

CANADIAN HARDWOODS.

Our trade in hardwoods, which a generation ago was confined, as far as Ontario is concerned, almost exclusively to walnut and oak, is undergoing of recent years a remarkable development. Uses have been found for woods whose adaptability and beauty were not known or recognized in former times. And a value is now placed upon a number of these which not long since were regarded as fit for nothing but fuel. Basswood for example, was considered, at the time when the Reciprocity Treaty with the States was in force, as fit only for cordwood—poor cordwood at that, black ash was almost equally despised, soft elm was neglected, and hickory, that strong, tough timber, so much used for carriage wheels, was regarded as desirable only for snow-jumpers, or for winter fires.

An unforeseen demand having arisen for many kinds of timber within the last few years, both abroad and at home, it may be well to notice the great variety of hardwoods Canada possesses, their habitat and uses. The classification adopted by a firm of Toronto dealers, prepared for the Ontario Government and communicated to the *Northwestern Lumberman*, may serve us. It is as follows:

Ash.	Elm.
Basswood.	Hickory.
Beech.	Maple.
Birch.	Oak.
Butternut.	Sycamore.
Cherry.	Walnut.
Chestnut.	Whitewood.

Of course, there are several varieties of a number of these woods. The various sorts of oak, elm and ash, for example, differ widely in their uses and values, as we shall see further on. The kinds of hardwood lumber most in request for home use or for export, we are told, are walnut, cherry, butternut, chestnut, white oak, whitewood, basswood, white ash, black ash, and soft elm. The supply of some of these is so limited, and the demand for them so steady, that they must become scarce and dear in a very few years, and, unless care be taken to replace they must become extinct, in which case the more common kinds, such as birch, maple, black ash, soft elm, will naturally be sought to take their places. A considerable share of the Canadian hardwoods now used for decorative purposes, goes to the United States. We send thither, principally from Ontario, butternut, cherry, white ash, and birdseye maple, to be used in car fittings, or house-interiors, sycamore for tobacco boxes; butternut for cigar cases. From New Brunswick we send birch timber to Great Britain, and in that country, as well as among our American neighbors, the birch appears to enjoy increasing favor. Oak, too, we continue to ship to Great Britain in the log and in staves.

If we consider each variety in its order, we shall see what woods are most nearly exhausted, and which ones are of the the greatest value to the country.

MAPLE.—The maple, as becomes the tree whose leaf is the natural emblem of Canada, is the most plentiful of all our forest trees. In Ontario it is especially abundant. The Muskoka country, the Midland district, the western peninsula, are all well supplied. It is used for furniture and in various other manufactures, common chairs especially, and the demand is growing all the time.

BIRCH.—This is a fine-grained, handsome wood, is growing extensively, and probably increasing in value. There are those who think that, as an ornamental wood, it will supplant walnut, cherry and butternut. It is found generally distributed over Ontario and the eastern provinces, and care should be taken to preserve it. There is a market in the United States to-day for quantities of black birch, which resembles cherry, and, when stained, resembles walnut, it takes as good a polish as cherry and can hardly be distinguished from that wood. There is plenty of it on the Atlantic and in the Mississippi territory.

ASH.—White ash, which is found chiefly in the western part of this province, is in active request from railway car-builders, wagon-makers, shops, and agricultural implement factories. It commands good prices, is sound timber, and is largely exported to the United States. The

supply is not abundant, and incense are being rapidly made upon it. Black ash is more generally distributed; it is used for house-fittings and for furniture. The demand is increasing, but can be met by the supply.

OAK.—Of this tree we have several varieties; the white, the red, the gray and blue. White oak is most sought after, and commands the highest prices. Most of our cut of this, from all the provinces east of the lakes, goes the log or in staves to Great Britain. Western Ontario has in past years furnished many a stately tree, and there still remains a good deal of this kind of wood. Red oak, as well as the kinds called gray and blue, are found in the north and west of Ontario. It is used generally and extensively, for agricultural implements and for railway carriages.

ELM.—Least plentiful of the many varieties of this wood is the genuine rock elm, which is in great request, from its strength and toughness, for carriage and wagon-making. It is mostly found in the neighborhood of Lake Erie or Lake Huron. Other kinds, such as the gray, blue and soft elms, are plentiful enough, and are made use of for furniture to a large degree. Soft elm is used extensively for making oak hoops for flour barrels and staves, and is exported largely to the United States and Great Britain.

BASSWOOD.—This wood is common in most parts of Ontario and Quebec. Once rejected for all purposes but fuel, it is now in request for carriage and street-car makers, and for furniture and interior fitting of dwellings, &c. It is a fine-grained and delicate-colored wood, and finds a ready market in the States, as well as here. From the absence of resin, basswood is preferable to pine for paneling, &c. It can be used for mouldings in interior wood-work. Large trees of it have become scarce, and the small timber is now being used.

HICKORY.—The westernmost counties of Ontario were at one time very nicely supplied with the hickory tree, whose nuts are so toothsome, and whose wood gives such intense heat in the old-fashioned wood stove, to say nothing of the uses of its bark to the Indian or the hunter for torches, by which to spear fish at night. Hubs, spokes, shafts, single-trees, and other portions of a wagon or carriage are now made from it, and agricultural implement makers understand well its properties of strength and toughness. It is now comparatively scarce, quantities of its product having been shipped to Britain from St. Thomas, Amherstburg, St. Catharines, and other points at which there are bending factories.

WALNUT.—The warm color and rich surface of black walnut when finished, have long made it a favorite wood, at first for furniture, but now for the interior structure of public buildings and private dwellings. In the wood-work of organs, sewing machines, and the like, it is regarded as indispensable, and the result of the demand is that but little walnut is left in Canada. It is now a more costly wood than ever, large trees of it being especially valuable. We have to import it from the Northwestern States, and even there, such is the demand, it is growing scarce.

WHITWOOD.—The western peninsula of Ontario once boasted a good deal of this rather attractive wood, which has been much demanded for furniture making and paneling of cars, &c. It brings good prices, and is no longer plentiful.

BUTTERNUT.—For pulpit and altar decoration, for bed room furniture and dining-room wainscoting, for cigar cases and sundry other purposes, butternut has come to be regarded as very desirable, indeed the limited supply of it, existing mainly in the north and west of this province, must soon be exhausted.

SYCAMORE.—This wood is growing scarce and dear. It is principally used for tobacco boxes, for which purpose quantities have for years been shipped from Essex and other counties to American sea ports, and even as far as Virginia. Kentucky parties have, we understand, placed saw mills at Essex Centre for cutting sycamore.

CHERRY.—A favorite and handsome wood, susceptible of a high finish, and making very rich furniture, or interior fittings for offices, &c. Ontario has but a limited supply remaining,

and for this there are plenty of customers. Cherry has always been deemed a choice wood, and to-day has more admirers than ever. In two or three years, Canadian cherry must, at the present rate of consumption, become extinct, and then birch will come into vogue.

CHERRY.—In the fitting of hotels or offices, and in some interior fitting of churches, this wood is used, but only sparingly, because the tree is a large grained one. It will have to be resorted to as the butternut, which it resembles, becomes exhausted.

BEECH.—Not many uses have been found for beech, which remains one of our cheap and common hardwoods, to be had nearly everywhere. Tool-makers have use for it to make planes and tool-handles.

BALM.—A species of whitewood. It is used in place of basswood and real whitewood. It is called by some of the Americans cottonwood, but deemed superior to the wood growing along the Mississippi and State of Ohio. It also takes the place of inferior quality of pine. The counties of Kent and Essex produce it largely. It is used for stave and heading bolts, and a large quantity is sawed into lumber and shipped to the United States, where it is used in wagon shops, agricultural works and so forth. There is still a large quantity remaining, but it is being used up fast, as the demand for it is great, and good prices are obtained.—*Monday Times.*

PROTECTION OF THE FORESTS FROM FIRE.

The following letter appears in the *Toronto Mail*.—

SIR,—From time to time articles and letters have appeared in the *Mail* and other papers lamenting the destruction of our forests by fire, and advocating measures for its prevention.

The Legislature now in session should pass some measure whereby the provisions of the Hon. J. B. Fardoe's Fire Act could be practically enforced. As it now is, as far as preventing fires the Act is a dead letter. Its 14th clause provides that it shall be the special duty of every Crown land agent and bushranger to enforce this Act, and to prosecute every person guilty of a breach of its provisions and requirements; but as these men have no instructions or authority from their department to that effect, they can do nothing. And as bushrangers taking up and prosecuting parties guilty of breaches of the Fire Act, it is simply absurd, as they would do it at the risk of having more of their limits purposely burned another year.

It would appear that some of the greatest fires have occurred since the passing of the Act, and this may be due to the fact that no person is afraid of being prosecuted under its provisions.

Most people are under the impression that it is only the license-holder who suffers from fires set out in the limits. They forget that every timber forest destroyed by fire represents so much revenue lost to the province, let alone the actual loss to the license-holder.

There is another great loss to be considered, and that is the loss to the country of the money which would be paid out in manufacturing and bringing this timber to market had it remained green.

During the summer of 1881 fires overran large parts of the Parry Sound and Muskoka districts and the country lying between the Georgian Bay and the Ottawa river, and according to an estimate made in the *week* of November 10th, destroyed \$10,000,000 worth of pine in Ontario. This does not nearly cover all the fires, as there were many fires on licensed lands of which the public know nothing, the holders of the limits burned keeping the knowledge of it to themselves, not wishing the value of their properties to be depreciated.

If these annual fires continue, in a few years they will make a large hole in the revenue of Ontario.

There was three-quarters of a million dollars in bonus alone obtained from the last sale of timber berths, and the duty on the timber growing on them will represent to Ontario, if not burnt, upwards of five million dollars, and perhaps more. As these berths are now being operated on, or likely to be within a few years, and owned by so many different parties, the

risk of fires is much increased. Before the sale, these berths were in their virgin state and not much exposed to fires, being held by the Government; but now that operations have commenced on them, they will stand a poor chance.

There should be a distinction made by the Crown Land Department between pine lands and hardwood lands fit for settlement. It is well known that in the back districts of Ontario and the Ottawa Valley the pine lands are generally not fit for settlement, and that where settlement has been made on them the settlers, instead of prospering, yearly grow poorer and poorer, till in many places they were actually driven from their holdings by starvation as witness the Opeongo road, the Bouchere and Mississippi counties, which are now nearly deserted, nothing but dry pines to be seen as far as the eye can reach, while on the other hand, those who settled on the hardwood lands have done well and made themselves comfortable.

Now that the country is mostly all surveyed, and the quality of the lands known to the Government, through the reports of its surveyors and bushrangers, it surely would be easy to make a distinction between lands for settlement and those for lumbering. A large portion of Opeongo and Bouchere country was not surveyed until after its settlement, and the Government had not therefore the knowledge they now have about their unoccupied lands.

It surely would not be too much to expect that the source of such a large revenue to this province as its timber forests should be better guarded against loss than it now is.

If the present staff of woodrangers was increased, and kept in the woods during the months of May, June, July, and August, to watch the Crown domain against fires, with authority to enforce the provisions of the Hon. Mr. Fardoe's Fire Act, they would prevent many bush-fires being set out. They should also be empowered to call on farmers, riders, drivers, surveyors, and others who may have set out fires, to turn out and assist in killing them and preventing their spread. If one-fifth of the revenue which would have been derived from the timber destroyed by fire in 1881 alone had been expended in watching the Crown domain, it would have paid the salary of a large staff of men for several years, and it is more than probable that not much damage from fires would have occurred.

If persons holding and working limits, and their agents and foremen, were all held responsible for the damage done by the fires set out by them or their men, and also the heads of surveying or hunting and fishing parties, they would be more careful than they now are.

Practical bushmen say that it is not so hard as some would suppose to trace the makers of fires in the woods as it is to trace incendiaries in cities, and that almost all fires can be traced to their starting points, and generally the parties who set them out.

Yours, &c.
LUMBERMAN.

Jan. 4, 1883.

A QUESTION OF PROTECTION.

The discussion of tariff revision in the United States has brought up the question of the conservation and protection of the forests. Under the existing tariff a protective duty of one dollar per thousand feet is imposed on hemlock, basswood, whitewood and sycamore lumber imported into the United States, and of two dollars per one thousand feet on all other kinds of lumber. The report of the Tariff Commission recommends a reduction to seventy-five cents in the former rate, but, inasmuch as the woods to which this reduction would apply, viz. hemlock, basswood, whitewood and sycamore, are either found in large quantity only in the United States, or are little employed in the manufacture of lumber, the reduction proposed will cause no substantial diminution of protection to the lumber interest. What the frostraders desire is the abolition of the duty on all other woods, and more especially of that upon pine and spruce lumber, which are largely imported from Canada. The ground upon which this abolition is urged, if well taken, makes it questionable whether the effect of the removal of the duty will be altogether advantageous to Canada. It is that, with the duty removed, American manufacturers will purchase a much larger por-