

PILING LUMBER AT THE MILLS.

It is now some four or five years since the *Lumberman* first called the attention of the mill men cutting lumber for this market to the advantage of piling and drying their lumber at the point of production, over the plan then almost exclusively in vogue of shipping it to this city green and seasoning it in the yards. In that time, the methods of making and handling lumber have undergone marked changes: the facilities for sawing have improved, and the average annual output of the mills in what is known as the Chicago district has very largely increased. The process of lumber making is in hardly any respect exactly what it was in 1877, and, similarly, we find that in handling the mill product, improvements have been introduced that have materially lessened the expense and added to the profits of manufacturers. A good many mill men have followed the advice of this paper, and have made a practical test of the plan of piling at the mills, and shipping lumber to Chicago dry. The fact that none of them have found the scheme impracticable or have abandoned it after a fair trial, is pretty reliable evidence that it had in it, in the first place, nothing that was wild or visionary. Some figures printed in connection with our Annual Review of the production in this district last year give a pretty good notion of the increase in mill piling in the last four years. Comparisons of the amount carried over at the close of 1880 and 1877, with the amount sawed by the mills in those years, prove that while the increase in the cut for last year over the earlier one was less than 60 per cent., the gain in the quantity wintered over was fully 115 per cent., or nearly double. These figures demonstrate conclusively that the operators who have tried the plan of piling at the mills have found it profitable, and have continued to follow it.

The *Lumberman's* attention has been directed to this matter by the fact that several of the largest manufacturers who own yards in Chicago have lately been maturing plans to pile a considerable part of their cut at the mills, instead of occupying so much yard room here. The advance in dock rents is so great that it is becoming an important matter for the lumbermen to take up as little space in this city as they can, and, as a means of escaping a portion of this tax on their stock, a number of them are preparing to pile and dry at the mills. We are informed that several of the Menominee river operators are already making preparations to pile a large part of this season's product on the mill docks, with the intention of holding a good deal of it over for shipment early in the spring, when dry lumber is wanted and is generally scarce. They expect in this way to escape the necessity of enlarging their facilities here, which, with dock rents at \$9.50 per foot, is an important consideration. The example of these operators is likely to be followed by others who have the accommodations at their mills for piling, and probably the close of the present season will find on the mill docks the largest stock that has ever been carried over.

It would seem that the advantages of cross-piling at the place of sawing hardly needs consideration at this time. They are pretty generally understood and admitted by saw mill men. For manufacturers who do not own yards at this point, the plan seems especially desirable. By adopting it they will escape many of the annoyances and losses that arise from the shipment of the lumber just as it comes from the saw, and its sale on commission here, by reason of which allowances have often to be made to the buyer which might have been avoided if the manufacturer could have sold his lumber in pile where the purchaser could see exactly what he was buying. A man can always sell his own lumber, moreover, to better advantage than some one else can sell it for him, which is another good reason why producers should, as far as possible, endeavor to hold their lumber at the mills and dispose of it themselves.

It is true, unquestionably, that the new plan, if it may so be called now, requires a larger and longer investment of money than the old one of turning the lumber into cash as soon after it leaves the saw as possible. In order to pile his cut, a mill man must be content to expend something in the way of interest, insurance,

and, possibly, taxes; but the returns are sufficient to make this a paying investment. There is a nominal difference of fully \$1 in the value of green and dry stock, and, actually, the difference is much more, for the fact that lumber is dry implies that it can be handled and freighted at a much less cost than if it were full of sap and water. There is something saved at nearly every point in its progress from the mill to the buyer's yard, and all this economy contributes to the profit of the man who dries it. Besides, if there were any doubt remaining as to the profit to be derived from seasoning lumber, it could not stand against the fact that lumber is bought and seasoned in Chicago where rents are high, taxes excessive, and labor much more costly in proportion than it is at producing points, and the process made to pay those who undertake it fairly, if not handsomely.

There is one other fact that should not be lost sight of in this connection; namely, that the manufacturer who piles his lumber occupies a comparatively independent position toward those who buy. He does not stand in mortal fear of a break in prices, or run the chance of sending a heavy consignment to the cargo market at the wrong time, and having to stand the consequent loss, because of the impossibility of doing anything with his lumber but selling it after he gets it there. If the market happens to weaken temporarily he need not suffer by it, unless he chooses to do so. He has his stock where it will keep, and he is prepared with the facilities for holding it; so that if prices are down to-day and there is reason to think they will improve shortly he can withhold his stock from sale long enough to cover the interval of weakness.

We shall be much disappointed if, as we said once before, there is not a considerable increase in the amount of piling at the mills this season, over what has been done in this way heretofore. Our reasons for so thinking are, first, that the plan is a thoroughly practicable and profitable one in itself, and one that is looked upon with favor by the shrewdest of our mill men, and, secondly, that the mill owners and operators are generally in better shape to take advantage of it than they ever were before. There is no doubt about the fact that they made money last year, and that they enter upon the present season with greater financial resources than they have ever had. They are therefore prepared, with few exceptions, to conduct their business just as they want to, and with a view to getting out of it all that it holds for them, and it is not to be assumed that they will overlook so important a source of profit as this. We do not hope to see all manufacturers cross-pile their lumber; we know very well that many of them cannot do it, because of inadequate dock facilities, or because of other obstacles in the way; but we are equally well aware of the fact that there are many others who do not labor under such disadvantages, and of such we look for a considerable proportion to try the plan of piling and drying their lumber at the mill.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

Spruce Deals.

There is no doubt but spruce deals are on the decline in the London market. The cargo of the *St. Julien*, from St. John, N.P. (which usually stands next in favor to Quebec), was sold a few weeks since at a decided fall in value. A cargo from the same port sold last year—about the latter part of March—fetched at the Baltic rooms on an average about £7 10s., now the highest price for the best lengths and sizes unsortea was £6 15s., and the average was in fact not more than £6 7s. 6d. all through. A couple of lots, about 3,000 pieces, 3x21 in., were knocked down at £6 5s., good lengths, varying from 18 to 25 feet. The freight charges would not be much short of £4 per standard, and if we deduct this and other expenses attached to these goods, we shall find very little left to go towards the first cost at St. John. Last fall spruce was in great request at the shipping ports, and for the best sorts at one time as much as £8 was paid. Shippers this season will think twice before consigning there again.

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TREE CULTURE.

Important as is tree culture with us, the subject is an insignificant one in the older Provinces compared with the position it assumes in the daily life in the North-West. Our prairies are not so bare of trees as are those farther south, and therefore the question has not the life-and-death importance it has in parts of Minnesota and Dakota. Yet if our pioneers are wise they will, after their first needs are satisfied, plant the seeds of trees in shelter belts over a space equal to several acres. The railroad company may properly be called upon to introduce to our territory the liberal policy in vogue in the North-Western States. A good rebate should be given on the price of all land that is put under trees, and young trees should be carried free of charge. To give an idea of the indispensableness of trees, we quote a few sentences from a letter by Mr. S. M. Emory, who, the *St. Paul Tribune* says, knows as much of the subject of North Western tree culture as any man living. Mr. Emory says:—

"One-third of the money expended by the railroads in this State during the past ninety days in shovelling snow, saying nothing of loss of life, destruction of property, and the general loss in the shrinkage of revenue in freights, would plant sufficient wind-breaks on every rod of prairie storm-infested railroad in the State. Suppose the six lines of railroad crossing the State from east to west were protected by vigorous, strong-growing shelter-belts of cottonwood, white willow, or larch, and that these were supplemented by planting shelter-belts along all highways, and that the hundreds of timber-claims were covered with a vigorous growth of young timber, as required by law, could we fail in controlling the effects of these terrible blizzards? The intensity of the winds would certainly be modified, and a corresponding degree of comfort and safety be the result. This is not a matter of idle speculation, but it is susceptible of tangible, ample proof. In many places the shelter-belts along the line of the Manitoba Railroad are packed full to the top most twigs, rendering great assistance in protecting the road-bed from the immense drifts, in spite of the fact that these belts have not had anything like reasonable care for several years."

Mr. Emory suggests that railroads which are subject to snow blockades should put a rod of land on each side of their line in trees.—*Globe.*

Which Way to Run the Splice of a Belt.

A new England journal is allowing the discussion of whether there is a wrong way to run a belt with regard to "splices." The general answer to this question is: Put the belt on so that the pulley in slipping on the face of the belt shall run with and not against the splices. But if the belt slips on both pulleys, of a belted pair, then there can be no difference which way the splices of the belt lie, for the motion of one pulley will be against and the motion of the other will be with the splices, which is the true state of the case, but which does not often happen; there will mostly be conditions favoring slippage on the one or other of the pulleys, when it is known which one it is, then put the belt on to suit this condition. In the cases where there is no slipping, if the driving pulley acts favorably on the splices, then the driven pulley is sure to be against them, and so it may be said there is really nothing in the advice directing the way a belt should be run, except for the cases of known slippage. So says Mr. John H. Cooper, who is certainly competent authority, in a recent communication.

Appreciated.

COTE ST. ANTOINE,

Montreal, May 4th, 1881.

MESSRS. TOKER & Co., Publishers of THE CANADA LUMBERMAN, Peterborough, Ont.

GENTLEMEN,—You, or some friend, has been forwarding me your periodical I think from its first issue, and you will please receive enclosed \$2 to pay for it for the year, since I first received it, the date of which you will no doubt be able to ascertain. I like the paper very much. It is in my opinion the best published on the subject in America, and is far away ahead of the *Timber Trades Journal* of London, England.

Yours,

JAMES LITTLE.

PILING OR SHARPENING THE TEETH OF SAWS.

The greatest wear of a saw is on the under sides of the teeth. File nearly to an edge (but not quite), leaving a short bevel of, say 1/32 of an inch wide on the under side of the point. But in no instance file to a fine point and thin wire edge.

First.—Be sure that the saw hangs properly on the mandrel.

Second.—The saw must be in proper line with the carriage, and the carriage run true.

Third.—The mandrel must be level and run tight in the boxes.

Fourth.—Round off the saw so that all teeth will cut the same amount, and be sure that the very points of the teeth are widest.

Fifth.—Do nearly all the filing on the upper sides of the teeth and see that they are well spread at the points; file square and have them project alike on both sides of the saw.

Sixth.—If the saw heats in the centre when the mandrel runs cool in the boxes, cool it off and line it into the log a little.

Seventh.—If the saw heats on the rim and not in the centre, cool it off and line it out of the log a little.

Eighth.—Do not try the experiment of bending each alternate tooth for the set, when using inserted-toothed saws.

Ninth.—File the teeth hooking, so that the swags will spread them at the points.

Tenth.—Use a light hammer in sawing, say three-quarters to one pound weight.

In filing solid toothed circular saws, let the throats or roots of the teeth round, or as the saws are when new. Angles, or square corners, filed at the roots of the teeth, will almost invariably cause a saw to crack; the filing of such angles or square corners will cancel the warrant on any saw. The back or top of the tooth leads or guides the saw, and should be filed square across. The under side of the teeth may be filed a little beveled on the teeth of saws that are bent alternately for the set so as to leave the outer corners of the cutting edge longest. These directions, if carefully followed, will not only put the saw in excellent condition for cutting, but will, to a great extent, serve to keep it true in circumference, and even in balance. They have been prepared by J. E. Emerson, of Emerson, Smith & Co., who is, as our readers know, a practical saw maker.

LABOUR ON THE OTTAWA.

The *Ottawa Daily Citizen* in a review of the prospects of lumbering in that valley says:—The labor question in all of the lumberman's operations, is one of the greatest importance, and there seems no chance of a clash between labor and capital this season. Among the employers there seems a general idea that a slight advance in wages will take place, but no one of them seem to apprehend the slightest difficulty in obtaining all the hands they may require for any kind of work, and among the men so far, even those who are over sanguine as to what the season may produce, there seems no inclination to force the price of their toil above its fair market value. The Upper Ottawa Improvement Company, which owing to the fact that work is steady on it the whole season through, can get men cheaper than most private firms for the drive; are paying \$3,000 per month more than they did last season. In the mills, however, it is not probable that much over a dollar a day will be paid for day hands, and the usual rates will be observed in regard to night hands. Men on the drives, especially the short drives, are now commanding high wages, in some cases \$30 per month and found being paid, and in a very few exceptional cases first-class men on difficult work have secured a higher figure.

Fire Proof Buildings.

There if practically no such thing as a fire proof building. Brick comes nearer to being a fire proof material than any other substance. Iron is treacherous and almost worthless in many places where it is commonly used. A good oak pillar is far better as a support in case of fire than iron. None of the building stone generally in use of any value in case of severe fire, and granite is the worst, or least reliable of all.