

THE TIMBER SUPPLY QUESTION.

We have received the following for publication:—

Sir,—I have for several years been endeavoring, through the press and in pamphlets, to draw attention to and impress on the Government and lumberers, both of Ontario and Quebec, the importance and necessity of preserving our timber resources, so as to place us in a position to take advantage of the wants and necessities of our neighbors across the line, when their supplies are exhausted, and notwithstanding I showed that that time was within a few years of its accomplishment, no heed has been given to my warnings.

Since my first introduction of the question of supply, in the United States and Canada, the Western lumber periodicals have lost no opportunity in trying to discredit my statistics on the subject. They have in the interest of the manufacturers been endeavoring to hoodwink the consumers with assertions that their timber resources were abundant to meet the demand for many years, and thus withholding them from pressing on the Government the necessity of admitting our Canadian lumber free of duty and all other obstructions to which it is liable. But the Government itself has now, it appears, taken the matter in hand, and has sent experts to the timber supplying States of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, the only ones they have from the Rocky Mountains to the Eastern Atlantic seaboard, to investigate and report on the extent of their timber resources for their forthcoming census returns, and I herewith beg to hand you a copy of the *New York Times*, of the 21st instant, containing an article on the subject, in hopes you will give it to the public through the *Lumberman*.

It will be seen from the article referred to, that at the present rate of consumption their supply will be totally exhausted within the short period of about nine years, and when there is added to the population a yearly complement of a million and a half consumers, a number equal to the whole population of the Province of Quebec, the supply will not suffice to respond to the demand for half-a-dozen years at the outside, and in two or three years at the very farthest a total cessation of shipments to the East must take place, which will necessitate a doubling of our present manufacturing capacity to supply its place, and be the means of doubling as well the value of our wood product.

The Western Ontario papers inform us of 100 acres of pine changing hands recently at \$22,000, enough to purchase half-a-dozen good farms with all their buildings and betterments, and \$1,000 have been refused for ten pine trees in the Township of Puslinch. And what is the reason of this extraordinary advance in the value of such property? It simply arises from a scarcity where, a few years ago, pine on a farm lot was looked upon as an eyesore. It might surely be supposed that our lumberers would take a lesson from this—but no—the state of prosperity to which the United States have attained, occasioning an increased consumption of lumber coupled with a short supply and a consequent good demand, have had the effect of sending our lumberers into the woods with double force, to slaughter away and keep the markets glutted, and thus waste their timber and entail on themselves a double loss.

I do not hesitate or fear to assert that there is no description of commercial wood in our forests that will not in five years be worth more standing where it is, than it is to-day manufactured for market.

JAMES LITTLE.

Cote St. Antoine, Montreal, March 25th, 1881.

When on the 13th May, 1878, you published a letter, from Mr. James Little, of Montreal, on the subject of the devastation of our woodlands, you no doubt remember the incredulity with which his statements were received by those pretending to be informed on the subject; but you have now the satisfaction of showing that the warnings then given are fully justified by the reports of the Government itself, now coming to light through the medium of the lumber journals of the West, which, I may remark, were as adverse to giving currency to the facts then as they are now urgent to have it recognized that they assisted in giving the warning.

The facts that he presented were, that of the

whole twenty-six States, comprising the New England, Middle, Western, and North-Western to the Rocky Mountains, only four, namely, Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, had a supply of timber in excess of their own wants, and the question was, how long the supply for commercial purposes would last the drain upon them? The white pine being the wood of prime importance, his remarks were that the supply of this timber was confined almost entirely to the three States of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and that the demand on them was so heavy for all sections of the country, that it would not be possible for them to respond to it for more than six or seven years longer.

The *North Western Lumberman* now states, from information derived from the proper authorities, that the forthcoming report of the United States census will show that the pine timber supply of the North-West, in 1880, was in Minnesota, credited by popular estimate at 40,000,000,000, only 6,150,000,000; Wisconsin, from statements varied from 80,000,000,000 to 100,000,000,000, only 40,500,000,000, and Michigan, on both the upper and lower peninsulas, 35,000,000,000, making a total supply of 81,500,000,000 feet of pine timber. This paper at the same time states that the aggregate cut and destruction of pine in the three States is not far from 8,000,000,000 feet per annum, so that, if we deduct the past winter's cut, which has been an exceedingly heavy one, there remains standing today in the whole North-West only 73,500,000,000 feet, which is distributed about as follows, viz.:

In Minnesota	5,500,000,000
In Wisconsin	39,000,000,000
In Michigan	33,000,000,000

Total ... 73,500,000,000

From the above it will be seen that even now, when only three years of the six or seven mentioned by Mr. Little have gone, these States have reached a condition when common prudence would say they had not another foot to spare. They are rapidly growing in wealth and population, and in all probability will have 6,000,000 inhabitants to supply within their own boundaries in the next ten years, so that the amount now remaining would barely supply their own wants for twenty years from to-day; but what will be their condition in four years from this time if the continued slaughter of the pine is kept up?

In round numbers, Michigan is parting with her forests at the rate of 5,000,000,000 feet a year; consequently at the end of four years will have only 10,000,000,000 remaining to supply her more than 2,000,000 people. Wisconsin will probably part with 13,000,000,000 during the same period, leaving her with only 25,000,000,000, and Minnesota, that has not a stock to-day one quarter sufficient for her own wants, will be reduced to 3,000,000,000, leaving only 38,000,000,000 of white pine in the whole North-West (an amount little more two years' consumption of the whole country), as the reserve supply, not only for themselves, but for the entire country. It is but trifling with the subject to speak of the few patches here and there in our own State, and in Pennsylvania, Virginia, or elsewhere.

Formerly, when the New England States parted with their pine, there remained the forests of New York, Pennsylvania and Canada to fall back on, these in their turn fell back on Michigan, but now the reserves themselves are about gone, and even Canada is forced to compete for supplies in the forests of Michigan and Wisconsin for the English market, and unless something is at once done to stop the destruction of this indispensable timber, it will be all gone, and we will have only the stumps remaining to remind us of our folly.

It is to be hoped, now that the Government has come into possession of the facts, it will take means to enlighten the public on this most important subject. An enlightened public-opinion can do much to aid in stemming the tide of destruction which is now going on with reckless precipitancy. A knowledge of the value of their property will cause owners to be more careful of it and not be disposed to part with it to go abroad at one-tenth the value it will have in a few years, standing in their forests for their own wants. The substitution of spruce, hemlock

and other woods for such purposes as they are suitable, by stopping the frightful butchery of this timber which is now going on by the use of circular saws, that turn one-quarter of the tree into sawdust; by allowing the young trees to grow; by the Government withholding its timber lands from sale; by preventing, if possible, the making of square timber in the woods, by which one-third of the tree is cut into score blocks and shavings, furnishing the most fruitful source of fire, and by throwing open our ports to the free entry of timber from any country that may be willing to spare it—and now that this timber is about gone, if the lumber papers have at last learned to recognize the difference between a pine tree and a gooseberry bush, so as to give their patrons correct information on this important subject, some little may yet be done to prolong the supply of this indispensable timber.

WILLIAM LITTLE.

Astor House, New York, March 16th, 1881.
—*New York Times*, March 21st.

VANISHING FORESTS.

The *Toronto Mail* says that the lumber question seems to be coming, if not "within the range of practical politics," at least within the range of practical business men. A long conference on the expediency of protecting the forests was recently held in Chicago; and it is a noticeable fact that the remarks were made chiefly by the owners of pine lands and the operators of saw-mills, who may fairly be supposed, from the nature of their business, to have a more intimate acquaintance with the present condition of our forests, and the necessity of protecting them and of replacing them as they are cut off, than those who merely sell the lumber after it is sawed. The situation in the States certainly seems to be rather startling. The *N. Y. Shipping List* lately said it had been advised that "the pine forests of Michigan will be exhausted in thirteen years, and those of Wisconsin and Minnesota in thirty and forty years." After quoting and commenting upon Mr. Little's letter, which we publish in another column, the *Mail* continues: "The census commissioners ought certainly to be expected to be well-informed and impartial men; and if the actual situation should be as is stated it is rather a serious matter for the States. But it is equally serious for Canada. Lumber is our staple export; if our neighbors' fields should be run out they will turn to us if we have any left. A large part of our territory seems fit for nothing else than a lumber field. This being the fact, and a demand on its resources being certain, should we not seek to turn its resources to the best account?"

Waste Paper.

A recent report of the controller of the British Stationery Office, whose function is to provide the paper used in all the government offices, states that the value of the waste paper collected from the various offices and sold for the public account averages \$50,000 a year. Hitherto it has been the rule to turn the bulk of this paper over to a single firm, under bond to reduce it to pulp in the United Kingdom. Under such conditions, the price received was less than the paper was worth in open market. The paper is now sent to the state prisons, where it is sorted and torn up, so as to be rendered practically illegible, and then sold unconditionally at much better prices than before.

At first thought it might seem to be more economical to burn the paper at once, and thus save all the expense of collection and transportation; but the controller states that the money received for waste paper in some years amounts to more than the total salaries of the controller, assistant controller, and staffs of the department in both England and Ireland.

THE CANADA LUMBERMAN.—A journal in the interest of the lumber trade, bearing the above title, which has been published in Toronto, has passed into the hands of Toker & Co., of the Peterborough Review, who will publish it hereafter. Under their energetic management it will no doubt command a large share of patronage, and if the initial number is any criterion, it well deserves to. Published semi-monthly at \$2 a year.—*Pictou Times*.

THE FREDERICTON BOOM COMPANY.

Recognizing the impetus given to lumbering operations last fall by the favorable state of the English markets, and feeling confident that the cut on the Upper St. John and its tributaries would be in excess of previous years, the Fredericton Boom Company have made ample preparations to boom, hold and raft every stick that may float or be driven down the river this year. To do this necessitated not only the repairing of many piers in the old booms, but the providing of increased boom space. Work was commenced on January 3rd in the Gill boom, below Fredericton; and here 15 to 20 teams, along with about fifty men, were employed till three new piers had been constructed and the damage done by the ice to six of the old piers had been repaired. A large jam pier was also erected in the Mitchell boom, likewise below Fredericton. The main operations, however, were conducted at Sugar Island, just below the mouth of the Keewick, where a new reserve boom has been located and constructed, capable of holding sixty millions and intended, in case of a big run, to relieve the Douglas and Lincoln booms to that extent. The location is admirable for the purpose, being well sheltered and having deep water throughout the season. Here the company have expended fully \$5,000 in the erection of thirteen jam and block piers, which will render the boom fully able to stand all strain. All logs running down the river can be turned into this area by means of a sheer boom set at the head for this purpose. The boom was located by Stephen Glasier, Esq., agent of the boom company, who has also personally superintended the construction and repairs to the several booms this winter. Perhaps the most difficult task Mr. Glasier had to undertake was devising means to guard the ten million logs now in the Douglas boom from being carried away by the run of ice this spring; and along with them, between four and five millions lying rafted in the wake of the boomed logs—all these logs having come down last fall too late to be got away before navigation closed. Two new piers have been built in this boom and the seventeen existing piers have each been raised about five feet, so as to prevent the ice from jamming in on top of the logs and carrying them away. It is expected that these piers will present an impassable barrier to the run of up-river ice and turn it in another direction, thus saving the logs in the boom. With respect to the five million rafted just below the boom, as the ice there is rotting rapidly, it is believed that they can be got away before the up-river ice runs down. Messrs. D. D. Glasier & Sons are keeping a sharp lookout, and by pushing their tugs up as fast as possible, taking advantage of the open creeks, expect to be able to tow these rafts down to St. John ahead of the main body of ice. While the boom company have made most extensive arrangements for the summer business, more improvements would have been made in the lower booms if the early wasting away of the ice had not prevented the lumber having been got out for the purpose. From the best information attainable, the company look forward to a run this spring and summer of about 150,000,000, and have made their arrangements accordingly. The quantity of snow now in the woods on the Aroostook and Upper St. John renders the chance of a sudden fall of water like that of last spring impossible, so it is extremely probable that most of the quantity above estimated will reach the boom this spring and early summer.—*St. John Sun*.

FOREST FIRES.

ATTLEBORO, Mass., March 28.—An extensive fire has been raging in the woods between Attleboro and Mansfield all day, extending into Wrentham, where to-night it is burning with great fury. A large quantity of wood and timber has been destroyed, and several dwellings are threatened. A force of men are fighting the fire, which is fanned by a strong breeze.

WILKESBARRE, March 28.—Forest fires are burning furiously on the mountains near here along the line of the Lehigh and Susquehanna railroad, and are spreading rapidly to-night.

GLOUCESTER, Mass., March 28.—An extensive fire is raging in the woods between here and Rockfort, which threatens to burn a large area.

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