



OF those entitled to rank among the large lumbermen of Ontario are the Muskoka Mill and Lumber Co., composed, as most people know, of Mr. A. H. Campbell and his two sons, owning large timber interests in the northern sections of the province and with the head office at Toronto. It may be taken as significant of the outcome of lumbering in Ontario at not a very distant day, that this firm have within the past few years disposed of considerable of their limits in this province, and become investors in spruce lands in New Brunswick. There is not necessarily any connection between their transaction in Ontario and New Brunswick, but they have shown that they are able to take a long look ahead in putting some of their money into spruce lands in the Lower Provinces. I was conversing the other day with Mr. Campbell, and learned, as with others who have studied the matter, that he sees a profitable investment in spruce. His idea is to acquire, perhaps, 500 or 600 miles of spruce lands, and at some distant day operate these. It is believed that spruce can be cut over every ten or fifteen years, and with limits of the size named by Mr. Campbell it will be readily seen that these would practically never be denuded, and a continuous revenue of a very profitable character would be derived from them. I am not going to anticipate anything that may be said in the editorial columns on the question of pulp wood, but it is well known by lumbermen that this industry is assuming large proportions in Canada, and bids fair to over shadow what has heretofore been considered the legitimate business of lumbering. Mr. Campbell paid a visit to the Maritime Provinces about two years ago, and I was enquiring as to his impressions of the lumbering industry there. Viewed from the standpoint of an Ontario lumberman, he could not but think that lumbermen there were much behind in their methods. The equipment of their mills is, with few exceptions, of the most primitive character. "I pointed out," said Mr. Campbell, "to one of the largest lumbermen in New Brunswick the loss that he must be yearly sustaining by his method of sawing lumber, giving rise to so great waste. The reply was of the most easy-going nature. Money was being made at the mills and our friend did not see any occasion to change. And so it is in every department of business. They are splendid people down there, but conservative, and lacking the go-ahead-iveness that we are inclined to think belongs to the people of the west."

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It is at this season of the year that some of the greatest risks are taken on by those engaged in the activities of lumbering. Dangers and privations, though much less to-day than years ago, have to be endured by the shantymen who spend their winters in the woods. Life there, however, is tame compared with what it is when the drives commence. Rafting is one of the exciting experiences of lumbering. How old raftsmen can dilate on the adventures of the river drives, as they have made their way through these waters in all sorts of ways and under, at times, most exciting conditions. One moment sailing along placidly and again plunging through a dam and over an apron into the pool beneath. Then again logs are stranded, a jam is formed, and the energy and ingenuity of the drivers are fully taxed. "It depends a good deal," said Mr. Gordon, of McArthur Bros., who was giving the writer some of his experiences a few days ago, "where the rafts are making for. I can remember rafting twenty-five or thirty years ago. It was something different then to what it is now with the progress that has been made in this line of business, as in every other. Then, it is one thing to raft logs across the Georgian Bay, and it is something quite different to take a raft of logs down the St. Lawrence. I can tell you excitement runs high at times, when the rafts are running the rapids of this great Canadian river.

We speak of business men being keen-witted, but all the keenness, and all the wit, that the cleverest can summon up is required when this work is engaged in. Losses of life too often occur, but the risks seem inevitable to the work. Fancy yourself strapped to the rafts, as the men have to be when going through certain portions of the rapids. The ordinary traveller knows what it is to run the St. Lawrence rapids in one of our lake steamers, and what danger is undertaken, of the excitement that occurs, when the steamer, may, perchance, strike the rocks." I had gone down the St. Lawrence on the Corinthian a few years ago when that vessel met with a mishap as she was running the Lachine rapids. There was great excitement on board, but from what Mr. Gordon has just stated, one can readily understand that that was child's play along side of the excitement and risk attending these raftsmen, when their improvised vessel of logs should chance to strike the rocks of the St. Lawrence. As one has said: "The dexterity and agility of drivers are astonishing. Upon logs of all sizes, bobbing, floating and rolling, they walk, stand and ride. The bucking broncho is a rocking-horse compared to these sawlogs with their treacherous antics. Tests of skill are at times attempted between expert drivers by two of them getting upon one log and turning it rapidly by turns, as a squirrel turns the wheel in his cage, when one contestant will attempt to check it and thus throw the other driver into the water. Chill and frequent are the baths these men daily receive, often spending the entire day in the water that is fresh from a snowbank."

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The address delivered recently by Hon. J. K. Ward, of Montreal, and which the LUMBERMAN is publishing in full this month, is very suggestive of the changes that have taken place in the past few decades in methods of lumbering. Mr. Ward is able to speak as one who knows all about it, for fifty years ago he commenced at the lowest rung of the ladder and has with intelligent interest, and much personal success, watched the progress of this great industry from that time forward. This matter was further brought under my notice as I talked a few days ago with Mr. McBurney, of McBurney & Laycock, operating a mill at Callender, Ont., and cutting this season for Robert Thomson & Co., for the British market. Mr. McBurney a number of years ago carried on a saw mill business at Simcoe, which is still his home. There is no longer, however, any opportunity to engage in lumbering in Simcoe, for the forests thereabouts have long since been depleted of their timbers. Mr. McBurney remarked to me, that with a reasonable competence in hand, it might have been the wisest thing for him to have left lumbering alone, and enjoyed the evening of his days in his old home. But he is a man of too great energy to withdraw for any length of time from the activities of business, and so he keeps at it, sometimes in one direction and again in another. I am not going to play the preacher at this point in my talk, but the fact that the timbers in the district of Simcoe are depleted, and that this place is only one of scores of others, points the old, but ever necessary lesson of the need of taking greater care of the forest resources of the Dominion. Mr. McBurney lumbered a good part of the winter with Mr. Laycock, who by the way is a well-known Buffalo lumberman, in the vicinity of northern Michigan and Wisconsin, where they were cutting timber for the Platt Bros., of Hamilton. Mr. McBurney thinks that this firm will rank among the largest shippers this season of lumber for the British markets. As with the lumber got out by McArthur Bros., Sharpless Bros., and others, it is forwarded to Quebec, and from there exported to Great Britain. I was interested in what Mr. McBurney had to tell of the changed conditions of lumbering in northern Michigan and Wisconsin. Lumbermen no longer plant their mills in the territory in which the lumber is cut, but bring the logs a distance of from 300 to 500 miles to mills located in other parts of the country. This change has come about, through the enterprise of the railroads in shaping their equipment and rates to meet this particular line of trade. It is a sight worth seeing, said Mr. McBurney, to watch the immense car loads of logs that go out from that district daily, to be sawn at some of the great mills of the country hundreds of miles away. I questioned whether this was a paying method of lumbering, and was informed that mill men

could bring the logs even 500 miles, lay them down at their mill door, and the cost would be less than that of operating mills in the locality where the logs were cut. This experience is just another instance of the large place that steam occupies in the business economy of the present day. Mr. Meaney, Toronto manager of Robert Thomson & Co., was with us at the time of conversation and remarked, that at one time his firm endeavored to make an arrangement with the Grand Trunk Railway to carry logs from the northern lumber districts to Hamilton, where they would have been willing to have established a large saw mill and wood-working business. But nothing satisfactory could be arrived at with the Grand Trunk.

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One of the hard problems in the Canadian lumber business is that of securing anything like uniformity of prices. This matter came under my notice a few days ago by the remark of a country mill man, that he was unable to interpret the LUMBERMAN'S quotations for hardwoods in the light of his experience in endeavoring to sell certain classes of woods in the Toronto market. He had been unable to secure within two or three dollars of the quoted price in Toronto for certain woods. This is to be remembered that the prices quoted on the fourth page of the WEEKLY LUMBERMAN are those at which wholesalers are selling their lumber in Toronto. This lumber is brought from the mills of the province at a cost for freight and handling. On top of this must be added the wholesalers profit. I do not know that a mill man could expect to secure that price, should he come to a dealer in Toronto and offer the output of his mill. He is in the position of the manufacturer of woollen goods who comes to the wholesaler and offers to sell him goods at certain prices. The wholesaler makes his purchase. When he comes to sell to the retailer, his profit must necessarily be added to the cost. This will account in part, at least, for the apparent discrepancy in prices, to which my friend the mill man referred. A broader interpretation, however, must be placed on all current price lists of lumber. They must be read alongside of the comments on the market conditions that find a place every week in all lumber journals, and that prove a leading feature of the WEEKLY LUMBERMAN. The situation in certain lines will change sometimes for the week. A few weeks ago, maple, which had been demanding a certain price, became slow, and at that time could have been bought a little less than the current market quotations, and yet it would not have been fair to say that the current market quotations were out. Within a month after this date, building operations had become more active in certain large centers, and maple was going into consumption more largely and the price again stiffened. This also is to be remembered, and it suggests another trouble the trade has to contend against, that ash, or elm, or basswood, may be quoted mill run at a certain price. But mill run will differ widely in certain mills. I may go to a mill man and get his figures for basswood, mill run. I examine his stock and find that it runs less to 1sts and 2nds than the stock of his neighbor. Or it may be that a larger percentage of the stock of one man will be off in color as compared with that of another. So it is through every class of wood. It is impossible to draw these distinctions in prices in a printed price list. They must always be flexible enough to permit of changes in the local conditions and situation. I talked this matter over only a week ago with a lumberman whose operations run into large figures, and who can talk from the standpoint of a mill man, as well as a wholesaler. "What we have to contend against here," said he, "is the imperfect character of inspection. We all go paddling our own canoe; fix our own standard of what constitutes certain grades, and as long as we can dispose of the stuff in this way we are satisfied, seemingly forgetting that the most successful business can always be done when the trade are something nearly of a unit in methods of handling their business." But to repeat, let current lumber prices of the WEEKLY LUMBERMAN be read alongside with the comments on the week's trade and the remarks and quotations that are given in Stocks and Prices column, and how closely to the mark the editor shapes these things will at once be seen.