Ottawa. The sewer was constructed from 32 to 38 years ago. It consists of a foundation of red pine planks laid transversely, on which two side walls of stone are erected, which are covered over at the top with heavy round cedars. The cedars at the top are all, though still apparently quite serviceable, in a more or less advanced state of decomposition. The planks, however, are to all appearance as sound and hard as on the day they were put down. It is another proof that timber kept constantly submerged in water keeps in good condition—unless sewage has a special virtue as a timber preservative.

THE *Southern Lumberman* celebrates its tenth birthday by the issue of a special number descriptive and illustrative of the progress of the lumber and timber industries of the Southern States. Our contemporary is to be congratulated on the general "make-up" of its anniversary issue and on the gratifying progress that it has made during the first decade of its existence. The opening up of the lumber industry of these states is of comparatively recent date. It was not till 1875 that any vigorous effort was made to realize the rich stores that time has since shown exists in these southern forests. The walnut and cherry timber of Indiana began to fail, and buyers, seeking for other pastures green, began to flock into the hardwood forests of Tennessee. The early bird, in this case, reaped the reward. The value of this hitherto unrecognized source of wealth was not realized by the people, and before its riches had dawned upon them, millions of feet, including the bulk of walnut and cherry, were bought at about one-tenth its value. This was true also of ash, and to some extent, of poplar and oak. History repeats itself in the case of all our natural products. The adventurous prospector, who has often to brave the ridicule and prejudice of friends, gets in on the ground floor and makes his pile. We see no reason why he should not. It requires courage and foresight to be among the pioneers in any cause; success does not always crown the work of the pioneer; when it does, he has generally well earned it. The primitive methods of manufacturing and marketing, that have been common to all lumbering sections in their early history, were with the South in the days of the seventies. To-day they are as well up to the times as most of the older territories. Interest just now in these states gathers around yellow

pine. There people are very sanguine of the uses and value of this wood, and whilst some discount must be made for native enthusiasm, indications tell of good value having its existence in this particular timber. Tennessee is the chief lumbering state of the south, where there are now 436 saw mills, 142 planing mills and 20 shingle mills. Of these 41 (including twelve saw mills and ten planing mills) prosecute their successful industries in the city of Nashville. They have a daily saw mill capacity of 450,000 feet. The lumber handled or consumed by them yearly is 229,350,000 feet. We are not so far north in Canada that we do not find an appreciative interest in the welfare of those engaged in the timber interests of the Sunny South.

NEW YORK is again threatened with a lumber "tie-up." The trouble is a continuation of the labor difficulties of the early summer. At that time, as a result of united action by the members of the Lumber Dealers Association the men were badly beaten. It was an ugly licking for the walking delegate, and he continues to smart under it. He would again stir up the men and practice his old tricks, and it is an effort in this direction that has given rise to present rumblings of a fresh fight. *The Lumber Trade Journal* of New York, which carried through the former contest with marked ability and success, very plainly warns the men that if they allow themselves to be influenced by these agitators, and a single dealer in the Lumber Association is boycotted that every yard in the district will shut down and the men will have to meet their fate with a cold winter before them. It is to be hoped that for the sake of the families of the men, if for no other reason, that wise counsels will be allowed to prevail.

RECENT government returns furnish some important particulars of the volume and character of lumbering operations in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. We are told that there are 19 mills in operation within the Winnipeg agency cutting under government license. The total amount of dues collected for timber within the Calgary agency during the year amounted to \$8,232.88, being a decrease of \$8,578.24. The price of lumber at Calgary was from \$12 to \$18; at Cochrane, \$12 to \$16; at Fort McLeod, \$15 to \$43; at Lethbridge, \$30, and at Cypress Hills, \$13. Two saw mills were cutting lumber within this agency last year under government license, and several portable mills under permit. The total amount of dues collected within the Edmonton agency was \$4,910.59, being an increase of \$868.86, as compared to the previous years. The price of lumber at Edmonton during the year was \$20 to \$23, and at St. Albert \$23 to \$27. The agent reports three saw mills in operation within his agency. The total amount of dues collected in the Prince Albert agency was \$7,689.91, being an increase of \$3,596.32 over the previous year. Lumber sold at Prince Albert from \$20 to \$42, and at Battleford from \$30 to \$35. There is only one saw mill in this agency cutting timber under license, namely, the one at Prince Albert, erected by Moore & McDowell in 1876. There are, however, several mills at Prince Albert and Battleford cutting under permit. Saw mill returns received at the head office give the following quantities of building material as having been manufactured and sold during the year within the five agencies: Lumber, 30,605,906 feet; sold 27,097,480. Shingles, 1,449,916; sold, 1,610,247. Lath, 156,402; sold, 142,146. Sixty-four licenses to cut timber over a total area of 2,312.88 square miles were issued during the year. The number of applications during the year to cut timber was 88, of which 48 were for licenses to cut lumber in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, and the remainder to cut timber on Dominion lands in British Columbia. The number of applicants during the previous year was 81.

A RETURN brought down at Ottawa towards the close of the session showing that 42,000,000 acres of land in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories had been granted to railways, and the same policy being continued has brought from the *Winnipeg Commercial* a vigorous and outspoken protest. This journal, in order to make clear to its readers what this "dissipation

of the public domain" means, points out that the entire superficial land area of the province of Manitoba, including swamps and all un-tilable land, is 41,002,240 acres, so that the gift to railways exceeds by a million acres the whole area of this province. We need to have a question of this character placed sometimes in this bold shape to realize fully its import. Our contemporary follows up its protest by showing that as yet the railways that have been built, influenced by this prodigal gift, cover only a small portion of the country, and "if land grants are to continue until all parts of the country are opened by railways, there will not be land enough in the entire country to satisfy the railways. The railways will own all the land, and still be unsatisfied." Railways have the power, apparently, to hoodwink governments and corporations with a child-like innocence that is foreign to anyone else, but that is perfectly indigenous to them. No one is so unfair as not to concede to the railways of the country well-deserved merit for the important part they have occupied in the development of the country. But there is a wide gulf between credit-earned commendation, and an insatiable hoggishness that breeds with too many railway corporations. The people have rights, the country has rights, that must be made a consideration with governments, just as much, as the alleged rights of railway companies. If a protest to avail anything is to be entered it cannot be done too soon. We may make up our minds that whatever the railway companies secure they will hold; there will be no giving back anything. A little regiment of municipalities in this province have had some experience, if not in land giving, yet in bonus granting to railway companies, and in the interim of careful second thought, they know to-day, just how much their generosity has cost them, and how little, in too many cases, they have for their liberality. The objection to this principle of bonusing comes with enlarged strength when it applies to public land. The *Commercial* states a true principle when it contends that the public lands belong to and "should be held by people." We agree with our contemporary that the time has come to cry a halt to this policy, which if not seriously felt now, will certainly "in the future prove disastrous to the country."

TORONTO has had an avalanche of failures in building and lumber circles during the past month. Among the smaller concerns that have gone under may be mentioned Hammon & Williams, builders, of North Toronto, who assigned to Campbell & May with liabilities of \$3,000, and assets nominally the same. H. Lambert, another builder in a small way, is seeking a composition with his creditors. Herbert A. Matthews, proprietor of the Toronto Hardwood Company, has assigned to H. J. Watson. The Bloor Street Lumber Company is liquidating. The company consists of Stephen Wilcox, H. H. Mullin, of this city, and T. J. Hammil, Barrie. Direct liabilities are placed at \$9,800, and indirect \$9,000. The assets are about \$9,000—largely book debts. The surprise of the trade has been the financial embarrassment of William McBean, the extensive builder of what is familiarly known as speculative properties. His affairs have been placed in the hands of A. E. Osler. Mr. McBean's trouble is in being "land-tied," and unable to sell owing to the depressed condition of the real estate market. The amount involved in the failure is from \$250,000 to \$300,000, while it is claimed there is a surplus of \$90,000, but this is conditional on the assets realizing what is deemed their proper value. What the outcome will be it is just now difficult to state. These several difficulties will have no serious effect on the lumber trade outside of the firms, that may be interested as creditors, and we do not know that any of them will be hit to hurt very badly. The builders who have gone under are sufferers from the depression in building operations in the city. As we have pointed out before in these columns, speculative building in the city has for some years been carried on in a measure altogether in excess of the actual requirements of our population. The reaction that has set in is perfectly healthy, and whilst it will pinch some, and others it will squeeze pretty hard, the outcome will be for the general good, and will not be without a salutary effect upon some enthusiastic spirits who are more noted for their ability as boomster than level headed business men.