

THE LUMBER TRADE.

THE BUSINESS OUTLOOK.

The outlook for the city trade looks somewhat brighter this week. We announced a few weeks ago that a new list had been prepared by the Winnipeg trade, and that it was expected the foolish cutting of prices which ruined the trade last year would not be repeated this season. This view, however, proved disappointing and soon cutting was resumed again. Several meetings of the dealers have been held lately, and it is believed the list will hereafter be kept. The city contract, which was one of the stumbling blocks, is now out of the way. There is every prospect for a good season's trade this year for the city dealers, and it would be the height of folly to throw away profits the way this was done last year. The margin of profit on lumber is a very moderate one at best, and it is sheer folly to do business in the reckless fashion that was followed last year. In fact it is not business at all, and the wonder is that intelligent business men will indulge in such recklessness.

The wholesale trade is a little quiet yet. The long continued wet weather and bad roads last fall cut off the sales of lumber in the country very materially and left country retailers with more lumber on hand to carry over winter than they had figured on. The prospect, however, is for a good season's trade, and we believe all the lumber to be cut this season will be wanted. At the time of writing the ice was not clear at the Lake of the Woods, but as soon as it is, the mills will get to work. The cut of the Lake of the Woods mills will be about 60,000,000 feet.

MORE RESIDENCES WANTED.

A large number of new business blocks have been projected for Winnipeg this season, and it was thought that building activity this year would be mostly in the direction of erecting business premises. From present appearances, however, it would appear that there is a scarcity of suitable residences in Winnipeg, and we may expect considerable activity in this class of building as well. The most certain sign of a scarcity of residences is the sharp advance which has taken place in rents this spring. Many houses renting from \$20 to \$25 per month have been advanced about \$5 per month, and in some cases even more. The class of residences wanted are houses with modern conveniences which will rent at a moderate price.

HARDWOODS.

There is no immediate prospect for relief from the famine of dry stock, although reports received from the south this week are more encouraging than they have been for several months. Dealers who have returned recently from the Memphis district state that conditions are improving rapidly at the mills, and that if the present weather continues for two or three weeks there will be no trouble in getting in logs. Many of the mills are now in steady operation, but the stock that is being cut is all under contract and much of it is being shipped green from the saws. With improved weather conditions there is prospect of getting out some stock that has been on sticks for a year or more but which could not be moved

on account of inability to get it to the railroads. When this stock is finally released it may result in relieving the tension of demand for a time, but the amount of such stock is very inconsiderable in comparison to the consumptive requirements. Under favorable conditions very little of the new cut of oak from the southern mills will be available until after mid-summer, and the users of oak are already put to their wits' ends to supply present requirements. The same is true of ash, and to a degree of all the southern hardwoods.

In the northern territory the mills are running practically without interruption and stock is going rapidly into pile, though as usual the softer woods are being cut first. It is said that very little of the northern oak is likely to come on the market before August or September, and therefore no one is anticipating lower prices within two months. A large percentage of the northern stock is held in strong hands and prices at the mill have ranged considerably higher than they did a year ago. Such mill men as have not already disposed of their cuts are holding them at prices that the wholesalers regard as practically prohibitive and transactions are therefore about at a standstill for the time being. Some basswood is being shipped from northern points, but it will be a month or two yet before any great amount of this season's cut shall be in shipping condition.—American Lumberman.

LUMBER TRADE NOTES.

The Standard Oil company will use oak barrels in future in the distribution of coal oil throughout Canada discarding the elm barrels now in use.

F. A. Maguire, of Elgin, Man., has sold out his stock of lumber to T. H. Patrick, of Souris, who will continue both yards. Maguire will continue in charge of the Elgin branch.

Hemlock lumber has advanced 50 cents per thousand at New York and is now on a \$12.50 basis. Other eastern markets for this lumber have also advanced.

North Carolina pine has advanced two dollars per thousand in price within the past three months, and even at the advance is said to be the cheapest lumber in the market.

A very large amount of low grade lumber is being consumed in the manufacture of boxes. This has always been a profitable outlet for accumulations of this class of lumber.

A Barrie, Ontario firm is advertising semi-ready houses for sale for shipment to the Northwest. The houses are small and lightly constructed, being made so that they can be knocked down for shipping purposes.

On April 15 the prices of yellow pine were advanced in the western states to within less than the accepted margin between yellow and white pine. This advance is due to the very heavy demand and inadequate supply.

United States mills are away behind with their orders for dry poplar lumber and prices have an advancing tendency. Quotations for box cuts of this wood are \$4 to \$5 higher per thousand than they were a year ago.

Hardwood floors, uncarpeted and now regarded as highly desirable for dwelling houses from a sanitary point of view. It is charged that carpets are great germ breeders and assist very often in the transmission of disease.

Purchasing of white pine around the great lakes has been so heavy during the past winter that it is said the city stocks on hand have been cleaned up and all the way from 25 to 75 per cent of the prospective output for this year sold.

A prominent southern furniture manufacturer recently made this announcement. Owing to an advance of 10 per cent to 25 per cent in the cost of all raw material and labor entering into the construction of our goods, we are obliged to withdraw all quotations made you on office desks. That is the general tendency of the times.

Cypress is a line of lumber which is gaining favor in the south. It is said that many of the retail yards are putting in lines of cypress siding and finishing and are well pleased with the result. Cypress shingles are also coming into favor. It is said that grade for grade prices for cypress are lower than the prices for white pine.

At the meeting of the Winnipeg city council on Monday last, the following item was accepted: "That the tender of the Rat Portage Lumber Co. for supply of lumber at the prices stated in schedule attached to tender be accepted." The lumber required by the city is mostly plank, and the tender price is understood to be about \$17 per thousand, compared with \$14.75 last year. Of course lumber is higher everywhere this year and the city could not expect to make as good a bargain as last year.

At a meeting of manufacturers held last week in Chicago, an advance in the prices for red cedar shingles was decided upon. The market is said to be in a very strong position. The general demand for shingles south is said to be improving, and advances amounting to 10 to 20 per cent have been made at the mills. White pine stocks on hand at the beginning of 1899 were lighter than at any corresponding time for many years previous. In fact, it is likely that never since production in the northwestern states passed the 5,000,000,000 mark have stocks at the beginning of the year been so low. The output of the year will be larger than for two or three years past, though not materially so.—American Lumberman.

The total number of failures in Canada during the week ending April 20 was 22 as compared with 23 in 1898. Manitoba contributed one to the total.

H. J. Boswell, of Boswell & Adams, Sydney, Australia, was in Winnipeg a few days ago. This firm represents several Canadian manufacturing concerns in Australia and accordingly are fitted to speak of the position and prospects of Canadian trade. Seen by a city daily reporter, Mr. Boswell said: "My firm represents only Canadian manufacturers, and during the past four years we have been in the business I find that there is a rapidly increasing demand for goods made in Canada. They are a thoroughly loyal people, deeply imbued with the imperial spirit of the day, and give the preference wherever possible to Canadian firms. There is especially an active demand for Canadian knitted goods, boots and shoes, clothing, Mackintoshes, braces, cottons, hams and bacon. In braces we control the market of Australia and in other lines the advance is very marked. Most of the goods is taken by the western route over the C. P. R., which has given the most favorable rates possible."