

RAMBLING NOTES.

Tid-Bits of News and Gossip Effecting the Lumber Interests Picked up Here, There and Everywhere.

By our Travelling Correspondent I

HAVING been deputed to furnish readers of THE LUMBERMAN with brief notes of my rambles among the mills and interviews with lumbermen, I undertake the work with a little trepidation, but with an honest purpose to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth, with the hope that the same will have the effect of promoting the interests of the trade in general.

Taking the east-bound train from the "Queen City" I soon arrived at the smart little town of

WHITBY

where I had the pleasure of calling upon Mr. George Cormack, who has conducted a most extensive lumbering business there for upwards of 30 years past, his operations to the United States and other channels averaging from 6 to 8 millions yearly. Thus Mr. Cormack is a man of great experience, considered one of the best judges of all kinds of lumber in Canada, and his words are entitled to respect. He informed me that business during the past year had been generally dull; but prices were fairly good and firm; and he was pleased to say there seemed at present no disposition to change. The dullness had not been caused by over-production, as many supposed, but mainly because the U. S. have bought in smaller quantities than usual the past season. The stocks on the Canadian side are as yet pretty heavy, but there is every prospect of their being very much reduced. One of the greatest obstacles to that reduction being either the inability, lack of energy, or of will, on the part of the G. T. R. officials to provide freight cars in sufficient quantities, and at opportune times, and thus assist their customers to fulfill their contracts in delivering lumber already sold and reduce stocks in order to make room for more. Mr. Cormack operates principally on the G. T. R. system, and has now upwards of half a million feet of lumber which he has sold to a U. S. firm, but which he cannot deliver on account of want of freight cars for that purpose. I find the lack of cars on this company's system quite an "old chestnut" now, and it has given place to a later grievance, namely, the withdrawal of the privilege which master lumbermen have for some long time enjoyed, of having a passenger ticket at a much reduced rate issued to them by the company. When this new edict was passed, a representative meeting of Ontario lumbermen was convened, and the case thoroughly canvassed, with the result that two prominent men from that meeting were deputed to wait upon the General Manager of the G. T. R. at Montreal. The only good they got for their pains and labor was a letter somewhat to the following effect. "We are unable to renew the tickets in question, as we are prevented from so doing by the *Interstate Law*; and for other reasons." Our friends, the lumbermen, would like to know "what the Interstate Law has to do with the case?" as the Mikado has it; and also what the other reasons are; but their hopes were blighted. The lumbermen contend that they do not travel for pleasure like school lads, but that the tickets were mainly used by them in travelling from place to place hunting up freight cars, and generally doing the work which ought to have been done by the company's own servants, and thus facilitating in every way the lumber traffic on their system.

The freight rates levied to lumbermen by the G. T. R. seems to be a very sore point also. I am informed that they charge by *weight* and not by *measurement*. Now as lumber is felled, logged, bought, sold, and shipped by vessels at a rate per 1,000 feet, why in the name of all that is rational, is it not carried by the G. T. R. in the same way, at per 1,000 feet? I, as well as the lumbermen, fail to see the reason why the G. T. R. should be allowed to carry out this one-sided policy; unless it is so that the lumbermen cannot possibly have any check on the freight charges when levied. I was shown some 30 to 40 way bills, or freight charges, the other day by a gentleman who

ships some millions of lumber yearly on the G. T. R. system, and was pointed out the apparently erratic manner in which they varied in the sums charged, but in every single case the variation seemed in favor of the company and consequently against the client. For instance a man buys say a million feet of lumber at one given point, and orders it to be delivered to another given point in four equal instalments, although each instalment is of the self same kind of lumber, and exact in quantity, each carriage charge varies considerably. Now, why should these things be? The lumberman has no check and no redress. He cannot make a contract with accuracy, as it is impossible to rightly estimate what his carriage is going to cost him. In fact the G. T. R. appears to be the *hete noir* of the poor, long-suffering lumberman and his complaint, surely, is a righteous one.

Continuing my rambles in an easterly direction, I am glad to report good accounts of fair prices and encouraging anticipations of future business prospects from our lumberman friends, Messrs. Sykes & Son, and Mr. J. E. Edmondson, of Oshawa; and Messrs. McClellan & Co. and others of Bowmanville and that district.

PORT HOPE.

I was sorry to hear that the lumbering interest in this advantageously situated town is not so great as it used to be. Genial Mr. James S. Leverich is about the only representative lumberman, but he does a business of a very extensive character. He has been located here for some 40 years past, and his now annual average handling of lumber is about two millions, and some seven millions in shingles, besides operating largely in posts and laths. Although he jokingly calls himself a son of Uncle Sam, he is a good specimen of Canadian industry and energy and consequent success and is quite satisfied with the land of his adoption. He finds trade good and prices firm. For his courtesy, and the information he imparted, I wish him continued success. There are also two planing mills here. Fortunately for Port Hope, if the lumbering trade has somewhat left it, other industries have arisen in its midst, one of which is the Globe File Manufacturing Company, conducted by Mr. Outram. Another industry, which Port Hope ought to be thankful for, is that of Messrs. A. W. Morris & Brothers, of Montreal, one of the largest binding twine firms in the Dominion, who have erected a large manufactory here, and employ a considerable amount of labor. Last, though not least, Mr. Alonzo W. Spooner has for the past five years been very successfully manufacturing a new metal called "Spooner's Copperine." He guarantees it copper mixed, non-fibrous and anti-frictionous, and it is used all over the Dominion by nearly every owner and manufacturer of machinery, engineers, &c. It is a capital adjunct to saw, grist and planing mills. It is also extensively used in British Columbia. Messrs. A. Robb & Son, of Amherst, Nova Scotia, a very old and reputable firm, are selling Mr. Spooner's Copperine in very large quantities. So those who have not yet tested it are advised to do so; and I wish every success to Mr. Spooner and Port Hope industries generally.

COBOURG.

This very loyal and pretty town of some 5,000 inhabitants, has had a very dull-time lately, but I am informed there are great prospects for its immediate future, especially for the lumbering industry. Heretofore our friends, Mr. George Spence, Messrs. Jones & Barnum, and other lumbermen of Cobourg, have had to haul their lumber from the G. T. R. station, some distance out of the town, to their works, at a great expense, but Mr. T. B. Pierce, the proprietor of the old Cobourg-Blairton railway has just completed arrangements with the G. T. R. Co. so that car lots can be carried upon a portion of Mr. Pierce's track, free to the yards of the lumbermen in the town of Cobourg, which will do away with the expensive hauling spoken of. It is also rumored, that at no distant date there will be direct railway communication between Cobourg, Peterborough and Rice Lake district, and that the old town of Cobourg will become, what it had a right to expect years ago, a great shipping port of the lumbering industry. She will have her docks dredged and recussitated and expects a goodly fleet of

vessels to be seen entering and leaving her ports. Cobourg has a splendid town hall, good water works, loyal and enterprising inhabitants, and in fact everything conducive to the making of a big city in the future. The Cobourg Car Works, is another great industry of this town, and Mr. James Crossen, the proprietor, is a very large employer of labor. He manufactures sleeping, passenger, freight, post office, baggage, box, platform and hand cars, and is at present executing an order for 100 box cars for the G. T. R. and I have no doubt would be equally pleased to construct a few hundred extra cars for them for the exclusive use of the lumber trade. Mr. Hewson, Sen., of dry goods fame, a very old resident, and whose heart is full of Cobourg's future prosperity, kindly escorted me over the town.

TRENTON.

Messrs. Gilmour's immense lumbering industry has its head centre located here, but as I was unable to see Mr. Gilmour I must send in an account of their extensive operations at an early date. The Government authorities have recently erected an imposing post office, and there are several prominent public buildings in the town, a remarkable bridge, and one or two good hotels. At the Queens, where I put up, you can rely upon getting a very rare thing, that is a *rare* tender beef steak. The accommodation is also good, and you may also expect an occasional impromptu concert from "The Boys of the Commercial fraternity." My visit happened to be on one of these occasions. Their hearts and lungs were sound enough, but the harmony was not quite as euphonious as usual; but as I expect each one then present will become an annual subscriber to THE LUMBERMAN I will only say they were jolly good fellows.

BELLEVILLE.

This is a fine city of some 10,000 inhabitants, with great expectations, as it is rumored that a large Rolling Mill, which will employ 250 men, and a new Axe Works, to employ 150 more will be almost immediately added to the present industries of the city. I called upon our friends, Messrs. Pringle & Sons, Harris & Walton, Flint & Holton, the Canada Lumber Cutting Co. (who are about to move their works to Trenton) and the Rathbun Co.'s branch office here, and got favorable accounts of present business from each. Mr. F. J. Drake, and the Brown Manufacturing Co. are extensively occupied in the manufacture of planing, lath, and other machinery used in the lumbering business.

PICKTON.

This is one of the most picturesquely situated towns in the Dominion, as it nestles in a beautiful valley at the head of the Bay of Quinte, the surrounding hills sheltering it from storm or tempest. It is a thriving busy little town, with more than the full complement of handsome buildings including churches, schools, hotels and some imposing and well-filled stores. The district is purely an agricultural one; and, therefore, Pickton is busy, and seen at her best on a market day when the weather is fine; on other days a calm, peaceful halo seems to hang over Pickton, and the stranger seems invited to cease his wanderings and end his days in this town of peace and plenty. The neighborhood is also specially interesting to the traveller or tourist, from the fact that at some two or three miles to the west of the town there is a charming sheet of water called "The Lake on the Mountain." It is some 200 feet above the Bay of Quinte, is about three-quarters of a mile long and on-half a mile broad; is teeming with Black Bass, Pickerel and other denizens of the finny tribe, and is a mystery as to how it got there, from whence its waters came and whether they flow again; in fact one of nature's stupendous mysteries. Again some eight miles or so in an opposite direction, there are acres upon acres, of white-silver sand hills, whose origin is as mysterious as the "Lake on the Mountain." They are called the "Sandbanks," and are the happy hunting grounds of ladies and children in the summer season, the bathing being safe and good and the sand hills being so bright, fine and soft that the little ones, (and very frequently the big ones also) enjoy rolling from the summit to the base of these "golden sands." I do not if Pickton