

CORRESPONDENCE

METHOD IN THE SHOP.

BRANTFORD, ONT., Nov. 12th, 1901

Editor CANADA LUMBERMAN.

Dear Sir,—In your last issue there appeared an article "Method in the Shop," by H. T. G. We feel that we cannot let the opportunity pass without endorsing the writer's remarks; indeed, it would almost appear that he had stolen the idea from us, as he describes our system exactly, even to the color and size of slip used by us.

This system enables us to tell in a moment's time by whom the material was ordered, to whom delivered, when and where, and name of teamster. When necessary to issue a shop slip or lumber yard slip in connection with the order, each order bears a corresponding number, and are all, with the shipper's slip, attached together and filed away consecutively.

We heartily recommend the system described by H. T. G. to any person who desires a safety valve on his business.

Yours very truly,

SCHULTZ BROS. COMPANY, LIMITED.

THE BOX SHOOK TRADE.

CORK, IRELAND, Nov. 12th, 1901.

Editor CANADA LUMBERMAN.

Dear Sir,—Now that the box shook trade is about closing for the season, I would like to bring before shippers some facts which I have already laid before a member of the Canadian Government.

Firstly I would call the attention of shippers to the want of a central agent or expert where all enquiries could be made. For example, A wants a cargo of box shoos, and calls on B, who are agents in London or Liverpool for a leading shipper. B can only say he would write out and see what his house can supply, and A has to wait perhaps a month for a reply, and then if B cannot supply the stock, he (A) has to go and repeat this over again with one or more agents. Norway and Sweden score here, as the cheap telegraphic rates enable the agent to wire out and back instead of writing.

Secondly, Canadian shippers could get a great number of orders if an expert or agent were appointed who would look after this branch of the Colonies industries, and if the right man was appointed, I feel confident a large and profitable addition could be made to the timber box shook trade of the Colony.

Thirdly, the mills would want a little organization, and I should say if the Government would not provide for such an expert the shippers could easily subscribe a small sum each yearly to pay for looking after their interests.

And lastly, there are a great number of details to be discussed at the beginning and end of each season which would enable all parties, the shipper, the agent and the expert, to more effectually grasp the trade in this very important industry. In conclusion I would say that I believe there would be everything to gain and very little to lose in such an appointment, and there need be no clashing with existing agents, but a very valuable help to them in securing orders which are now going elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,

"A SMALL IMPORTER."

TRANSPORT OF TIMBER IN ENGLAND.

A paper was read before the Botanical Section of the British Association by Mr. Samuel Margerison, on "The Transport of British Timber." He said that in England it cost about 5d. to grow a cubic foot of fir timber. On the average it cost about another 5d. or 6d. to get it into the market, and it sold for 8d. to 9d. per cubic foot. The chief reason, Mr. Margerison said, why it sold for less than cost price was that foreign fir was sold at the figure specified, and the growers and importers could make it pay. He had selected fir as an extreme case

in order to emphasize the fact that the handling charges on home-grown timber were much higher than those on imported timber of the same species. We could grow Scots fir and spruce practically as cheaply as the continental forester, but we could not afford to sell it at the same price and at the same time compete on equal terms with him, because it cost us more to transport it from the plantation to the consumer, sometimes even when both were in the same county; and until we could do it as cheaply the splendid efforts of our scientific botanists to produce good and cheap timber were greatly spoiled by the hard facts of £ s d. This, it might be said, was an old story about all native produce. Yet, because of its bulky nature it was more ruinous in relation to native timber than, say, to home-grown corn, because of its greater handling charges in proportion to its value. A ton of wheat was sold for, say, 6l. 15s. Of this 5 per cent. (6s. or 7s.) would be paid for cartage and railway carriage. But a ton of spruce sold for 33s. would cost 21s. (or 60 per cent.) for cartage and carriage. A ton of spruce grown in a Baltic country cost in transport from the forest there to the consumer here about 40 per cent. of its selling value, and a ton of spruce grown in Canada very little more. Of course the discrepancy and extra cost did not seem so great proportionately on the value of the higher priced timbers. But these took longer to grow, and except in favourable surroundings the final results were about the same. There was little commercial encouragement to produce timber if there was no reward but that which virtue was said to bring. Preferential railway rates in this country were costing timber growers nearly as much as the rental value of the land on which the timber was growing. Why was there this great check upon the efforts to make forestry pay? One reason was that foreign timber imports were handled generally in large quantities, so that detail work was done more cheaply. But it was not only in railway charges that our expenses were higher. The overland carriage cost us more. We had not the advantage of water shoots and great rivers, or sufficient snows and frosts to make water or ice a generally available means of transport. Could these overland forest to railway handling charges be reduced? He had made some inquiry about tramway and other mechanical appliances, but did not see any advantage to be gained from them under the conditions ruling in this country. The chief drawback to their use was that our small and scattered plantations would not pay for the profitable employment of costly plant and machinery for transport. A tramway, cheap as it was in working, was costly in instalment, and although it would effect considerable reduction in the cost of transporting a large lot of timber grown in a suitable environment, and could be used again under similar circumstances, would in a large number of cases, be much dearer than the present system of removal by horse waggons. Besides, public roads would have to be used and crossed, and county councils would not be ready to allow this. Under favourable circumstances, again, traction engines would effect considerable economy in haulage. A load of

12 or 15 tons might, on some roads, be drawn for less than one of three or four tons drawn by horses. But good roads did not often penetrate into the woods, and there were weak bridges and sharp corners to contend with, which could not be negotiable with long, heavy loads, as would be required to use the full available power. The pole-waggon at present in use, drawn by horses, was the best appliance at present in existence for collecting timber from our comparatively small timber areas in the first instance. But if we could have the conversion of the timber at centres close to large areas of timber, we could considerably cheapen the cost of transport, both by the use of traction engines and tramway for the local haul, and traction engines for "through" traffic over reasonable distances. It was easy to come to the conclusion of the iniquities of railway companies in charging more for carrying native produce than foreign, and there was considerable reason for the complaint, especially under the present chaotic system of measurement and the insisted-on wharfage charges. But the question was not a one-sided matter. There was no gainsaying the fact that native timber on the whole, cost somewhat more to transport than foreign. It was often in clumsy, dangerous forms, crooked and knotty, whilst imported timber was generally wholly or partly converted into tidy, straight pieces, making more compact and firmer loads. And being dealt with at once in larger quantities at one place, much of the work was centralized and specialized, with the result that there was a large saving in detail. Railway managers were practical business men who could not afford to do work on philanthropic principles, and they saw this difference in the nature of the two classes of merchandise. But, at the same time, we had no practical indication that, if any effort was made by the home producers and merchants to centralize their work, make their loads more compact, and arrange for regular and large consignments, the railway companies would make their charges equal those for imported timber. Straight, crooked, large lots and small, compact loads, all were charged at the same rate. The question was a large one, and of importance was not sufficiently realized by those who were not affected by it, namely, growers of timber. Whilst persevering in the efforts which had been made of late years to improve our forestry, it behoved growers to pay special attention in future to the relation of transport to concentration of production, the production of timbers of the higher values, compactness of loads, and regularity of supply of consignments.

IMPORTS OF JAMAICA LUMBER.

Mr. G. Eustace Burke, commercial agent, Kingston, Jamaica, in a report to the Department of Trade and Commerce, says regarding lumber. The figures which represent the importation of white pine, I think I am safe in saying, are hardly a quarter of the actual importation, the bulk of which arrives via United States ports at an enhanced value which prejudices consumption. If a tariff was touched at St. John, N.B., I think this would improve the situation.