

# THE CANADA LUMBERMAN

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## CHARACTER SKETCH.

J. R. BOOTH.

"The Truest Wisdom is a Resolute determination."—Napoleon.

FEW pages of history are more fascinating than those which tell of the achievements of men born in humble circumstances and against whom there would seem to have been arrayed insurmountable difficulties. In the story of such lives is found easy demonstration of the old saying, that truth is stranger than fiction. No romance is half so romantic as a memoir of these world's conquerors.

One finds in the life of Mr. J. R. Booth, of Ottawa, who is credited with having been the owner and operator of the largest saw mill in the world, few incidents that can be weaved into a biographical sketch. His biography is written in deeds, not words. With one of old he might say, "It is not what I am, but what I have done—that is my kingdom," or as one of the world's greatest poets has observed:

"It is not in mortals to command success;  
We will do more—deserve it."

Mr. Booth was born in humble circumstances. At one time he was owner of a very small piece of land. To-day he is believed to be the largest property holder in the city of Ottawa, outside of the Government. His larger holdings, however, and those which have brought him wealth and fame, are his great timber interests, and the extensive saw mills he has owned and operated in the Ottawa district.

Mr. Booth's big mill, which the record has declared was the largest saw mill in the world, was, as is well known to LUMBERMAN readers, destroyed by fire about twelve months since. It was a property of which the owner had good reason to be proud. The mill was most perfectly equipped, with modern machinery, containing alone 14 large band saws, and capable of cutting over 1,000,000 feet per day. Not alone did the destruction of this mill by fire prove a serious loss to Mr. Booth, but in some respects the loss to the city of Ottawa, and its commercial interests was even greater, for how completely is the prosperity of a community associated with the success and individual effort of its most enterprising citizens. Whether Mr. Booth will at some future time rebuild his mill, no one can at this time say. The water by which it was driven is derived from the Chaudiere Falls, in which is found a most valuable asset, that will before long, no doubt, be utilized for commercial purposes, either by its owner or some one else.

Some two or three years ago Mr. Booth purchased the well-known Perley & Pattee mill, and shortly after remodelled it, and made it one of the most completely equipped mills on the Chaudiere. The two mills together were estimated to cut 165,000,000 feet per year. Operations for the season on the present mill were commenced about a fortnight ago, employment being given to fully one thousand men. As we have taken occasion to note in our editorial pages, a commendable step was taken by Mr. Booth this season in fixing the day's labor at ten hours in place of eleven, as in former years, the same wages being paid for the shorter day.

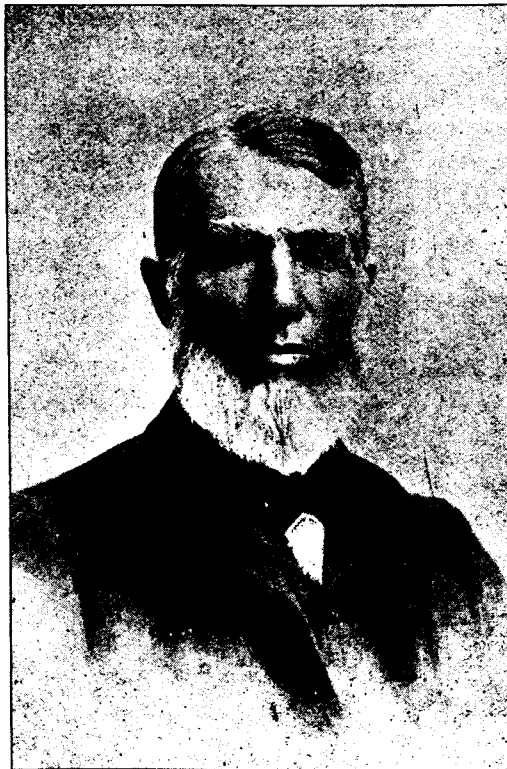
The activities of Mr. Booth have been developed in late years in the building of the Canada Atlantic Railway, of which he is one of the largest shareholders. This road has proven of immeasurable help to lumber exporters in the Ottawa district. A valuable adjunct to the Canada Atlantic is the Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway, which is now nearly completed, connecting Ottawa with important lumber districts in the interior, the construction of which is due to Mr. Booth's enterprise, and has been carried through with his well-recognized business ability and energy.

The subject of our sketch is without ambitions in the

direction of public office. One of the wealthiest and most esteemed citizens of the Capital, responsibilities and honors in a public way would be willingly placed upon his shoulders, but to all such suggestions he has ever given a decided "No." Modest and retiring in disposition, he prefers to stick closely to his business, erecting there a monument that will carry with it personal gain to himself, but likewise a still greater gain to the community that has been fortunate enough to enlist his citizenship and generous good-will.

## WASTE OF FILES.

THOUSANDS of dollars' worth of files are annually used among wood-working shops, and nineteenth-twentieths of this amount are lost or thrown away, after the teeth become dull. There are several ways of utilizing worn-out files by recutting or partially recutting the



MR. J. R. BOOTH.

teeth. The acid process pops up periodically. It consists merely of treating the files to a solution of soda or potash to remove the pitch, grease, etc., from the teeth. After this treatment they are immersed in diluted sulphuric acid, laid on one side for a few hours, then cleaned of the acid, thoroughly washed and oiled; the action of the acid sharpens the teeth, so that there is quite a little cut to the file thus treated, but it does not last long; the file gets dull again very quickly, showing that the acid process gives only temporary benefit. Files may be returned to the maker, the teeth ground off, and recut, at a cost of about fifty per cent. of the original price of the file. A worn-out file may be cleaned of grease, dirt, &c., between the teeth, then laid one side several weeks, when it will be found much sharper than when laid away. This result is due to the action of the atmosphere, which seems to dissolve in a manner similar to, but much less, than the acid process, the points of the teeth. Like the acid process, the benefits derived are not lasting.

The machinery for Messrs. Mason & Sons' mill, of which mention was made in the LUMBERMAN for May, was furnished by the Waterous Co., of Brantford.

## BY THE WAY.

IN response to a letter from the CANADA LUMBERMAN, Mr. J. Arthur Maguire, Consul-General in Canada, for the Argentine Republic, and who is at present in South America, writes as follows from Buenos Ayres, giving important information, touching the changes recently made in the lumber tariff of that country. He says: "The duties on the different classes of lumber now stand as follows:

Pitch pine, \$4.65 Argentine gold, per 100 cub. meters.  
White pine, \$5.43.  
Spruce, \$3.88.

"One hundred cubic meters equal 929 sup. feet, B. M. The reduction of about \$5 per 1,000 feet on pitch pine will have a bad effect on spruce shipments, as first named wood can be bought as cheaply, if not more so, than spruce, and, at the same time, is preferred for almost all purposes. The duty on spruce has been slightly decreased, and I fear that a great falling off in the use of white pine, will be the result. The market here, is very largely stocked with last year's shipments of white pine from Montreal, nearly all of which remains in store. I may add that the difference between Canadian and Argentine gold is, roughly speaking, 3½ per cent., that is to say, the Argentine dollar is worth about 96⅔ cents Canadian."

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THE approach of the summer season creates in the breasts of lumbermen fear of losses by fire. Indeed, forest fires have already shown themselves in some quarters, more particularly for the moment in certain parts of Quebec. The situation suggests the necessity for the utmost precaution on the part of individual lumbermen themselves, who are so vitally interested, and the government. The view has been expressed by Mr. W. C. Edwards, the large Ottawa lumberman, that ten times more lumber has been destroyed by fire than has ever been cut by the lumberman's axe. When we remember what the cut of lumber in this country has amounted to, the thought is a terrible one to entertain. The direct financial loss is something enormous. Mr. Peter White, Speaker of the House of Commons, and one of the oldest lumbermen of the country, has observed that forest fires along the Upper Ottawa occur between May and August, and he has made the suggestion to prohibit the starting of fires for clearing or other purposes within those four months. Out of thirty years' experience he has come to the conclusion that most of the bush fires have been the work of fishermen and hunters, who not only destroy valuable timber, property of the public, but also the shanty and material of the lumbermen. These are reasons, good and sufficient, strong in the strongest sense of the term, for governments taking the most vigorous measures to prevent forest fires. The Ontario government is farther ahead in this respect than the governments of any other province in the Dominion, and a long way ahead of the United States. But what Ontario has accomplished by its system of fire rangers, simply furnishes argument for further strengthening that department of crown lands management. Other local governments, and the government at Ottawa, should not allow any time to be lost in placing regulations on the statutes that will work to this same preservative end. The destruction of the forests by fire works back on the lumber industry in many different ways. To take the case of Minnesota, of last year. The trouble has not ended with the direct losses sustained at that time. But when the standing timber is destroyed, in order that what remains burned may not be a total loss, it must be cut at once to save it from destruction by worms. This means, as it does with Minnesota, an abnormal cut of lumber, which is sure to effect the lumber situation in some of its branches.